2003 ASLA Graduating Students Study

Tabulated by
Lewis & Clark Research

4020 BARRETT DRIVE, SUITE 205, RALEIGH, NC 27609
(919) 510-0060 (PHONE) (919) 510-0070 (FAX)

October 2003

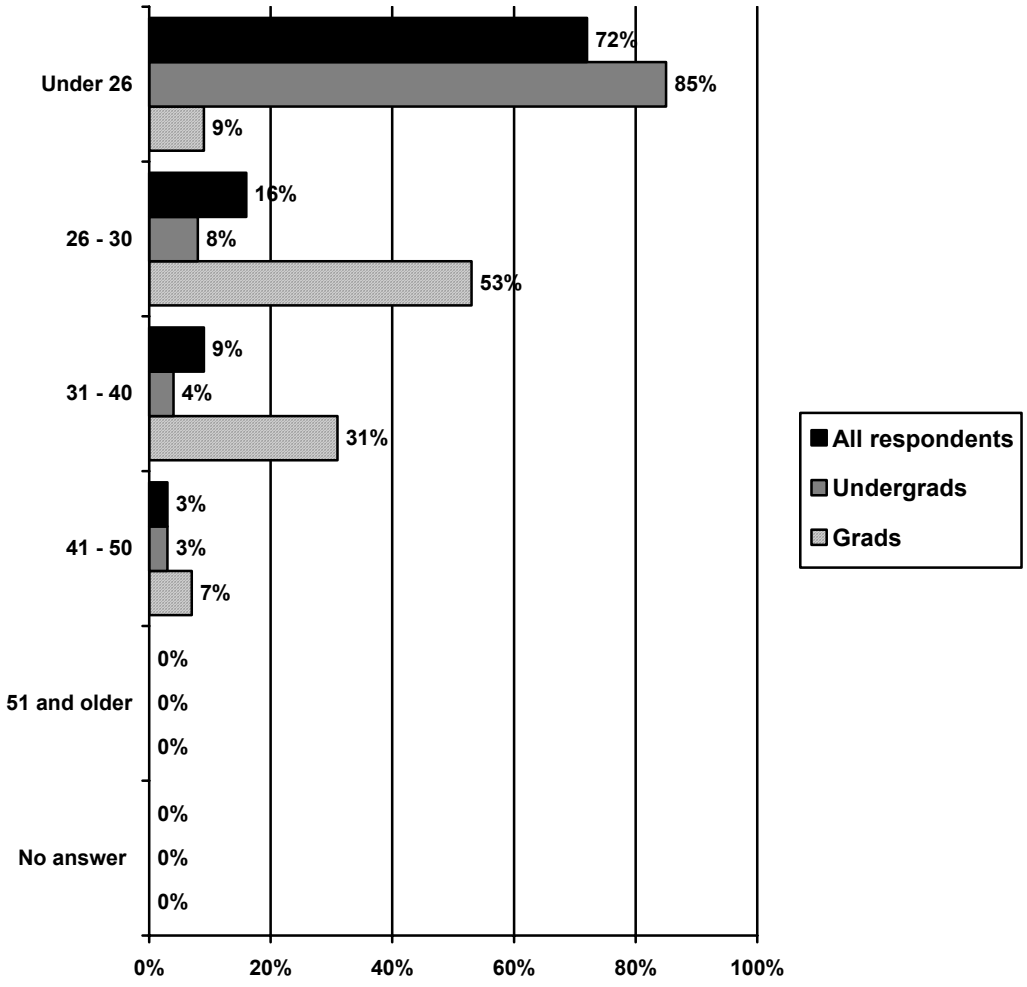
2003 ASLA Graduating Students Study

- Introduction

Surveys were distributed to graduating students in accredited undergraduate and graduate landscape architecture programs. The purpose of this survey was to gather information on post-graduation plans. This survey, with some modifications, was a repeat of ones done annually starting in 1997. The results are summarized in the following report.

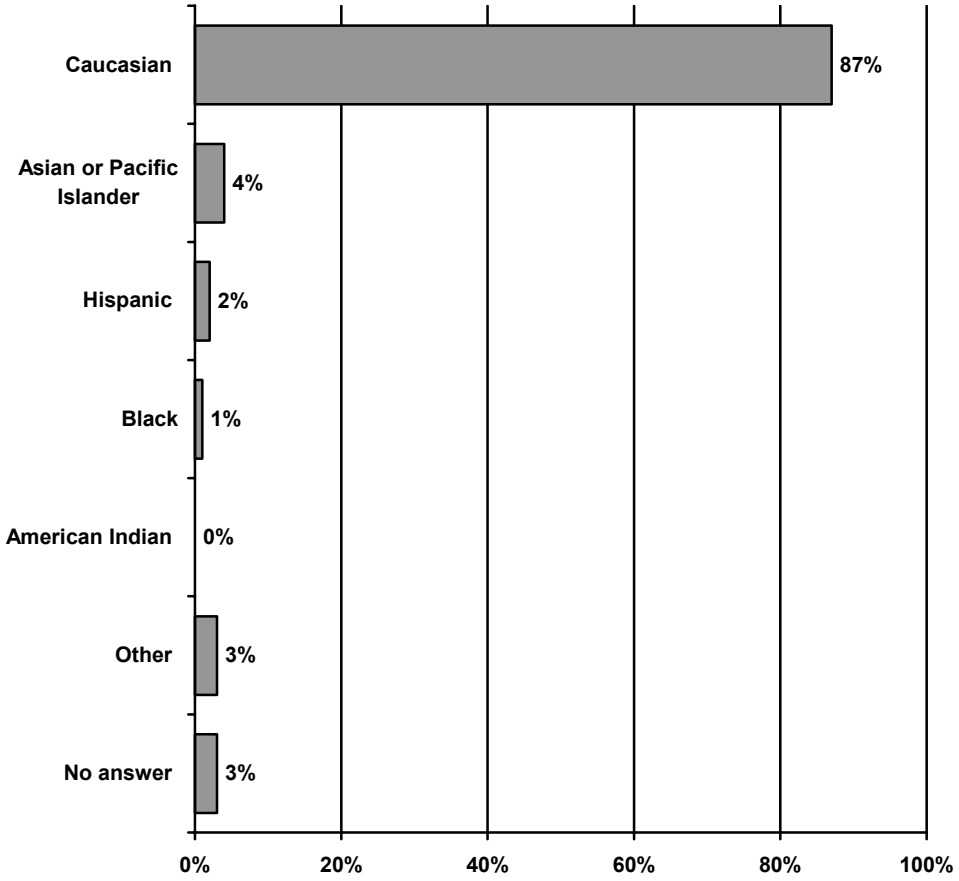
- Age

The average age of respondents is 25 for undergraduates, 30 for graduate students, and 26 overall. This is similar to previous years.



- Race

The majority of respondents (87%) indicate that they are Caucasian.

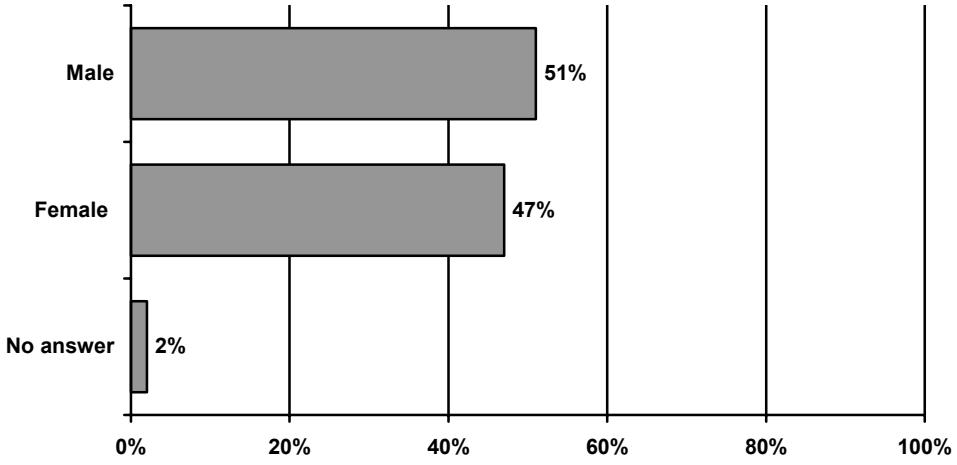


Comparison with previous years:

	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997
Caucasian	87%	88%	89%	83%	79%	83%	86%
Asian/Pacific Islander	4%	6%	4%	9%	5%	9%	2%
Hispanic	2%	2%	3%	2%	1%	4%	2%
Black	1%	1%	<1%	2%	0%	1%	1%
American Indian	<1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	2%
Other	3%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	3%

- Gender

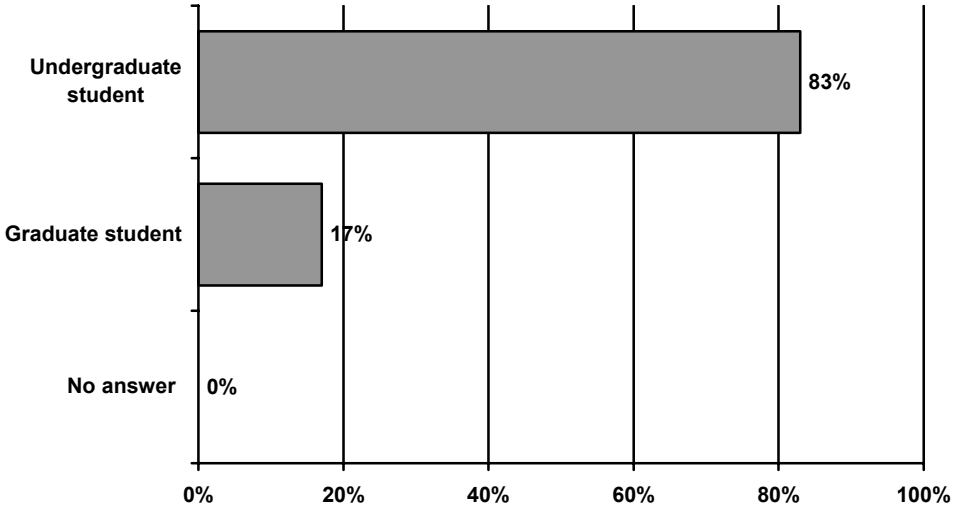
Just over one-half of respondents (51%) are male, while 47% are female.



The proportion of male respondents decreased slightly from last year (56%). Among graduate students, female students accounted for more than two-thirds of respondents in this year's study.

- Current Educational Status

Out of 319 respondents, 264 (83%) indicate that they are undergraduate students, and 55 (17%) indicate that they are graduate students. This represents a similar proportion of undergraduate students in this year's survey responses as in last year's responses.

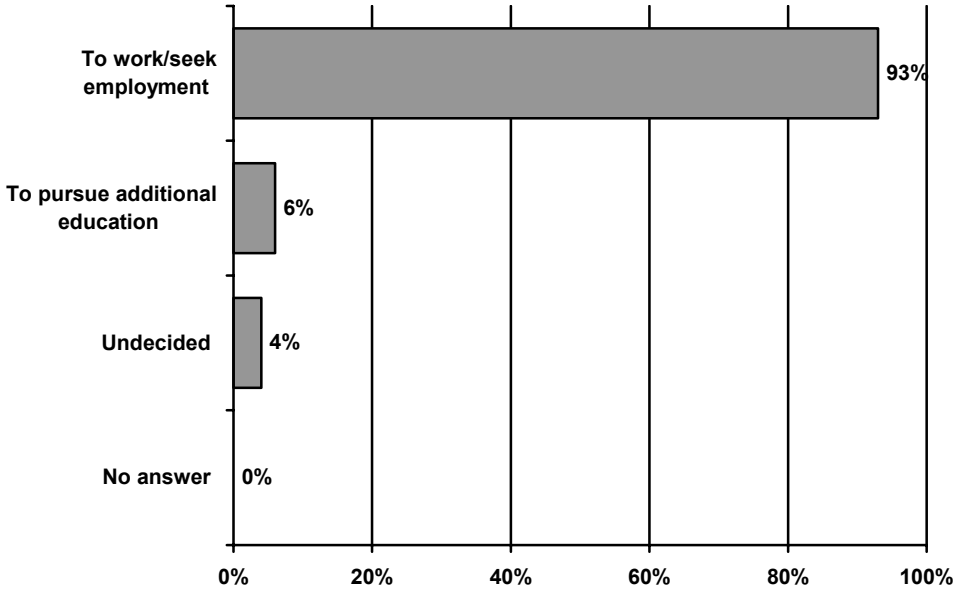


Schools represented by ten or more undergraduate students were as follows:

# of Students	School
19	Cal State Polytechnic U, Pomona
18	University of California, Davis
15	Ball State University
15	University of Georgia
13	Purdue University
12	Kansas State University
12	Texas Tech
11	Pennsylvania State University
10	Ohio State University
10	Oklahoma State University

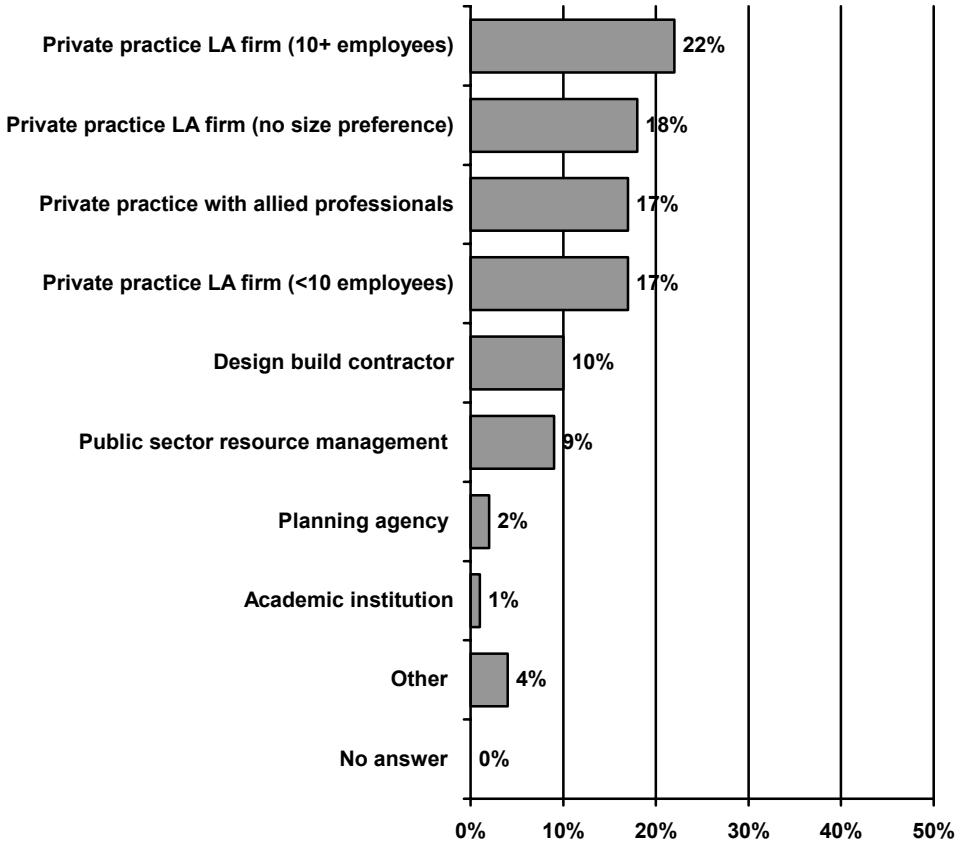
- Plans for Immediate Future

A majority of respondents (93%) indicate that their plans for the immediate future involve either working or seeking employment, while 6% plan to pursue additional education and 4% are undecided. This is similar to previous years.



- Desired Type of Employer
  [RESPONDENTS WHO ARE LOOKING FOR OR HAVE ACCEPTED A JOB]

  Close to one-quarter of respondents (22%) indicate that they are primarily interested in seeking employment in a private practice LA firm with 10 or more employees, followed by a private practice LA firm (no size preference) (18%), and a private practice with allied professionals and a private practice LA firm with less than 10 employees (17% each).

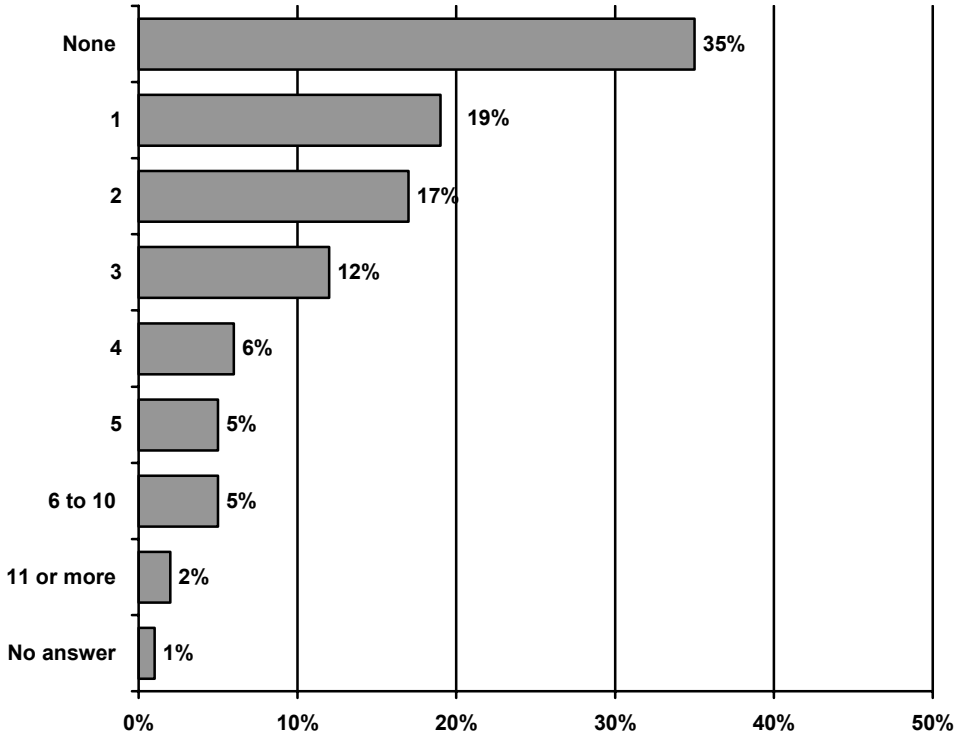


Comparison with previous years:

	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997
Private Practice LA firm (<10 employees)	17%	15%	15%	16%	22%	16%	23%
Private Practice LA firm (10+ employees)	22%	24%	30%	23%	20%	22%	27%
Private Practice LA firm (no size preference)	18%	19%	14%	18%	21%	13%	23%
TOTAL Private Practice LA firm	**57%**	**58%**	**59%**	**57%**	**63%**	**51%**	**73%**
Private Practice with Allied Professionals	17%	19%	21%	22%	21%	24%	13%
Design/build Contract	10%	10%	10%	8%	2%	5%	3%
Public Sector Resource Management	9%	8%	6%	4%	7%	10%	7%
Planning Agency	2%	2%	2%	2%	4%	2%	2%
Academic Institution	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Other	4%	3%	2%	6%	3%	4%	3%

- Job Interviews
  [RESPONDENTS WHO ARE LOOKING FOR OR HAVE ACCEPTED A JOB]

  Respondents indicate that, on average, they have had 2 job interviews during their final semester in school, the same as in last year's study.

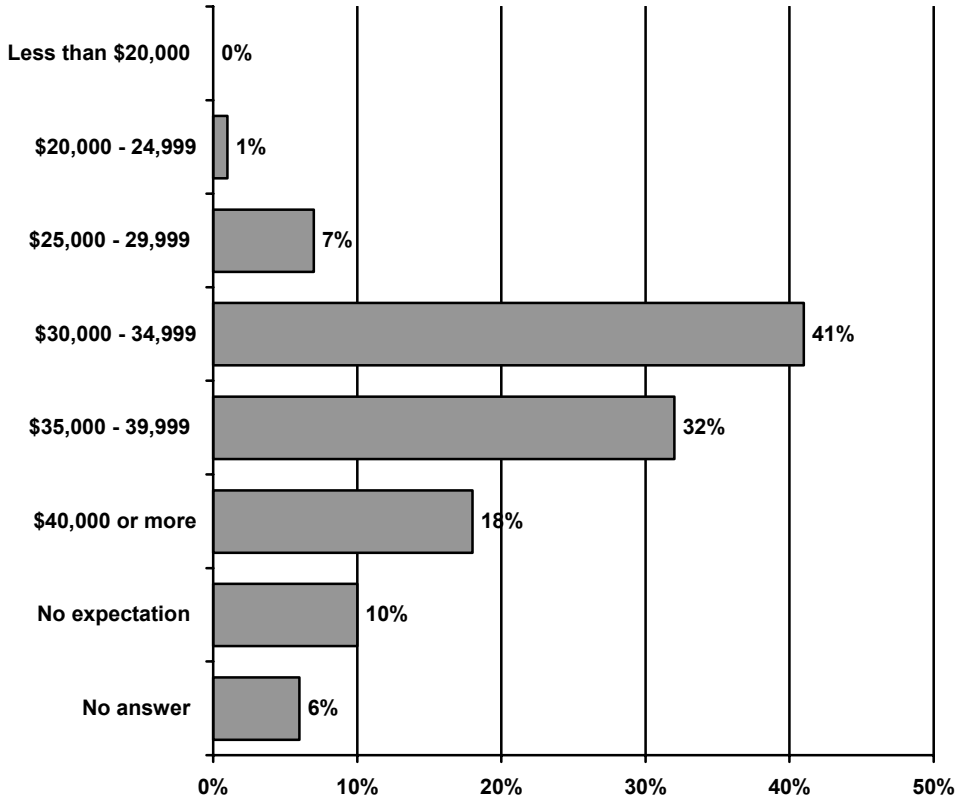


Respondents who have had one or more interviews were asked to comment on how the interview process went, if it was what they had expected, and anything noteworthy they encountered. A complete list of their comments may be found starting on page 33.

Approximately one-half of respondents (53%) indicate that the interview(s) went as expected, while 11% said it didn't (and 36% didn't indicate an answer). Their explanations can be found starting on page 39.

- Salary Expectations [RESPONDENTS WHO ARE LOOKING FOR OR HAVE ACCEPTED A JOB]

Respondents who are looking for a job (or have already found one) expect(ed) an average salary of approximately $34,300. Undergraduate students expect(ed) $33,400 and graduate students expect(ed) $38,400.



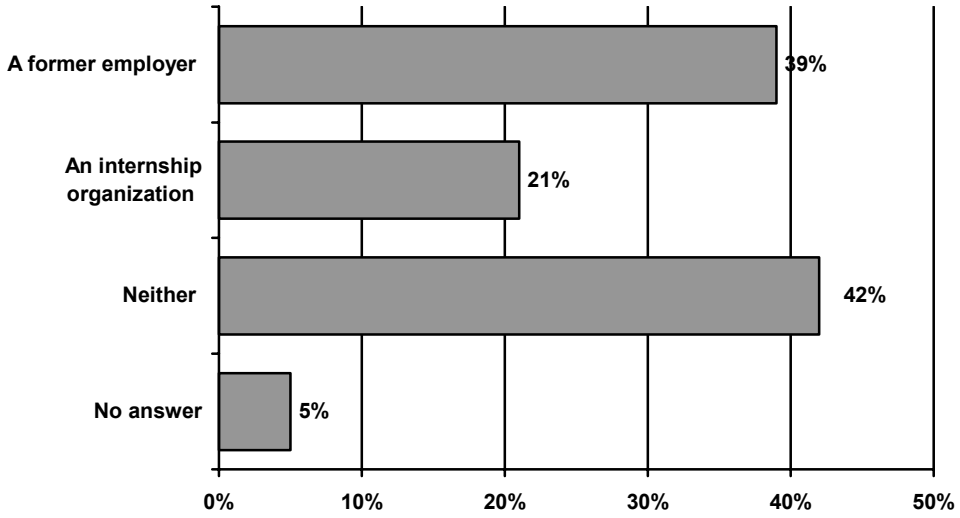
Comparison with previous years:

(AVERAGE SALARY – '000's)

	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997
All Respondents	$ 34	$ 29	$ 31	$ 31	$ 30	$ 29	28
Undergraduates	33	28	31	31	28	27	28
Graduates	38	35	35	34	33	32	29

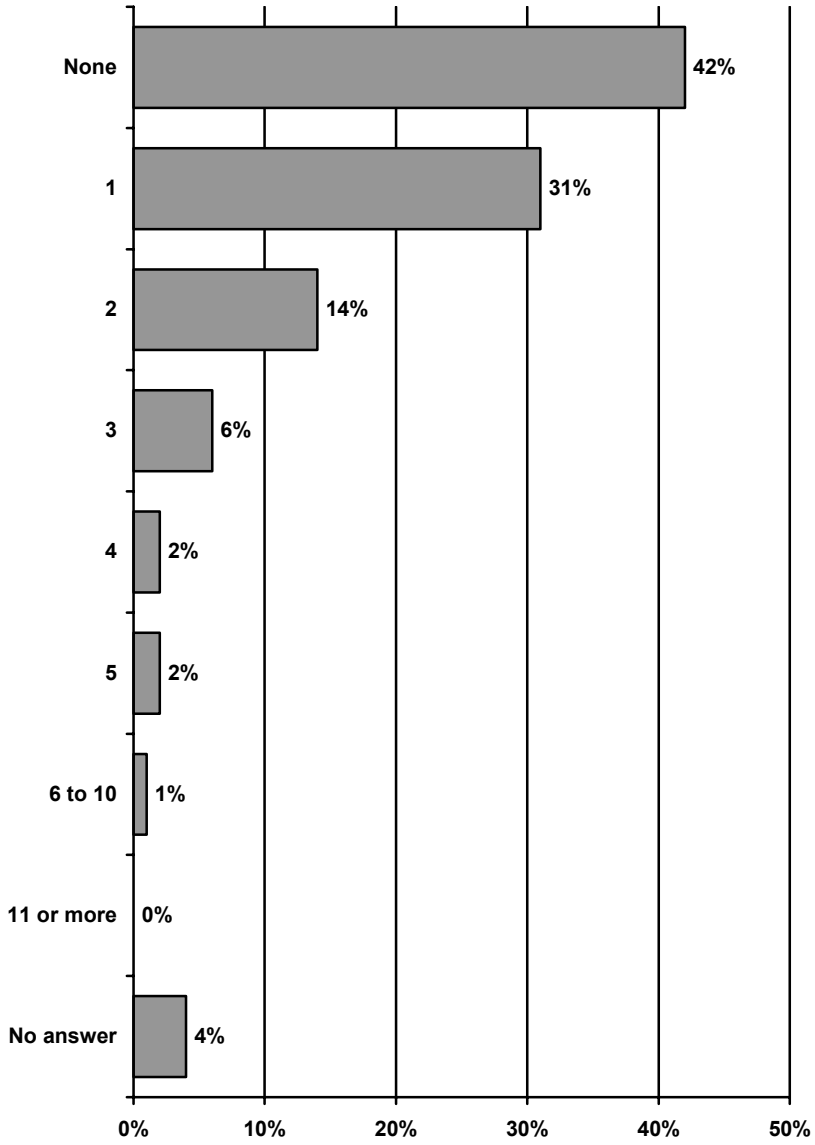
- Employment Prospects
  [RESPONDENTS WHO ARE LOOKING FOR OR HAVE ACCEPTED A JOB]

  Approximately one-third of respondents (39%) indicate that they have or have had reasonable employment prospects with a former employer, while 21% have/had prospects with an internship organization. This is similar to previous years.



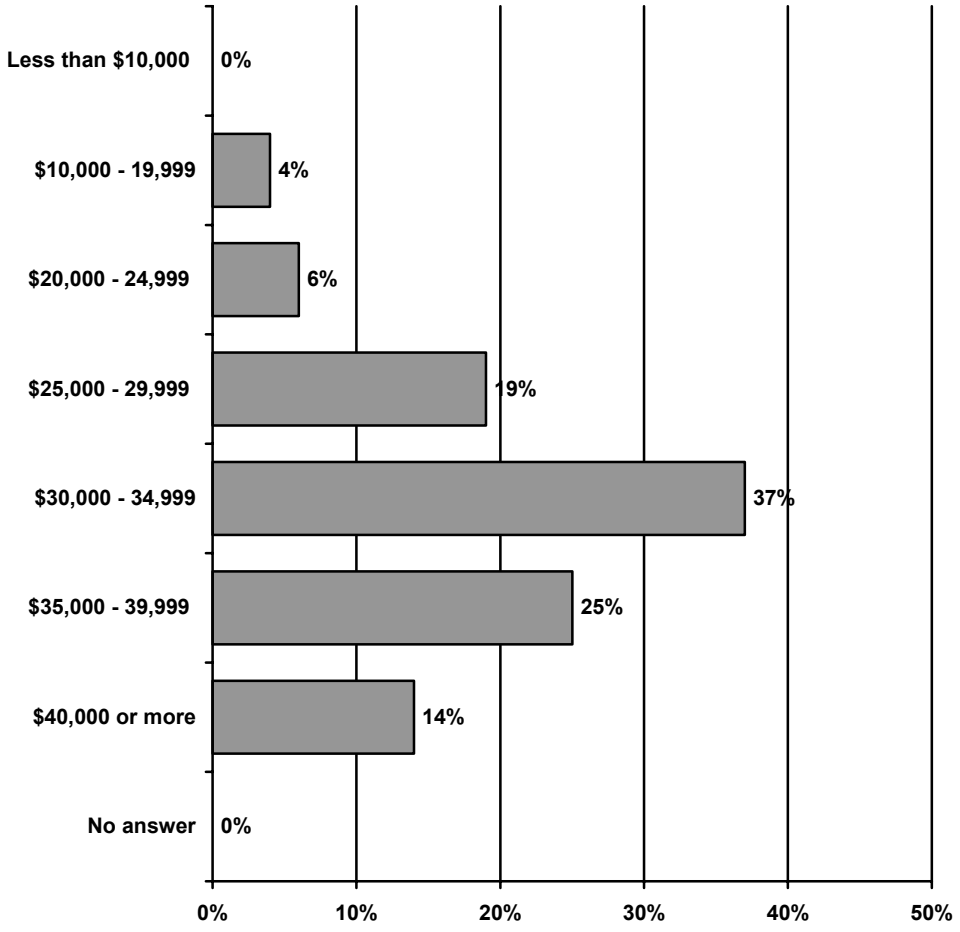
- Number of Job Offers [RESPONDENTS WHO ARE LOOKING FOR OR HAVE ACCEPTED A JOB]

  Respondents indicate that they had received an average of 1.0 job offers at the time they completed the questionnaire. This is similar to the 1.1 job offers received last year, compared to 1.4 two years ago and 1.6 three years ago. In addition, the percentage of respondents receiving *at least* one job offer was about the same – 56%.



- Starting Salary Offered [RESPONDENTS WHO ARE LOOKING FOR OR HAVE ACCEPTED A JOB]

  Respondents who have had one or more job offers indicate that the average starting salary offered to them was approximately $32,700.

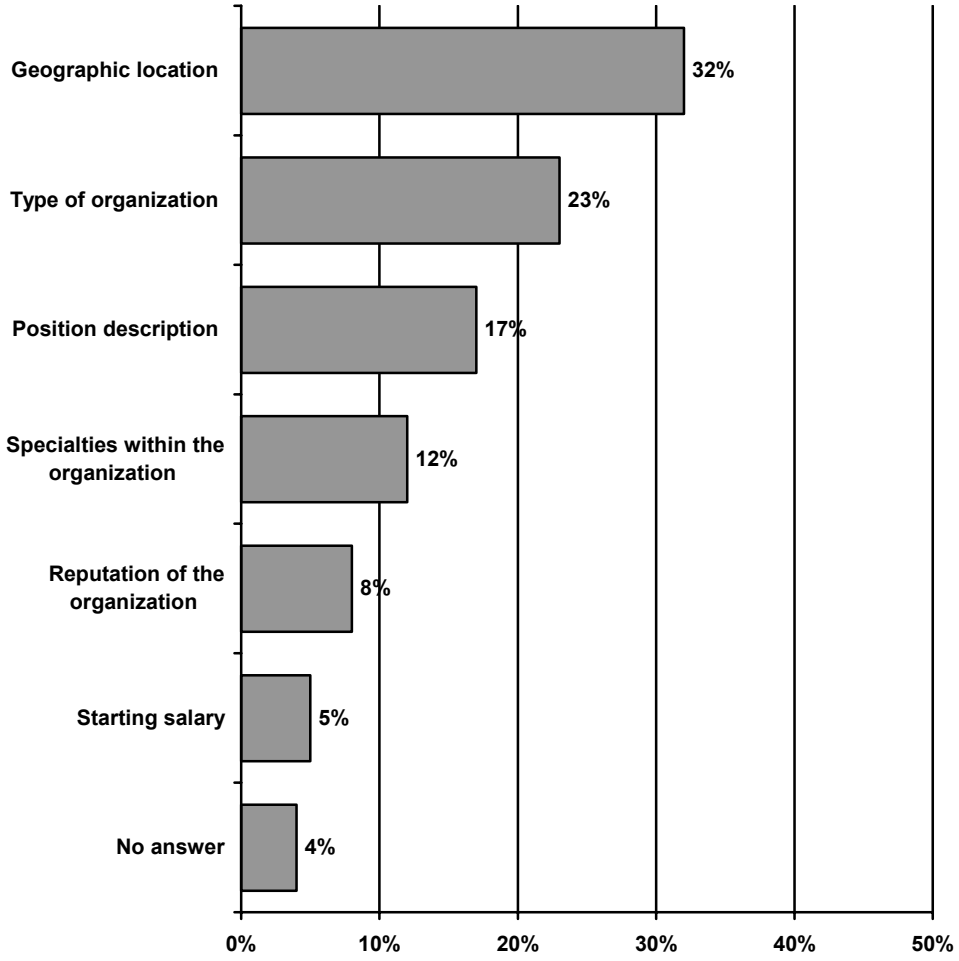


As has been the case for past several years, the starting salary offered increased only slightly in this year's study:

1997:	$23,000
1998:	26,300
1999:	28,200
2000:	31,800
2001:	32,400
2002:	32,500
2003:	32,700

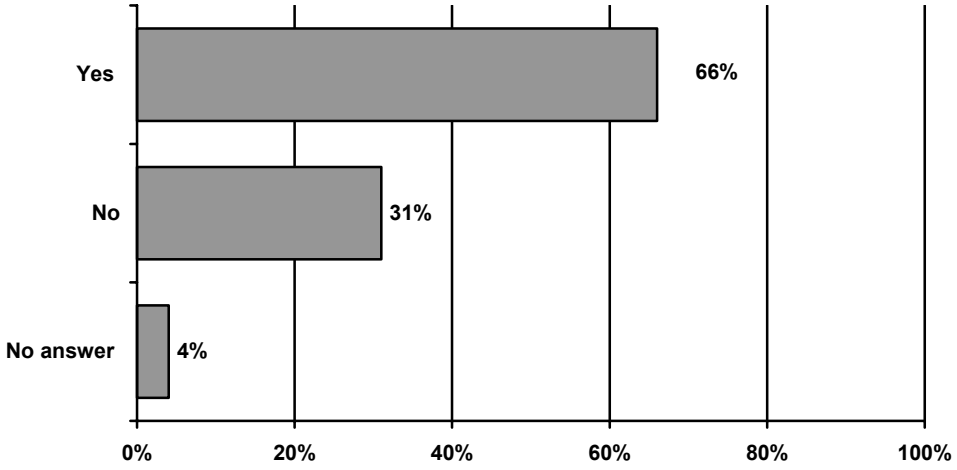
- Important Factors in Job Selection [RESPONDENTS WHO ARE LOOKING FOR OR HAVE ACCEPTED A JOB]

  Respondents were asked to rank a variety of attributes in order from 1 to 6 based on their importance to them in selecting a job. The following chart shows the percentage of respondents ranking a specific attribute number one.



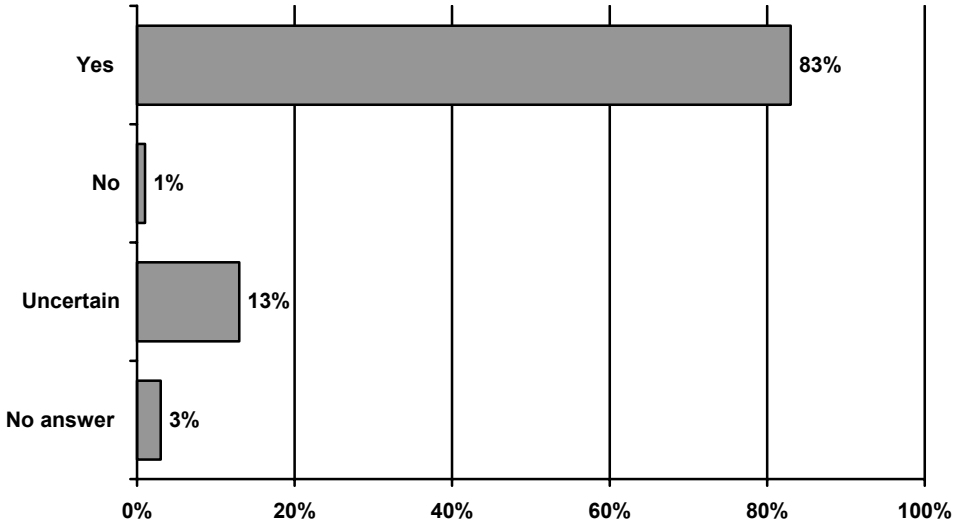
- Geographical Restrictions [RESPONDENTS WHO ARE LOOKING FOR OR HAVE ACCEPTED A JOB]

  Two-thirds of respondents (66%) indicate that, in their job search, they feel restricted to one geographical area for reasons of necessity or strong personal preference, while 31% do not feel restricted. In the last study, a slightly smaller percentage of respondents (59%) indicated that they felt confined to a geographical area.



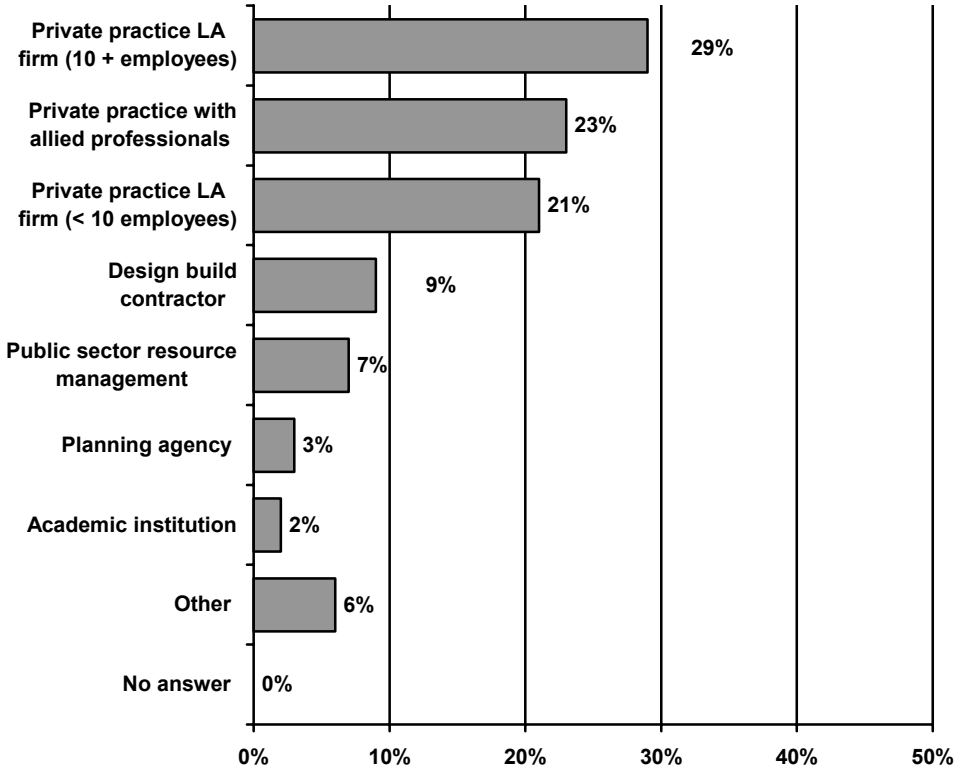
- State Registration [RESPONDENTS WHO ARE LOOKING FOR OR HAVE ACCEPTED A JOB]

  A majority of respondents (83%) indicate that they intend to seek state registration as a Landscape Architect. This represents a small increase from last year, when 80% indicated that they intended to seek state registration.



- Type of Employer [RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE ACCEPTED A JOB]

Close to three-tenths of respondents (29%) who have accepted a job describe their new employer as a private practice LA firm with 10 or more employees, while 23% describe their employer as a private practice LA firm with allied professionals, and 21% describe their employer as a private practice with less than 10 employees.



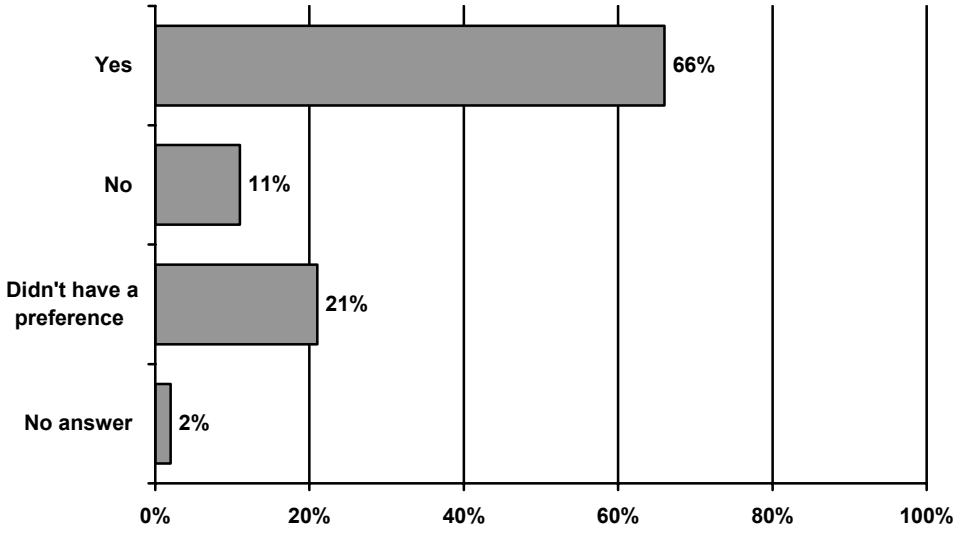
Comparison with previous years:

	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997
Private Practice LA firm (<10 employees)	21%	24%	22%	27%	*	*	*
Private Practice LA firm (10+ employees)	29%	30%	28%	26%	*	*	*
TOTAL Private Practice LA firm	**50%**	**54%**	**50%**	**53%**	**46%**	**60%**	**50%**
Private Practice with Allied Professionals	23%	20%	26%	21%	36%	26%	16%
Design/build Contract	9%	12%	18%	12%	8%	6%	16%
Planning Agency	3%	1%	0%	1%	2%	1%	0%
Public Sector Resource Management	7%	5%	2%	4%	1%	4%	5%
Academic Institution	2%	3%	1%	3%	1%	0%	2%
Other	6%	5%	4%	8%	7%	5%	13%

* (Data not available broken down by size)

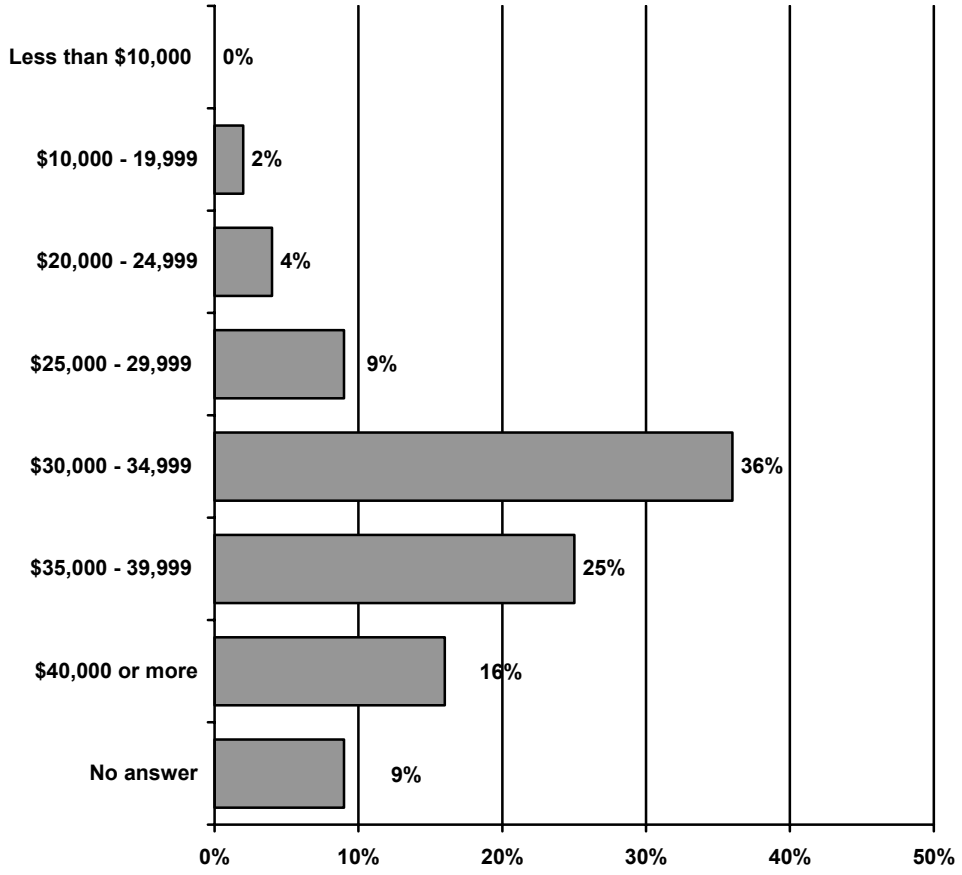
- Preferred Employer Type [RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE ACCEPTED A JOB]

Two-thirds of respondents (66%) who have accepted a job indicate that it is with their preferred type of employer, essentially the same as last year's 67% of respondents who accepted a job with their preferred type of employer.



- Starting Salary [RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE ACCEPTED A JOB]

Among the one-hundred and twenty-eight respondents who report that they have accepted a job offer, the average starting salary was approximately $34,800. Undergraduate students report an average starting salary of approximately $33,600 and graduate students report an average starting salary of approximately $40,700.



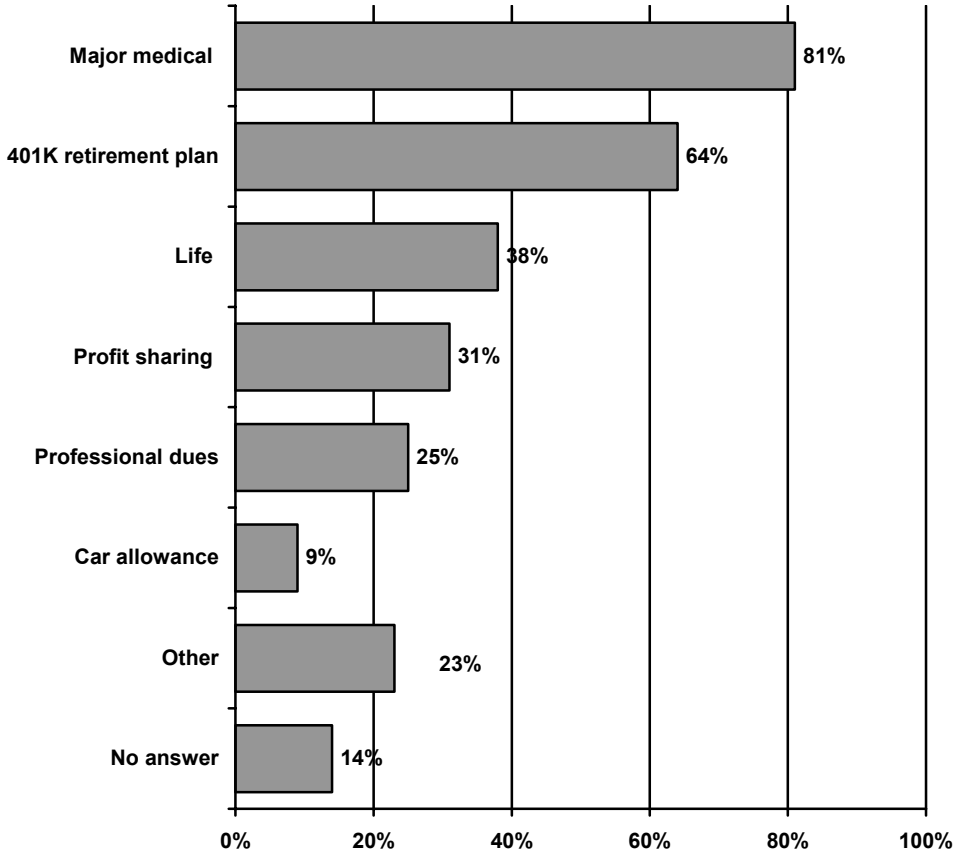
Comparison with previous years:

(AVERAGE SALARY – '000's)

	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997
All Respondents	$35	$ 33	$ 33	$ 33	$ 29	$ 27	26
Undergraduates	34	32	32	31	28	26	25
Graduates	41	38	36	39	33	30	29

- Benefits [RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE ACCEPTED A JOB]

Respondents indicate that they have a variety of benefits included in their current job. At the top of the list are major medical (81%) and 401K retirement plan (64%).



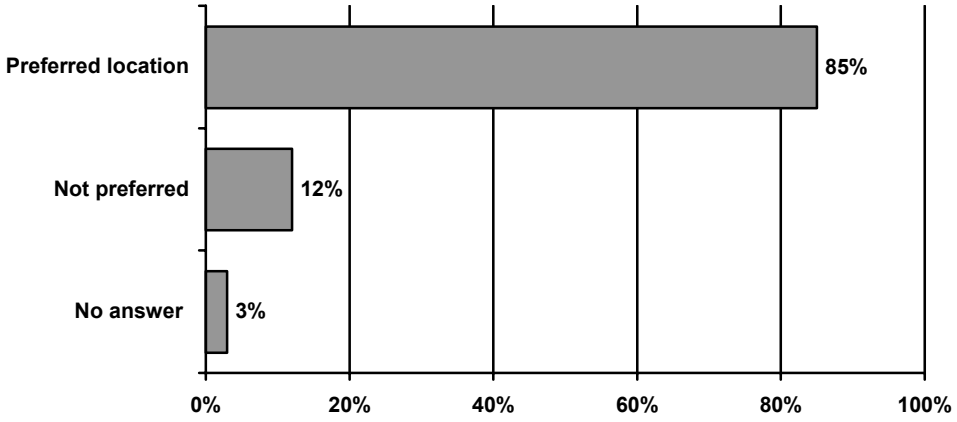
Comparison with previous years:

	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997
Major Medical	81%	79%	87%	79%	88%	86%	83%
Life Insurance	38%	36%	44%	38%	54%	35%	34%
Profit Sharing	31%	41%	44%	37%	46%	41%	36%
Car Allowance	9%	11%	12%	15%	16%	14%	28%
Professional Dues	25%	24%	31%	24%	36%	32%	33%
401K Retirement Plan	64%	70%	75%	63%	70%	61%	52%
Other	23%	19%	16%	20%	28%	20%	33%

- Location [RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE ACCEPTED A JOB]

  Respondents indicate that they will be working in a number of different states, with the largest groups in California (25%), and Florida (8%).

  Most respondents (85%) indicate that this is their preferred region. This represents a reversal of the previous trend– 79% in 2002, 81% in 2001, 85% in 2000, 93% in 1999, and 86% in 1998 and 1997.



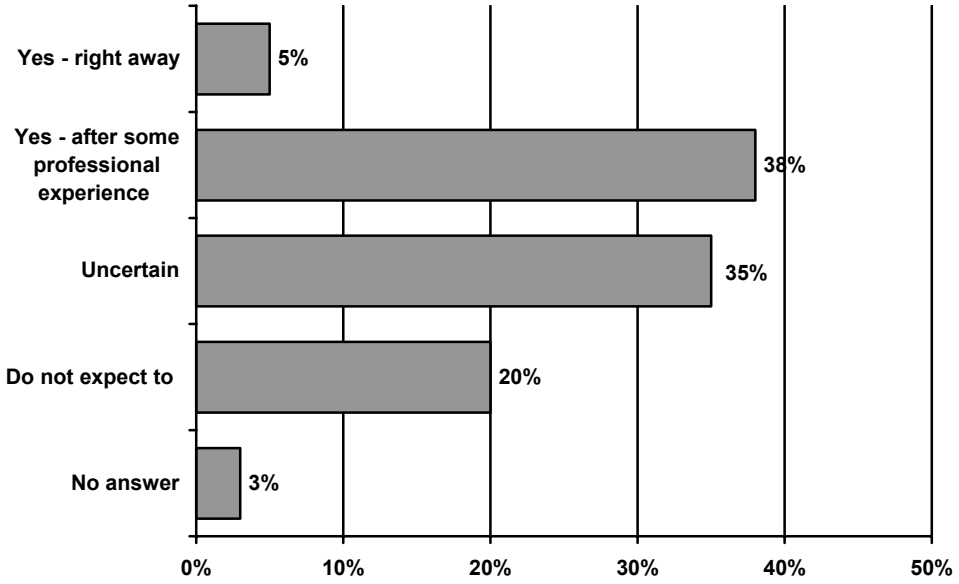
- Summary Comparison of Job-Expectations with Recently Hired Respondents

The following table compares the expectations of respondents during their job search (both those who are still in the job market and those who have accepted jobs) against the job 'realities' of those who have accepted jobs.

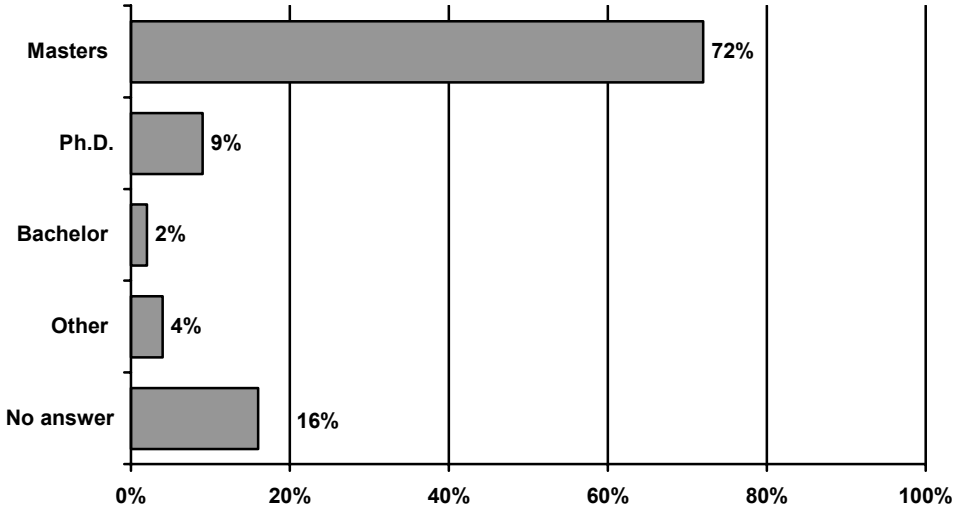
	'expectations' (job search)	'reality' (job accepted)
EMPLOYMENT SECTOR:		
Private practice LA firm (<10 employees)	17 %	21 %
Private practice LA firm (10 or more employees)	22 %	29 %
Private practice LA firm (no pref/not indicated)	18 %	-
	---	---
Private practice LA firm TOTAL	57 %	50 %
Private practice with allied professionals	17 %	23 %
Design build contractor	10 %	9 %
Planning agency	2 %	3 %
Public sector resource management	9 %	7 %
Academic institution	1 %	2 %
Other	4 %	6 %
AVERAGE SALARY:		
All respondents	$ 34,300	$ 34,800
Undergraduate students	$ 33,400	$ 33,600
Graduate students	$ 38,400	$ 40,700

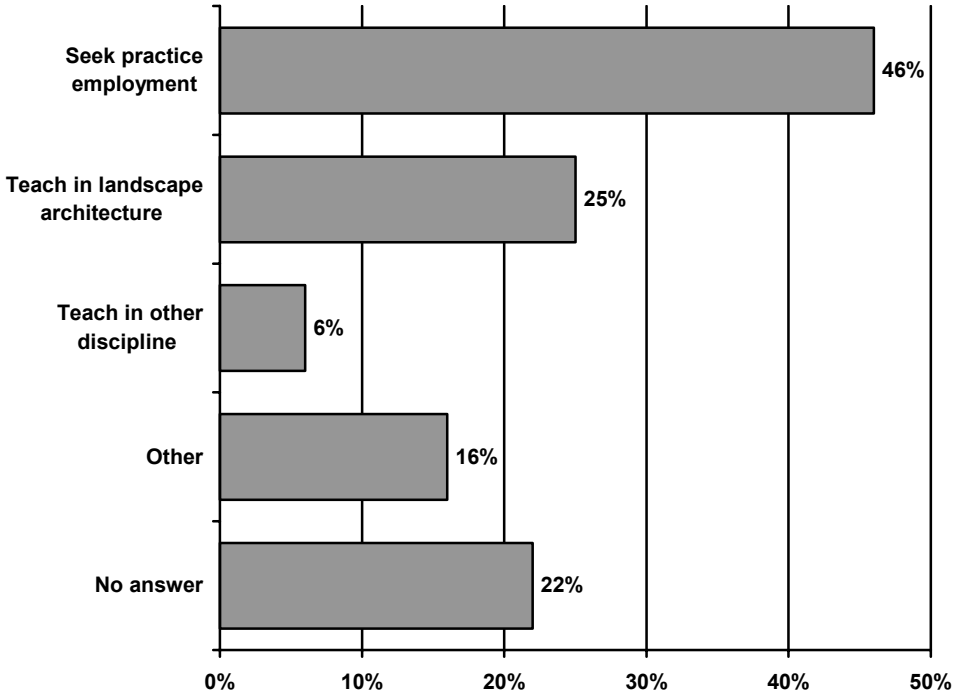
- Additional Schooling

Over one-third of respondents (38%) indicate that they anticipate pursuing another degree or additional education after some professional experience, while 38% may do so at some later point, and 5% intend to do so right away.



Of the respondents who are planning to pursue another degree, nearly three-quarters (72%) indicate that it will be a Masters, while 9% will pursue a Ph.D., and 2% will pursue an additional Bachelor's Degree. This is similar to last year's responses. Most respondents plan to pursue advanced degrees in Landscape Architecture or related areas.



- After Completing Additional Degree

Close to one-half of respondents (46%) who plan to pursue another degree anticipate seeking practice employment once they have completed this degree, while 25% expect to teach in landscape architecture. This is similar to last year's responses.