



Australian  
Institute of  
Architects

– 2013

*Graduate Survey*  
*The results*

*Membership Team*

## Foreword

You are part of one of our most important demographics: graduates and emerging architects.

The annual Graduate Survey allows us to gauge your experiences as a graduate and emerging architect both in terms of your career and as a member of the Institute.

The results also help us improve our offerings to you - we want to ensure we are doing things right.

2013 was the second time we have conducted this survey.

As a result of the 2012 survey, the Institute increased the affordability of and implemented a number of changes to the Graduate Membership category, with the aim of providing relevant resources to members that would assist the transition from university to practice. The following are now permanent additions to the Graduate Membership category:

### **Acumen**

Free access to the Institute's practice advisory notes online

### **Environment Design Guide**

Free access to peer reviewed articles on sustainable design

### **HR+**

Free access to a specially catered HR and IR information service

### **National Seminar Series**

Free live streaming of all National Seminar Series events

If you're yet to receive access to these benefits as a Graduate Member, or are unaware of how to access them, please contact the Membership Team: [membership@architecture.com.au](mailto:membership@architecture.com.au).

Thanks for participating and we look forward to your responses in 2014.

The Membership Team.

## Then & now at a glance

### *Demographics*

Although there were fewer participants in the 2013 Graduate Survey, there was parity (almost!) between genders. The majority of respondents indicated they lived in, and completed their studies, in Victoria. This differed from 2012 where most completed their studies in NSW. The mode age for both surveys was 27.

### *Employment*

The unemployment rate within the 2013 survey sample was slightly higher; 8.2% were unemployed compared to 5.5% in 2012. Most respondents felt valued at work, and the actual hours worked by individuals were longer than contracted; these results were very similar to the 2012 survey. Graduates mainly performed design and CAD-related tasks, commonly expressed that relevant experience was a major barrier to becoming employed, and claimed the most challenging aspect of their professional lives was finding a work/life balance.

### *Salary*

The difference between the average salaries of males and females was only hundreds of dollars, comparing favourably with the 2012 survey result of thousands of dollars, indicating a potential shift within the profession. The average salary across the sample was \$57,460 representing a 2% drop from 2012. As was the case in 2012, salaries can be seen to increase correspondingly with increased experience.

### *Registration*

The majority of respondents were not registered, but 90% indicated that they planned to undertake the exam. A lack of general experience and time were the most common factors preventing registration; the same was said in the 2012 survey.

### *Membership*

The majority of respondents were members; mostly A+. Those who were not, indicated the cost to be prohibitive. The new inclusions for Graduate Members have been perceived as valuable.

## 1. Introduction

The Australian Institute of Architects conducted this survey to gain a better understanding of the lives of graduates of architecture, to better assist graduates with their first steps into the profession. This was the second year that the Graduate Survey been offered, building on the valuable data received from the 2012 Survey.

### *The particulars*

Our **aim** was to gather data about individuals who have graduated from an architectural degree in the last ten years, to learn of their experiences within the architectural and related professions and to assist the Institute in developing graduate focused programs and initiatives.

A 'graduate of architecture' is **defined** as an individual who graduated from a two tier or Masters of Architecture degree within the last ten years; they may or may not be registered architects.

The 2013 Graduate Survey was completed by 611 individuals; this was a marked decline from the 2012 survey's 1279 and we acknowledge this as a **limitation**. The sample is composed of current and previous members who graduated in the last ten years; they were contacted via email and invited to participate. Despite the sample size, we believe it is large enough to make some interesting inferences and provide members with further information, but is by no means representative of the entire population.

We encourage more people to participate in the 2014 survey. Further information will be made available on our website shortly.

## 2. Demographics

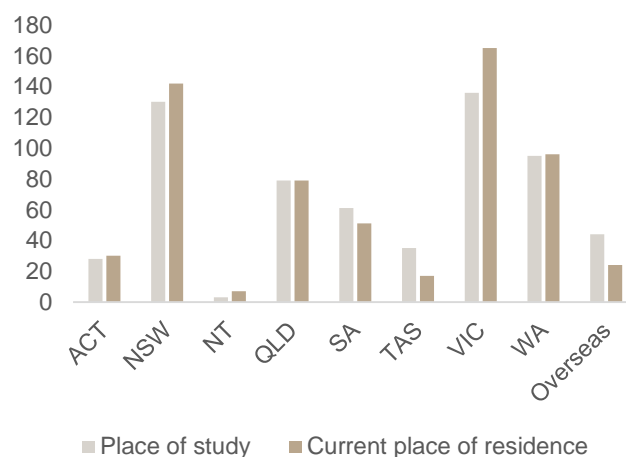
### *About our respondents*

A total of 611 individuals completed the 2013 Survey and rather interestingly, the gender split was almost even; females represented 49.9% of respondents and males 50.1%. This was in contrast to the 2012 Survey which exhibited almost a 40/60 gender split in favour of males. The most common year of birth was 1985, or 28 in 2013, and the most common graduation year of respondents was 2012.

### *Location of study and residence*

The graph below indicates where respondents completed their studies and where they now live. As with the 2012 Survey, Victoria remained the most popular state to live in; and in 2013 it was also the state of choice to have completed one's studies.

Figure 1: Place of study vs. place of residence



## 3. Employment

### *Employment figures and characteristics*

The table below highlights the employment and unemployment of both genders. On the whole the majority of respondents were actively employed;

only 8.2% of those who completed the 2013 survey were unemployed. This was slightly higher than the country's unemployment rate of 5.8% as at November 2013 (ABS, 2013), and also slightly higher when compared with the 2012 survey sample (5.5%). More than double the amount of females were unemployed than males, yet this was most prominent within the first three years of graduation (see Figure 2 below). Only 3.6% of registered architects were unemployed, compared to 10.2% of graduates of architecture.

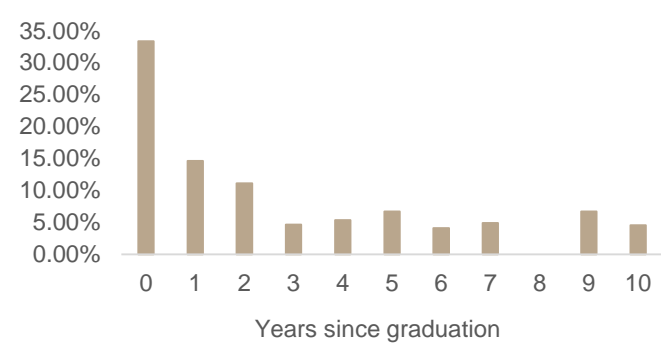
Figure 2: Unemployment rates

Gender	2012 Survey	2013 Survey	ABS Nov 2013
Female	6.2%	11.5%	-
Male	4.9%	4.9%	-
Total	5.5%	8.2%	5.8%

Unemployment since graduation

The graph below shows the percentage of unemployment by graduation year. The unemployment rate was quite high (33%) for those just entering the profession, but as respondents gained experience the unemployment rate seemed decreased. There were no responses eight years out.

Figure 3: Unemployment by years since graduation



Barriers to employment

There seemed to be a number of barriers preventing graduates from finding employment, which included a greater number of graduates than there were positions available, and lack of relevant professional experience. listed are the five most common barriers to employment as indicated by

respondents in order from most frequently mentioned to least:

Barrier to employment
Experience
Lack of job opportunities
Reasonable pay
Being female
The economy

The most frequently mentioned barrier to employment from the 2012 survey was a lack of job opportunities.

What graduates do at work

Graduates' tasks at work were quite varied. On the whole, our respondents performed design and drafting tasks at work; documentation and contract administration also featured quite prominently. Individuals also indicated that as young design professionals familiar with social media, they were involved with marketing and PR duties for the practice in order from most frequently mentioned to least:

Task
Design
Drafting/3D modelling etc.
Documentation
Contract administration
Admin/emails/phones

Where do graduates work?

The majority of respondents (80%) reported that they were employed by an architectural practice; the 2nd largest subset indicated that they were self-employed in an architectural capacity (7.9%) and the 3rd largest subset indicated they were employed by a firm offering architecture related services (5.4%). For a full breakdown, please refer to Figure 4 on page 4.

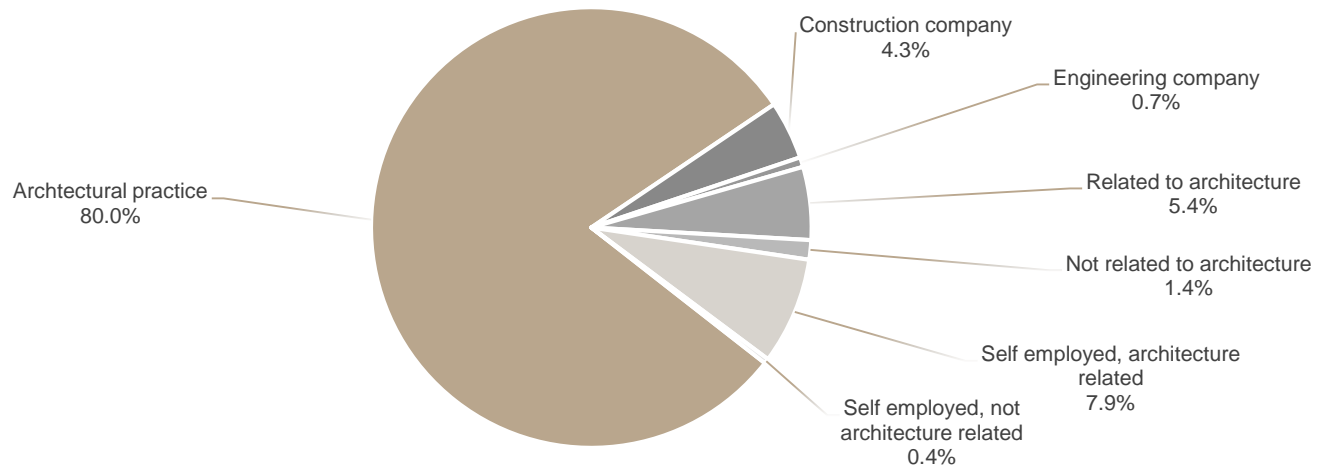
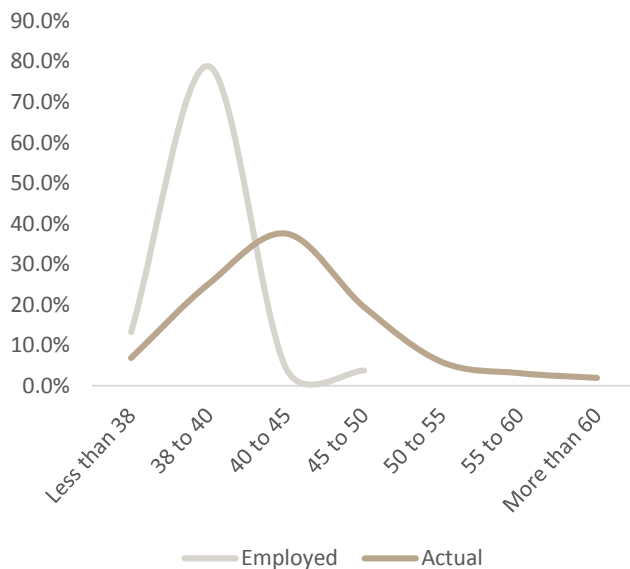


Figure 4: Employment distribution

### How many hours do graduates work?

The results of the 2013 Survey were almost identical to 2012; respondents generally worked more than they were contractually obliged. Despite more than 75% of respondents being contracted to work between 38 and 40 hours, the majority of respondents (68%) worked more than 40 hours. In contrast to 2012, where there was a small but notable discrepancy, gender did not impact the actual amount of hours worked.

Figure 5: Employed hours vs. actual hours worked



### Challenges at work

Below are the five most common challenges pertaining to the life and careers of respondents in order from most frequently mentioned to least:

#### Challenges in professional life

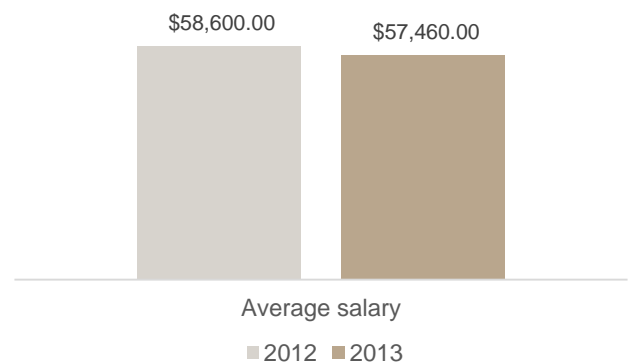
- Achieving work/life balance
- Receiving pay commensurate to duties
- Managing time effectively
- Job security/career development
- Overcoming poor working conditions

## 4. Salary

### Average salary

The total average salary has decreased by 2.0% when compared to the 2012 Graduate Survey sample; this, however, could be due to the fewer responses received.

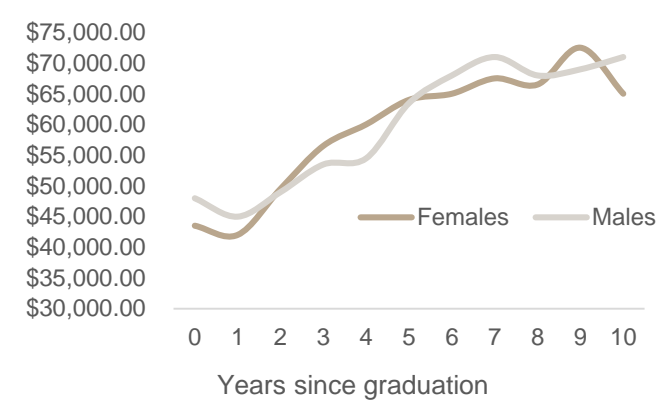
Figure 6: Average salary



Salary trajectory

The graph below highlights the average salary by year of graduation; essentially depicting that as one progresses through their career, their salary is expected to rise. There was a discrepancy between the average salary for females and males in their first year out – a difference of almost \$2200. However, over the course of 10 years, the average salary evened out for the genders.

Figure 7: Salary by years since graduation



Average salary by gender

In the 2012 survey, the average male salary was \$5000 higher than that of their female counterparts. Responses from the 2013 survey however, showed that the average salary was separated by approximately \$500. It is not discernible whether the relative balance of these salaries was a characteristic of the sample or the current professional climate, however the 'balance' may indicate similar graduate wages for both genders.

Figure 8: Salary by years since graduation

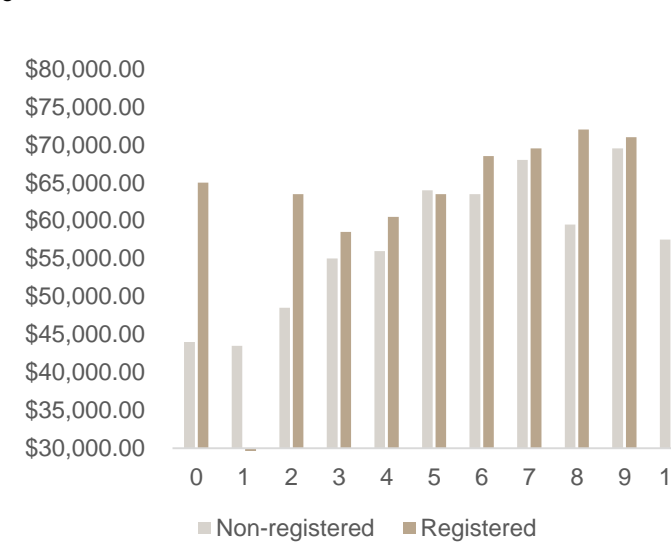


5. Registration

The value of registration

Most respondents were not registered architects (70%); although more than 90% of graduates were considering becoming registered. A trend from both the 2012 and 2013 surveys showed us that on average, registered architects earned more than graduates as they progressed through their careers. In the 2013 survey, graduates who completed their studies five years ago earned slightly more on average than their registered colleagues. There were no respondents who were both registered and completed their studies 2 years ago.

Figure 9: Architects' and graduates' salaries by years since graduation



Factors preventing registration

There were reasons outlined by respondents that prevented them from becoming registered, or even contemplating registration. Below are the five most common factors preventing registration in order from most frequently mentioned to least:

- Factors preventing registration
- Lack of general experience
  - Lack of time
  - Lack of contract admin experience
  - Haven't met the hours requirement
  - The costs associated

## *PALS*

The Practice of Architecture Learning Series (PALS) is a program that has been developed to assist individuals with becoming registered. It involves a series of online modules and face-to-face tutorials addressing all aspects of practice, helping to prepare you for the examinations. Graduate Members receive a 36% discount on this program should they choose to partake; A+ graduates receive a 57% discount.

Almost 60% of respondents indicated that they were intending to complete PALS in preparation for registration.

## *6. Membership*

### *How many are members?*

Within the 2013 survey sample, 63.9% indicated that they were members of the Institute; of that subset, the majority specified that they were A+ Members of the Institute.

### *Why aren't some individuals joining?*

The survey asked those who were not members why they had not joined the Institute. Below are the most common responses:

Reasons for not joining	Percentage
Cost	70.4%
Value/benefits	10.7%

The majority of individuals indicated cost as the main reason for not becoming members. However, it is worth noting that Graduate Membership has become much more affordable, and with the addition of the aforementioned benefits, much better value for money.

## *Graduate Member benefits*

It was mentioned previously that the Institute has, since the 2012 Graduate Survey, included a number of services at no extra costs to Graduate Members. These benefits include:

- Access to Acumen
- Access to the Environment Design Guide
- Access to HR+, the Institute's HR and IR information service, and
- Free live streaming of the National Seminar Series

The majority of respondents (42%) were not aware of these inclusions to Graduate Membership, but almost 75% acknowledged that these additions increased the value proposition. Respondents were also asked which of the services they felt were the most useful in assisting with career development. The most common response was that Acumen was a useful service as part of Graduate Membership.

Service	Percentage
Acumen	43.4%
Environment Design Guide	11.5%
HR+	1.6%
National Seminar Series	6.6%
None	36.9%