

Maastricht University graduate surveys 2016

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Maastricht University graduate surveys 2016

ROA Fact Sheet

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Researchcentrum voor Onderwijs en Arbeidsmarkt | ROA
Research Centre For Education and the Labour Market / ROA

Maastricht University graduate surveys 2016

To what degree does Maastricht University succeed in preparing its students for the labour market? What are the short and medium term career paths of Maastricht University alumni, and how do they look back on their study in Maastricht? In this factsheet, the most important results of a 2015 survey amongst three cohorts of Maastricht University alumni are presented. The first cohort graduated in the academic year 2013-2014 (1.5 years prior to the survey), the second cohort graduated in 2009-2010 (6 years prior to the survey) and the third cohort in the academic year 2004-2005 (11 years prior to the survey).^{1,2} In addition, this year the comparison between Maastricht University and national results can be made for the cohort 2013-2014 and for the cohort 2009-2010.^{3,4}

Position in the labour market

Table 1 gives a detailed overview of graduates' unemployment rates – that is, the proportion of graduates who are currently not working but who are searching for work. On average in other Dutch universities⁵, 6% of the graduates from the 2013-2014 cohort and 4% of the graduates from the 2009-2010 cohort are unemployed. Of Maastricht University alumni, 7% of the 2013-2014 cohort is currently unemployed, while this only applies to 3% of the 2009-2010 cohort and 3% of the 2004-2005 cohort.⁶ The higher unemployment rate of the 2013-2014 cohort may reflect the aftermath of recent recessions, that have hampered the transition from university to work for graduates in the years directly following 2008 (see also previous factsheets).

How well do graduates from different faculties fare? In the 2013-2014 cohort, unemployment rates are highest among graduates of Law or Psychology and Neuroscience. However, in both the 2009-2010 and the 2004-2005

cohorts, unemployment rates are the highest among Arts and Social Sciences graduates.⁷ We can conclude that labour market participation is higher for the 2009-2010 and 2004-2005 cohorts of Maastricht university graduates, but is considerably lower for the 2013-2014 cohorts.

Table 1
Unemployment^a

	2013-2014	2009-2010	2004-2005
Humanities and Sciences	4	6	0/x
Business and Economics	4	2	4
Health, Medicine and Life Sciences	7	5	2
Arts and Social Sciences	6	7	12
Psychology and Neuroscience	10	3	3
Law	10	2	0
Maastricht University	7	3	3
National averages	6	4	N/A

x = too few cases; N/A = not available

Trends in unemployment

To what extent has the recent economic crisis affected labour market opportunities of Maastricht University graduates since 2008? An indication can be found in the average unemployment rate of Maastricht University graduates, as reported by the surveys that were held between 2005 and 2015. For all eleven years that these surveys were conducted, unemployment information of the three cohorts is available. For the two cohorts that are 6 or 11 years on the labour market, no clear trend in unemployment rates can be detected. Thus, the most recent economic crisis does not seem to have had an influence on the unemployment rate of Maastricht University alumni 6 to 11 years into their labour market. Nevertheless, a notable trend in unemployment rates can be observed when analysing the data of graduates one year after graduation (see Figure 1). Between 2007 and 2013, unemployment rates one year after graduation have risen steadily. Since 2013, the unemployment rates of graduates one year after graduating have sharply decreased, and are almost back to pre-economic crisis levels. In Appendix A, yearly employment rates are reported per faculty.

¹ Of the 2013-2014 Maastricht University cohort, 2,676 alumni were approached, of whom 26% responded. For the 2009-2010 Maastricht University cohort, of the 1,826 alumni were approached, 26% responded. Finally, for the 2004-2005 Maastricht University cohort, of the 1,895 alumni that were approached, 29% responded.

² The reader should keep in mind that the mix of studies offered by Maastricht University the respondents graduated from may vary between the three cohorts.

³ For the cohort 2009-2010 an adjustment weight is assigned due to the limited number of universities participating in comparison to the cohort from 2013-2014.

⁴ Of the 2013-2014 national cohort, 37,962 respondents were approached, of whom 21% responded. For the 2009-2010 national cohort, 21,264 respondents were approached and 17% responded.

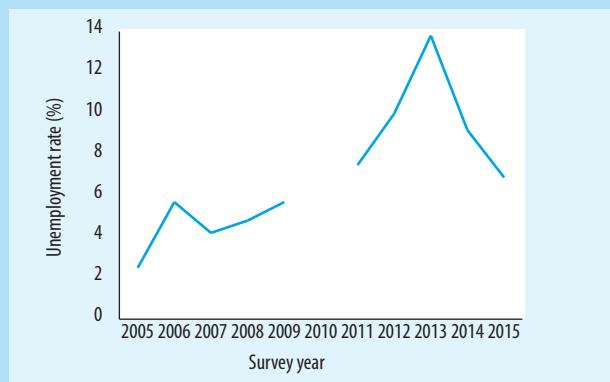
⁵ UvA, TU Delft, TU Eindhoven, RUG, RU, EUR, and UU

⁶ The unemployment rate might also vary within faculties. For example, in case of the Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences, the unemployment of Medical alumni is 3% 1.5 years after graduation, whereas for Health and life Sciences alumni the unemployment rate among the same cohort is 7%.

⁷ In the 2004-2005 cohort too few cases from Humanities and Sciences were available for reliable statistical analyses.

⁸ Compared to preceding years, starting in 2015 we use a slightly different definition of employment status in the surveys among alumni who graduated 6 and 11 years prior to the survey. Whereas prior to 2015 a respondent had to report a working week of at least 12 hours to be considered as employed, from 2015 onwards the International Labour Organisation (ILO) definition applies, whereby all those who reported at least one hour of work are considered to be employed. In practice this makes little difference, since the vast majority of those employed are working fulltime, but it is possible that a small part of the change in unemployment in 2015 in those cohorts (between 0.1 and 0.5 percentage points) can be attributed to the definition change.

Figure 1
Trends in unemployment of the T+1 survey¹



¹ the T+1 survey was not administered in 2010

Job characteristics

It is important that graduates have a good match between their education and the requirements of their job, since this determines the extent to which they can use their knowledge and skills.⁹ The quality of the education-job match is positively related to job satisfaction, career opportunities, and wages. An important indicator of the quality of the fit between education and the job is the vertical match (i.e., whether graduates are working in a job that requires an academic degree). Table 2a shows the results of the vertical match between graduates' current job and their level of education, for all three cohorts.

Table 2a
Vertical match

	% working at university level or higher		
	2013-2014	2009-2010	2004-2005
Humanities and Sciences	78	100 / x	86 / x
Business and Economics	83	87	92
Health, Medicine and Life Sciences	86	91	95
Arts and Social Sciences	82	83	91
Psychology and Neuroscience	79	97	97
Law	73	94	96
Maastricht University	81	90	94
National average	69	83	N/A

x = too few cases; N/A = not available

Table 2a shows that the vast majority of graduates succeeds in finding a job at an appropriate level. However, the results of the vertical match are substantially different for the three cohorts. At a national level, of the cohort 2009-2010 83% is employed in a job at an appropriate level, and for the cohort 2013-2014 69% is working at university level

⁹ See for example: R. van der Velden (2011), De effecten van betrouwbaarheid van onderwijsdiploma's op arbeidsproductiviteit: toepassing van een simulatiemodel, In: J. Dronkers (ed.), Goede bedoelingen in het onderwijs: Kansen en missers, boekaflevering Mens en Maatschappij, pp 27-49.

or higher. Maastricht graduates do significantly better. Among graduates from Maastricht University as a whole, the proportion of well-matched respondents decreases from 94% for the oldest cohort to 81% for the youngest cohort. There are some fluctuations between the cohorts. In general we may see relatively lower proportions of well-matched graduates in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, and (the youngest cohorts of) the Faculty of Psychology and Neuroscience and the Faculty of Law. Relatively high numbers of graduates from the Faculties of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences, (the older cohorts of) Psychology and Neuroscience, and the Faculty of Law found a university level job.¹⁰

Table 2b presents numbers on the horizontal education-to-job match. This indicator measures the proportion of Maastricht University graduates who currently work in a job that requires their own or a related field of study. Again, most graduates succeed in finding a job in a field that matches their field of study well. The three cohorts have different matching rates, with the results being most positive for both the 2009-2010 and the 2004-2005 cohorts. In the older cohorts, more graduates are working in their own or related field of study (80%) than in the recent cohort (77%). Nationally, 74% of graduates from the cohort 2013-2014 are working in their own or related field of study, compared to 77% from the cohort of 2009-2010. Shortly after graduation, a horizontal mismatch is often related to labour market conditions not allowing graduates to find a job that matches the field of study, as well as voluntary choices preferring a job in a different field. 11 years after graduation, upward job mobility often comes with more 'generic' positions that are not directly related to the initial field of study.

Table 2b
Horizontal match

	% working in own or related field of study		
	2013-2014	2009-2010	2004-2005
Humanities and Sciences	57	81 / x	86 / x
Business and Economics	77	74	73
Health, Medicine and Life Sciences	89	92	87
Arts and Social Sciences	63	60	50
Psychology and Neuroscience	72	87	84
Law	71	83	81
Maastricht University	77	80	80
National average	74	77	N/A

x = too few cases; N/A = not available

¹⁰ For the Faculty of Health, Medicine and life Sciences a strong difference is again visible between Medicine and Health and Life Sciences. Graduates of the latter studies are vertically matched in 90% (2013-2014), 86% (2009-2010), and 93% (2004-2005) of the cases, while graduates of Medicine are vertically matched in 95% (2013-2014) and 100% (both 2009-2010 and 2004-2005 cohort) of the cases.

Next to differences between the three cohorts, we may observe differences between the faculties. Overall, graduates from the Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences show lower proportions of well-matched graduates. Graduates from both Humanities and Sciences and Psychology and Neuroscience have relatively more difficulty finding a matching job right after graduation, but their horizontal match rate rises sharply as the career progresses. Graduates from the School of Business and Economics have a better chance at finding a job in their own or related field right after graduation, but their match rate does not rise over the years. There is little systematic difference between the remaining faculties. It should be noted, however, that within the Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences, a strong distinction can be seen between the study of Medicine and the studies of Health and Life Sciences. Because of the very specific nature of their study, Medicine graduates show a considerably better horizontal match in all three cohorts (2013-2014: 95%, 2009-2010: 100%, 2004-2005: 100%) than the graduates of Health and Life Sciences studies (2013-2014: 86%, 2009-2010: 91%, 2004-2005: 81%).

Income and working hours

Table 3 shows that, as can be expected, as working experience increases, the median gross income of Maastricht University alumni increases. More specifically, 1,5 years after graduation, Maastricht University alumni have a median income of €2.531 per month, while this increases to €3500 6 years after graduation and €4.300 11 years after graduation. These numbers closely match the results of previous surveys. Although the income patterns across disciplines slightly differ between the different survey years, Business and Economics graduates consistently show the highest monthly earnings and Arts and Social Sciences graduates the lowest.¹¹ It should be noted however, that graduates of the top income discipline (Business and Economics) also report the highest working hours, compared to graduates of the other disciplines. Compared to national gross incomes of graduates, Maastricht University graduates yield comparable returns to their education: 1,5 years after graduation the median income is €2500 per month and 6 years after graduation this has increased to €3400 per month. The median working hours on national level is 40 for both the 2013-2014 and the 2009-2010 cohort.

¹¹ The relatively low median income of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences graduates, is strongly influenced by the relatively low median income of the Health and Life Sciences studies. Medical graduates (a) have a higher starting salary and (b) are the best paid alumni 11 years after graduation, with a median income of €5150. Due to the structure of their career paths, Medical alumni are also the group that displays the biggest income growth between six and eleven years after graduation.

Table 3
Income and working hours

	gross income per month (median)			regular working hours per week (median)		
	2013	2009	2004	2013	2009	2004
	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2014	2010	2005	2014	2010	2005
Humanities and Sciences	2.754	3.700/x	4.150/x	40	40/x	40/x
Business and Economics	3.000	5.000	5.650	40	40	40
Health, Medicine and Life Sciences	2.770	3.250	4.000	38	38	36
Arts and Social Sciences	1.350	2.450	3.000	39	40	40
Psychology and Neuroscience	2.100	3.000	3.729	38	39	36
Law	2.433	3.360	4.422	40	40	40
Maastricht University	2.531	3.500	4.300	40	40	38
National average	2.500	3.400	N/A	40	40	N/A

x = too few cases; N/A = not available

Aspects of the current job

Graduates in the 2004-2005 and 2009-2010 cohorts were asked to report the extent to which a number of features apply to their current job. Table 4 presents a selection of three of these features, namely job security, new challenges and career perspectives. Shown in the table is the percentage of graduates who reported that these features applied to a high or very high extent to their current job. Graduates often reported that their job is characterized by new challenges: around 90% of graduates in both cohorts reported that this was the case. Around two thirds reported that their jobs were characterized by a high level of job security, while about three quarters of the graduates reported that the job was characterized by good career perspectives. Interestingly, although the older cohorts showed somewhat higher proportions of respondents that were satisfied with the new challenges their jobs offered, they were slightly less satisfied with the career perspectives and job security. It seems likely that the careers of older graduates have stabilized somewhat after a period of early growth and improvement.

Table 4
Percentage of respondents who reported that these features applied to a high or very high extent to their current job

	job security		new challenges		career perspectives	
	2009 - 2010	2004 - 2005	2009 - 2010	2004 - 2005	2009 - 2010	2004 - 2005
Humanities and Sciences	56/x	83/x	94/x	83/x	81/x	83/x
Business and Economics	64	51	91	95	90	79
Health, Medicine and Life Sciences	66	71	87	87	79	68
Arts and Social Sciences	71	65	85	100	88	55
Psychology and Neuroscience	75	85	91	85	91	63
Law	71	67	87	87	84	73
Maastricht University	67	65	89	90	86	71
National average	64	N/A	89	N/A	76	N/A

x = too few cases; N/A = not available

The differences between faculties for the older cohorts are the largest for job security, where Psychology and Neuroscience graduates reported highest levels of job security and the graduates of Business and Economics report the lowest levels of job security. Regarding new challenges in their job, the graduates of Arts and Social Sciences report the highest level and the graduates from Psychology and Neuroscience the lowest. The Business and Economics graduates report the most career perspectives, and the Arts and Social Sciences graduates the lowest.

The graduates who were approached 6 years after graduation report smaller differences. Psychology and Neuroscience graduates in this cohort enjoy a relatively high level of job security, whereas this applies to a little over a half of their Humanities and Sciences peers. Graduates from Humanities and Sciences are relatively likely to report a high level of new challenges, but the lowest level of career opportunities. New challenges are reported the least by graduates from Arts and Social Sciences, and graduates from the Faculty of Psychology and Neuroscience score relatively high on career perspectives. Compared to national numbers for the 2009-2010 cohort, 64% reports enjoying a relatively high level of job security, 89% reports a high level of new challenges and 76% states good career perspectives.

International orientation of Maastricht University and its graduates

It appears that the international orientation of Maastricht University and the fact that English is the main language of instruction in many study programs continue to attract increasing numbers of international students for all faculties. It is interesting to see whether this international orientation extends beyond the time of the study in Maastricht, in the form of high percentages of graduates working abroad. Table 5 shows the percentage of Maastricht University alumni of the various cohorts currently working inside and outside the Netherlands, split by faculty. For Maastricht as a whole, 46% of the alumni of 2013-2014 cohort is working abroad, while the same applies to 42% of the alumni of the 2009-2010 cohort and 23% of the alumni of the 2004-2005 cohort. These numbers include foreign students who returned to their home country after graduation.¹²

Table 5
Percentage of alum working abroad

	% working abroad		
	2013-2014	2009-2010	2004-2005
Humanities and Sciences	52	69 / x	29 / x
Business and Economics	65	64	45
Health, Medicine and Life Sciences	21	16	8
Arts and Social Sciences	73	55	39
Psychology and Neuroscience	56	33	23
Law	36	28	19
Maastricht University	46	42	23
National average	17	4	N/A

x = too few cases; N/A = not available

Considerable variation exists between the faculties. Graduates of the Arts and Social Sciences and Business and Economics are particularly internationally active, while for Law and especially Health, Medicine and Life Sciences graduates' international mobility is relatively rare. The pattern of diminished mobility for the older cohorts can be seen in all faculties, despite the large differences in the absolute level of international mobility. Only for Humanities and Sciences there are more graduates working abroad from the 2009-2010 cohort than from the 2013-2014 cohort. On a national level, from the 2013-2014 cohort 17% is working abroad compared to just 4% of the 2009-2010 cohort.

Satisfaction with Maastricht University

Finally, alumni were asked how they look back on their study at Maastricht University and to assess what choices they would have made in retrospect. With the benefit of hindsight, would graduates choose the same study at the same university again? In the 2013-2014 cohort, 76% of the alumni would again choose the exact same study at Maastricht University. For the cohorts that graduated in 2009-2010 and 2004-2005, these figures were 78% for both. Table 6 presents the survey results for the three cohorts per faculty.¹³

¹² We only show the general numbers here, and delve deeper in the international orientation, the origin and destination of graduates in the 2016 research report "Geographical mobility of Maastricht University graduates"

¹³ Within the Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences, graduates of the Medical studies are significantly more satisfied with their study choice in retrospect. For example, in the 2004-2005 cohort, 71% of the graduates of Health and Life Sciences would again choose the same study at Maastricht university compared to 89% of the Medical graduates.

Table 6

Percentage of alumni who would again choose the exact same study at Maastricht University

	2013-2014	2009-2010	2004-2005
Humanities and Sciences	74	88 / x	100 / x
Business and Economics	80	82	78
Health, Medicine and Life Sciences	78	78	75
Arts and Social Sciences	74	62	82
Psychology and Neuroscience	69	83	79
Law	76	77	79
Maastricht University	76	78	78
National average	76	76	N/A

x = too few cases; N/A = not available

In general, graduates from the Faculties of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences, Business and Economics' and Psychology and Neuroscience (particularly the 2009-2010 cohort) are most often satisfied with their initial choice. Relatively less satisfied were graduates from Law and Arts and Social Sciences. Compared to national data, from both the graduates of the 2013-2014 and 2009-2010 cohort 76% would choose the same study at the same university again.

Appendix A

Table 7
Trends in unemployment^{1,2}

	2009 T+1 2007-2008	2010 T+1 2008-2009	2011 T+1 2009-2010	2012 T+1 2010-2011	2013 T+1 2011-2012	2014 T+1 2012-2013	2015a T+1 2013-2014	2015b T+1 2014-2015
Business and Economics	5,7	-	4,9	6,0	6,3	5,7	3,6	-
Health and Life Sciences	0,0	-	4,4	8,3	16,4	10,3	9,2	-
Medicine	0,0	-	0,0	1,7	2,5	3,3	2,7	-
Arts and Social Sciences	18,5	-	23,9	25,5	33,3	13,7	5,9	-
Psychology and Neuroscience	6,1	-	11,4	16,7	25,6	7,6	10,3	-
Law	6,0	-	8,8	7,1	14,3	16,2	10,3	-
Maastricht University	5,7	-	7,5	10,0	13,8	9,2	6,9	-
	2009 T+5 2002-2003	2010 T+5 2003-2004	2011 T+5 2004-2005	2012 T+5 2005-2006	2013 T+5 2006-2007	2014 T+5 2007-2008	2015a T+5 2008-2009	2015b T+5 2009-2010
Business and Economics	3,2	2,2	5,4	1,9	0,0	0,0	0,9	1,5
Health and Life Sciences	2,4	1,7	2,7	2,1	3,1	3,5	4,3	5,3
Medicine	0,0	0,0	1,5	0,0	0,0	1,3	0,0	4,9
Arts and Social Sciences	x	x	3,8	10,1	5,7	4,8	4,4	6,7
Psychology and Neuroscience	1,9	7,0	10,3	4,2	0,0	4,3	7,5	2,5
Law	1,2	4,3	5,0	0,0	6,8	3,8	2,6	1,8
Maastricht University	2,3	2,5	4,4	2,7	3,2	2,6	2,6	3,4
	2009 T+10 1997-1998	2010 T+10 1998-1999	2011 T+10 1999-2000	2012 T+10 2000-2001	2013 T+10 2001-2002	2014 T+10 2002-2003	2015a T+10 2003-2004	2015b T+10 2004-2005
Business and Economics	0,0	3,0	2,8	0,9	0,9	0,7	1,0	0,0
Health and Life Sciences	0,6	0,6	2,0	1,2	3,1	3,7	0,6	2,6
Medicine	0,0	0,0	2,6	1,8	0,0	2,0	3,6	1,5
Arts and Social Sciences	x	x	x	x	x	x	4,3	11,5 ³
Psychology and Neuroscience	0,0	0,0	0,0	3,8	0,0	4,9	2,0	3,1
Law	0,0	1,5	0,0	6,1	1,6	0,0	1,4	0,0
Maastricht University	0,3	1,7	2,0	2,0	2,0	2,1	1,5	3,0

¹ = too little information on the Faculty of Humanities and Sciences

² = It should be noted that a slightly different definition of employment status was used in the T+5 and T+10 surveys in 2015 than in the preceding years. Whereas prior to 2015 a respondent had to report a working week of at least 12 hours to be considered as employed, from 2015 onwards the International Labour Organisation (ILO) definition applies, whereby all those who reported at least one hour of work are considered to be employed. In practice this makes little difference, since the vast majority of those employed are working fulltime, but it is possible that a small part of the change in unemployment in 2015 in those cohorts can be attributed to the definition change.

³ = this trend should be interpreted with care. The number of respondents is relatively low which can lead to relatively large fluctuations. More data points are needed before a trend can be safely interpreted.

x = too few cases

- = the T+1 survey was not administered in 2010 and still has to be administered in 2016

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