

Summary of employment market survey 2004 – 2009

Leiden graduates of Language and Culture Studies, History, History of Art, Religious Studies and Creative and Performing Arts

An employment market survey was carried out in the Spring of 2009 among the alumni of the Faculty of Humanities who had graduated after 2004. The survey was conducted by the Faculty's Career Service in collaboration with ICLON and the department for Education and Research Policy. This survey follows on from the study that was carried out in 2004 among graduates of the Arts Faculty who had completed their studies in the period from 1999 to 2004 (and in the previous period of 1995 to 1999). The findings supplement the information from the annual Higher Education monitor.

This survey is also the first employment market survey to be conducted among *doctoraal*, bachelor's and master's graduates and can therefore be regarded as a pilot. The findings will be used for a variety of purposes, including for current students, for the recruitment of master's students and for policy development.

The alumni who participated in this survey have almost all found employment. A small percentage (4.5%) currently term themselves as 'seeking employment'. Others have already completed their working life or are still engaged in study (14%), mainly for their master's diploma.

Of the alumni in employment, 44% work in the profit sector, 35% for government institutions and 21% in the government-related non-profit sector. The respondents work in very diverse fields, relatively frequently in teaching and research (28%), in such obvious fields as the publishing and book sector, but also in less expected areas as ICT and industry.

The majority of alumni work in salaried employment, mainly in companies with more than 100 employees. In the course of their work, almost 40% have extensive international contacts. The majority - 70% - have a full-time position, after which part-time positions of more than 20 hours per week (20%) are popular. 76% have a permanent contract, or the prospect of one: 17% work in a temporary position and 6% are self-employed. The alumni who graduated in this period managed to find employment within a short period of time, more than 80% were unemployed for less than two months. Income and opportunities for further personal development were the reasons for accepting a position below the respondents' academic level. Most alumni aspire to a position at academic level and/or in the field of their study. The majority of these graduates change position or employer within a relatively short time. Their subsequent positions are a better match for the graduate's academic level, as is the salary.

Respondents often find a position with employers who, apart from seeking a graduate from the respondent's particular field, are happy to take a graduate of a similar field, or even of an unspecified field for the position in question; such employers are primarily seeking a candidate with an academic level of education.

The income of 37% of the respondents is above 2,900 euro gross per month, based on a full-time appointment. More than 20% earn between 2,000 and 2,300 euro per month. Some 7% of respondents fall into the lowest income category: less than 1,350 euro per month. The level of the position and the year when the respondent graduated determine the level of income. On average, the salary of alumni increases strongly in the initial years following graduation, mainly as a result of changes in the position and greater responsibility.

A large number (76%) are satisfied with their career development so far. However, not all respondents reflect this: 3% are even very dissatisfied; the remainder are somewhere in between. The level of satisfaction, or dissatisfaction, is unrelated to the study programme followed by the respondent.

54% of the respondents to this survey have a *doctoraal* diploma; 28% have a master's diploma and for 19% a bachelor's diploma is the highest level of education attained. After obtaining their bachelor's diploma, some (19%) of the respondents from the BaMA system started work immediately, 56% opted to continue with their master's in Leiden, 10% took a master's in Leiden in a different field, and 15% chose to take a master's outside Leiden. Some of those who continued with a master's were still engaged in their studies at the time of the survey.

Those who started work immediately after obtaining their bachelor's diploma clearly started at a lower educational level than those graduates with a master's or *doctoraal* diploma. This arrears was recovered to some extent in subsequent positions. These respondents were also to be found more frequently in lower salary scales. Of the respondents with a *doctoraal* or master's diploma, 8% opted for a university teacher training programme while 17% followed a PhD track or other post-doc or professional training. Of those who started work, many continued their education, in the form of courses or a company training, in parallel with their work.

In the view of the alumni, their academic diploma and academic skills were the main contributing factor to their career. A relatively large contribution is attributed to relevant work experience, management experience and internships. A number of skills were mentioned that are used regularly in daily practice, and that alumni consider should be addressed more fully during study programmes. As well as field-specific knowledge and competences, these include research skills, verbal and written language skills, and the ability to work and think independently. A number of other skills were mentioned, which respondents felt were not addressed adequately, such as computer skills.

A large number (71%) of the alumni undertook specific activities during their study in order to prepare themselves for seeking work. As well as work placements, these activities include visits to the Career Service of the Faculty of Humanities, company open-days and job markets. Frequent mention was also made by respondents of participation in employment market courses or seeking individual career guidance. For half of the respondents, in addition to any preparation for job-seeking, chance played a significant role in finding a job.