

**Council of Graduate Schools
Completion and Attrition in STEM Master's Programs**

Survey of Graduating Master's Students

Welcome to the Survey of Graduating Master's Students!

You have been selected to participate in the survey because you are a master's student who is expecting to complete all requirements for your master's degree this academic year.

We urge you to participate in the survey—your responses, opinions, experiences, and recommendations will be invaluable in helping universities across the nation improve master's education and to help current and future students complete their degrees in a timely fashion.

We appreciate your willingness to participate. Thank you, in advance, for your time and input.

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Will you be completing your master's program this term (semester or quarter)?

- Yes (Go to question 2)
- No (Please do not complete this survey; it is intended only for students who are completing a master's degree.)

2. In what program are you enrolled? _____

3. When did you first enroll in this program?

Month (MM) ____ ____
Year (YYYY) ____ ____ ____ ____

4. When do you expect to be awarded your degree?

Month (MM) ____ ____
Year (YYYY) ____ ____ ____ ____

5. Did you attend the program primarily full-time or part-time?

- Full-time
- Part-time
- Mix (some semesters/quarters part-time, some full-time)

6. Have you taken a leave of absence since you enrolled in the program? (i.e., were there regular semesters/quarters in which you were not registered for credit and attending classes or working on your thesis? Do not count summers if your program does not require summer enrollment.)

- Yes (Go to question 7)
- No (Go to question 9)

7. In total, how long was your leave of absence? (i.e., total number of semesters/quarters you were not enrolled.) _____

8. What were the main reasons for the leave of absence? (Check all that apply.)

- Financial
- Family-related
- Work-related
- Health
- Other (please specify): _____

9. What were the THREE main reasons you enrolled in your master's program? (Check up to three responses.)

- To improve my skills and knowledge
- To increase opportunities for promotion, advancement, and/or pay
- To meet requirements of my current employer
- To meet requirements of a prospective employer
- To learn more about something in which I am particularly interested
- Best option available at the time
- To facilitate a job/career change
- To use as a stepping stone for even more education (e.g., Ph.D.)
- Other (please specify): _____

10. What are your future plans after getting your degree? (i.e., over the next year) (Check all that apply.)

- Go on for a doctorate or other graduate degree
- Continue in my current job
- Look for employment related to my degree
- Look for employment regardless of whether or not it is related to my degree
- Don't know what my future plans are

11. Did you visit the campus before enrolling in the program?

- Yes, I visited the campus before enrolling in the master's program (Go to question 12)
- No, but I attended this institution as an undergraduate (Go to question 12)
- No (Go to question 13)

12. To what extent did this influence your decision to enroll in the program?

- Not at all
- To a small extent
- To a moderate extent
- To a great extent

SECTION 2: FINANCING YOUR EDUCATION

Throughout this survey, when using the term “job” or “employment” we mean paid employment at or outside the university, excluding assistantships, fellowships, traineeships, or other paid work that is considered part of your program.

13. Excluding assistantships, fellowships, or traineeships, are you working for pay at or outside the university?

- Yes, for the university (Go to question 14)
- Yes, for a non-university employer (Go to question 14)
- Yes, self-employed (Go to question 14)
- No, Not working for pay (Go to question 15)

14. On average, for how many hours per week are you working for pay during this semester/quarter?

- Less than 20 hours per week
- 20-30 hours per week
- More than 30 hours per week
- Don't know (occasional jobs, hours vary)

The next few questions ask about how you financed your education (including tuition, fees, books, living expenses, and health insurance).

15. Indicate the LARGEST source of financial support for your master's program.

- Assistantship, fellowship, scholarship, grant, traineeship
- Paid internship, clinical residency
- Loans (any source)
- Personal earnings or savings
- Family earnings or savings
- Employer reimbursement/assistance
- Support from a foreign government
- Other (please specify): _____

16. Indicate the SECOND LARGEST source of financial support for your master's program.

- Assistantship, fellowship, scholarship, grant, traineeship
- Paid internship, clinical residency
- Loans (any source)
- Personal earnings or savings
- Family earnings or savings
- Employer reimbursement/assistance
- Support from a foreign government
- Other (please specify): _____

17. Approximately how much money did you PERSONALLY borrow in student loans for your UNDERGRADUATE education?

- None
- \$1 - \$5,000
- \$5,001 - \$20,000
- \$20,001 - \$50,000
- \$50,000 and above

18. When you receive your master's degree, approximately how much money will you have PERSONALLY borrowed in student loans for your GRADUATE education?

- None
- \$1 - \$5,000
- \$5,001 - \$20,000
- \$20,001 - \$50,000
- \$50,000 and above

19. Were you guaranteed financial support at the time you were admitted?

- Yes, for more than one year
- Yes, for the first year only
- No

20. To what extent was financing your education a challenge?

- To a great extent
- To a moderate extent
- To a small extent
- Not at all

SECTION 3: YOUR OVERALL EXPERIENCE

21. Do you have an advisor?

- Yes (*Go to question 22*)
- No (*Go to question 27*)
- Don't know (*Go to question 27*)

22. How frequently do you meet with your advisor(s) to formally discuss your academic progress?

- More than once a month (*Go to question 23*)
- Monthly (*Go to question 23*)
- Once a semester/quarter (*Go to question 23*)
- Once a year (*Go to question 23*)
- Never (*Go to question 27*)

23. To what extent is the feedback provided by your advisor useful?

- To a great extent
- To a moderate extent
- To a small extent
- Not at all

24. How helpful is your advisor in supporting your career goals?

- Very helpful
- Helpful
- Of little help
- Not helpful at all
- Don't know

25. How satisfied were you with the quality of advising?

- Very satisfied (Go to question 27)
- Satisfied (Go to question 27)
- Dissatisfied (Go to question 26)
- Very dissatisfied (Go to question 26)

26. Which of the following would have improved the advising experience? (Check all that apply.)

- More time
- Better quality time
- More or better career/professional guidance
- More or better research guidance
- More interest and encouragement
- More structured feedback
- Other (please specify): _____

27. Did your program or department hold an orientation when you enrolled in this master's program?

- Yes, and I attended the orientation
- Yes, but I did not attend
- No
- Don't know

28. Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements about your program.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A
Requirements of my program were presented in clear, written form					
The faculty were helpful and interested in students					
Academic milestones and timelines were clearly outlined					
Courses were available when I needed them					
The program was well-structured in terms of sequence of courses					
Overall, the courses provided useful information					
Some courses or components of the program were a waste of my time					
The faculty were generally supportive and available					
Requirements and expectations for assistantships were clearly articulated (for example, in terms of time required, time off, workload, sick time, etc.)					

29. Overall, how satisfied are you with the quality of teaching in the courses you have taken?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

30. Does your program or institution offer the following? If so, did you participate in or use any of the following? (Check one column for each offering.)

	Not offered or don't know	Yes, offered but I did not use/ participate in	Yes, offered and I used/ participated in
Social events for students and faculty			
Speaker series			
Job placement services			
Career counseling			
Ombudsman, grievance procedures, conflict resolution			
Student associations			

31. During your program, have you received any formal or informal instruction, practice, or professional development in any of the following? (Select “Yes” or “No” for each of the following.)

	Yes	No
Oral communication and presentation skills		
Writing clearly for different audiences		
Research methods		
Working in collaborative groups		
Conducting independent research/scholarship		
Project management (e.g., budgeting, staffing, allocation of resources, etc.)		
Research/professional ethics		
Teaching skills/methods		
Preparation for job interviews		
Preparation for non-academic careers		

32. Have you experienced any of the following during the past two years? (Check all that apply.)

- Marriage or marriage-like relationship
- Birth/adoption of child(ren)
- Death of immediate family member or friend
- Divorce/separation
- Assumed primary responsibility for a person with illness or other disabling condition
- Major illness (mental or physical) or other disabling condition
- Retirement
- Loss of job
- None of the above

33. Since entering this program, how often have you felt that:

	Frequently	Occasionally	Not at all	N/A
Your job responsibilities interfered with school				
Your family responsibilities interfered with school				
Your employer supports your academic aspirations				
You were treated unfairly at school because of your gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, or religion				
Your family fully supports your academic aspirations				

34. Since entering this program, how often have you felt:

	Frequently	Occasionally	Not at all	N/A
Isolated from other students in the program				
Disengaged/disinterested in school				
Supported by a network of students in the program				
Interested and engaged in your educational program				
Worried about your mental or physical health				
That your program will help you meet your career goals				

35. Did you ever have concerns about not being able to complete your degree?

- Yes, frequently (Go to question 36)
- Yes, occasionally (Go to question 36)
- No (Go to question 37)

36. What were the primary reasons for your concerns about not being able to complete your degree?

37. To what extent did the following factors contribute to your ability to complete the program?

	Not at all	To a small extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent	N/A
Financial support from the institution or program					
Supportive faculty					
Student loans					
My advisor					
Program structure					
Motivation and determination					
Family (non-financial) support					
Peer support					
Institutional or program supports					
Financial support from employer					
Supportive employer					
Quality of teaching					
Being a full-time student					
Other					

If “Other” was selected in question 37, please specify: _____

38. What did you like MOST about your program?

39. What did you like LEAST about your program?

40. What changes to the program or institution would help students complete the degree in a timely manner?

SECTION 4: BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS

These last few questions ask for some demographic information.

41. What is your marital status? (Check only one.)

- Married or in a marriage-like relationship (Go to question 42)
- Living together, unmarried (Go to question 42)
- Widowed/Separated/Divorced (Go to question 43)
- Never married (Go to question 43)
- Prefer not to answer (Go to question 43)

42. Is your spouse/partner currently working?

- Yes, full-time
- Yes, part-time
- No

43. Are you ...

- Male
- Female

44. Not including yourself or your spouse/partner, how many dependents do you have?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4 or more

45. What is your age? Are you ...

- Under 25
- 25 to 29
- 30 to 34
- 35 to 50
- Older than 50

46. What is your citizenship status?

- U.S. citizen (*Go to question 47*)
- Non-U.S. citizen with permanent U.S. resident visa (green card) (*Go to question 47*)
- Non-U.S. citizen with temporary visa (*Go to end of survey. Do not answer questions 47 and 48*)
- Prefer not to answer (*Go to question 47*)

47. Are you Hispanic or Latino/Latina?

- Yes
- No

48. What is your racial background?

- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Black/African American
- White
- Two or more races

THANK YOU!

Thank you very much for participating in this survey. We appreciate your time and input.

***** END OF SURVEY *****