



STUDENTS' VIEWS ON THE LABOUR MARKET – GRADUATES ENTERING THE LABOUR MARKET

**Some findings of the Graduate
Career Tracking Survey
by the University of Szeged**

Hallgatói és intézményi szolgáltatásfejlesztés
a Szegedi Tudományegyetemen
TÁMOP-4.1.1-08/1-2009-0015



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IMPRESSZUM

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www.u-szeged.hu

Felelős kiadó:

Dr. Görög Márta projektvezető

Nyomda:

Generál Nyomda Kft., 2011. Szeged

Készült 1.000 példányban, ingyenes terjesztéssel

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INTRODUCTION

One important goal of our university is to provide practice-oriented training and usable knowledge to students which can make sure that our graduates, as educated and well informed intellectuals, can enter the labour market with a degree that can be well used. This present study is useful, first of all, for those employers who would like to get a picture of how well the students of the University of Szeged are prepared for the labour market and what their expectations are, and for those who also want to have some information about the work situation of the graduates of our university one to three years after their graduation.

Our students' labour market preparedness can be indicted by the professional experiences they have besides their studies, and also by how many of them join professional training programs. Another important factor is foreign language skills, which are a basic requirement for many jobs in Hungary, too. The graduates' ideas about their first workplace and expected salary well reflect their expectations towards their employers.

Introducing how our graduates find employment provides information about the ways of looking for a job, the length of time spent looking for a job, whether graduates stay in or leave the region, the salaries available, as well as the graduates' satisfaction with their work or with the labour market itself.

All this information might be useful for those employers who would like to strengthen their team with well-prepared graduates entering the labour market who are committed to their professions.

ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY

The University of Szeged, which represents a student body of nearly 30,000 including more than 1500 foreign students, has 8000 employees, is comprised of 12 faculties since its integration in 2000, and is one of the leading higher education institutions of Hungary.

We offer a wide range of training programmes at our faculties: 250 at the bachelor's and master's levels in 13 different academic fields and more than a hundred at our 19 PhD schools in the 2008–2009 academic year.

Approximately 5000 to 6000 students graduate every year from our university, and recently 3500 to 4500 of them have graduated as full-time students each year. Most students graduate from the Faculty of Arts, the Faculty of Sciences and Informatics, and the Teacher Training Faculty, but the number of graduates from the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Economics is reaching 300 to 400.



The present study is based on the results of five surveys. All of the five surveys were carried out in 2010-2011. As the survey questionnaires were continuously developed during the surveys, some topics were not included in all studies, so, certain aspects were viewed through the data of only one or another survey.

Our current students' preparedness for the labour market is presented through two surveys. One of them is the survey carried out in spring 2010, when all students available via e-mail were contacted. This meant approximately 24,000 students. This electronic survey was filled out by 5589, which makes a response rate of 23%. The other data collection took place in spring 2011, when again all students received the questionnaires. At this time, 4510 people responded, which is 18% of the total number of students we contacted. The sample of respondents was weighted in both cases so that it reflects the faculty, type of training, and gender rates typical of the University of Szeged. As this study aims at revealing the language skills and preparedness of graduates for the labour market, we present the views of full-time students only. This means 4153 people in the 2010 survey, and 3178 people in the 2011 survey¹.

The labour market situation of students who have already graduated is presented through the results of three surveys. One was a survey carried out in spring 2010, focusing on the students who graduated in 2007 and 2009, when we contacted all of the graduated students (more than 10,000 people). In that year, the response rate was 18%, that is, 1861 people completed our electronic questionnaire. The other study was carried out in spring 2011. In this case, we contacted a group of people who graduated in 2007, 2008 and 2009 by phone. Practically all of the ex-students who we could contact (1203 people) answered our questions. The third survey took place in spring 2011, at which time students who graduated in 2008 and 2010, approximately 11,000 people, were surveyed via online questionnaires. The number of respondents was 1884 in this case. While focusing on the first few years of graduates entering the labour market, only former full-time students' responses are presented from each of the three studies: 845 people from 2010, 666 from the 2011 telephone survey, and 1129 people from the 2011 survey.

STUDENTS' PREPAREDNESS FOR THE LABOUR MARKET, FOREIGN LANGUAGE SKILLS, EXPECTATIONS

We describe students' professional preparedness mainly based on their professional experience and their participation in professional training programs, but we also asked if they wanted to work according to their qualifications, or rather do a different job. Foreign language skills were not measured based on language exams which have been

¹ As the students completed the survey questionnaire independently, and obviously not all students answered all of the questions, the number of respondents might be lower in certain cases.



passed as this does not necessarily mean real living language skills. Instead, we asked if they speak a given language, and if yes, then what the level of their skills is. Regarding their expectations, on the one hand we introduced salary expectations, and on the other hand we examined what kind of workplaces students want to find employment at after their graduation

Foreign language skills, studying and working abroad

Language skills, especially English, but also German and French, are indispensable not only for working abroad, but also for some Hungarian jobs. To meet this expectation, according to the higher education law students need to complete at least one intermediate-level (B2) complex language exam. Some of our students have passed language exams already when they start their studies at our university, but the majority of them complete it during their higher education years.

In the 2011 survey, we asked the respondents themselves to rate the **level of their own foreign language skills**. In Table I, we listed the four most frequent languages. It is clear that students mainly use the English language, one-fifth of them speaking English definitely well, even being able to use it as a working language, and hardly any of them having zero knowledge of English. Knowledge of the German language is much less widespread: one-third of the students do not speak it at all, but the good and very good speakers make up 20% of students in the case of German, too. The two other languages, French and Italian, are less popular among students..

Table I. Foreign language skills of full-time students as a percentage. 1 = no language skills at all; 5 = very good language skills

<i>What is the level of your language skills?</i>	1	2	3	4	5	Total
(in parentheses: the number of respondents)	1	2	3	4	5	Total
English language (N = 3157 people)	2%	11%	30%	36%	21%	100%
German language (N = 2957 people)	33%	27%	20%	13%	7%	100%
French language (N = 2721 people)	83%	10%	5%	2%	1%	100%
Italian language (N = 2717 people)	83%	10%	4%	1%	1%	100%

Source: the survey carried out in 2011

At the Faculty of Economics, a relatively high number of students speak a good level of English: almost three-quarters rated their language skills as good or excellent. A high percentage of students speak English at the Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Dentistry, Faculty of Law, and the Faculty of Arts (in which case this can be justified by language majors there, too): here two-thirds of the students have good English language skills. However, more than half of the students at the Faculty of Pharmacy and the Faculty of Sciences and Informatics speak this language well, too.



Foreign language skills are improved by studying and working abroad.

According to our survey carried out in 2010, 28% of the students were planning to study abroad. Most of them are students from the Faculty of Music, the Faculty of Arts, the Faculty of Medicine, the Faculty of Economics and the Faculty of Law. The students' plans are obviously influenced by what stage they are at in their training programmes (one-third of the respondents were in the last year of their training), as graduating students focus mainly on working abroad, rather than studying abroad. More than half of the respondents were thinking about trying to work abroad. First of all, doctors and dentists would like to go abroad. Sixty to 80% of them would try their chances in other countries. However, the majority of students from some faculties (e.g. the Faculty of Engineering, Juhász Gyula Teacher Training Faculty, and the Faculty of Law – those whose subjects are more difficult to use abroad) would like to build their career in Hungary. Plans, on the other hand, are not always realized.

Only about 6% of the respondents of the 2011 survey confirmed that they had **studied abroad, for shorter or longer periods of time**. Going abroad is more usual among students of the Faculty of Arts, the Faculty of Law, and the Faculty of Economics. The majority of those who manage to go abroad spend at least one semester (generally four to six months) there, it being much less usual to spend a shorter period of time in a foreign country.

Some students do not, or do not only, go abroad to study, but also in order to get some work experience as well. According to our 2011 survey, 8% of graduates had already worked in another country. It is even more typical in the case of students from the Faculty of Economics and the Faculty of Arts where 13% of them confirmed having worked abroad.

In many cases, working abroad is connected to studying abroad: 30% of those who study abroad have already worked abroad, while only 7% of those who never studied abroad did actually work abroad.

Professional experience

Based on our 2010 survey, when almost one-third of respondents were graduating students, **40% of the students had already done work related to the profession they studied**. On the other hand, the majority of them (30%) had occasional jobs only, while 10% of them confirmed that they continuously worked in a field closely related to their studies.

In the 2011 survey, we used a different method to assess how students were related to the labour market. We asked not only about professional work, but about working in general. At the same time, we did not ask if they had ever worked during their studies, but whether they had been working at the time when they filled out the questionnaire. A little more than one quarter (27%) of them confirmed they had worked during their studies. In general, this work means student or trainee work, while some students take

jobs for shorter periods of time on a contract basis. One-fifth of the students working, however, take non fixed-term permanent jobs. For most of the students, practically 50% of them, the work they do is related, in some way to their studied profession, while the others take jobs unrelated to their studies.

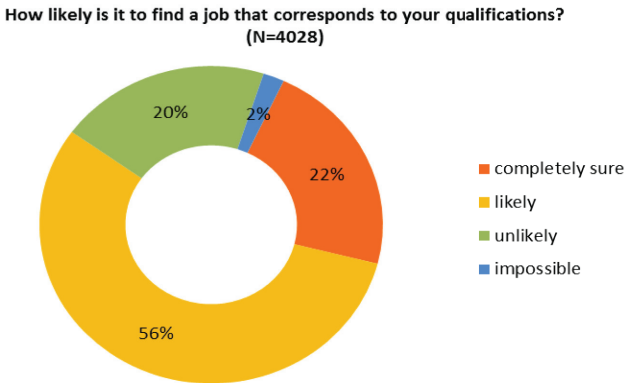
Anticipation and expectations related to labour market

In the 2010 survey, we asked about numerous topics in relation to students' future work, such as changing their professions, planned jobs, and expected salaries.

Seventy-eight percent of the students would definitely like to have a job in the field they currently study. Those who are preparing for professions in health care (like doctors, dentists and pharmacists), as well as artists, are the most committed to their professions. At the same time, the majority of students of sciences, law, nursing, and economics, also think of having jobs in their own professional field. Nearly a further one-fifth of the respondents confirmed they would take jobs close to their studied professions, and **only 5% thought of changing their careers.**

Nearly 80% of the respondents trust they can find a job in the field corresponding to their professions, but only one-fifth (22%) of them were completely sure about it. The others think they will not find jobs corresponding to their qualifications, but only 2% of them are really pessimistic in this respect. First of all, humanities and agriculture seem to be the areas where students think they will have to face more difficulties if they want to find a job that corresponds to their qualifications.

Figure 1: Probability of finding a job corresponding to qualification



Source: the survey carried out in 2010

After graduation, most of them (56%) would like to have full-time jobs, and a further 28% think they will do extra work besides their full-time jobs. Very

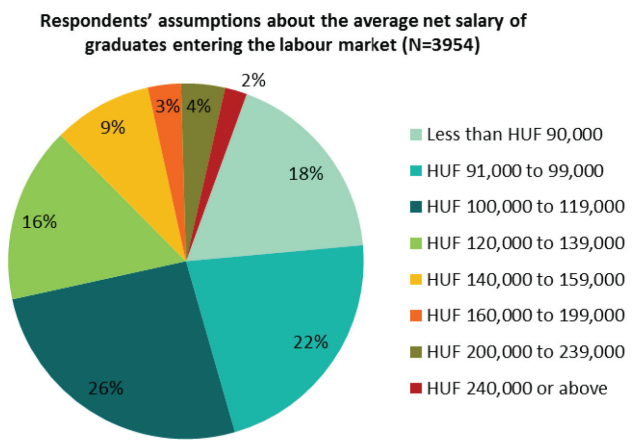


few of them are planning to live on occasional or contract-based work, but **more than one-tenth of them would like to start their own businesses**. The idea of being an entrepreneur is especially popular among future dentists, agriculture specialists, pharmacists, and economists.

More than one-third of the respondents, in harmony with the training portfolio of the university, would like to find a job in the public sector. The non-profit sector seems to be less attractive (5%) **The rest would like to get along in the private sector:** 13% of them, for example, would take a job at a multinational company, and 15% at big companies. Fourteen percent of them would choose small- and medium-sized enterprises. The public sector appears attractive mainly for doctors, but nearly 70% of graduates of the Faculty of Music are preparing to find employment here, too. From the rest of the faculties, less than half of the graduates are planning to find a job in the public sector.

Forty percent of the students think that the monthly net salary of a graduate entering the labour market in their own profession does not reach HUF 100,000. A further one-quarter think they can make HUF 100,000-120,000 as a graduate entering the labour market. Only 18% count on a monthly net salary over HUF 140,000 (Figure 2). According to our respondents, the average net monthly salary of intellectuals entering the labour market is HUF 112,000. The next section will show if these assumptions are correct

Figure 2: Respondents' assumptions about the average net salary of graduates entering the labour market

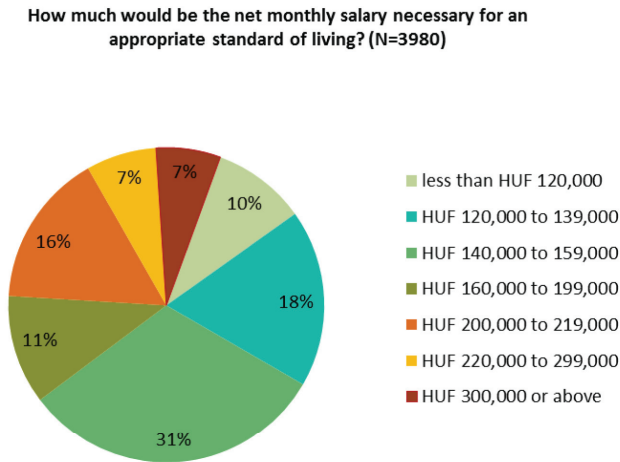


Source: the survey carried out in 2010

The students' assumptions also depend on which field they would like to have a job in. Those who would like to work in the public sector think an intellectual entering the labour market takes home HUF 100,000 per month. Those who would like to work in the for-profit sector, assume the salary of graduates entering the labour market is higher than this. As an average, they think that this figure is HUF 121,000. Graduates themselves have slightly different, usually more realistic, ideas about salary than those who have not yet dealt with entering the labour market. According to graduates, an intellectual entering the labour market makes HUF 110,000, while students who have not graduated think it is HUF 113,000.

These anticipated salaries are obviously different from what the respondents think **would provide a decent standard of living**. Almost one-third of the students would be satisfied with a net sum of HUF 140,000-160,000 per month, nearly one-fifth, however, would be happy with HUF 120,000-139,000. Thirty percent think they would need more than HUF 200,000 to have the standard of living they want. On average, respondents thought a HUF 176,000 net salary would be appropriate.

Figure 3: Net monthly salary necessary for an appropriate standard of living according to full-time students



Source: the survey carried out in 2010

These amounts can vary significantly among the faculties or professional fields. Table 2 shows the opinion of students from different faculties. Based on student opinion, the most significant differences can be noticed in the case of medical and dentistry students, while the smallest difference (HUF 36,000) can be seen in the case of students of pharmacy.



Table 2. Salary when entering the labour market anticipated and required

	<i>In your profession, how much is the net average salary of a graduate entering the labour market? (in thousand HUF)</i>	<i>How much is the net monthly average salary needed for an appropriate standard of living for you? (in thousand HUF)</i>	<i>The difference between anticipated and expected salary (in thousand HUF)</i>
Faculty of Law	113	177	64
Faculty of Medicine	94	211	117
Faculty of Arts	99	157	58
Faculty of Health Sciences and Social Studies	95	156	61
Faculty of Dentistry	128	265	137
Faculty of Economics	126	172	46
Faculty of Pharmacy	164	200	36
Juhász Gyula Teacher Training Faculty	95	154	59
Faculty of Engineering	112	161	49
Faculty of Agriculture	98	153	55
Faculty of Science and Informatics	128	173	45
Faculty of Music	86	183	97
Total	112	173	61

Source: the survey carried out in 2010

GRADUATES' SITUATION IN THE LABOUR MARKET

So far, we have presented the opinion of full-time students currently studying at the University of Szeged. **Now we will focus on students who have already graduated.** We will present the process of looking for a job, and, connected to this, the knowledge that helps them find their jobs. We will also mention some university services supporting students' future careers, and then we will describe our graduates' situation in the labour market.

Foreign language skills, scholarships abroad, and work experience during university studies

Ninety percent of our students who graduated in 2007, 2008 and 2009 confirmed that they could speak English, more or less, but only one-third of them would be able to use English as a working language. The second most popular language is German, more than



half of our graduated students speak this language, but only 12% of them said their level of German skills was advanced. Twelve percent understand French, 3% could use it as a working language, and only 5 to 7% of them speak Italian and Spanish².

Those who speak a foreign language are not always able to put it to use in their work. A quarter of students speaking English, and 15% of those speaking German, take advantage of their foreign language skills at their work (see Table 3). Only few students speak French, but even in the case of those who speak the language, only 12% use it frequently, and the same can be said about Italian language skills, too. A good part of the graduates cannot or do not want to take advantage of these possibilities.

Table 3. Levels and use of foreign language skills per faculty

	Is able to work in an English language environment (%)	Is able to work in a German language environment (%)	Uses his/her English language skills a lot at work (as % of those who speak English)	Uses his/her German language skills a lot at work (as % of those who speak German)
Faculty of Medicine	45	13	29	21
Faculty of Law	34	17	14	13
Faculty of Arts	44	20	35	26
Faculty of Health Sciences and Social Studies	5	6	4	7
Faculty of Dentistry	33	17	20	0
Faculty of Economics	49	15	50	17
Faculty of Pharmacy	22	11	13	0
Juhász Gyula Teacher Training Faculty	27	9	20	8
Faculty of Agriculture	25	0	0	0
Faculty of Engineering	21	4	8	20
Faculty of Science and Informatics	35	7	39	9
Faculty of Music	18	8	10	20
Total	33	12	26	15

Source: the telephone survey carried out in 2011

2 The telephone survey carried out in 2011 among graduates of 2007-2008-2009.



Thirteen percent of those who graduated as full-time students confirmed they had studied abroad during their higher education years: as we have seen with current students, most of them – more than a half – spent 4 to 6 months abroad.³ A part of the graduated students, almost one-tenth, went abroad to work, and not to study, during their years of education.

Nearly one-quarter of graduates from 2008 and 2010 **took part in compulsory professional practice during their studies**. Most of them (90%) however, did not have any work experience related to their later professions. Only one-fifth of them confirmed they had had experience in the field that they wanted to study later. This does not mean that teenagers are not connected to the world of work at all. Almost half of our graduated students had already worked before they started their higher education, although not in a field related to their professions. A significant part of them pursued work activities, too, while they were students. Forty-seven percent said they did, or partly did, professional work during their studies, while 56% worked in fields not related to their studies.

The use of university services that help in finding jobs

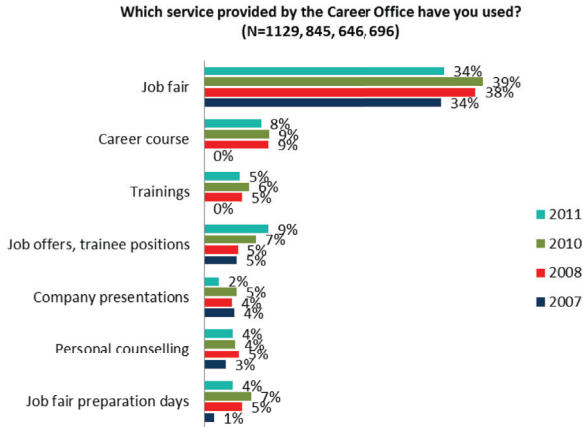
The University of Szeged tries to help students find jobs and improve their situation in the labour market in several ways. To achieve this, the **Career Office of the University of Szeged** offers several services to students, such as job fairs organized twice a year, in the spring and in the autumn. Collecting and mediating job offers, however, is not limited to these two occasions, but is continuously happening throughout the year, just like finding and offering trainee positions to students. In addition to this, the Career Office organizes career development courses as well. In every semester, approximately 300 students take these courses in which they can learn about finding jobs, writing CV's, selection procedures, and some issues related to labour law. In addition, they have a chance to take part in different trainings, and to get personal counselling.

In general, 36 to 46% of full-time graduates use one of the services offered by the Career Office; e.g. in the case of graduates of 2008 to 2010, 40% of them confirmed this. Among the individual services, **job fairs and the career course seem to be the most popular** (Figure 4).

Usually, slightly more than one-third of full-time graduates take part in the job fairs (34 to 39%), and 8 to 9% of students register for the career courses offered to all students. The coordination of job offers and trainee positions have especially become popular since a required 6-month professional practice is built into some of the undergraduate programs, and in this way more and more students rely on the services offered by the Career Office in order to find the appropriate trainee positions. According to the 2011 survey, 9% of the graduated students used this possibility. Earlier students from the Faculty of Economics, the Faculty of Sciences and Informatics were mainly those who relied on these services, but also 20 to 30% of students from the Faculty of Arts, the Faculty of Law, and the Faculty of Medicine mentioned they had used them.

3 The online survey carried out in 2011 among graduates of 2008 and 2010.

Figure 4: Use of services offered by the Career Office in the past years



Source: the online survey carried out in 2011 and 2010, and the printed questionnaire survey carried out in 2008 and 2007. In 2008, we surveyed students who graduated in 2006 and 2007, while in 2007, we surveyed those who graduated in 2004 and 2005.

Finding employment after graduation

The transition from higher education to the world of labour, looking for, and finding jobs, is by far not as easy and smooth as it was even 10 years ago. Some students cannot receive their diplomas due to a language exam they did not complete, but they have finished their studies and want to take a job. Others, having received their diploma, decide not on finding a job, but continuing their studies, especially since the traditional 5-year programmes have been replaced, and it is the master's programmes after the shorter undergraduate programmes that give more profound knowledge. Furthermore, others found a family, but it is quite usual that they study or take jobs at the same time.

Based on surveys of the past years, we can conclude that 20 to 22% of our graduates do not wish to enter the labour market after graduation, but continue their studies or found a family, or do not take paid jobs due to other reasons. A majority of graduated students can find employment when they enter the labour market. Based on our telephone survey, **91% of our full-time student respondents managed to find a permanent job since their graduation.** On the other hand, many of those full-time graduated students who had not found a permanent job, were still somehow related to the labour market: they took occasional jobs, worked abroad, or worked as volunteers.

For those who can find employment, looking for a job can take several months. Others, however, are already working at the actual time of graduation, e.g. they get a job offer from the workplace where they had their trainee positions. In the past years, the percentage of these students has fluctuated between 15 to 25% (Table 3). One-fifth to



one-third of the students managed to find a job within a month, while a further 25 to 30% needed one to three months to do the same. **Based on the research up to now, most (70 to 75%) of those who could find employment, could actually find it within a maximum of three months.**

Table 4. Time needed for finding employment for graduates from our full-time programmes

	<i>Already worked at graduation</i>	<i>Less than 1 month</i>	<i>1 to 3 months</i>	<i>4 to 6 months</i>	<i>7 to 12 months</i>	<i>More than a year</i>
Students graduated in 2004 and 2005 (N = 645) (2007 survey*)	14%	27%	30%	12%	11%	5%
Students graduated in 2006 and 2007 (N = 583) (2008 survey*)	14%	27%	30%	12%	11%	5%
Students graduated in 2007 and 2009 (N = 809) (2010 survey)	25%	24%	24%	15%	9%	3%
Students graduated in 2007, 2008, and 2009 (N = 603) (2011 telephone survey)	23%	21%	30%	17%	7%	2%
Students graduated in 2008 and 2010 (N = 749) (2011 online survey)	17%	34%	24%	13%	10%	3%

* In these two earlier surveys, we also examined the situation of the graduates of the University of Szeged in the labour market

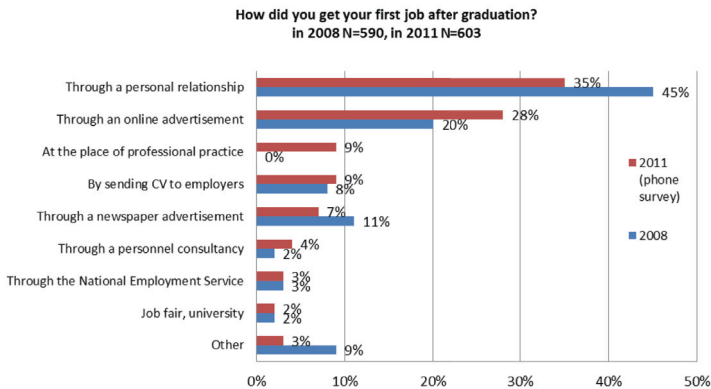
In certain cases, looking for a job can be prolonged, and sometimes more than a year might be needed to find the appropriate job. The effect of the economic crisis cannot be seen through an increased length of time for finding a job, but some distortions can be affecting this (the respondents filling in fewer months), and due to the insecure economic situation, graduates might be taking the first acceptable job instead of continuing their search, or, maybe they compromise their requirements.

In several surveys we asked about **how the respondents had found their first jobs**. In Figure 5, you can see the results of our 2011 telephone survey, together with the findings of a survey carried out in 2008. **The most successful way of finding a job is through personal relationships.** This is how more than a third (35%) of people we asked had found their jobs. This method of finding a job was mainly typical in the case of the graduates of smaller faculties (like the Faculty of Dentistry, Faculty of Agriculture, or Faculty of Music), but students of Faculty of Pharmacy, the Juhász Gyula Teacher Training Faculty, and the Faculty of Arts also were the most successful when relying on personal relationships. **The Internet is slowly catching up with personal**



relationships: 28% of the respondents could find employment through online advertisements or databases. It was especially popular in the case of the graduates of the Faculty of Law, where nearly half of them used this method successfully. It seems likely that the **younger generations look for jobs through the internet, and can less and less be reached via traditional newspaper advertisements.** Nine percent of the graduates looking for jobs turned out to be successful by sending their CV's to companies without responding to any specific job advertisements. A further 9% managed to get employed at the place of their professional practice. (In 2008, we had not specifically asked about this option yet.) Nowadays, only every 13th respondent used the traditional printed newspaper advertisements to find their jobs. Besides these methods, a small percentage of the respondents found their jobs through personnel consultancies or university organizations (job fairs, mailing lists, or advertisements posted in the dean's office). In the 'other' category, we can find those who found their jobs through other organizations (e.g. a professional association or the AIESEC); some in this category were contacted by an employer, and some others became individual entrepreneurs.

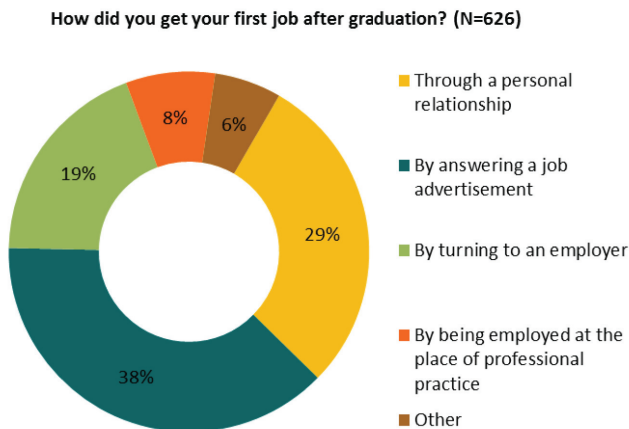
Figure 5: Methods of finding employment after graduation (full-time students)



Source: the 2011 telephone survey and the 2008 questionnaire-based survey

In the 2011 online survey, we changed the potential responses, but the results do not significantly differ from the earlier ones (Figure 6). At that time, we did not separate the online and printed job advertisements, so 38% of the respondents chose this answer. Again, being employed at the place of practice resulted in 8% of the responses. The role personal relationships continues to be important: 29% of the respondents relied on them to find jobs. Among these, only 4% managed to become employed through recommendation by a teacher. Compared to what we experienced in earlier years, the fact that some graduates applied directly to an employer (e.g. submitted a CV without knowing about any specific job offers) had much more important role for those who graduated in 2008 to 2010. Finding employment through university organizations still makes up 1 to 2%.

Figure 6: Methods of finding employment after graduation for full-time students



Source: the online survey carried out in 2011

The **selection procedures** for those who found a job successfully may also be informative. More than three-quarters (77%) of those who found employment had to go through some selection procedures⁴. This also means that **for almost a quarter of them (23%) there was no challenge of this kind**. This was mainly typical in the case of the graduates from the Faculty of Dentistry, the Faculty of Agriculture, and the Faculty of Pharmacy: the majority of them did not go through a procedure like this. The fact that a part of these graduates works in family enterprises, or starts their own businesses, might have an effect on this rate. On the other end of the scale, we can see graduates of the Faculty of Law, the Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Economics, 85 to 91% of whom went through these procedures. (The same thing was typical in the previous years, too.) Respondents could mark more than one selection procedure, as it may happen that a person had a job interview, and also had to take some tests to prove their competencies, or maybe they had to do a practical exercise.

Almost all (97%) of those who went through a selection procedure became employed following a job interview or an admission conversation with the employer. This interview, in 81% of the cases, took place in Hungarian, in 14% in Hungarian and in a foreign language as well, and 4% of these interviews happened only in a foreign language. This means that **the language of the application was not (only) Hungarian for one-fifth of the respondents**, but the individual faculties showed significantly different rates. For example, nearly half of the graduates of the Faculty of Economics had their job interview in a foreign language (too), and this figure was 35% in the case of the graduates of the Faculty of Arts. Besides them, also graduates of

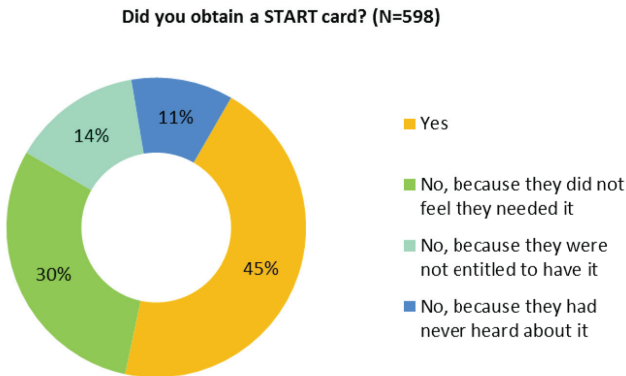
4 The telephone survey carried out in 2011



the Faculty of Sciences and Informatics, and the Faculty of Law had this experience, though to a significantly smaller extent (17 to 18%). **Compared to job interviews, other forms of selection represented a much lower rate:** 15-16% of the graduates became employed after having taken tests or done practical exercises. Compared to these, the Assessment Center - a whole-day complex procedure with several tasks, or a physical examination of competency were not that frequent. We asked about selection procedures in earlier studies, too, but in a different way. At those times, job interviews were mentioned in 80 to 90% of the cases, (psychological) tests were mentioned in 14 to 18% of the cases, while practical exercises and test work appeared in 20 to 28% of the cases.

The **START card**⁵, which was, among other reasons, created to help young people start their career, **was obtained by less than half (45%) of those who found employment.** We also asked why they did not take advantage of this opportunity. Most of those who did not obtain it simply did not feel they needed it, some of them were not entitled to have it, while others did not hear about it at all. At the time of our previous studies, the START card was not this popular yet. According to our 2008 survey, 29% of the respondents got the card. Almost 40% of those who did not get it, did not feel it was necessary. A little less than a third did not hear about it, and the same number of people were not entitled to have it.

Figure 7: Did you obtain a START card that helps to find a job?



Source: the telephone survey carried out in 2011

5 When employers employ someone with a START card, they are entitled to get a reduction of the amount of social security contributions they have to pay.



Not all of those who successfully find a job after graduation actually keep their jobs. Their jobs might cease or they can be sent off, so there may be periods of not being employed during the years after graduation. It might also happen that young people decide to have children, and in this way finding employment after graduation does not necessarily mean that graduates still have their jobs at the time of the survey. To be able to discuss the actual situation of graduates in the labour market in a reasonable way, and in relation to this, see the threat of unemployment that graduates of the University of Szeged might have to face, we will now introduce the nature and characteristics of the current jobs of the respondents, their possible salaries, and whether graduates entering the labour market are satisfied with their own situation.

Ninety-four percent of former students who successfully found employment had jobs at the time of the survey⁶. Considering all respondents, including those who did not want to or could not find employment after graduation, we can say that 85% of the graduates were employed at the time of the survey. Approximately half of those who did not actually have a job at that time were inactive, i.e. they were away from the labour market due to having small children, while the other half were registered unemployed people. This makes up approximately 5% of all the graduated full-time students.

Those respondents who are currently employed were also asked about the characteristics of their work⁷. A significant part of them (88%) had full-time jobs, and a further 4% did extra work besides their main jobs. Approximately 7% of them had part-time jobs. Not very many graduates entering the labour market started their own enterprises. It seems like very few graduates (only 3%) from higher education choose self-employment. It is interesting to compare this to the present situation: as we saw earlier, one-tenth of them thought of starting their own businesses.

The majority of those who found employment have a non fixed-term contract (60%), but more than one-third of them found jobs on a fixed-term contract⁸. Some of them do occasional work.

Those who graduated as full-time students are just starting their career, so relatively few of them **work in leading positions**: according to our research so far, this rate is slightly higher than 10%. Most of them are in lower- and medium-level leading positions, and only 1 to 2% of them work in the upper management.

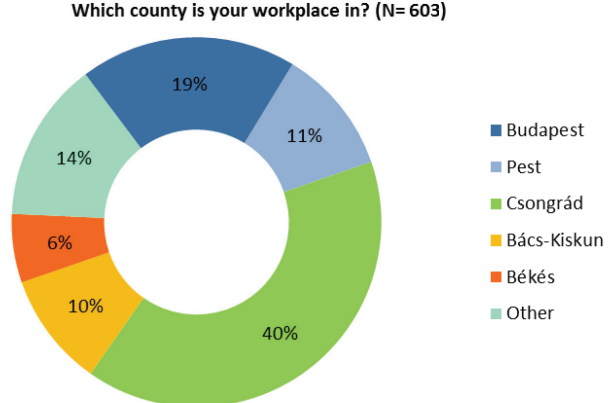
Fifty-six percent of the graduates found their jobs in the region, and 40% of those in Csongrád County. Besides this region, Budapest and Pest County seem to be the most popular: 19% of respondents found employment in the capital, and 11% in the

6 the telephone survey carried out in 2011.
 7 the telephone survey carried out in 2011.
 8 the online survey carried out in 2011



neighbouring areas of the capital. This corresponds to the rates of earlier studies, where finding employment in the region proved to be around 50 to 55%, while Budapest drew away one-fifth of the graduates. Typically, one-third of the graduates stayed in the county.

Figure 8: Geographical distribution of graduates entering the labour market

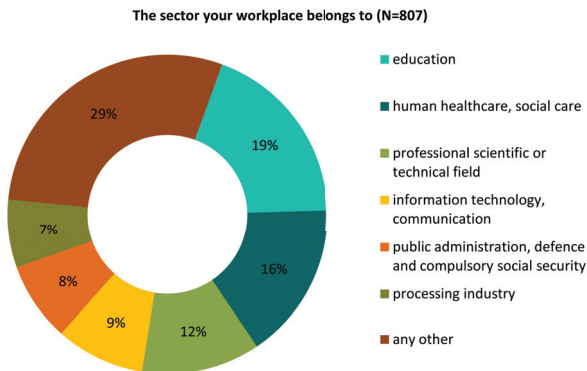


Source: the telephone survey carried out in 2011

As for keeping the labour force here, this region is especially strong in the case of graduates from the Faculty of Agriculture, the Juhász Gyula Teacher Training Faculty, and the Faculty of Health Sciences and Social Studies: at least two-thirds of their graduates found employment in this region. Compared to this, the capital has a really strong drawing effect for the graduates of the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Economics: more than one-third of the graduates found their jobs in Budapest and its neighbouring areas.

Nearly the same number of respondents worked in the public and government sector as in the for-profit field: 45 to 46% of the respondents. The rest, almost one-tenth of the respondents, became employed in the non-profit sector. We found similar rates in earlier studies as well. The respondents could choose more than one field: e.g. a public employee who has their own enterprise too, could mark both the public and the private sector, but only few people did so.

According to the portfolio of the University of Szeged, most of the graduates of this university **find employment in education, human health care** and social care (approximately **35 to 41% of the graduates** entering the labour market). At the same time, many of them stay at organizations specialized in professional, technical, or scientific activities (including business expert activity, legal and technical consulting, and scientific research), also at companies for ICT, and also at organizations of public administration and compulsory social security (figure 9).

**Figure 9: Sector of the present job**

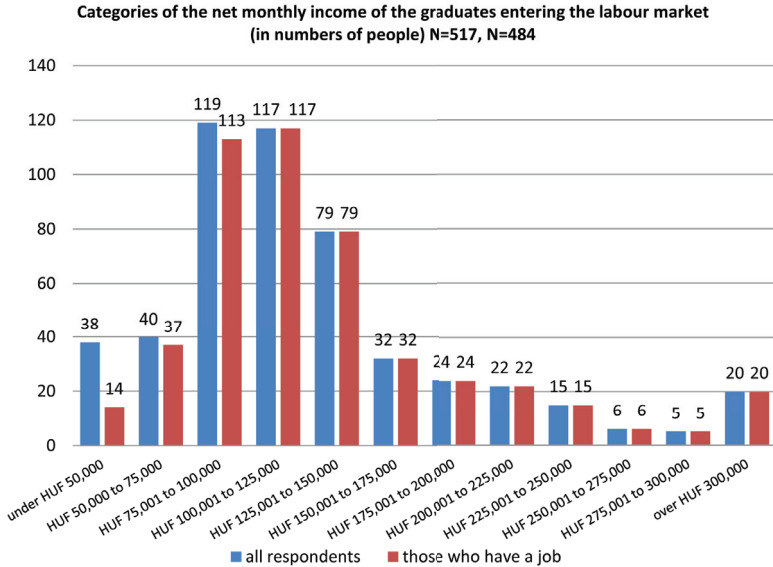
Source: the online survey carried out in 2011

Now let us see the possible income that graduates entering the labour market can have. **The question regarding the net monthly income** was addressed only to those who had, or had ever had, a job since their graduation, that is, to those who had entered the labour market.⁹ This is a rather sensitive topic, as some people are not so pleased to answer questions about their financial situation. During the 2011 survey, 13% of the respondents refused to give information about this. If we consider only those respondents who given a substantive answer (517 people), we can say most of them get an income of HUF 75,000 to 125,000 per month, and 15% of them have an income lower than HUF 75,000 (Figure 10). **The income of three-quarters of the graduated students does not exceed HUF 150,000.**

If we consider only those who currently have a job, then, as expected, there are fewer respondents in the lower income categories. **According to the surveys carried out so far, typically one-third of those who have jobs do not take home more than HUF 100,000 per month.** A monthly income higher than HUF 300,000 might also result from distorted information, i.e., respondents report an income higher than what they actually have, or, it may also result from the fact that 1 to 2% of them found employment abroad.

Pharmacists, economists, IT specialists and lawyers can realize a higher income, while teachers and people working in healthcare, at least in Hungary, are relatively not so well-paid. According to our earlier studies, graduates entering the labour market in the for-profit sector have higher incomes than those who become employed in the public or government sector, while the lowest income is earned in the non-profit sector. This was supported by the current survey (see Table 9). However, as their careers develop, people working in the public sector offset some of this disadvantage due to their stable promotional system.

9 The telephone survey carried out in 2011

Figure 10: Net monthly income of the graduates


Source: the telephone survey carried out in 2011

Table 5. Net monthly income in the business sector, public sector, and non-profit sector (by distribution of

	up to HUF 150,000	HUF 150,001 to HUF 250,000	Over HUF 250,000
Business sector (N = 205)	58%	29%	13%
Public-government sector (N = 242)	85%	13%	2%
Non-profit sector (N = 44)	91%	9%	0%

Source: the telephone survey carried out in 2011

If we compare the salary expectations of current students to the actual incomes freshly graduated students achieve after 1 to 3 years from their graduation, we can say students are not far from reality, and they do not have unreal expectations. This does not mean, however, that they are satisfied with the income they can have.



Table 6. Salary expected by full-time students, and the actual salary of graduates entering the labour market, by

	Less than HUF 100,000	HUF 100,000 to HUF 150,000	HUF 151,000 to HUF 250,000	Over HUF 250,000
How much does a graduate entering the labour market make? (according to full-time students)	40%	51%	8%	1%
Net monthly income of employed people after 1 to 3 years from graduation (the 2011 telephone survey)	34%	41%	19%	6%

Subjective indicators are also important besides the objective ones such as how graduates entering the labour market feel at their workplace. If we examine how graduates are related to their jobs, **how satisfied they are with their work conditions**, then we can generally say they are satisfied with almost all of the aspects we surveyed, except their salary (Table 7).

Usually they give the highest rank to the professional nature of the work they do, and basically have good relationships with colleagues as well, and think the physical conditions are satisfactory, too. At least three-quarters of the graduates entering the labour market were satisfied with these three areas. However, the opinion about professional prestige and career possibilities is not that good. The rating of salaries, just like in the earlier surveys, seems to be the lowest. The aforementioned aspects have already been assessed in several surveys, though using different methods, and the result is always the same: the achievable income and the expected promotion possibilities are the reasons for some dissatisfaction for graduates entering the labour market, while the professional aspects and colleagues at work seem to be the main reasons for satisfaction.

Table 7. Satisfaction of the graduates with different aspects of their work; rates of satisfaction as %

Characteristics of the job	Satisfied or very satisfied %
professional aspect of the job	80
professional promotion	59
professional prestige	64
income, benefits	48
personal aspects of the job	79
physical conditions of the job	76

Source: the online survey carried out in 2011

We used a seven-point scale to show general satisfaction with the labour market situation. We can often see a kind of “pulling to the centre” on these scales,

i.e. many respondents choose rather the middle values of the scale than the extremes, however, now this is not the case. Generally, one-third of the respondents seem to be unsatisfied, while 45 to 50% are rather satisfied. The number of those who have seen their situation as being in the middle in the past few years seemed to be approximately one-fifth of the respondents. According to our earlier surveys, when the year of graduation was not during the economic crisis, the number of respondents who were definitely not satisfied with their situation was significantly lower (the rate was around 6%, as opposed to 14 to 15% found in 2010-2011)¹⁰ (Table 8). Those who are really satisfied typically make up one-tenth of the respondents. Those who have jobs are usually more satisfied with their situation, unlike those who have currently no employment, either by their choice or by necessity.

Table 8. Satisfaction with the labour market situation on a 7-point scale, distribution, mean

Satisfaction with the labour market situation (1 = not at all, 7 = completely satisfied)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	mean
2010 online survey (N = 733)	14	9	10	18	20	21	9	4.20
2011 online survey (N = 1058)	15	11	10	22	21	14	8	3.96

Finding employment in this region¹¹

As we described this earlier, more than half of the graduates of the University of Szeged find employment in the Southern Great Plain region of Hungary. Considering the whole of Hungary, even though the labour market situation is not the most favourable here, still there are regions with worse unemployment rates than this one. In fact, the region-level labour market data are not exactly of informative value, as the differences between smaller areas are washed out. Typically, it is easier to find jobs in bigger towns and in their neighbouring areas, while it is more difficult to find employment in certain smaller units of area where the labour market is practically closed.

The process of finding employment is slightly longer for those who want to work in this region compared to other regions which is probably also due to the saturation of the local labour market: only approximately two-thirds of the graduates find employment within up to three months, and the rate of those who find employment after one year reaches 9%. In other regions, especially due to all the possibilities in the capital and its neighbouring areas, only 1% of the graduates look for a job for a longer period of time than 12 months.

¹⁰ These data come from the online surveys. However, in the 2011 telephone survey, fewer respondents say they are definitely unsatisfied. The survey method might have a role in this too: when we are contacted by interviewers personally, we might be less likely to express our dissatisfaction.

¹¹ based on the telephone survey carried out in 2011



The most important way of finding employment, just like anywhere else in the country, is the network of personal relationships: this is how one-third of those who stayed in the region found their jobs. Online advertisements have a less significant role, although a little more than one-fifth of the graduates found their first jobs through online advertisements. Those who are looking for employment are more likely to read traditional printed advertisements, and getting job offers from the place of their professional training is more frequent, too. Ten percent each find their jobs this way.

Graduates had to go through **selection procedures** to a smaller extent (three-quarters of them) to get into workplaces in this region than in other regions. This procedure, in the great majority of the cases, is the job interview itself, usually in Hungarian: in the region only one out of ten respondents had to answer questions in a foreign language, too, while this rate is significantly higher in other regions (28%). Other selection procedures were not really typical as employers did not use complex procedures, and psychological tests were not very usual either.

Graduates who find employment in this region can take advantage of their foreign language skills to a smaller extent than those who find jobs in other regions: in other areas of Hungary, almost one-third of the graduates use English frequently, and one-fifth of them use German. In the Southern Great Plain region, only one-fifth of those who find jobs use English, and a little more than one-tenth use German frequently.

Regarding how many of the graduates have jobs currently, there is no difference between this region and other parts of Hungary: approximately 94% of them do. However, there is a difference regarding what those graduates do who have currently no jobs. While in this region almost three-quarters of them are registered unemployed people, in other regions almost three-quarters of those who have no jobs are inactive (probably due to having small children). As for obtaining a START card, we did not find any differences. It is as popular in this region as anywhere else: 46% of those who stayed in the Southern Great Plain region obtained this card meant to help finding employment, which is 43% of the respondents in other regions.

In the case of this region, the rate of those who work in the business sector is smaller (43%); more of them (13%) find employment in the non-profit sector. The percentage of those who find employment in the public sectors is more or less the same here as in other regions. Those who stay in the Southern Great Plain region, usually work for smaller organizations; nearly one-third of them are at workplaces with less than 20 employees. In other regions, only one-fifth of them work for organizations like this.

The salaries available in this region are lower: 86% of the respondents have a net monthly income lower than HUF 150,000, and only 3% of them make more than 250,000. If we consider HUF 100,000 as a dividing line, we find that almost half of those who work in this region make less than this amount, while only one-fourth of those who find employment in other regions make less than this, mainly because of higher

salaries in the capital, its neighbouring areas and abroad. Several factors contribute to this situation. According to Table 9, those who find employment in this region have a disadvantage both in the business sector and the public sector, although this difference is smaller in the case of graduates finding jobs in the public or government sector.

Table 9. Net monthly income in the business and public sector, comparing this region and other regions (by distribution of the respondents)

		<i>up to HUF 150,000</i>	<i>HUF 150,001 to HUF 250,000</i>	<i>Over HUF 250,000</i>
Working in the Southern Great Plain region	Business sector (N = 112)	74%	20%	6%
	Public-government sector (N = 135)	90%	9%	1%
Working somewhere else than the Southern Great Plain region	Business sector (N = 93)	39%	40%	21%
	Public-government sector (N = 106)	79%	18%	3%

Source: the telephone survey carried out in 2011

As we have already seen, **the labour market situation of graduates staying in the Southern Great Plain region is less favourable to a certain extent** than the situation of those who find employment in other regions. This is also reflected in their satisfaction with their labour market situation (Table 10). Almost a third said they were unsatisfied, but still more than a half (53%) were basically satisfied. We found a higher satisfaction rate in the case of graduates finding jobs in other regions: hardly more than one-fifth were unsatisfied, and 57% said they were satisfied.

Table 10. Satisfaction with the labour market situation in a 7-point scale, distribution

<i>Satisfaction with the labour market situation (1 = not at all, 7 = completely satisfied)</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Graduates who found employment in the Southern Great Plain region (N = 339)	8	9	13	17	29	16	8
Graduates who found employment somewhere else than the Southern Great Plain region (N = 262)	5	7	11	20	31	17	9

Source: the telephone survey carried out in 2011

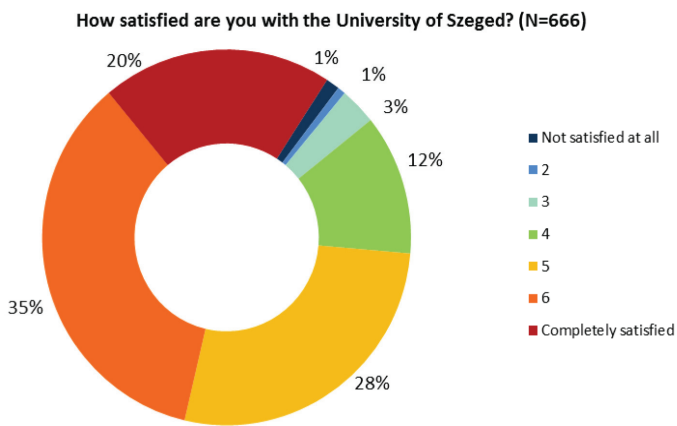


What do the graduates entering the labour market think of the University of Szeged?

It is also an important part of graduate career tracking, besides finding out about the labour market situation, to ask our ex-students what their opinion is, in the light of their experience in the labour market, about the University of Szeged, about the knowledge and skills they learned here, how satisfied they were with our institution, and whether they would recommend it to other young people preparing for higher education.

Generally speaking, graduates are definitely satisfied with the University of Szeged. Eighty-five percent said they were satisfied, 20% of whom were completely satisfied, and only 5% of whom were unsatisfied (that is, marked values of 1 to 3 in the 7-point scale)¹² (Figure 11). These results are in harmony with the views from the previous years: the rate of satisfied people has been fluctuating between 83 and 85%, with that of the unsatisfied being around 4 to 6%, while the rest of the respondents (approximately one-tenth) have an ambiguous view.

Figure 11: Satisfaction of full-time graduated students at the University of Szeged (7-point scale, distribution)



Source: the telephone survey carried out in 2011

If we compare this to our results concerning the labour market, just like in earlier surveys, we can say: **71% of even those who are unsatisfied with their situation in the labour market are satisfied with our university, and only one-tenth of them are unsatisfied.** This means that the respondents did not base their opinion about the place of their studies on their actual situation in the labour market.

12 The telephone survey carried out in 2011



As a result, it is not an accident that **a huge majority (96%) of our graduates entering the labour market would recommend our university to others.** Those who would not, make up 3% of the respondents, and a further 1% could not decide in this question. **We also asked about the reasons for not recommending our university to others.** A part of those who would not recommend our university to others feel the training is too difficult, others felt the acquired qualification was not useful enough, some respondents felt the practice part of their education was too little, and a few of them mentioned reasons that come from their personal situation.

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The project is supported by the European Union
and co-financed by the European Social Fund.