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ABSTRACT

Data are provided on the labor market for recent college graduates (the spring 1976 status of July 1974-June 1975 graduates). Statistical data and descriptive summaries are presented on bachelor's and master's degree recipients on the following issues: labor force status, underemployment, major field of study, type of job, employers and salaries, the field of teaching, enrollment in further schooling, sex differences, and race differences. Information on the study methodology and sampling error is appended. (SW)

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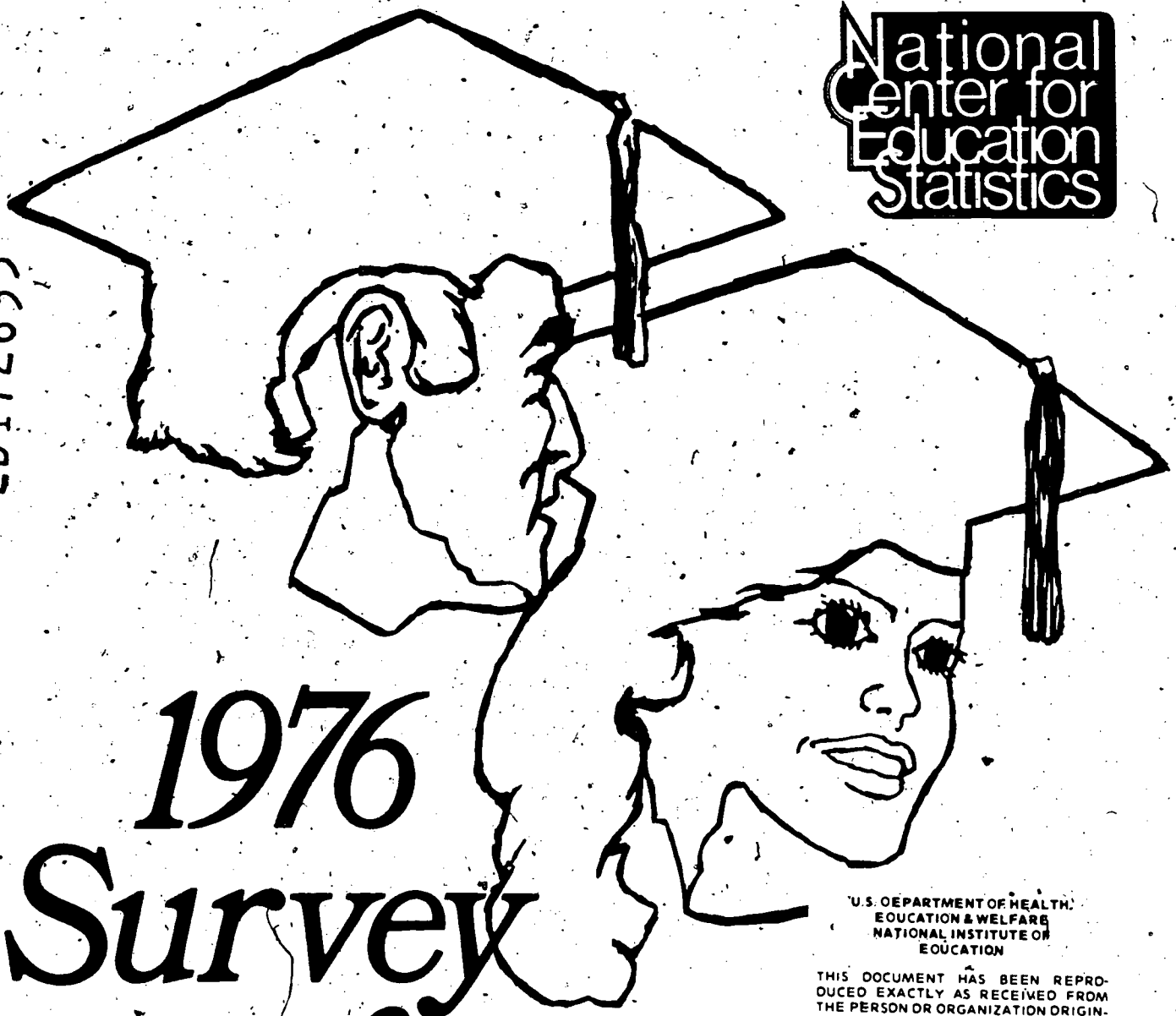

1976 Survey of 1974-75 College Graduates

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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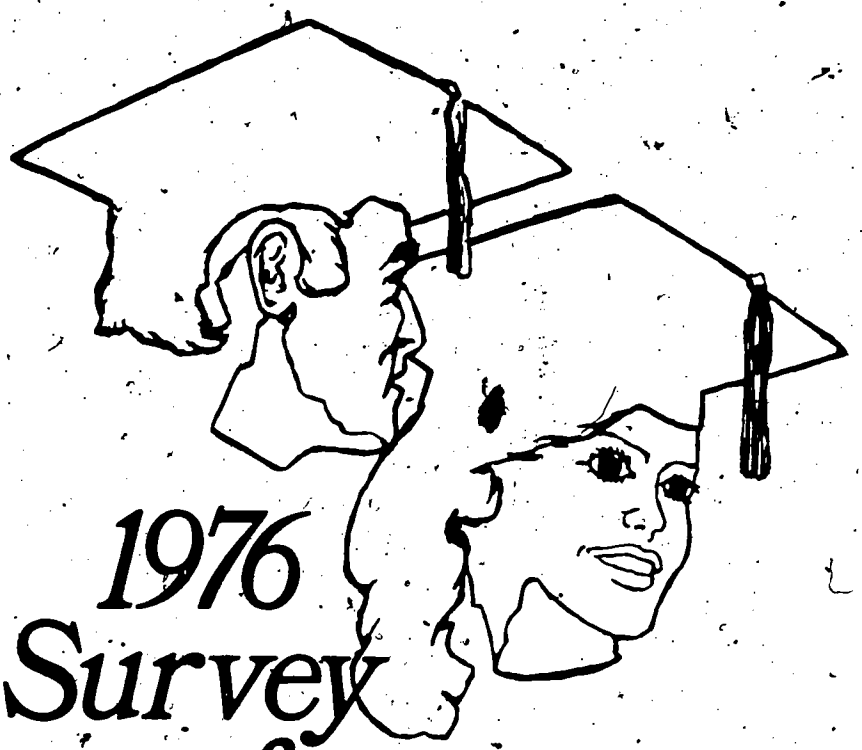

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National Center
for Education Statistics

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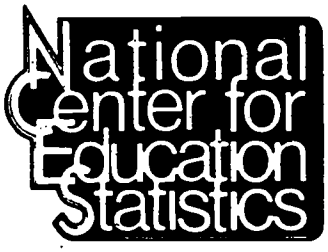

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FOREWORD

This report provides data on the labor market for recent college graduates. Information is presented on the spring 1976 status of July 1974-June 1975 college graduates. The survey, which will be conducted every other year, was developed by Mark Borinsky and Stafford Metz of the National Center for Education Statistics. The data were collected and processed under contract by Westat, Inc., of Rockville, Maryland.

A. Stafford Metz, Chief
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1976 EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF 1974-75 COLLEGE GRADUATES

This report on recent college graduates presents data on issues such as unemployment, underemployment, sex and racial differences in employment status, balance between public and private employment, and teacher supply and demand.

All data are as of the week of May 3, 1976, and were derived from a national sample of bachelor's and master's degree recipients who graduated in the academic year 1974-75 and were surveyed in spring 1976.

RECENT BACHELOR'S DEGREE RECIPIENTS

Labor Force Status

In 1974-75, 932,000 persons (416,000 women and 516,000 men) received bachelor's degrees. In May 1976, 749,000 (80 percent) of these graduates were employed--5 out of 6 of them on a full-time basis.

The unemployment rate for the recent graduates was 7.0 percent--about the same as the rate for the labor force as a whole (7.3 percent) at that time, and higher than the rate for all college graduates in the labor force (2.8 percent--in March 1976). Although the term "unemployed" implies hardship, many of the unemployed recent graduates did not necessarily appear to be in distress. Of the 7.0 percent of graduates who were unemployed, 53 percent were characterized by one or more of the following: turned down at least one job offer, looked for work for less than 2 weeks, looked for part-time work only, or spouse employed.

Fourteen percent of the graduates were not in the labor force (defined as not working and not looking for work). Most graduates in this category (72 percent) cited "going to school" as the major reason; another 11 percent cited "family responsibilities" or "homemaking."

Underemployment

Many college graduates have been disappointed to find that, after a substantial investment of time and money in a college education, they cannot find suitable jobs. Underemployed college graduates are defined as those not working in a professional, technical, managerial, or administrative job and

who report that, in their opinion, their job does not require a college degree.*

Twenty-four percent of the graduates with jobs were underemployed; 27 percent were in an intermediate situation (i.e., neither clearly "underemployed" not clearly "not underemployed"); the remainder (49 percent) had jobs commensurate with their training.

Major Field of Study, Labor Force Status, and Salary

Table A presents data on employment outcome**, salary and enrollment status by major field of study. Job opportunities were best for engineering majors--they ranked lowest in underemployment and earned the highest salaries (salaries in this report are calculated for full-time workers only). Humanities majors had the highest underemployment rate and next to the lowest salaries.

Type of Job

Table B shows the distribution of full-time jobs bachelor's degree recipients held. The largest fields were elementary and secondary school teaching--15 percent of all full-time workers, management and administration--14 percent, and clerical--13 percent. Some of the other fields were sales--7 percent, accounting--7 percent, and engineering--6 percent.

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* Specifically, underemployment was measured as follows: First, the jobs of graduates were classified in one of the following categories: professional, technical, managerial, administrative, clerical, craftsman, laborer, sales, service, or operative. Second, graduates were asked if the jobs they were doing required a college degree. Graduates were designated "underemployed" if (a) their jobs were classified as clerical, craftsman, laborer, sales, service, or operative and (b) respondents stated that their jobs did not require a college degree. Graduates were designated "not underemployed" if (a) their jobs were classified as professional, technical, managerial, or administrative and (b) the respondents stated that their jobs did require a college degree. The remaining graduates were placed in an intermediate category (neither clearly underemployed nor clearly not underemployed); for example, someone in a clerical job who stated the job did require a college degree, or someone in a technical job who stated that it did not require a college degree.

** Underemployment was a more useful measure of employment outcome than unemployment. Only a small fraction of recent graduates were unemployed, whereas large proportions were underemployed.

Type of Employer

A major current issue is the continuing growth in size and cost of government and its effect on our lives. Thirty-five percent of employed recent graduates worked for some level of government--Federal, State, or local (table C)--double the 17 percent of the entire U.S. labor force employed by government. Of the recent graduates who were government employees, 40 percent worked as public-school teachers. The largest group of graduates (50 percent) worked for private, profit-making organizations. Nine percent worked for private, nonprofit organizations. Only 2 percent of all graduates were self-employed.

Table C also presents figures for type of employer by salary. Federal Government workers and employees of private, for-profit organizations received the highest pay--$10,100 and $9,900 per year, respectively. Nonpublic school teachers received the lowest pay, $6,900 per year; but this salary was usually for a 9-10 month year and might include other benefits, such as housing.

Teachers

Teaching was the field of preparation for the largest number of 1974-75 bachelor's degree recipients. Nearly one quarter (227,000) of all graduates were qualified to teach. Included are persons prepared to teach who majored in fields other than education (e.g., persons qualified to teach high school who majored in subjects such as mathematics, English, and history).

Of those persons qualified to teach, 178,000 actually applied for a teaching job. Only 53 percent (93,000) of these applicants were working as full-time teachers. Persons in special education fared somewhat better; full-time teaching jobs were held by 70 percent of such applicants.*

(A recently completed Survey of Local Education Agencies provides additional information on the job market for teachers. A nationally

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* Persons working as speech therapists were counted as teachers.

representative sample of these agencies were asked whether they had any teaching positions that they were unable to fill for fall 1977.* They reported about 9,200 position openings for which qualified teachers could not be found. In other words, while there was a large surplus of teachers, there were still a small number of unfilled openings.)

While the overall job market for teachers was discouraging, potential teachers were generally more successful than graduates in other fields. Eighteen percent of persons prepared to teach were underemployed, compared with 26 percent for all other graduates; 5 percent of persons prepared to teach were unemployed, compared with 8 percent for all other graduates.

The average salary for bachelor's degree recipients working as teachers was $8,300 per year. This rate was lower than the rate for those in other professions, $9,700 per year. (However, teachers, unlike other workers, generally have 9-10 month contracts.)

Further Schooling

Twenty-seven percent (252,000) of the graduates were enrolled for further schooling. Of these, 62 percent (155,000) were enrolled full-time and 85 percent (213,000) were in a degree-granting program.

Sex Differences

Men earned significantly higher salaries than did women--$10,200 per year compared with $8,300 per year. Underemployment rates were about the same--24 percent for men, 23 percent for women; unemployment rates did not differ significantly--5 percent for men, 6 percent for women.

Men and women tended to enter different occupations. Thus, far more men than women worked as engineers (11 percent as against less than 1 percent) and as managers and administrators (19 percent compared with 6 percent). Many more women entered elementary or secondary school teaching (31 percent opposed to 8 percent) and clerical jobs (19 percent opposed to 9 percent). The relatively large proportion of women in teaching--with its 9-10 month contracts--accounts to some degree for their lower overall salaries.

* Note the Survey of Local Education Agencies referred to fall 1977 while the Survey of College Graduates referred to the 1975-76 school year.

Men were more likely than women to have received financial aid as undergraduates--60 percent compared with 54 percent. However, if one excludes veterans' benefits, about the same proportion of men and women received financial aid.

Race Differences

Black bachelor's degree recipients earned significantly higher average salaries than did whites--$10,500 compared with $9,400. Also, a higher proportion of Blacks than whites received financial aid as undergraduates--72 percent against 57 percent, and Federal financial aid--67 percent compared with 37 percent.

Of those graduates working full time, a greater proportion of whites than blacks worked for profit-making organizations--50 percent compared with 34 percent; a greater proportion of blacks than whites worked for the government (excluding elementary or secondary school teaching)--36 percent compared with 20 percent; and the same proportion of blacks and whites worked as public school teachers--15 percent.

Other Findings

- Underemployment was as prevalent in the sunbelt States (24 percent) as in the Northeastern States (24 percent) and the rest of the country (24 percent).*
- Sixty-nine percent of graduates were aged 20-24; 19 percent were 25-29; 5 percent were 30-34; and 6 percent were over 35.
- Fifty-seven percent of graduates received financial aid of some sort as undergraduates.
- Thirty-eight percent of graduates received Federal aid.

* Sunbelt States are: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas. Northeastern States are: Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Wisconsin.

RECENT MASTER'S DEGREE RECIPIENTS*

Labor Force Status**

There were 294,000 master's degrees awarded in academic year 1974-75 (157,000 men and 136,000 women). Of the master's recipients, 255,000 were employed--88 percent full time and 12 percent part time.

The unemployment rate for master's recipients was 5.0 percent. Of those unemployed, 66 percent were characterized by one or more of the following: turned down at least one job offer, looked for work less than 2 weeks, looked for part-time work only, or spouse employed.

Nine percent (26,000) of master's graduates were not in the labor force. "Attending school" was the most frequent reason cited for not being in the labor force--46 percent. Twenty-six percent cited "homemaking" or "family responsibilities" as the major reason.

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* The sample size for master's degree holders was smaller than that for bachelor's recipients. Thus, data cannot be presented in as much detail for this group.

** Data were not available on prior experience for master's degree recipients and, thus, all data relating to employment must be interpreted with caution. For example, it is not known how many people were attending school at night to get their degrees, and thus, were not new entrants to the labor force. Or it is not known how many had previous work experience in their field and how many did not.

Underemployment

Underemployment was not as serious a problem for master's as it was for bachelor's recipients.* Only 4 percent of master's recipients were underemployed; 11 percent were in intermediate situations (neither clearly underemployed nor clearly not underemployed); the remaining 85 percent had jobs commensurate with their qualifications.

Major Field of Study

Education was by far the most frequent major, accounting for 43 percent of all degrees. Twelve percent of master's degrees were granted in business and management. The remaining degrees were distributed in the other fields, with each accounting for less than 10 percent of all master's degrees.

Types of Job

Table D indicates the types of jobs master's recipients held. The largest group (36 percent) were employed as elementary and secondary school teachers, followed by "other" professionals (20 percent), and managers and administrators (17 percent).

Employers and Salaries

Sixty percent of employed master's recipients held government jobs--more than triple the 17 percent of all workers who held government jobs (table E). (Of the recent master's recipients who were government employees, just over

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* The same measure of underemployment was used for both bachelor's and master's recipients. The reasons were:

(1) Education requirements for many jobs are variable and tend to overlap for bachelor's and master's degrees; for example, one school may require a master's degree for a given teaching job, while another school may require only a bachelor's degree for a comparable job.

(2) The differentiation between "underemployed" and "not underemployed" is essentially on the basis of "professional" versus "not professional." (See footnote (*), p. 2.) This distinction is a reasonable criterion for both bachelor's and master's recipients.

half were public elementary or secondary school teachers.) Twenty-four percent of master's recipients worked for private, profit-making organizations; 10 percent for private nonprofit organizations. Only 1 percent were self-employed.

The average salary for master's degree recipients working full time was $10,800 per year.

Teachers

Most (75 percent) of the master's recipients who were prepared to teach had either previous teaching experience, an existing teaching certificate, or were actually holding a teaching job while going to school. The other 25 percent (34,000) were certified (or eligible for certification) for the first time. Of the 34,000 newly certified teachers, 23,000 applied for a teaching job and 16,000 (70 percent) found a full-time teaching job.

Enrollment

Eighteen percent (53,000) of all master's recipients were enrolled for further schooling. Of these, 46 percent (24,000) were enrolled full time and 72 percent (38,000) were enrolled for a degree.

Sex

At the master's level, salaries for men and women were about even; women earned $11,000 per year compared with $10,700 per year for men. However, if one adjusts for the fact that teacher's contracts are for 9-10 months and that many more women than men became teachers, women earned significantly higher salaries than men--$12,200 per year compared with $11,200 per year. Underemployment was about equal: 4 percent of males and 5 percent of females.

As was true at the bachelor's level, women and men entered different occupations. Women tended to enter teaching (56 percent against 21 percent of men); men predominated in fields such as engineering and accounting.

Table A.--Number of bachelor's degrees: Employment, salary, and enrollment, by major field

Major field	Bachelor's degrees	Percent bachelor's degrees	Working full-time	Average salary	Percent underemployed	Percent enrolled for an additional degree
Total**	931,700	100	622,400	9,400	24	23
Biological sciences	69,200	7	40,800	7,900	26	34
Engineering	59,400	6	47,100	13,400	3	22
Physical sciences & mathematics	38,200	4	18,300	9,900	26	44
Psychology	52,400	6	32,400	8,500	38	23
Social sciences & public affairs	147,000	16	85,400	9,200	38	30
Humanities	99,100	11	52,600	8,000	41	26
Business & management	157,800	17	131,500	10,500	21	12
Education	181,700	20	127,600	*8,100	16	17
Health professions	55,600	6	37,700	10,600	4	21
Communications	19,500	2	14,400	8,900	26	20
Other	51,800	6	34,700	8,800	16	20

* Most teachers have 9-10 month contracts.
** Columns may not add exactly to totals on this and other tables due to rounding.

Table B.--Bachelor's degrees: Salary and sex, by occupation

Occupation	Full-time workers	Percent full-time workers	Average salary	Percent males	Percent females
Total	622,400	100	9,400	100	100
Accountants	44,600	7	11,500	10	4
Computer specialists	11,700	2	11,900	2	1
Engineers	39,700	6	13,900	11	-
Registered nurses	21,600	4	11,000	-	8
Health technicians	31,900	5	9,000	3	9
Social and recreational workers	13,300	2	8,800	1	4
College teachers	2,800	-	10,700	1	-
Elementary and secondary school teachers	93,000	15	*8,300	8	31
Engineering and science technicians	13,800	2	9,900	3	1
Other professionals	81,300	13	8,900	12	8
Managers and administrators	84,200	14	9,300	19	6
Sales workers	42,700	7	9,200	8	5
Clerical and kindred	82,500	13	7,900	9	19
Craftsmen and kindred	13,700	2	10,500	3	1
Operatives	10,300	2	9,400	2	1
Laborers and farm workers	10,500	2	8,800	3	-
Service workers	25,200	4	8,400	5	3

- Less than one-half of one percent.
* Most teachers have 9-10 month contracts.

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Table C.--Bachelor's degrees: Type of employer by salary

Type of employer	Full time only		Average salary
	Number	Percent	
Total	622,400	100	9,400
Private for profit - not teacher (NT)	311,200	50	9,900
Private not for profit (NT)	53,900	9	8,900
Self-employed	9,500	2	7,700
Government	219,600	35	9,200
Federal Government (NT)	42,200	7	10,100
State government (NT)	45,900	7	9,200
Local government (NT)	42,700	7	9,600
Public school teacher	88,900	14	*8,500
Nonpublic school teacher	11,000	2	*6,900
Other	16,900	3	8,700

* Most teachers have 9-10 month contracts.

Table D.--Master's degrees: Occupation

Occupation	Full-time workers	Percent full-time workers
Total	224,800	100
Accountants	6,000	3
Computer specialists	1,700	1
Engineers	16,600	7
Registered nurses	600	-
Health technicians	6,600	3
Social and recreational workers	8,600	4
College teachers	7,600	3
Elementary and secondary school teachers	80,300	36
Engineering and science technicians	1,100	1
Other professionals	44,900	20
Managers and administrators	37,900	17
Sales workers	2,700	1
Clerical and kindred	7,100	3
Craftsmen and kindred	600	-
Operatives	600	-
Laborers and farm workers	600	-
Service workers	800	-

- Less than 0.5 percent.

Table E.--Master's degrees: Type of employer

Type of employer	(Full time only) Number	Percent
Total	224,800	100
Private for profit - not teacher (NT)	53,000	24
Private not for profit (NT)	22,800	10
Self-employed	2,000	1
Government	135,400	60
Federal Government (NT)	17,200	8
State government (NT)	20,000	9
Local government (NT)	23,600	11
Public school teacher	74,600	33
Nonpublic school teacher	4,800	2
Other	6,800	3

APPENDIX: METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLING ERROR

Source of data

Data were collected by Westat, Inc., Rockville, Maryland, under contract to the National Center for Education Statistics.

A two-stage sample was developed to obtain the data used in this report. For the first stage, a sample of 209 schools was selected from all colleges and universities offering a bachelor's or master's degree. The universe of schools was stratified by percent of graduates in the school with degrees in education, publicly or privately operated, whether or not the school was on a list of schools emphasizing special education, and the 10 HEW geographic regions. A measure of size was assigned to each school depending upon its total number of graduates as well as the proportion of graduates in education. A systematic sample of schools was then selected with probability proportionate to size.

In the second stage, a listing of graduates with bachelor's and master's degrees was obtained from the selected schools. The graduates were stratified by level of degree, and by special education graduates, other education graduates, and other graduates. The sampling rates within the schools were established in such a way as to produce the same overall probabilities of selection for all bachelor's graduates in each of the three stratum and uniform probabilities within each class for the master's graduates. The sample of students was selected through the use of systematic sampling; that is, by selecting every n-th case with a random start.

Two hundred of the 209 schools in the sample responded (a 96 percent response rate) and 4,350 graduates of the 5,506 in the sample (79 percent) responded.

A ratio estimation procedure was used to inflate the sample results to estimates applicable to the total number of graduates in 1974-75, as reported in the Higher Education General Information Survey (conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics). This procedure includes the assumption that the nonrespondents had the same characteristics as the respondents.

Reliability of the estimates

Since the estimates in this report are based on a sample, they may differ somewhat from the figures that would have been obtained if a complete census had been taken using the same questionnaires. There are two types of errors possible in an estimate based on a sample survey--sampling and nonsampling. For estimates in this report, indications of the magnitude of sampling error are provided. The extent of nonsampling error--systematic error or bias in the data--is unknown. Consequently, particular care should be exercised in

the interpretation of figures based on a relatively small number of cases or on small differences between estimates.

Sampling variability

The sampling error is a measure of sampling variability such that chances are about 2 in 3 that an estimate from the sample would differ from the result of a survey of all graduates, using the same procedures, by less than the sampling error. The chances are about 95 out of 100 that the difference would be less than twice the sampling error. This section describes the method for deriving estimates of sampling reliability for data presented in this report.

For purposes of determining sampling variability, the data presented in this report must be divided into four categories: total number of graduates, salary, number of education majors or teachers with a given characteristic, and all other.

1. Data on number of graduates receiving bachelor's and master's degrees were, as mentioned above, taken from a separate study, the Higher Education General Information System. This study involves a census, not a sample, and, thus, the results are not subject to sampling variability.

2. Standard errors for average salaries are listed in tables I-IV.

   Example: Table B indicates that the average salary for accountants was $11,500/year. Table II shows the standard error for that figure to be $300. Thus, there are 2 chances out of 3 that the actual average salary is between $11,200 and $11,800.

3. Sampling error for number of education majors or teachers with a given characteristic must be calculated from table V.

   (a) For bachelor's degree recipients, divide the number in question by 181,700 (the total number of education majors) to arrive at the percentage of education graduates in the category under consideration. For master's degree recipients, divide by 126,400 (the total number of education majors).

   (b) Using the percentage calculated in the previous step, look up the appropriate coefficient of variation in table V--bachelor's or master's graduates in education. To obtain an estimated coefficient of variation for a figure not shown in table V, use linear interpolation for an approximation.

(c) Multiply the figure in question by the coefficient of variation arrived at in the previous step. This figure will be the standard error.

Example: Table C shows that there were 88,900 full-time public school teachers among bachelor's degree recipients. Dividing this figure by 181,700 gives a figure of 49 percent. Looking at column one in table V shows that, with interpolation, the coefficient of variation for 49 percent is .034. Multiplying 88,800 by .034 gives a sampling error of 3,000. Thus, there are 2 chances out of 3 that the actual number of teachers is between 85,900 and 91,900.

4. Sampling error for number of noneducation majors with a given characteristic is also calculated from table V.

(a) For bachelor's degree recipients, divide the number in question by 750,000 (the total number of noneducation majors) to arrive at the percentage of noneducation graduates in the category under consideration. For master's degree recipients, divide by 167,300 (the total number of noneducation majors).

(b) Using the percentage calculated in the previous step, look up the appropriate coefficient of variation in table IV under noneducation--for bachelor's or master's graduates. To obtain an estimated coefficient of variation for a figure not shown in table V, use linear interpolation for an approximation.

(c) Multiply the figure in question by the coefficient of variation arrived at in the previous step. This figure is the estimated standard error.

Example: Table C shows that 219,600 bachelor's graduates worked full time for the government. Dividing this figure by 750,000 gives a figure of 29 percent. Looking at column two in Table V shows that the coefficient of variation for 29 percent is .045 (interpolating between the figure for 25 percent and 30 percent). Multiplying 219,600 by .045 gives a sampling error of 9,900. Thus, there are two chances in three that the actual number is between 209,700 and 229,500.

Table I.--Standard error: Salaries - major field (bachelor's)

Major field	Standard error
Biological sciences	$300
Engineering	500
Physical science and mathematics	600
Psychology	400
Social sciences and public affairs	300
Humanities	300
Business and management	300
Education	100
Health professions	400
Communications	600
Other	400
All graduates	100

Table II.--Standard error: Salaries - occupations (bachelor's)

Occupations	Standard error
Accountants	$300
Computer specialists	700
Engineers	500
Registered nurses	300
Health technicians	300
Social and recreational workers	300
College teachers	1700
Elementary and secondary school teachers	100
Engineering and science technicians	600
Other professionals	400
Managers and administrators	300
Sales workers	400
Clerical and kindred	200
Operatives	900
Laborers and farm workers	600
Service workers	500

Table III.--Standard error: Salaries - type of employer (bachelor's)

Type of employer	Standard error
Private for profit - not teacher (NT)	200
Private not for profit (NT)	300
Self-employed	1100
Government	
Federal government (NT)	400
State government (NT)	300
Local government (NT)	300
Public school teacher	100
Nonpublic school teacher	200
Other	600

Table IV.--Standard error: Salaries - sex and race

Sex and race	Standard error	
	Bachelor	Master
Males	100	400
Females	100	200
Blacks	400	800
Whites	100	200

Table V.--Coefficients of variation

Percentage of graduates in category	Coefficient of variation			
	Bachelor's graduates		Master's graduates	
	Education	Noneducation	Education	Noneducation
1	.326	.285	.543	.584
2	.230	.201	.383	.412
3	.186	.162	.309	.333
4	.160	.140	.267	.287
5	.143	.125	.238	.256
10	.098	.086	.164	.176
15	.078	.068	.130	.140
20	.065	.057	.109	.117
25	.057	.050	.095	.102
30	.050	.044	.083	.090
40	.040	.035	.067	.072
50	.033	.029	.055	.059
60	.027	.023	.045	.048
70	.021	.019	.036	.038
80	.016	.014	.027	.029
90	.011	.010	.018	.020
95	.008	.007	.013	.013