



Education and Training

# 2009 ACT college graduates: Where are they now?

This publication presents results of the fourth annual post-year 12 destination survey, and provides a summary of a survey of graduates awarded an ACT Year 12 Certificate in 2009.

## Key findings

---

Ninety percent of all 2009 year 12 graduates were employed or studying in 2010

---

Seventy-five percent of all 2009 year 12 graduates were employed and 11 percent were unemployed in 2010

---

Fifty-three percent of all 2009 year 12 graduates were studying in 2010

---

Of those who were not currently studying 77 percent intended to start some study in the next two years

---

Overall 97 percent of 2009 year 12 graduates found year 11 and 12 worthwhile

---

2009 year 12 graduates who speak a language other than English (LBOTE) at home were more likely to be studying and less likely to be employed in 2010 than graduates who are not LBOTE

---

Just over half of the 2009 year 12 graduates who were studying in 2010 were undertaking their study because "it's a course that interests me"

---

The most common reason 2009 year 12 graduates gave for not studying in 2010 was that they were "taking a gap year"

## Context

The ACT Department of Education and Training is committed to providing learning pathways for students which result in an educated and skilled workforce that meets the present and future needs of the ACT and region. Priorities focus on ensuring young people's needs are met, providing flexible and responsive training options, engaging with industry and employers and improving retention rates. Together these strategies will empower students to shape their own learning pathways whilst meeting industry needs.

Australia is currently in a period of significant national education reform, with major changes in tertiary education with higher education and training and skills development on the agenda. The ACT is being proactive in looking to the future of tertiary education in the ACT building on the strengths of current collaborations and relationships within the sector and promoting opportunities for change.

Amendments to the *Education Act 2004* have changed the ACT education participation requirements. Taking effect on 1 January 2010, all young people must participate in schooling until they complete year 10, and then either continue full-time in education, training and/or employment until age 17 or complete year 12 or equivalent, whichever occurs first.

In 2010, the ACT Tertiary Taskforce was established with industry representatives, educational professionals and government to consult on the future of tertiary education in the ACT. A paper '*Creating a Connected ACT Tertiary Education Environment*' was released earlier this year to provide a focus for discussion on tertiary education. The Taskforce will develop a vision to position the ACT as Australia's lifelong learning capital. This will be presented in a report to the ACT Government.

It is now more important than ever to consider the destination of students after year 12 to help inform the development and provision of appropriate options into the future.

# Key Outcomes

Table 1 provides an overview of three key outcome indicators covering employment, study and those who were either employed or studying in the year following graduation. Data are presented for the four surveys conducted in respect of the 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009 year 12 graduates.

Of those who completed year 12 in the ACT in 2009, 90.1 percent reported that they were employed or studying in 2010. This was not significantly different from the 91.1 percent reported for the 2008 graduate survey but was significantly different from the 93.4 percent reported for the 2006 survey. Around three in four (74.9%) of the 2009 year 12 graduates were employed in paid work and just over half (53.2%) of all students were studying in 2010.

The following interesting features were identified:

- male and female students who graduated in 2007, 2008 and 2009 showed no significant difference in terms of employment and study outcomes. However, 2006 female graduates were more likely to be employed (83.2%) compared with males (79.1%)
- graduates with LBOTE were more likely to be studying while graduates who were not LBOTE were more likely to be employed in all four surveys
- graduates who completed a vocational education and training (VET) course at school were more likely to be employed in all four surveys
- graduates with an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) or Universities Admission Index (UAI) in the range 96-100 were more likely to be studying and less likely to be employed than other students in all four surveys.

**Table 1: Percentage of year 12 graduates employed or studying by selected demographics**

Year of graduation	Percentage employed				Percentage currently studying				Percentage employed or studying			
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2006	2007	2008	2009	2006	2007	2008	2009
<b>Sex</b>												
Females	83.2	81.4	78.6	76.3	55.7	49.7	52.9	52.4	93.5	92.5	91.4	89.7
Males	79.1	81.6	77.3	73.6	57.5	50.6	52.0	54.1	93.2	91.7	90.9	90.5
<b>LBOTE</b>												
No	83.1	84.4	80.6	78.2	53.3	47.9	48.6	50.1	93.3	92.6	90.8	90.0
Yes	71.6	64.0	60.9	54.8	78.2	64.0	78.3	72.5	95.7	88.9	93.3	90.2
<b>VET course</b>												
No	78.2	79.6	76.5	72.6	56.1	53.5	52.1	53.6	92.0	91.6	90.5	88.9
Yes	87.2	84.0	80.6	79.3	57.5	45.6	53.1	52.6	96.1	92.8	92.2	92.3
<b>ATAR or UAI group</b>												
No ATAR	87.2	85.7	82.1	80.9	46.5	38.6	44.4	44.9	94.1	90.4	89.5	90.3
1 - 65	85.7	86.2	81.6	78.8	54.0	47.3	51.9	49.2	95.1	94.7	94.0	91.3
66 - 75	81.3	81.4	83.4	78.5	58.7	50.7	53.8	56.5	92.7	91.5	94.8	91.8
76 - 85	77.2	78.9	76.8	73.7	61.9	61.8	58.2	57.6	92.2	93.9	91.6	90.2
86 - 95	76.0	74.7	72.3	64.3	63.9	65.0	56.3	61.7	92.2	93.1	88.9	88.8
96 - 100	67.2	62.0	55.6	59.2	74.9	74.0	68.7	65.7	92.9	91.6	89.4	85.4
<b>Career counselling</b>												
No	84.3	84.4	78.2	75.6	58.8	52.9	56.8	56.1	94.6	94.2	93.3	92.9
Yes	79.9	80.0	78.8	75.9	56.1	49.6	50.1	52.6	93.6	91.2	90.5	89.6
Don't know	64.0	68.0	65.0	58.9	37.3	27.7	36.9	34.6	77.3	79.6	77.2	69.6
<b>All graduates</b>	<b>81.3</b>	<b>81.5</b>	<b>78.0</b>	<b>74.9</b>	<b>56.5</b>	<b>50.1</b>	<b>52.5</b>	<b>53.2</b>	<b>93.4</b>	<b>92.1</b>	<b>91.1</b>	<b>90.1</b>

1. The 2007 percentages in this table exclude one independent school that chose not to take part in the survey.

2. In 2009 ATAR replaced UAI.

# Study

Table 2 shows the percentage of 2009 year 12 graduates studying in 2010 by selected demographic factors. About half (53.2%) of all graduates indicated that they were undertaking some study in 2010, with 43.8 percent of 2009 year 12 graduates studying full-time. The most common subjects of study related to society and culture (16.3%), management and commerce (14.5%) and natural and physical sciences (12.2%).

Graduates achieving a higher ATAR had a greater tendency to undertake further study. Just over half of all graduates (56.5%) with an ATAR between 66 and 75 were undertaking study in 2010, compared with two in three graduates (65.7%) with an ATAR between 96 and 100.

**Table 2: Percentage of 2009 year 12 graduates studying in 2010 by selected demographics**

	Studying			Not studying
	Part-time	Full-time	All	
<b>Sex</b>				
Females	7.7	44.7	52.4	47.5
Males	11.1	42.8	54.1	45.8
<b>LBOTE</b>				
No	9.3	40.7	50.1	49.9
Yes	9.9	62.3	72.5	27.3
<b>VET course</b>				
No	7.0	46.5	53.6	46.4
Yes	13.9	38.5	52.6	47.2
<b>ATAR group</b>				
No ATAR	18.8	25.8	44.9	54.9
1 - 65	10.1	38.8	49.2	50.8
66 - 75	5.9	50.6	56.5	43.5
76 - 85	2.5	55.1	57.6	42.4
86 - 95	3.3	58.4	61.7	38.3
96 - 100	0.5	65.1	65.7	34.3
<b>All graduates</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>43.8</b>	<b>53.2</b>	<b>46.7</b>

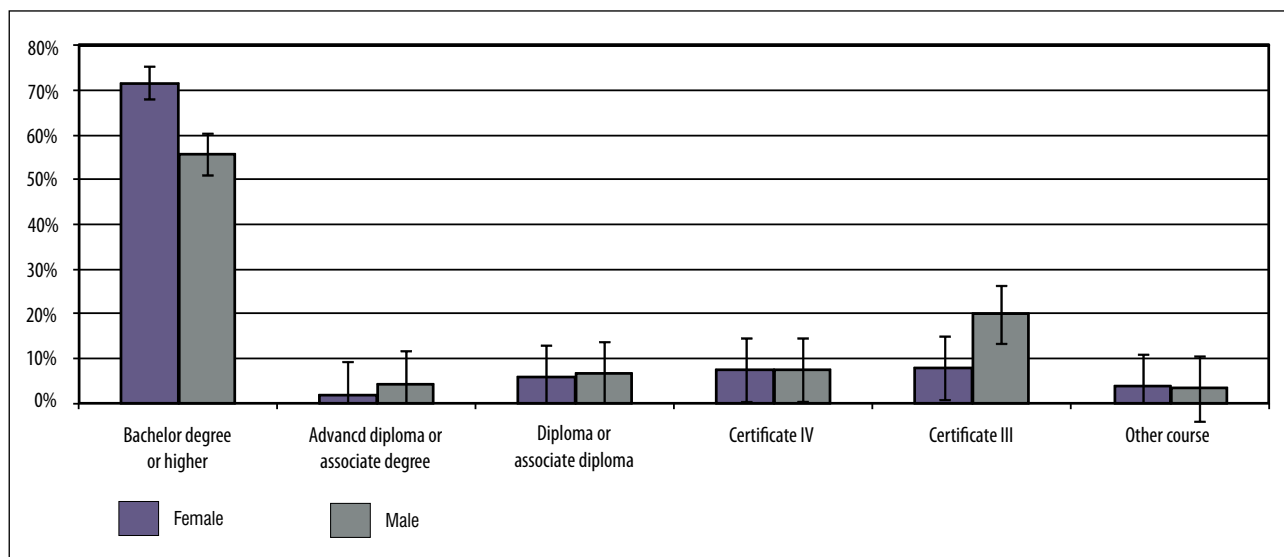
1. The percentages in this table do not all add to 100 percent due to rounding and a small percentage of 'don't know' responses.

Almost six in ten (59.0%) 2009 year 12 graduates applied for a university place and 97.1 percent of these graduates were successful in gaining a place. However, only 62.2 percent accepted the place and enrolled in 2010. Over one in three (35.6%) graduates who were offered a place deferred. Female graduates, graduates who did not complete a VET course, graduates who are not LBOTE and graduates who received career counselling were all more likely to defer their university studies.

The majority (63.7%) of 2009 year 12 graduates who were studying in 2010 reported that they were studying at a Bachelor Degree level or higher, 14.1 percent at Certificate III level, 7.5 percent at Certificate IV level, 6.3 percent at Diploma or Associate Diploma level, 3.3 percent at Advanced Diploma or Associate Degree level and 3.6 percent at other levels.

A greater proportion of females were studying at a Bachelor Degree level or higher – 71.7 percent of females compared with 55.8 percent of males. The proportion of males studying at Certificate III level was more than twice the proportion of females studying at that level – 20.1 percent of males compared with 7.9 percent of females (Figure 1). These general patterns were consistent with the results reported for 2006, 2007 and 2008 graduates.

**Figure 1: Percentage of 2009 year 12 graduates studying in 2010 by level and sex**



1. The error bars reflect the 95 percent confidence intervals and where they overlap indicates there is no statistical difference between the results

Table 3 shows the main reason why 2009 year 12 graduates were studying in 2010. Overall, just over one in two (53.6%) graduates reported that they were undertaking their study because “it’s a course that interests me”, with the next most popular reason being “to get/start/help in a job/business” (26.2%).

A much higher percentage of males (9.6%) compared with females (1.7%) said their main reason for studying was because it was “part of an apprenticeship/traineeship”.

Of the 2009 year 12 graduates who were studying in 2010 and did not gain an ATAR, around four in 10 (38.5%) reported that they were undertaking their study because “it’s a course that interests me”. Three in 10 (28.6%) said they were undertaking study “to get/start/help in a job/business” and 16.0 percent said it was “part of an apprenticeship/traineeship”.

**Table 3: Percentage of 2009 year 12 graduates by main reason for studying in 2010 and selected demographics**

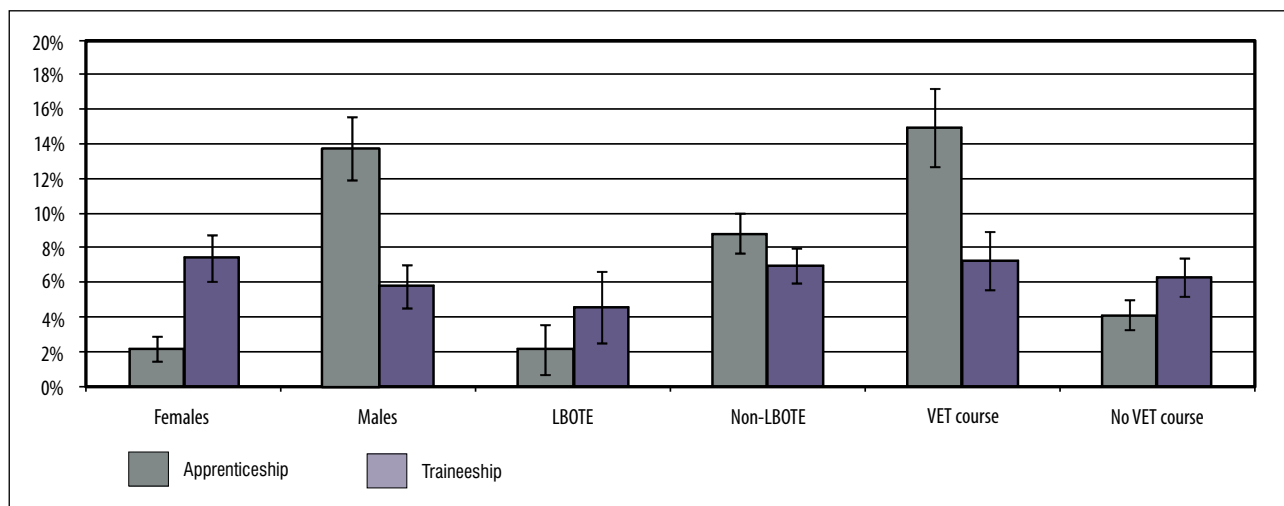
	It’s a course that interests me	To get/start/help in a job/business	Part of an apprenticeship/traineeship	To improve my education	Other
<b>Sex</b>					
Females	56.7	26.5	1.7	8.7	6.9
Males	51.4	25.9	9.6	5.6	7.1
<b>VET course</b>					
No	56.8	24.7	3.1	7.6	7.1
Yes	47.2	29.0	10.7	6.1	6.6
<b>ATAR group</b>					
No ATAR	38.5	28.6	16.0	7.6	8.8
1 - 65	48.4	34.3	4.5	7.5	4.8
66 - 75	63.3	24.2	1.8	4.2	5.7
76 - 85	63.3	21.5	2.1	6.3	6.8
86 - 95	58.2	24.1	0.5	9.3	7.3
96 - 100	64.8	21.6	0.0	6.4	7.1
<b>All graduates</b>	<b>53.6</b>	<b>26.2</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>7.0</b>

1. The percentages in this table do not all add to 100 percent due to rounding and a small percentage of ‘don’t know’ responses.

Overall, 7.9 percent of the 2009 year 12 graduates surveyed were undertaking an apprenticeship in 2010 and 6.6 percent were doing a traineeship. However, the percentage of graduates undertaking an apprenticeship varied significantly for selected demographics (Figure 2):

- male graduates were more than six times more likely than females to be undertaking an apprenticeship
- graduates who are not LBOTE were four times more likely to be undertaking an apprenticeship than graduates with LBOTE
- graduates who undertook a VET course at school were almost four times as likely to be undertaking an apprenticeship than graduates who did not undertake a VET course at school.

**Figure 2: Percentage of 2009 year 12 graduates undertaking an apprenticeship or traineeship in 2010 by selected demographics**



1. The error bars reflect the 95 percent confidence intervals and where they overlap indicates there is no statistical difference between the results.

Table 4 details the percentage of 2009 year 12 graduates in the labour force in 2010 by study status in 2010. Of the graduates who were studying part-time, 85.5 percent were employed with the majority (51.4%) employed full-time. Of the graduates who were studying full-time, 68.5 percent were employed with the majority (57.2%) employed part-time. Of the graduates who were not studying, about eight in 10 (78.9%) were employed and less than one in 10 (7.4%) were unemployed.

**Table 4: Percentage of 2009 year 12 graduates in the labour force in 2010 by study status in 2010**

	Studying			Not studying	All graduates
	Part-time	Full-time	All		
<b>Employed</b>	<b>85.5</b>	<b>68.5</b>	<b>71.5</b>	<b>78.9</b>	<b>74.9</b>
Full-time	51.4	10.8	17.9	45.9	31.0
Part-time	33.7	57.2	53.1	30.9	42.7
Don't know/Refused	0.4	0.5	0.5	2.1	1.2
<b>Unemployed</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>13.9</b>	<b>13.2</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>10.5</b>
Looking for full-time work	1.1	0.6	0.7	3.8	2.1
Looking for part-time work	7.5	12.7	11.8	1.9	7.2
Looking for full or part-time work	1.0	0.6	0.7	1.6	1.1
Don't know	0.4	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
<b>Total in labour force</b>	<b>95.5</b>	<b>82.4</b>	<b>84.7</b>	<b>86.3</b>	<b>85.4</b>
<b>Not in labour force</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>17.5</b>	<b>15.2</b>	<b>13.7</b>	<b>14.6</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

1. The percentages in this table do not all add to 100 percent due to rounding

Of the 2009 year 12 graduates who were not studying in 2010, 42.2 percent reported their main reason for not studying as “taking a gap year”, 21.2 percent indicated that they had “got a job”, 13.5 percent were “travelling”, 8.2 percent “didn’t feel ready for study at the moment” and 4.6 percent “never planned/intended to study” (Table 5).

More than one in three (38.4%) graduates who were not studying and did not get an ATAR reported their reason for not studying was because they “got a job”. Twenty-one percent indicated they were “taking a gap year”, 10.8 percent said they “didn’t feel ready for study at the moment” and 9.0 percent “never planned/intended to study”.

**Table 5: Percentage of 2009 year 12 graduates by main reason for not studying in 2010 and selected demographics**

	Taking a gap year	Got a job	Travelling	Not ready for study	Never planned/intended to study	Other
<b>Sex</b>						
Females	47.5	17.0	15.4	7.3	3.3	9.4
Males	36.7	25.6	11.5	9.1	6.0	10.3
<b>VET course</b>						
No	48.7	15.6	15.6	7.2	3.8	8.8
Yes	30.2	31.5	9.6	10.1	6.2	11.7
<b>ATAR group</b>						
No ATAR	21.3	38.4	6.1	10.8	9.0	13.4
1 - 65	40.0	17.2	14.9	12.1	4.3	11.4
66 - 75	52.3	14.1	17.8	6.5	1.0	7.8
76 - 85	62.2	9.9	16.5	3.5	1.0	7.0
86 - 95	64.1	2.6	23.2	3.9	1.6	4.5
96 - 100	67.7	4.5	19.8	4.2	0.0	3.9
<b>All graduates</b>	<b>42.2</b>	<b>21.2</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>9.8</b>

1. The percentages in this table do not all add to 100 percent due to rounding and a small percentage of 'don't know' responses

Of the 46.7 percent of the 2009 year 12 graduates not studying in 2010 (Table 2), 77.3 percent intended to start some study in the next two years. As ATAR increased, so did intention to start some study in the next two years. Of the students who obtained an ATAR of 76 or above and were not currently studying, 97.3 percent were intending to start some study in the next two years. Female graduates, graduates who did not do a VET course at school, graduates with LBOTE and graduates who undertook career counselling at school were also significantly more likely to report that they intended to undertake some study in the next two years.

# Labour Force Status

Table 6 details the 2010 labour force status of 2009 year 12 graduates. Three in four (74.9%) graduates reported having a paid job. About one in 10 (10.5%) graduates reported not currently having a paid job and actively looking for work with the majority (7.2%) looking for part-time work.

**Table 6: Number and percentage of 2009 year 12 graduates by labour force status in 2010**

	Number	Percentage
<b>Employed</b>	<b>3017</b>	<b>74.9</b>
Full-time	1247	31.0
Part-time	1719	42.7
Don't know/Refused	51	1.2
<b>Unemployed</b>	<b>422</b>	<b>10.5</b>
Looking for full-time work	87	2.1
Looking for part-time work	288	7.2
Looking for full or part-time work	44	1.1
Don't know	3	0.1
<b>Total in labour force</b>	<b>3439</b>	<b>85.4</b>
<b>Not in labour force</b>	<b>587</b>	<b>14.6</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>4026</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Unemployment rate</b>		<b>12.3</b>

1. The percentages in this table do not all add to 100 percent due to rounding and a small percentage of 'don't know' responses.

Of the 2009 year 12 graduates who had a paid job in 2010, the most common occupations were community and personal service workers (34.5%), sales workers (28.6%), clerical and administration workers (13.9%) and technical and trade workers (11.2%).

# Satisfaction

Figure 3 summarises the responses of 2009 year 12 graduates to seven satisfaction questions regarding their experience in years 11 and 12 in the ACT. Responses of strongly agree or agree were classified as “positive”, responses of strongly disagree or disagree as “negative” and responses of neither agree nor disagree as “neutral”.

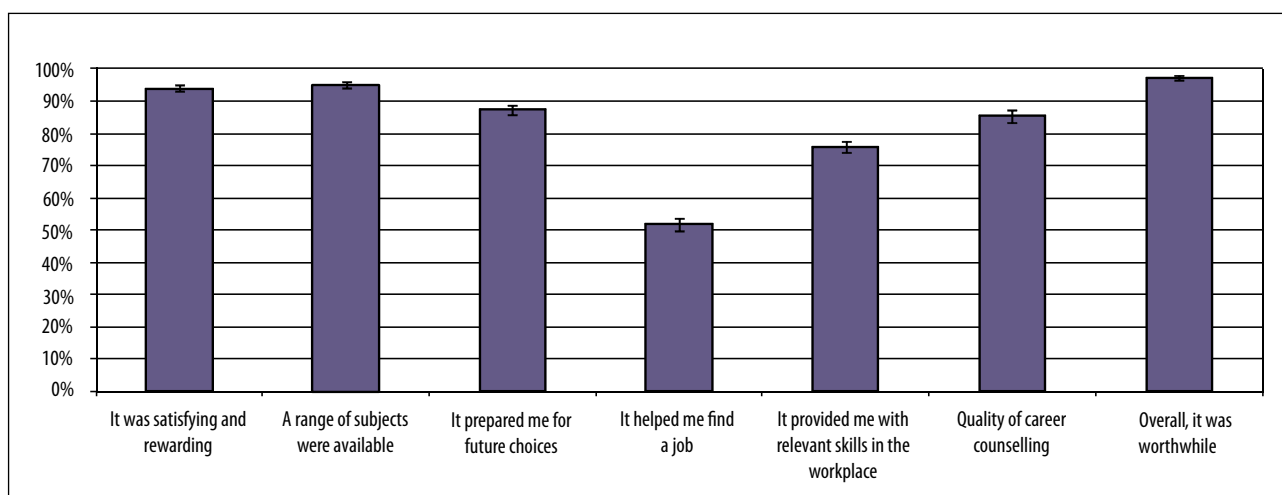
More than nine in 10 graduates gave a positive response to the following statements about their year 11 and 12 experience:

- it was satisfying and rewarding (94.1 percent)
- a range of subjects were available (95.0 percent)
- overall, it was worthwhile (97.2 percent).

More than four in five (87.4%) graduates gave a positive response to the statement that their year 11 and 12 experience “prepared them for future choices” and 85.4 percent were satisfied with the “quality of career counselling” they received during years 11 and 12.

However, about a third of graduates gave a negative response to the statement that their year 11 and 12 experience “helped them find a job” (34.7%). Fifteen percent of graduates gave a negative response to the statement that their year 11 and year 12 experience “provided them with relevant skills in the workplace”.

**Figure 3: Percentage of 2009 year 12 graduates satisfied with various aspects of their year 11 and 12 experience**



1: The error bars reflect the 95 percent confidence intervals and where they overlap indicates there is no statistical difference between the results.

These patterns of satisfaction were consistent with the previous survey results reported for 2006, 2007 and 2008 graduates.

## Scope and Methodology

This publication, *2009 ACT college graduates: Where are they now?* is based on the 2010 survey of graduates who successfully completed year 12 in the Australian Capital Territory in 2009. The survey findings will help to ensure that ACT senior school education remains relevant and is of the highest quality. Major stakeholders include the ACT Department of Education and Training, the Office of the Board of Senior Secondary Studies (OBSSS), universities, vocational education and training providers and schools.

The survey frame was drawn from the OBSSS administrative records and the population of interest was defined as those graduates who were awarded a Year 12 Certificate from an ACT college, school or the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) in 2009. The population excluded graduates who were full fee paying students in 2009 and graduates whose usual residence was overseas.

Prior to the survey being undertaken a primary approach letter was sent to all potential respondents. This provided information about the purpose and importance of the survey, the broad content of the survey, the amount of time the interview would take and confidentiality provisions. The survey was undertaken by telephone from 15 July to 12 August 2010 and where possible the information was obtained directly from the graduate. In some cases a parent or guardian supplied the information where the graduate could not be contacted directly. A total of 4026 graduates were identified as being in-scope for the survey. Of the 3560 graduates contacted via telephone, 2908 completed the survey, providing a response rate of 81.7 percent.

## Explanatory Notes

**Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)** is a percentile ranking used by universities to assist in the selection of school leavers for entry into undergraduate courses. It is used as an indication of a student's suitability for study at university level, and to allow universities to select appropriate numbers of students for each course. Prior to 2009 the rank used for university selection was called the Universities Admission Index (UAI). The ATAR is similar (but not identical) to the UAI (see [www.uac.edu.au](http://www.uac.edu.au) for more information).

**Career counselling** in schools may include one on one or group discussion between students and career advisors, industry experts and representatives from universities and CIT about various aspects of student pathways planning, such as course choices, work experience and developing a resume.

**Currently studying** refers to respondents who were actively undertaking some study in the year following graduation, including those attending university, technical and further education (TAFE), undertaking an apprenticeship or repeating year 12.

**Labour force status** provides provides data on whether a graduate was employed (full or part-time), unemployed (looking for full or part-time work) or not in the labour force at the time of the survey. Labour force status was derived from responses to a number of questions on the survey form.

**LBOTE** is used in this publication to describe graduates who speak a language other than English at home. Please note, this is slightly different from Language Background other than English (also known as LBOTE) which is used when a language other than English is spoken at home by the individual and/or one or both of their parents.

**Vocational education and training (VET) courses** in schools are accredited vocational courses which are designed around training packages endorsed by specific industry areas and successful completion may lead to the award of a vocational certificate or statement of attainment.

© ACT Government, 2010 ISBN 0642 60476 2

This publication has been produced by the ACT Department of Education and Training. Apart from any use permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968*, no part of this publication may be reproduced by any process without written permission. Requests should be made to the Department. Comments and suggestions regarding this publication are welcomed and should be forwarded to the Department.

**Published by ACT Department of Education and Training**

220 Northbourne Avenue, Canberra City ACT 2602 | GPO Box 158, CANBERRA ACT 2601

**Phone:** (02) 6205 9358 **Web:** <http://www.det.act.gov.au>