

Maastricht University graduate surveys 2014

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ROA Fact Sheet

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Researchcentrum voor Onderwijs en Arbeidsmarkt | ROA
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Maastricht University graduate surveys 2014

To which 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 are presented of a 2013/2014 survey amongst three cohorts of Maastricht University alumni. The first cohort graduated in the academic year 2011-2012 (1,5 year prior to the survey), the second cohort graduated in 2007-2008 (6 years prior to the survey) and the third cohort in the academic year 2002-2003 (11 years prior to the survey).^{1,2}

Position in the labour market

Six to eleven years after graduation, around 95% of the Maastricht university alumni have paid employment. Of those not currently working, a small percentage is searching for work, which means that overall approximately 2% of graduates in both cohorts reported to be out of the labour force. Important reasons for inactivity include participating in further education or to be taking care of children or relatives. Table 1 gives a more detailed overview of graduates' employment rates – that is, the proportion who is not currently working but who is searching for work – by cohort and faculty. Overall, 14% of the 2011-2012 cohort is currently without a job, while only 3% of the 2007-2008 cohort and 2% of the 2002-2003 cohort are unemployed.³ The considerably higher unemployment rate of the 2011-2012 cohort seems to be a clear reflection of the current economic crisis.

In the 2011-2012 cohort, unemployment rates are above average for Arts and Social Sciences and Psychology and Neuroscience graduates, below average for Business and Economics and Health, Medicine and Life Sciences graduates, and average for Law graduates. In the two elder cohorts, differences in unemployment rates are less pronounced. All things considered, we can conclude that labour market participation is very high for the 2007-2008 and 2002-2003 cohorts of Maastricht university graduates, but is considerably lower for the 2011-2012 cohort.

1. For the 2011-2012 cohort, 3030 respondents were approached, of whom 25% responded. For the 2007-2008 cohort, of the 1370 alumni approached, 38% responded. Finally, for the 2002-2003 cohort, of the 1346 alumni that were approached, 39% responded.
2. The reader should keep in mind that the mix of studies offered by Maastricht University the respondents graduated from, might vary between the three cohorts.
3. 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 between 1% and 2% for the two older cohorts, whereas for Health and Life Sciences alumni the unemployment rate is 4%.

Table 1
Unemployment¹

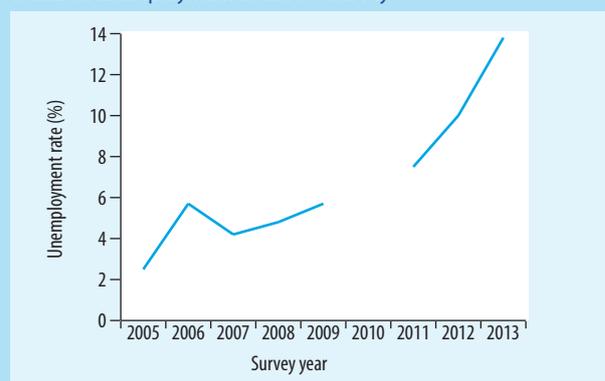
	% unemployed		
	2011-2012	2007-2008	2002-2003
Business and Economics	6	0	1
Health, Medicine and Life Sciences	11	3	3
Arts and Social Sciences	33	5	x
Psychology and Neuroscience	26	4	5
Law	14	4	0
Maastricht University	14	3	2

¹ = too little information about the Faculty of Humanities and Sciences
x = too few cases

Trends in unemployment

To which extent has the economic crisis affected labour market opportunities of Maastricht University graduates since 2008? In quest of an answer to this question, we have analysed the average unemployment rate of Maastricht university graduates, as reported by the surveys that were held between 2005 and 2013. For all nine 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 visible trend in unemployment rates can be detected. Especially when comparing within cohorts over time, unemployment rates fluctuate trendless. Thus, the current economic crisis does not seem to have an influence on the unemployment rate of Maastricht University alumni 6 to 11 years into their labour market. Nevertheless, a notable increase in unemployment rates can be observed when analysing the data of alumni who graduated one year prior to the survey (see Figure 1). In Appendix A, yearly employment rates are reported per faculty.

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. The quality of the education-job

match is therefore also 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 for which a university degree is required). 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 match¹

	% working at university level or higher		
	2011-2012	2007-2008	2002-2003
Business and Economics	79	94	87
Health, Medicine and Life Sciences	84	93	85
Arts and Social Sciences	82	88	x
Psychology and Neuroscience	72	91	87
Law	78	88	81
Maastricht University	80	91	84

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x = too few cases

The results of the vertical match are substantially different for the three cohorts. For all faculties, considerably more alumni are working at university level in the 2007-2008 cohort as compared to the 2011-2012 and 2002-2003 cohorts. In all three cohorts, graduates from the Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences show above average figures.⁴ In the 2011-2012 cohort, also graduates from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences show above average figures and in the 2007-2008 cohort, also graduates from the School of Business and Economics. In the 2002-2003 cohort, next to Health, Medicine and Life Sciences-degree holders, also graduates with a degree in Business and Economics and Psychology and Neuroscience are above average employed in university-level jobs. Notably, while the Faculty of Psychology and Neuroscience has above average figures for the 2002-2003 cohort and average figures for the 2007-2008 cohort, in the 2011-2012 cohort, the figures are far below the average. In addition, it should be noted that these outcomes are highly correlated with degree specificity as well as labour market condition in the particular field. In all disciplines and for all three cohorts, the percentage of graduates with an above average vertical match increased remarkably between the first and the current job.

Another important indicator of the quality of the fit between education and the job, is the horizontal match (i.e., whether graduates are working in a job for which their own or a related field of study is required). Table 2b presents the proportion of Maastricht University graduates who show

a good horizontal education-job-match. The results clearly show different results for the three cohorts, with the results being most positive for the 2007-2008 cohort. 6 years after graduation, 82% of the Maastricht University graduates are working in a job that matches the field of study, while 1,5 and 11 years after graduation, respectively only 75% and 74% of the Maastricht university graduates are working in the own or a related field of study. For the latter two cohorts, the underlying reasons for a horizontal mismatch might differ. 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 not directly related to the initial field of study.

Table 2b
Horizontal match¹

	% working in own or related field of study		
	2011-2012	2007-2008	2002-2003
Business and Economics	73	81	71
Health, Medicine and Life Sciences	82	89	78
Arts and Social Sciences	68	64	x
Psychology and Neuroscience	61	84	80
Law	76	86	75
Maastricht University	75	82	74

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Next to differences between the three cohorts, also differences between the various faculties can be observed. Graduates from the Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences and the Faculty of Law have above average figures for all three cohorts. 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 (2011-2012: 93%, 2007-2008: 100%, 2002-2003: 100%) than the graduates of Health and Life Science studies (2011-2012: 74%, 2007-2008: 78%, 2002-2003: 70%). Graduates from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and the School of Business and Economics have below average figures for all three cohorts. Remarkably, while the Faculty of Psychology and Neuroscience has above average figures for the 2007-2008 and 2002-2003 cohorts, in the 2011-2012 cohort, the figures are far below the average.

Income and working hours

Table 3 shows that, as can be expected, as working experience increases, the median gross income of Maastricht University

4. For the Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences a strong difference is again visible between Medicine (in all three cohorts 100% of the graduates are perfectly vertically matched) and Health and Life Sciences. Graduates of the latter studies perfectly vertically matched in 69% (2011-2012), 87% (2007-2008), and 80% (2002-2003) of the cases.

alumni also increases⁵. More specifically, 1,5 year after graduation, Maastricht University alumni have a median income of €2.500 per month, 6 years after graduation they have a median income of €3.585 per month (43% more than the starting salary), and 11 years after graduation they have a median income of €4.300 per month (72% more than the starting salary). These numbers closely match the results of previous surveys, although the median incomes have slightly dropped. 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.⁶ 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. This is particularly the case for the 2011-2012 and 2002-2003 cohort.

Table 3
Income and working hours¹

	gross income per month (median)			regular working hours per week		
	2011 - 2012	2007 - 2008	2002 - 2003	2011 - 2012	2007 - 2008	2002 - 2003
Business and Economics	3.048	5.250	5.667	40	40	40
Health, Medicine and Life Sciences	2.625	3.500	4.000	37	38	33
Arts and Social Sciences	1.608	3.000	x	33	40	x
Psychology and Neuroscience	2.019	3.050	3.500	32	38	32
Law	2.820	3.600	4.200	38	40	36
Maastricht University	2.500	3.585	4.300	37	40	36

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x = too few cases

Job satisfaction

The job satisfaction of Maastricht University graduates is generally high. Of the 2011-2012 cohort, 73% of all employed alumni are satisfied with their jobs. For the 2007-2008 cohort the figure is 79% and for the 2002-2003 cohort 81%. The majority of the Maastricht University alumni (66% of the 2011-2012 and 2007-2008 cohorts and 62% of the 2002-2003 cohort) also find that their current job offers good career opportunities (see Table 4).

5. In the estimation of the median gross income of the Maastricht University alumni, we did not control for any differences between graduates of the different faculties with respect to background characteristics such as country of residence, working hours, purchasing power parity, etc.

6. 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 €6.900. Due to the structure of their career paths, Medical alumni are also the group which displays the biggest income growth between six and eleven years after graduation.

Table 4
Job satisfaction, career opportunities¹

	% satisfied with job			% that thinks jobs offers good career opportunities		
	2011 - 2012	2007 - 2008	2002 - 2003	2011 - 2012	2007 - 2008	2002 - 2003
Business and Economics	74	81	82	68	79	75
Health, Medicine and Life Sciences	78	81	84	75	65	59
Arts and Social Sciences	72	76	x	48	50	x
Psychology and Neuroscience	57	79	87	46	64	51
Law	71	74	77	70	62	59
Maastricht University	73	79	81	66	66	62

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International orientation of Maastricht University and its graduates

The international orientation of Maastricht University and the fact that English is the main language of instruction in many study programs, appears to be attracting an increasing number of international students for all faculties. It is interesting to see whether this international orientation is extended 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 who are currently working inside and outside the Netherlands, split by faculty. For Maastricht University as a whole, 38% of the alumni of 2011-2012 cohort are working abroad, 30% of the alumni of the 2007-2008 are working abroad, and 20% of the alumni of the 2002-2003 are working outside the Netherlands. These numbers include foreign students who returned to their home country after graduation.

Considerable variation exists between the faculties. Graduates of the Arts and Social Sciences are particularly internationally active, closely followed by those of the School of Business and Economics and the Faculty of Psychology and Neuroscience. In the two youngest cohorts, more than 50% of the Arts and Social Sciences alumni were working in countries other than the Netherlands. This indicates that for alumni of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, international labour markets are now more important than the Dutch labour market.

Asked to what extent Maastricht University prepared its students for the international labour market, 50% of the 2007-2008 cohort and 44% of the 2002-2003 cohort responded that they felt prepared to a high or very high extent. There are large differences between faculties, which broadly reflect the differences in the proportions working abroad. Graduates of the School of Business and Economics and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences feel the most prepared for the international labour market.

Table 5
Percentage currently working abroad¹

	2011-2012		2007-2008		2002-2003	
	well prepared	working abroad	well prepared	working abroad	well prepared	working abroad
Business and Economics	-	57	85	50	74	40
Health, Medicine and Life Sciences	-	17	31	13	32	8
Arts and Social Sciences	-	67	57	57	x	x
Psychology and Neuroscience	-	31	44	29	36	15
Law	-	30	36	14	25	9
Maastricht University	-	38	50	30	44	20

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

- = not administered in the 2011-2012 questionnaire

x = too few cases

Satisfaction with study at Maastricht University

Finally, alumni were asked how they looked back on their study at Maastricht University and to assess what choices they would make in retrospect. Would they choose for the same study at the same university again? In the 2011-2012 cohort, 74% of the alumni would again choose the exact same study at Maastricht University. For the cohorts that graduated in 2007-2008 and 2002-2003, these figures were 73% and 75%, respectively. Table 6 presents the survey results for the three cohorts per faculty.⁷

5 out of 10 respondents indicated that they would like to be involved in at least one of these Maastricht University networks.

Table 6
Percentage of alumni who would again choose to study at Maastricht University¹

	2011-2012	2007-2008	2002-2003
Business and Economics	72	73	73
Health, Medicine and Life Sciences	79	73	76
Arts and Social Sciences	64	69	x
Psychology and Neuroscience	66	72	67
Law	85	77	73
Maastricht University	74	73	75

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In line with these findings, 78% of the respondents report that their study at Maastricht University is still (very) useful for their current job. These results are consistent across faculties and cohorts. Even six and 11 years after graduation, Maastricht University graduates still feel strongly connected to their alma mater. As part of the survey, alumni were also asked whether Maastricht University could contact them to ask them to give a lecture or a presentation, to act as a contact person in their company should internships become available there, or to act as a 'mentor' for current students.

7. 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 2007-2008 cohort, 63% of the graduates of Health and Life Sciences would again choose the same study at Maastricht University compared to 82% of the Medical graduates.

Appendix A

Table 7
Trends in unemployment^a

	2008 T+1 2006-2007	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
Business and Economics	4,2	5,7	-	4,9	6,0	6,3	-
Health and Life Sciences	4,2	0,0	-	4,4	8,3	16,4	-
Medicine	2,8	0,0	-	0,0	1,7	2,5	-
Arts and Social Sciences	13,8	18,5	-	23,9	25,5	33,3	-
Psychology and Neuroscience	0,0	6,1	-	11,4	16,7	25,6	-
Law	5,8	6,0	-	8,8	7,1	14,3	-
Maastricht University	4,8	5,7	-	7,5	10,0	13,8	-
	2008 T+5 2001-2002	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
Business and Economics	0,5	3,2	2,2	5,4	1,9	0,0	0,0
Health and Life Sciences	1,8	2,4	1,7	2,7	2,1	3,1	3,5
Medicine	1,3	0,0	0,0	1,5	0,0	0,0	1,3
Arts and Social Sciences	x	x	x	3,8	10,1	5,7	4,8
Psychology and Neuroscience	5,7	1,9	7,0	10,3	4,2	0,0	4,3
Law	0,0	1,2	4,3	5,0	0,0	6,8	3,8
Maastricht University	1,3	2,3	2,5	4,4	2,7	3,2	2,6
	2008 T+10 1996-1997	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
Business and Economics	0,9	0,0	3,0	2,8	0,9	0,9	0,7
Health and Life Sciences	2,2	0,6	0,6	2,0	1,2	3,1	3,7
Medicine	2,3	0,0	0,0	2,6	1,8	0,0	2,0
Arts and Social Sciences	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Psychology and Neuroscience	x	0,0	0,0	0,0	3,8	0,0	4,9
Law	1,2	0,0	1,5	0,0	6,1	1,6	0,0
Maastricht University	2,0	0,3	1,7	2,0	2,0	2,0	2,1

^a = too little information about the Faculty of Humanities and Sciences

x = too few cases

- = the T+1 survey was not administered in 2010 and still has to be administered in 2014

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