



Graduate Outcomes Survey For The Class of 2011-12

Athabasca University

Prepared by the Office of Institutional Studies

Athabasca University

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DRAFT

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Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary	p. 2
Demographics	
Satisfaction	
Comments	
2. Introduction	p. 3
Response rates	
Responses by program	
3. Demographics	p. 5
Highest level completed in K-12 system	
Location	
Parental education attainment	
Gender	
Gender by program	
Aboriginal	
Disability	
Employment	
4. Satisfaction	p. 11
Program benefits	
Education experience	
General satisfaction	
Recommendation by program	
Recommend institution	
Program worth the final cost	
5. Additional Comments	p. 16

1. Executive Summary

The 2014 Graduate Outcomes Survey focused on the AU graduating class of 2011-12 and asked questions about the student's post-secondary program two years after graduation. This report highlights the respondent's demographics and satisfaction with their program.

Demographics

- The largest proportion of AU graduates were living in Canada, but outside of Alberta (59.3%) and 33.8% were living in Alberta at the time of graduation.
- A high proportion of parents of AU graduates had not completed high school (16.0%), which is twice as high as all publically funded Alberta post-secondary institutions (8.0%).
- Most 2011-12 AU graduates were female (68.0%) which is significantly higher than all Alberta post-secondary institutions (59%) which participated in the survey.
- Thirty-eight AU graduates were Aboriginal (5.0%). The total percentage of Aboriginal graduates from all Alberta post-secondary institutions is 4.0%.
- There were 42 AU graduates who had a disability (5.3%). This is higher than all public post-secondary institutions in Alberta, which reported 3% of graduates with a disability.

Satisfaction

- The overall satisfaction for AU graduates was approximately 97% compared to 92% for all public institutions.
- The satisfaction with academic programs for AU graduates was 95.9% compared to 90.0% for all public institutions.
- The satisfaction with the quality of teaching for AU graduates was 93.5% compared to 91.0% for all public institutions.
- AU graduates were also asked if they would recommend their program of study to someone else and 94.2% of respondents selected yes. This is much higher than all Alberta public post-secondary institutions, in which 88.0% of respondents selected yes
- AU graduates were also asked if they would recommend Athabasca University and 97.2% indicated that they would. This is higher than all Alberta post-secondary public institutions, in which 95% indicated that they would recommend their home institution.
- Most either agreed or strongly agreed that their program was worth the final cost (88.1%), which is higher than all Alberta public post-secondary institutions (85.0%).

Additional Comments

- AU graduates were also asked to provide additional comments. Overall there were 45 positive comments; 8 neutral comments; and 6 negative comments.

2. Introduction

The Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS) is commissioned by Alberta Innovation and Advanced Education (IAE) and conducted biennially. This year's survey focused on the graduating class of 2011-12 and asked questions about the graduate's satisfaction with their post-secondary program. All post-secondary institutions in Alberta participate in the GOS survey. Athabasca University graduates were surveyed from February 12 to May 18, 2014 and the results were released by IAE in April of 2015. This report compares the responses by AU graduates to the responses from students of all public post-secondary institutions in Alberta.

The survey population included all 2011-12 parchment graduates from public and private post-secondary institutions. The list of AU graduates from all programs was provided by the Office of Institutional Studies in September of 2013. The class of 2011-12 included 1,725 students who graduated from AU between September 1, 2011 and August 31, 2012. As the chart below shows, a sample of 1,270 AU graduates were surveyed by IAE resulting in 801 responses and a response rate of 63.1%.

	Number of Graduates	Sample of Graduates	Number of Responses	Response Rate	Margin of Error
All Public Institutions	40497	25862	14012	54.2%	0.7%
Comprehensive Academic / Research Institutions	18634	9858	5291	53.7%	1.1%
Athabasca University	1725	1270	801	63.1%	2.5%

The 801 responses come from 30 different AU programs, with the largest number of responses from graduates of the Graduate Diploma in Management and the smallest number of graduates from the Post Masters Certificate in Counselling. The complete list of responses by AU programs is on the following page.

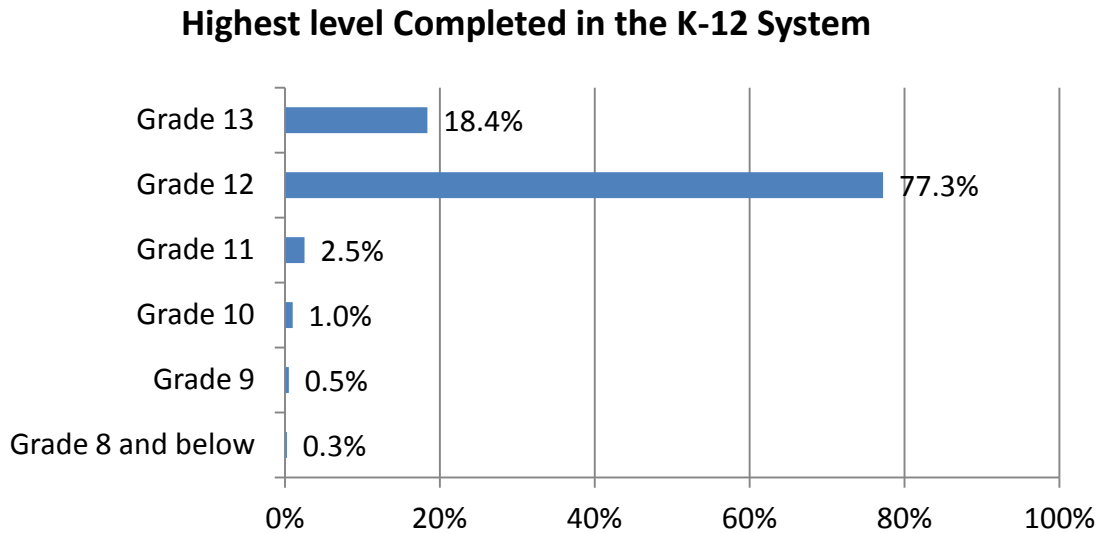
Graduate Outcomes Survey, AU Responses by Program

Undergraduate Programs	Responses
BACHELOR OF NURSING	73
BACHELOR OF GENERAL STUDIES	54
BACHELOR OF ARTS	49
BACHELOR OF PROFESSIONAL ARTS	47
BACHELOR OF MANAGEMENT 3 YR	41
BACHELOR OF COMMERCE	29
BACHELOR OF ARTS 3 YR	26
BACHELOR OF ADMINISTRATION	13
BACHELOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND LABOUR RELATIONS	12
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE	10
BACHELOR OF MANAGEMENT	9
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN COMPUTING AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS	6
BACHELOR OF HEALTH ADMINISTRATION	4
UNIVERSITY CERTIFICATE	50
UNIVERSITY DIPLOMA IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION	7
UNIVERSITY DIPLOMA IN ARTS	3
Graduate Programs	
MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION	66
MASTER OF NURSING	66
MASTER OF ARTS INTEGRATED STUDIES	46
MASTER OF COUNSELLING (COLLABORATIVE)	32
MASTER OF HEALTH STUDIES	32
MASTER OF EDUCATION	20
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN INFORMATION SYSTEMS	11
GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN MANAGEMENT	78
GRADUATE DIPLOMA: INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN	5
GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN DISTANCE EDUCATION (TECHNOLOGY)	4
POST GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN COUNSELLING	4
GRADUATE CERTIFICATE: INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN	3
POST MASTERS CERTIFICATE IN COUNSELLING	1
Total	801

3. Demographics

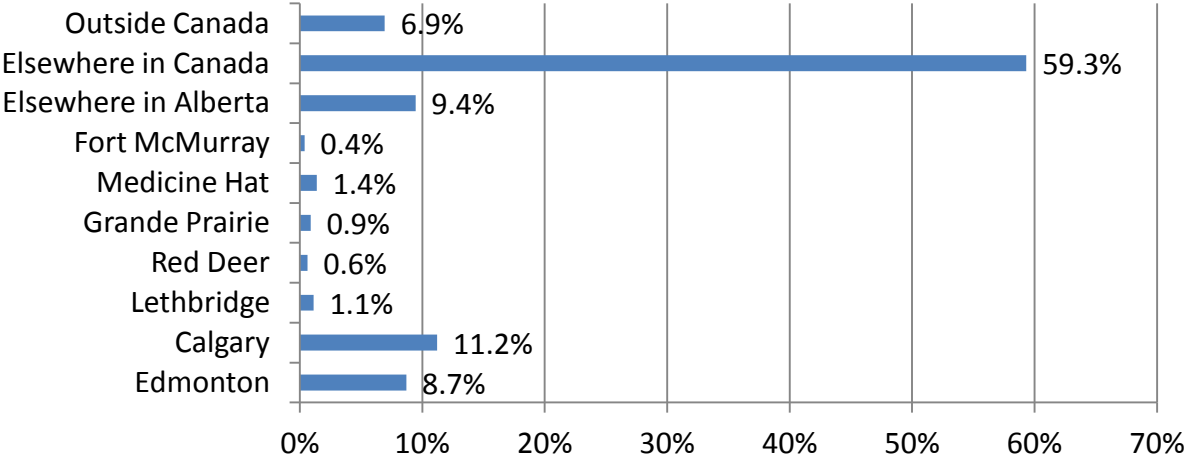
The demographic questions focused on previous secondary educational attainment, location, parental educational attainment; gender; Aboriginal status, disability, and employment. The AU responses to demographic questions were all similar to the previous GOS survey of the graduating class of 2009-10.

The first demographic question asked graduates for their highest level completed in the K-12 system. Most AU graduates had completed high school, but 34 respondents had grade 11 or less (4.2%). This is higher than the proportion of all publically funded institutions in Alberta, in which only 3% had grade 11 or less. The result from the previous GOS survey of AU graduates (class of 2009-10) was slightly higher as 6% of graduates had Grade 11 or less.



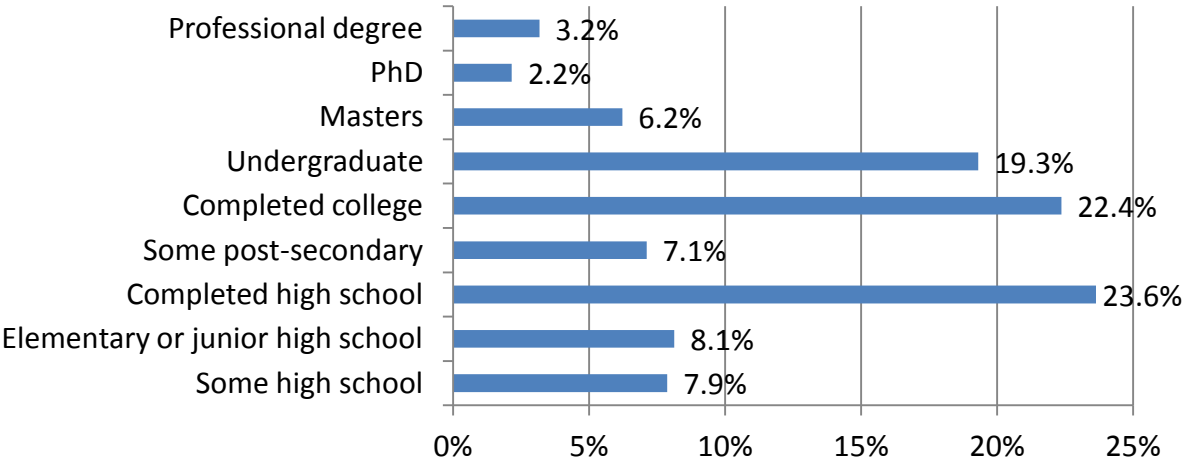
AU graduates were also asked which city or town they were living in when they applied for post-secondary studies. The largest proportion of respondents were in Canada, but outside of Alberta (59.3%) and 33.8% were in Alberta. The highest proportion of those were in the city of Calgary (11.2%). For the previous GOS survey of AU graduates, 58% were in Canada, but outside of Alberta.

City Living When You Applied for Post-Secondary Studies



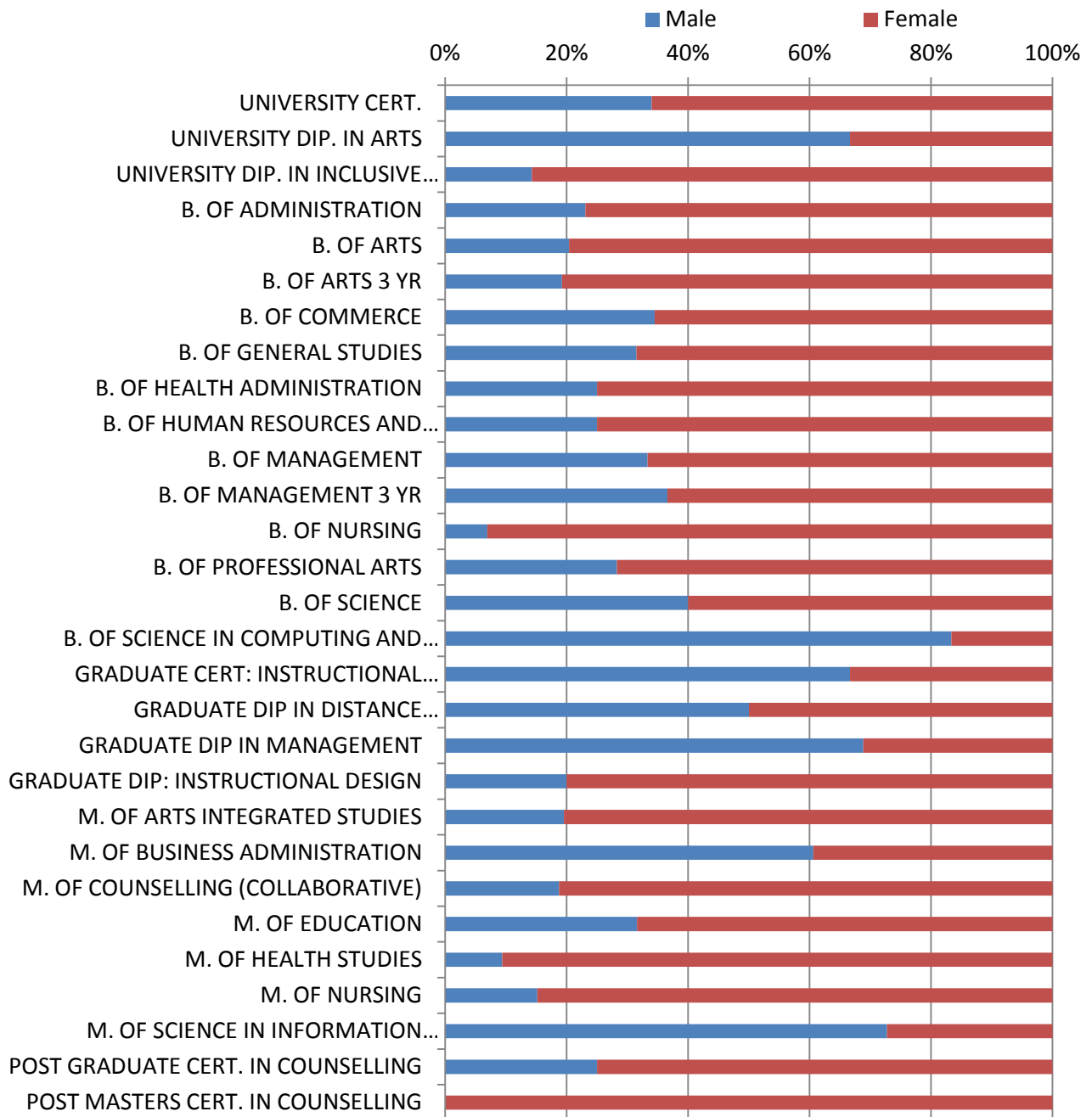
Most of the parents of AU graduates had completed high school (23.6%) or an undergraduate post-secondary degree (19.3%) or diploma (22.4%). However, a high proportion of parents of AU graduates had not completed high school (16.0%), which is twice as high as all publically funded Alberta post-secondary institutions (8.0%). The class of 2009-10 AU graduates also reported 16% of parents who had not completed high school.

Highest Level of Education Attained by Your Parents



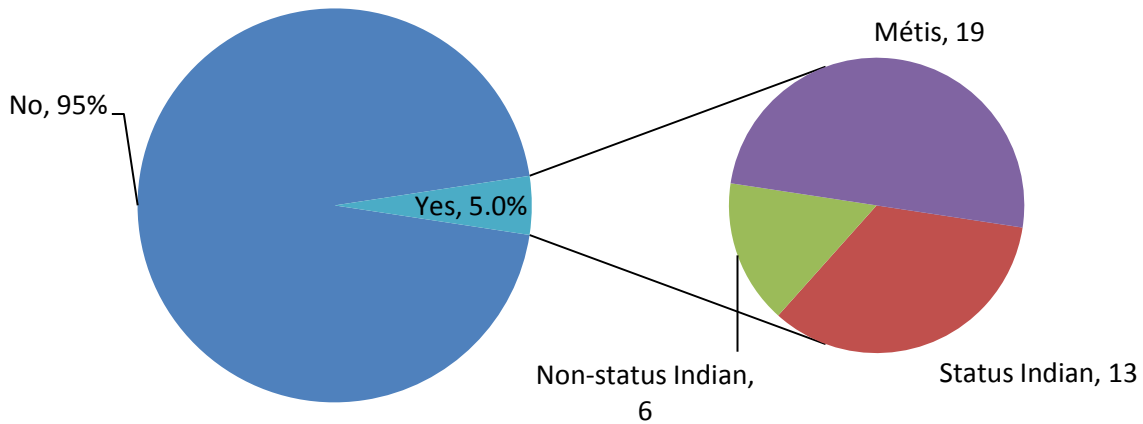
Most 2011-12 AU graduates were female (68.0%) which is significantly higher than all Alberta post-secondary institutions (59%). The chart below displays gender by AU program. Programs with the highest number of male graduates include the Bachelor of Science in Computing and Information Systems (83.3%) and the Master of Science in Information Systems (72.7%). Programs with the highest number of female graduates include the Post Masters Certificate in Counselling (100%) and the Bachelor of Nursing program (93.1%).

Gender by AU Program



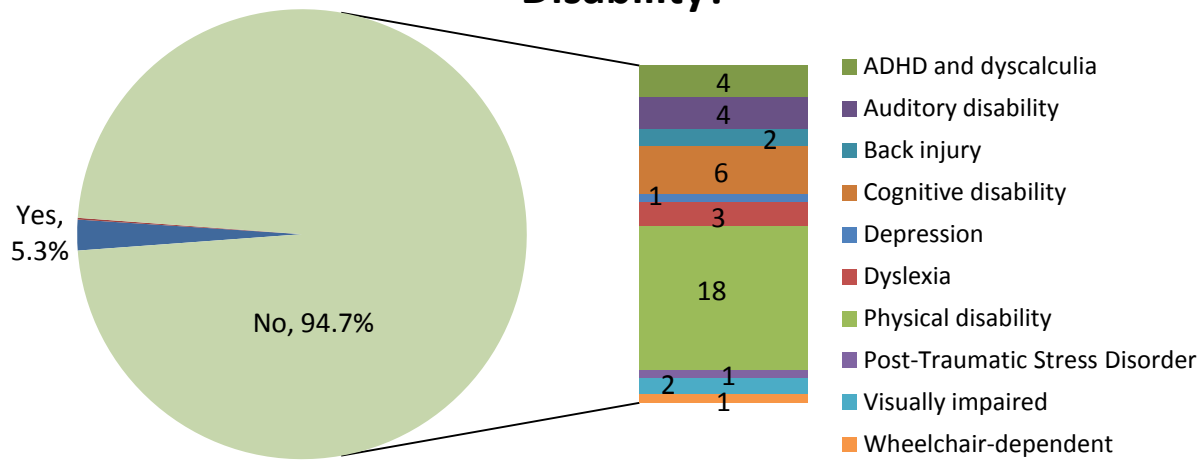
AU graduates were also asked if they considered themselves to be an Aboriginal person. Thirty-eight respondents said yes (5.0%) including 19 Métis; 13 Status Indian; and 6 non-Status Indian. The total percentage of Aboriginal graduates from all Alberta post-secondary institutions is 4.0%. The previous class of 2009-10 AU graduates reported 3% with Aboriginal status.

Are you an Aboriginal Person?



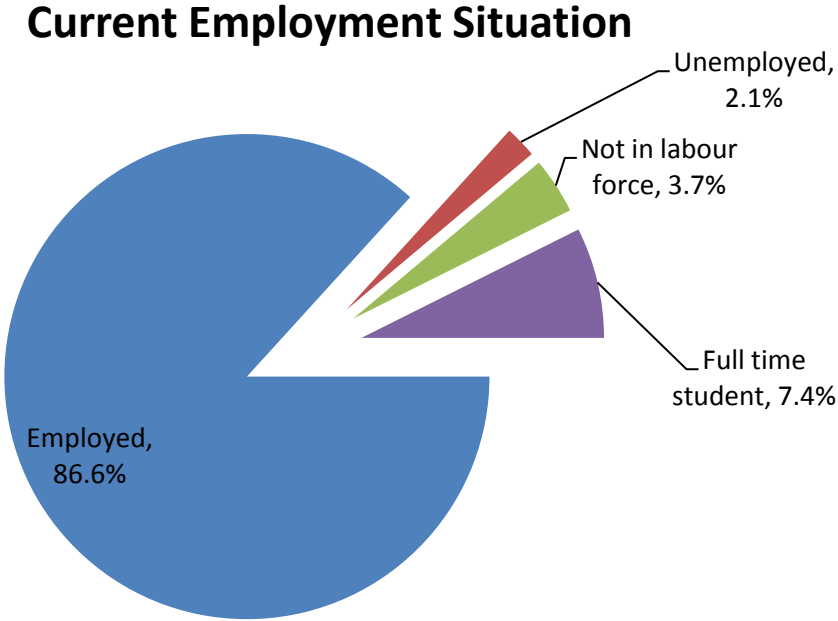
There were 42 AU graduates who had a disability (5.3%), most of which were described as a physical disability (18). This is higher than all public post-secondary institutions in Alberta, which reported 3% of graduates with a disability.

Do you Consider Yourself to be a Person with a Disability?



AU graduates were also asked questions about their employment, which can be compared to the other comprehensive academic and research institutions (CARI)¹ in Alberta. At the time of the survey 86.6% of AU graduates were employed, which is similar to the previous AU GOS survey (class of 2009-10) employment rate of 86.0%. The employment rate for the other CARI institutions is 77.8%.

Most AU graduates also stated that their current job is very or somewhat related to the skills and abilities they acquired in their program (94.7%). The proportion of AU graduates who are self employed is 8.6%, and the average salary of AU graduates is \$89,290.



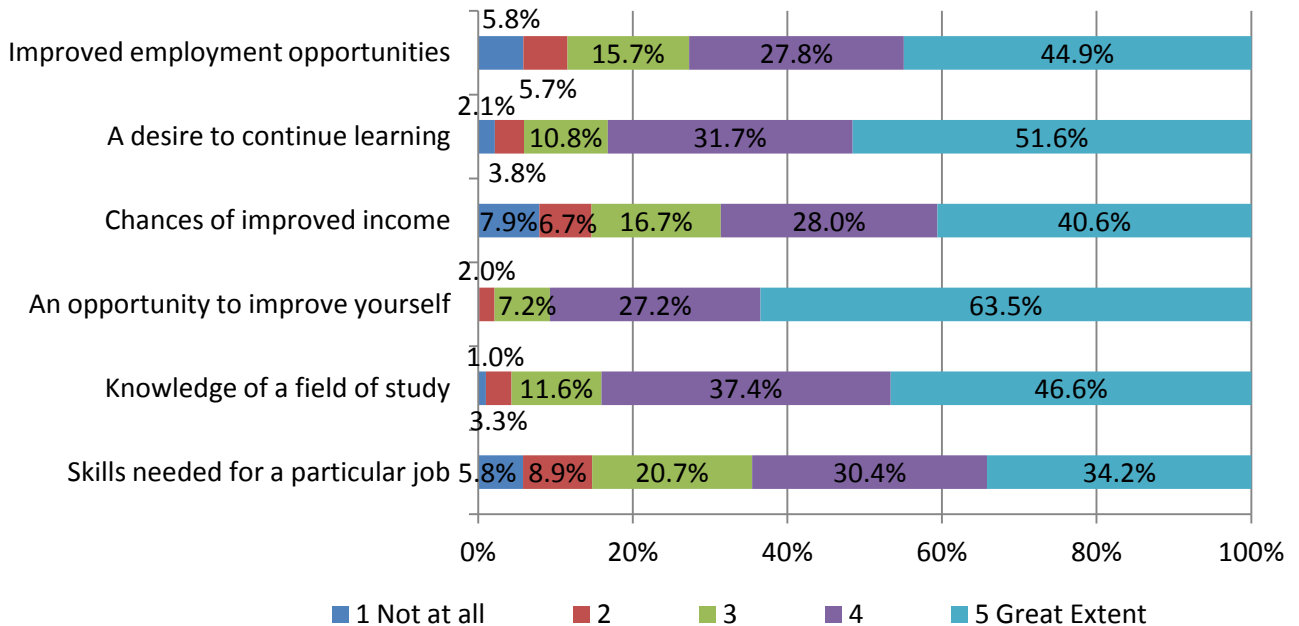
¹ CARI institutions include Athabasca University; University of Alberta; University of Calgary; and The University of Lethbridge.

4. Satisfaction

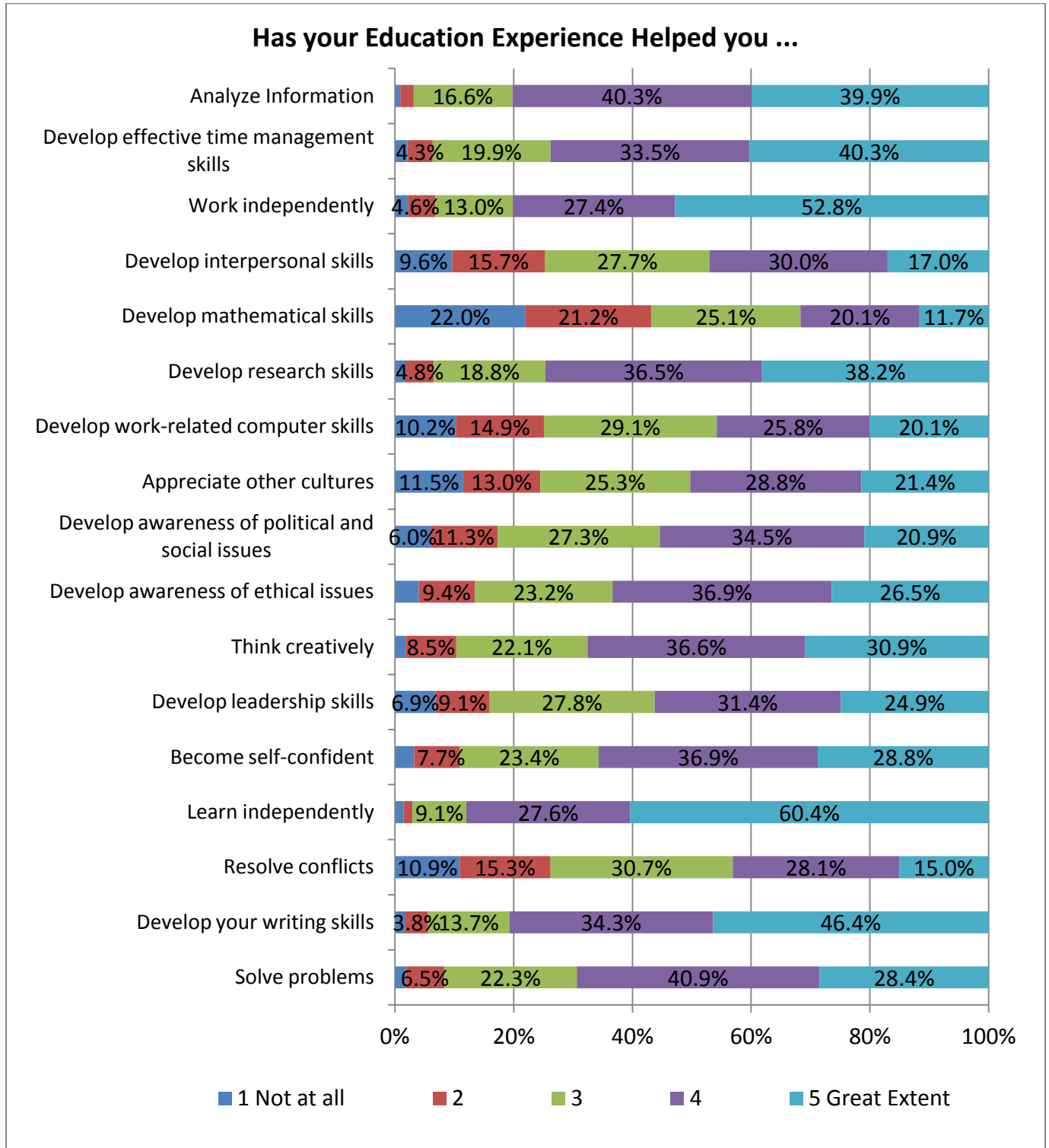
The GOS satisfaction questions included questions about the benefits provided by each program; Educational experience; General satisfaction; Program and institution recommendation; and if the AU program was worth the final cost. The responses to satisfaction questions were in line with the previous GOS survey of the AU graduating class of 2009-10.

AU graduates were asked how their program provided them with specific benefits. With the exception of improved employment opportunities (44.9% vs. 47%) and knowledge of a field of study (46.6% vs. 50%), AU graduates rated their program higher than all public post-secondary institutions.

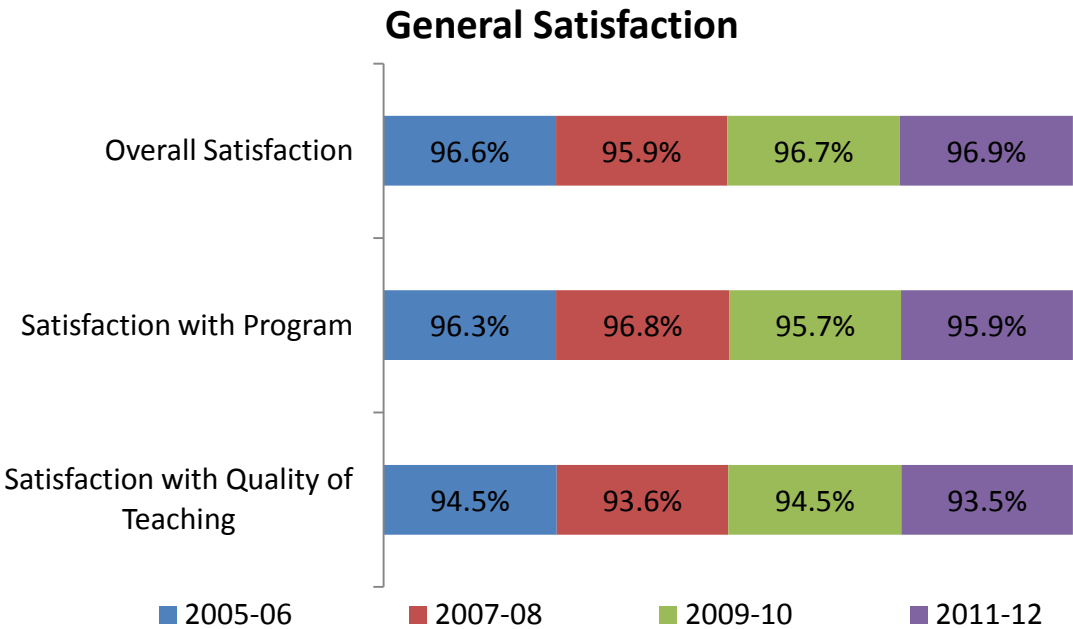
How did your Program Provide you with the Following Benefits?



Most of the education experience responses from AU graduates compared favourably with the responses from Alberta public post-secondary institutions. The ability to appreciate other cultures and resolve conflicts were slightly lower than all public institutions, but the ability to learn independently and work independently were much higher.



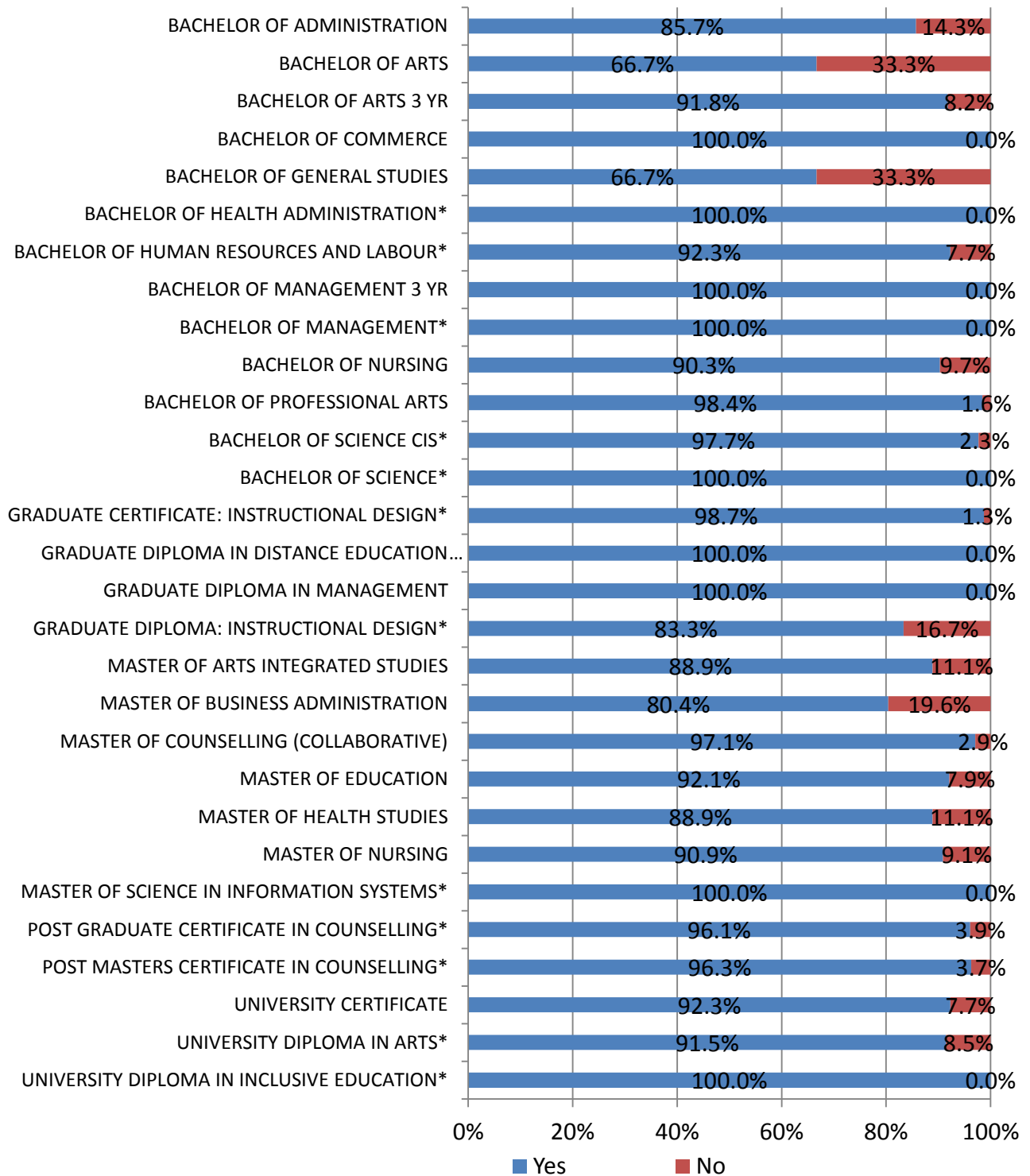
There are three general satisfaction questions, which are compared in the table below to previous AU GOS survey graduate responses. Overall, the general satisfaction of AU graduates has remained consistent over the last four surveys. For this most recent survey, the level of satisfaction for AU graduates was higher than all public post secondary institutions. The overall satisfaction for AU graduates was 96.9% compared to 92.0% for all public institutions. The satisfaction with program for AU graduates was 95.9% compared to 90.0% for all public institutions. The satisfaction with the quality of teaching for AU graduates was 93.5% compared to 91.0% for all public institutions.



Percentage values are respondents who selected satisfied as well as those who selected very satisfied

AU graduates were also asked if they would recommend their program of study to someone else and 94.2% of respondents selected yes. This is much higher than all Alberta public post-secondary institutions, in which 88.0% of respondents selected yes. The recommendation responses are separated by AU program on the following page. Please note that programs with an asterisk had less than 20 responses. This response rate is too small for an accurate representation, but we include the programs for comparison to future surveys.

Would You Recommend the Same Program?

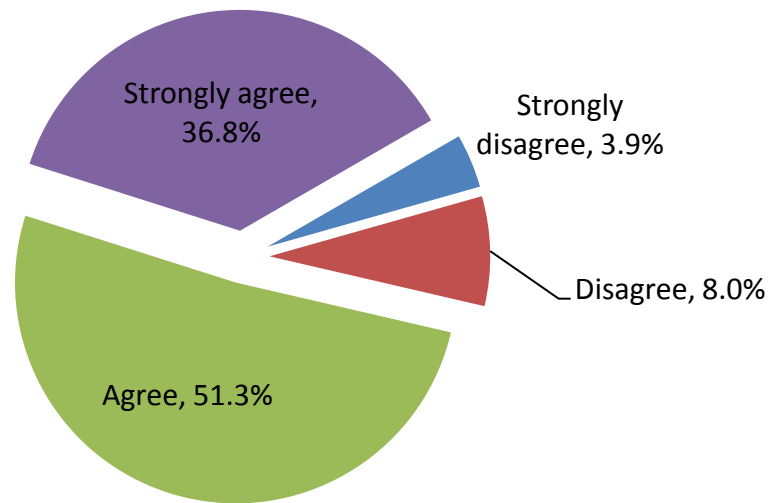


*Programs with an asterisk have less than 20 responses and should not be considered representative.

AU graduates were also asked if they would recommend Athabasca University and 97.2% indicated that they would. This is higher than all Alberta post-secondary public institutions in which 95% indicated that they would recommend their home institution.

Finally, AU graduates were asked if their program was worth the final cost. Most either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement (88.1%), which is higher than all Alberta public post-secondary institutions (85.0%).

AU Program is Worth the Final Cost



5. Additional Comments

At the end of the survey, AU graduates were asked to provide additional information about their education or work experience. Fifty-nine students provided additional commentary, most of which was positive about their educational experience at AU. The comments are provided below in alphabetical order, but overall there were 45 positive comments (76.3%); 8 neutral comments (13.6%); and 6 negative comments (10.2%).

Additional Comments

Appreciated how they encouraged sharing experience
Athabasca professors care about their students
Athabasca University is an amazing institution
Athabasca University is very flexible
Athabasca University should give out more scholarships
Athabasca was a very rewarding experience
Athabasca was the most rewarding experience
AU is a great university
AU was a great experience for me
B.A degree helps improve my interpersonal communication
Completing my Master of Nursing did not open doors
difficulties of courses vary
Distance learning is invaluable, and challenging
Enjoyed education, would prefer more personal contact
For the most part, it was a wonderful experience.
great experience
Great experience
Greatly increased my knowledge in nursing
Had four kids and wife at the end of the studies.
I appreciated the very personal attention I received
I enjoy Athabasca University and have recommended it
I felt that other program might have better for me
I felt very unsupported by Athabasca University
I had a good experience with AU.
I had a good experience with most of the professors
I had a great mentor at work that assisted me
I have had an extremely good experience with AU
I liked Athabasca, the experience was positive
I love Athabasca University
I loved my experience with Athabasca
I really appreciated that Athabasca helped me
I really appreciated the distance learning experience
I really enjoyed my time

I really liked how flexible the program was
I really loved the program I took
I recommended Athabasca university to a friend
I thought Athabasca delivered what they committed to
I was very disappointed with the PLAR.
It was a good program and recommended to friends.
Lower Tuition Costs! Thanks
My studies allowed me a change of career.
Nearly a 100% online program was critical for me
Overall AU was a good experience
Overall I had an amazing experience and would recommend it
Perseverance is key
Planning to attend DBA program
Program was very flexible - positive experience
Respondent loved the flexibility of the university
Takes too long to get answers/help with questions
The BA on its own is useless. I enjoyed MRU more
The online learning opportunity offered an easier path
The program bends to how you want to do.
The program did not prepare us for the workplace
This program was excellent and an extremely positive
Truly enjoyed the experience and the professors
Very pleased with the experience. Hopes to do PHD
Was living overseas (Japan), and this made it easy
Website for the school was very easy to use
Went to high school in Cdn Forces base in Germany
