GradConnection Student Sentiment Survey 2022

Summary Report

October 2022

Introduction

The GradConnection Student Sentiment Survey is an annual survey which collects feedback from our users about their experiences as a current University student, their internship or job search so far, and what they look for in a role/company. This year's survey was distributed to our database of users graduating 2021+, and received 796 responses.

Terminology

The respondents are also referred to as "students" throughout the report.

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Profile of respondents

The majority of respondents are expecting to graduate next year (29.02%), have already graduated (25.75%) or expect to graduate this year (22.61%). Their plans post University are to get a full time job (44.35%) or join a graduate program (36.68%).

Students on their job search experience

Students begin looking for roles at every stage of their degree - some report looking from their first year (22.05%) and others after they graduate (18.19%). They mostly use GradConnection (25.76%), LinkedIn (23.64%) and SEEK (18.99%) to look for jobs or internships.

When searching for roles students mostly search by degree/discipline/industry (87.38%). They find the information on employer websites or hearing from current interns/grads about their experiences to be most useful during their job search.

40.90% of students are worried about not being able to secure a job because of market competitiveness, with 12.62% saying the recruitment processes are too difficult and employers are asking too much from candidates (9.83%).

What students want from their future employer

Students are applying for a variety of role types - with responses a fairly close split between a rotational grad program (37.34%), entry-level role (31.54%) and specific grad program (31.12%).

Learning opportunities and career development (58.51%) is a consistently high response when asking students what they look for in a role. Other factors included competitive starting salary (37.76%), mentoring, coaching and networking opportunities (36.24%) and flexibility (34.85%).

Unsurprisingly a low starting salary (53.25%) and little flexibility (46.75%) means students are less likely to want to apply, whilst a lack of Diversity & Inclusion policy (48.96%) and no guaranteed position after completion (48.96%) were also big turn-offs.

More than half of the respondents said they would continue to look for roles after accepting an offer, with 46.75% saying they would renege if an offer from another company was better. A lack of communication after acceptance (17.84%) and speed of offer (13.83%) can also contribute to their decision to renege.

Ongoing communication after offer is crucial - with the preferred method of staying in touch being personalised emails (77.18%). New hires would also be responsive to training & development prior to start to help them with their new role (59.20%) and an early introduction to their mentor or buddy (52.56%).

Profile of respondents

In what year do you expect to graduate?

I have already graduated (25.75%)

2022 (22.61%)

Later than 2025 (2.26%)

2025 (4.90%)

2024 (15.45%)

2023 (29.02%)
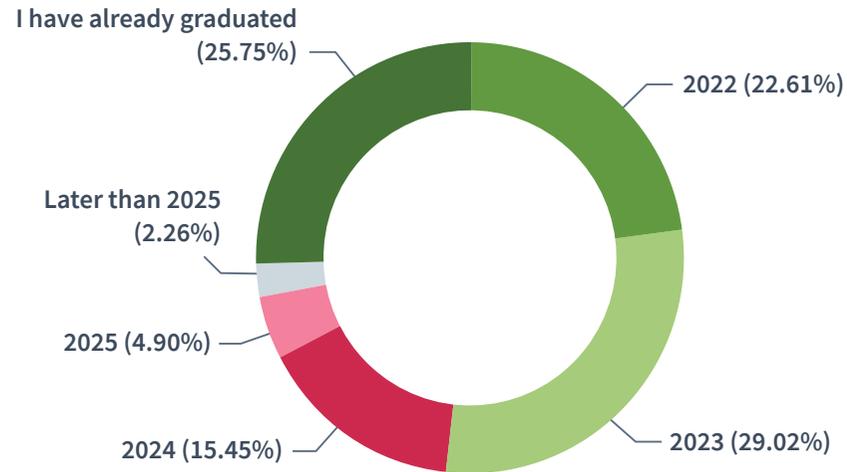
Are you the first in your family to attend university?

Prefer not to say (1.89%)

Yes (29.8%)

No (68.31%)

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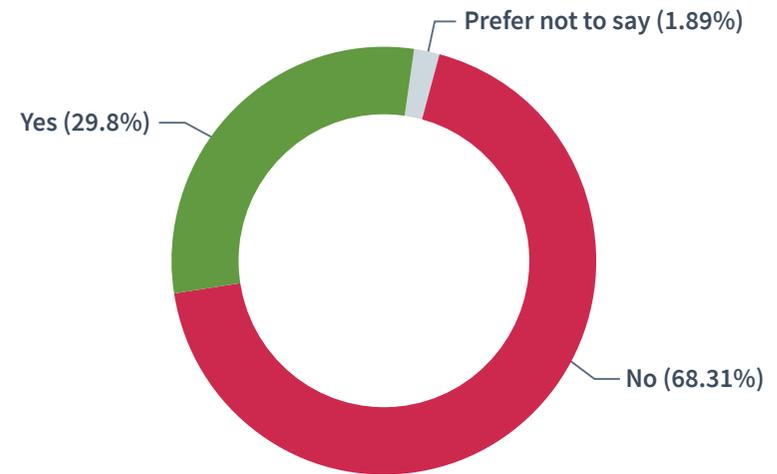
| Top 20 Attended Universities of Respondents	
University of New South Wales	7.78%
Monash University	6.38%
University of Technology, Sydney	5.74%
University of Melbourne	5.23%
RMIT University	4.85%
University of Queensland	4.85%
University of Sydney	4.72%
Edith Cowan University	3.70%
Macquarie University	3.57%
University of South Australia	3.06%
Western Sydney University	2.93%
Deakin University	2.81%
University of Adelaide	2.68%
University of Western Australia	2.68%
University of Wollongong	2.55%
Australian National University	2.30%
Swinburne University of Technology	2.04%
Curtin University	1.91%
Charles Sturt University	1.79%
Queensland University of Technology	1.79%

Top 20 Studied Disciplines of Respondents	
Engineering	16.21%
Business and Commerce	11.31%
Information Technology	8.04%
Accounting	6.16%
Computer Science	4.90%
Law	4.90%
Science	4.27%
Arts and Humanities	3.89%
Data Science and Analytics	3.14%
Banking & Finance	2.64%
Cyber Security	2.51%
Economics	1.76%
Environment	1.63%
Medical & Biomedical Science	1.63%
Architecture	1.51%
Information Systems	1.51%
Actuary	1.38%
Psychology & Counselling	1.38%
Education	1.26%
Construction	1.13%

What are your current plans post university?

Plan	Percentage
Get a full-time job	44.35%
Join a Graduate program	36.68%
Combination of work & study	10.8%
Further study	4.27%
Other	1.76%
Travel	1.13%
Take a break	1.01%
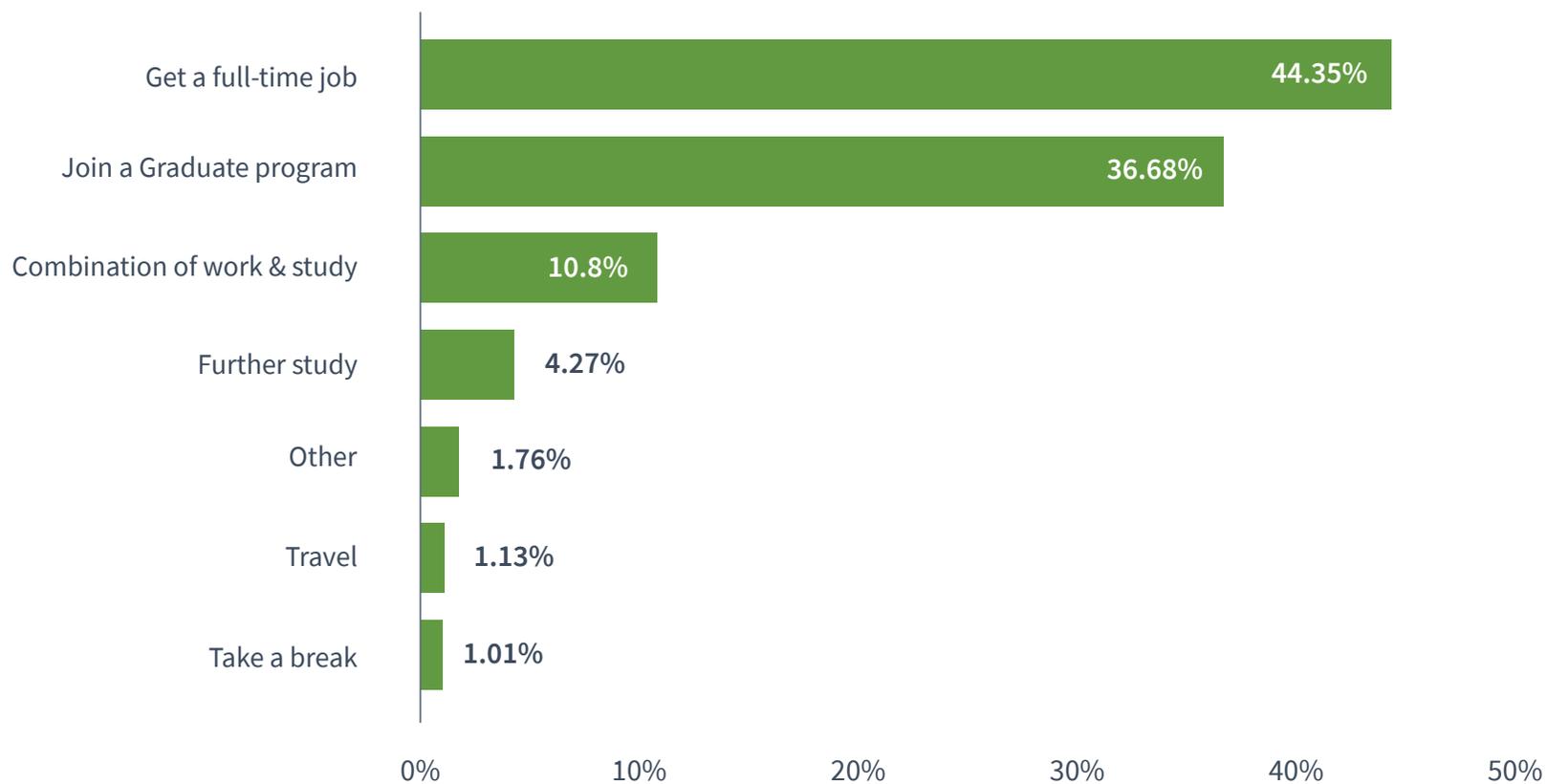
Other responses included completing an Internship, running a start-up or still deciding

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Which social media platforms do you use the most?

Platform	Percentage
Instagram	31.79%
YouTube	30.79%
Facebook	18.61%
TikTok	12.05%
Twitter	3.91%
Snapchat	3.04%

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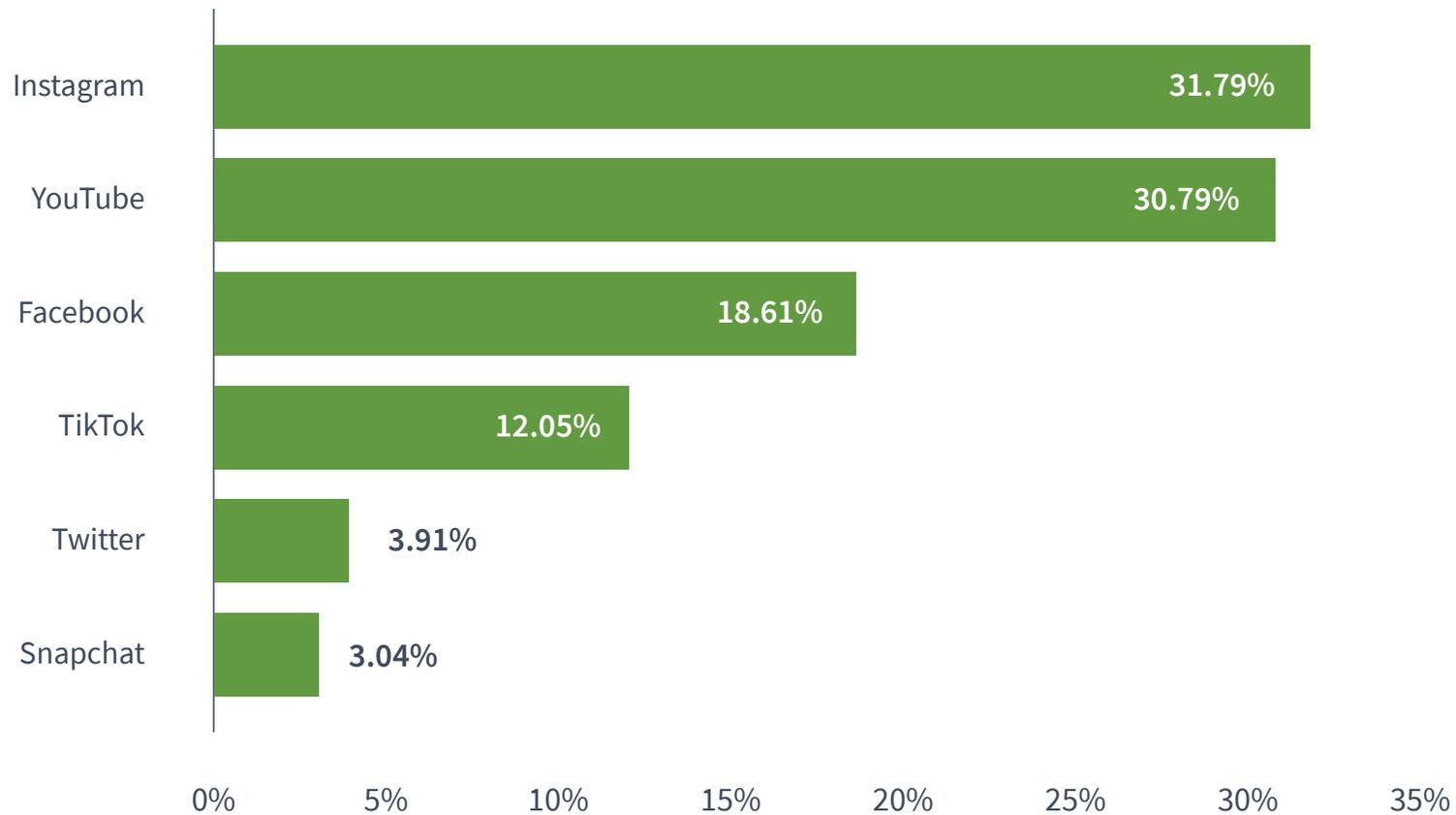
When did you start looking for roles, or when do you plan to start looking for roles?

From first year	22.05%
First half of my second last year	11.16%
Second half of my second last year	16.07%
First half of my final year	15.80%
Second half of my final year	14.87%
After I graduate/d	18.19%
Other*	1.86%
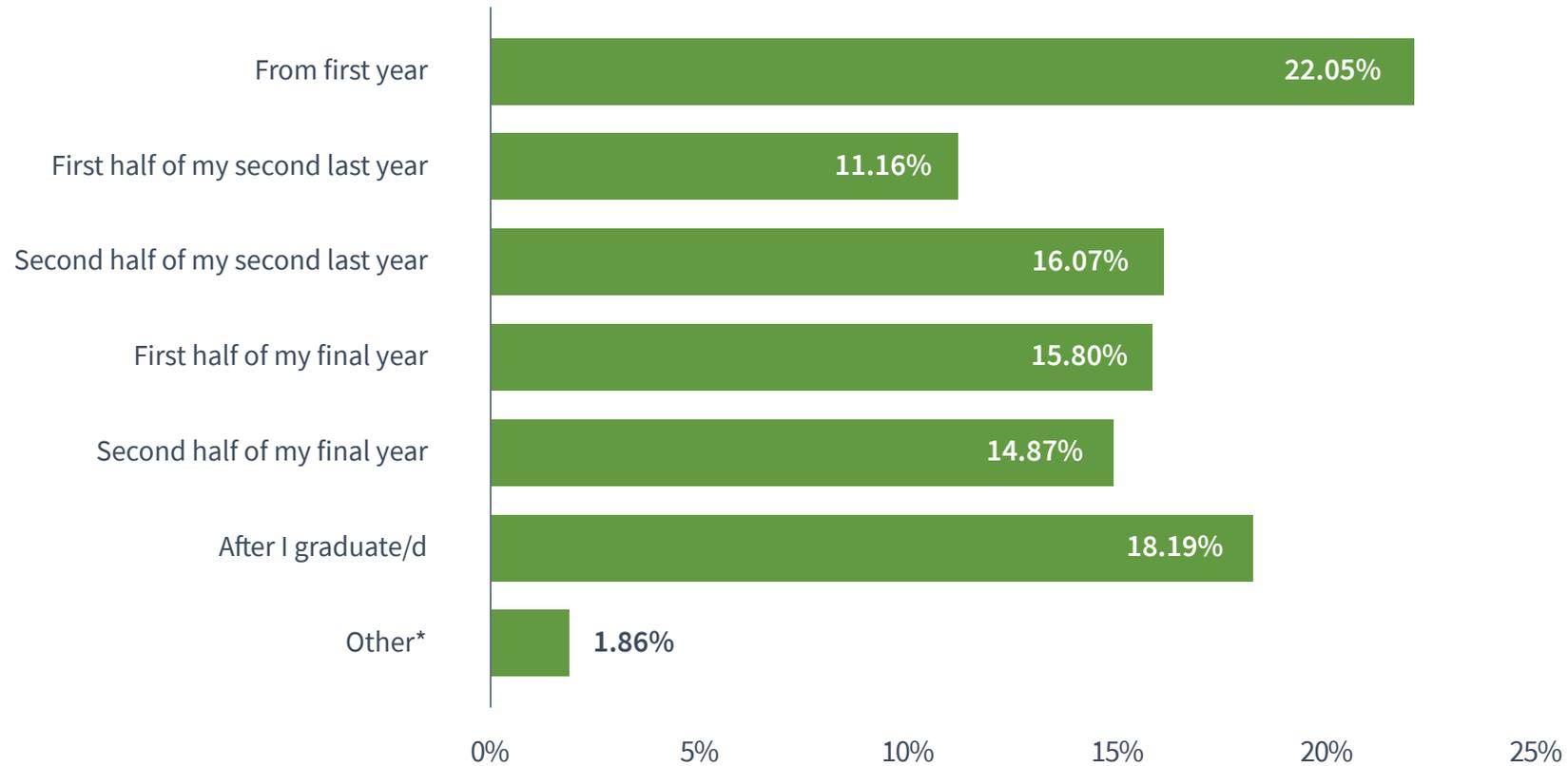
One student said they specifically look in the holidays before the first half of the final year. Ensure your brand remains visible over the Christmas and New Year period for students using the break to research their career plans, for example - consider having EOI for your Grad Program open during this time.

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Which of these services are you most likely to use to look for jobs or internships?

Service	Percentage
GradConnection	25.76%
LinkedIn	23.64%
SEEK	18.99%
University Careers Services	13.41%
Employer website	7.17%
Grad Australia	6.64%
Other online graduate services	1.86%
Facebook	1.33%
TikTok	1.20%
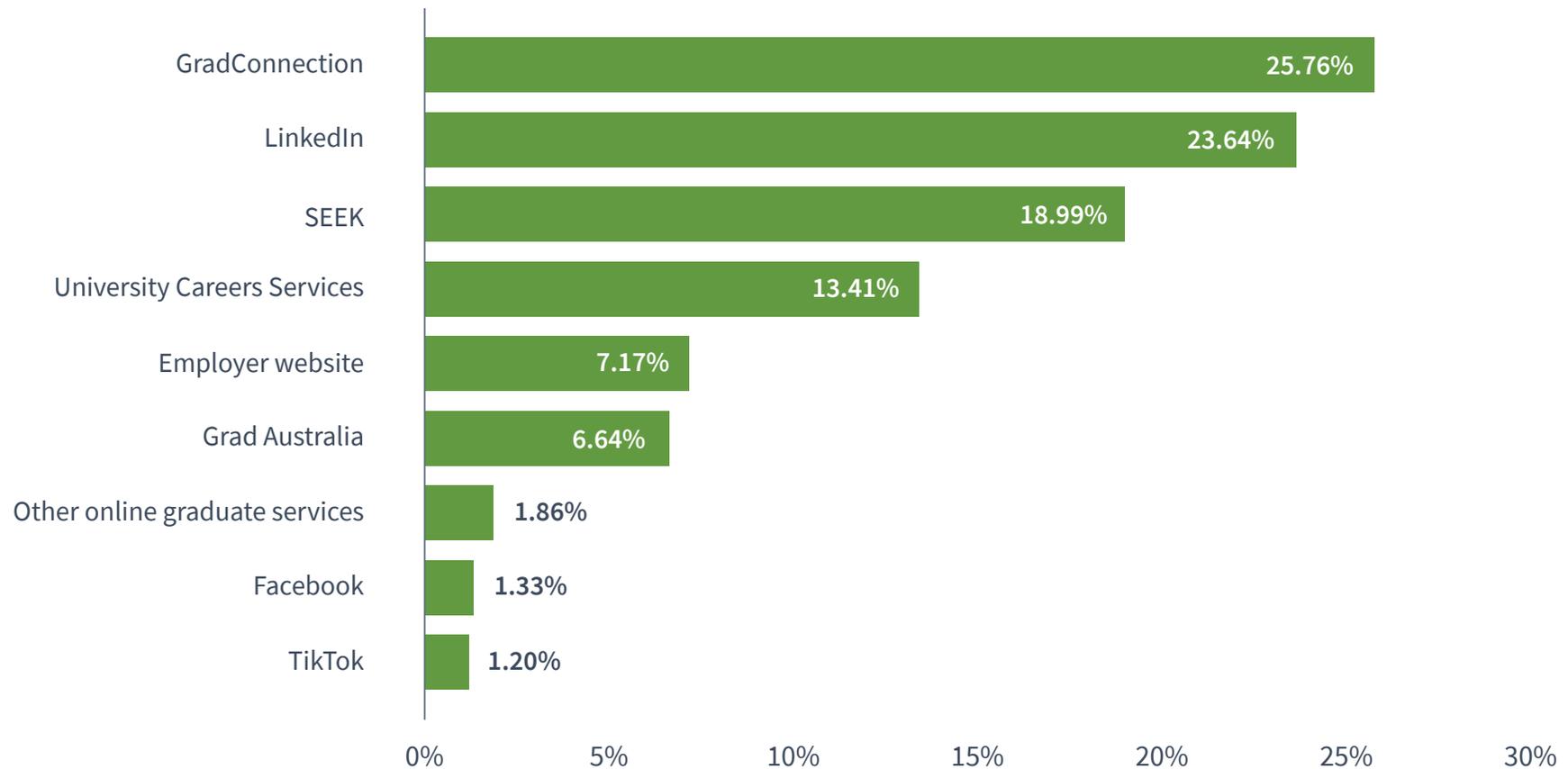
*When asked to rate the quality of jobs they found on GradConnection compared to other websites or sources, the majority of students reported they found the **quality of jobs on GradConnection to be higher** (51.44%) than other sources.*

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How useful do you find the following while conducting your internship or job search? (weighted average)

Information on employer websites	3.78
Hearing from current interns/grads about their experiences	3.74
In-person Careers Fairs	3.43
Webinars with employees	3.35
Advice from family or friends	3.28
Virtual Careers Fairs	3.05

0.0　0.5　1.0　1.5　2.0　2.5　3.0　3.5　4.0
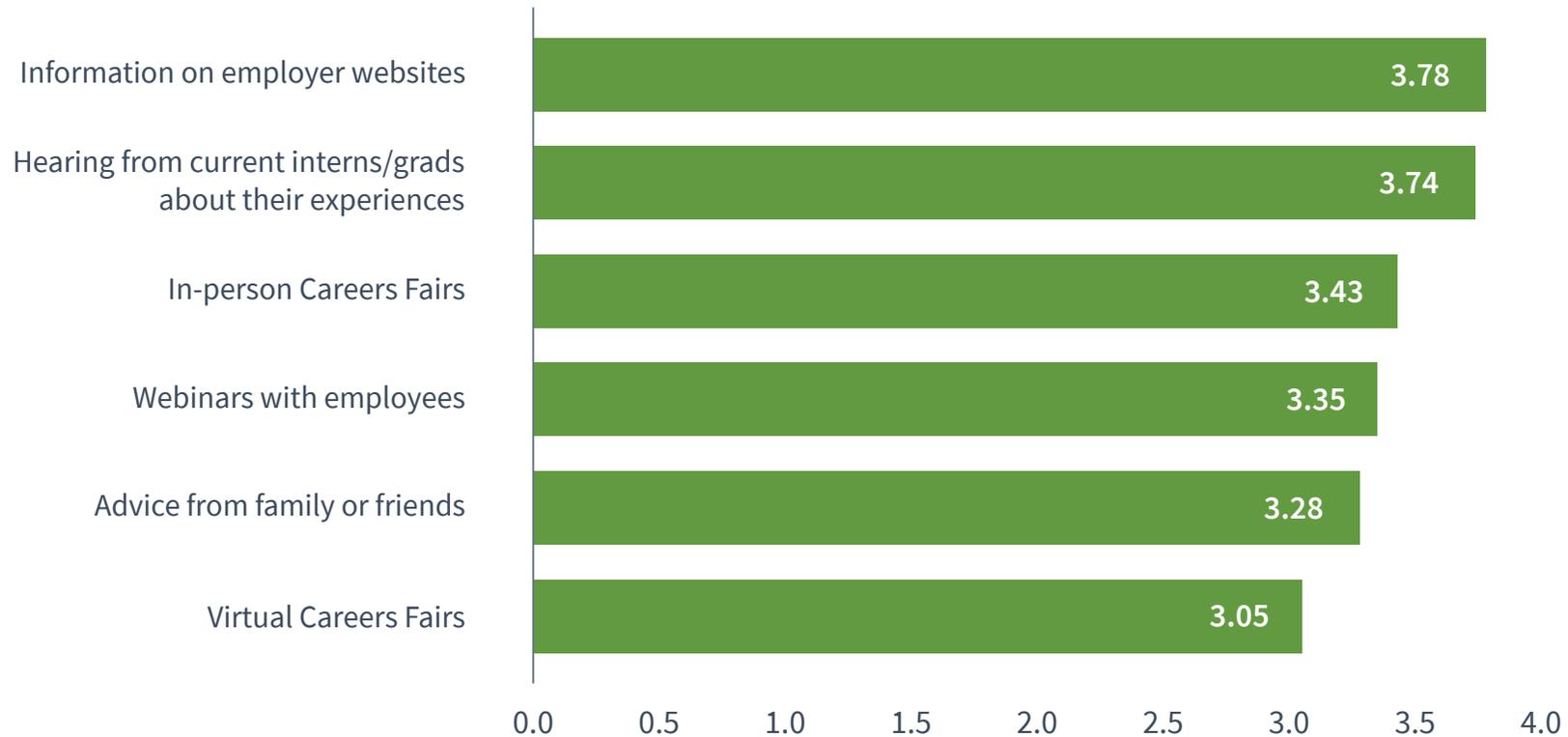
Students were very responsive to this question, using the free text field to share what they find most useful during their job searches. These included mentoring, word of mouth, updates via email, information from University clubs, day in the life videos on YouTube, Glassdoor reviews from current/former employees, Career guide books from University, advertising in physical spaces near their University, panels with industry professionals, reddit and Whirlpool.

Do you search for roles based on your degree, or by specific employers?

Specific employers (10.23%)

Other (2.39%)

Degree/discipline/industry (87.38%)
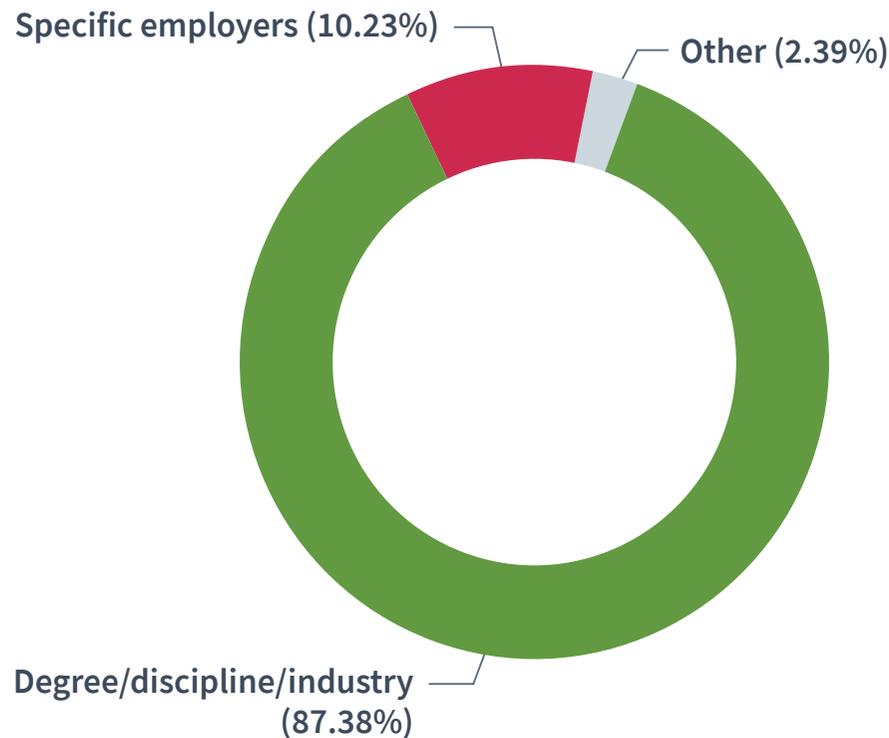
The vast majority of students responded that they search for roles based on their degree/discipline/ industry, meaning relevancy is key. Students will look at an advert for a graduate program and immediately think about how relevant it is to their degree. Job listings for generalist graduate programs could be dismissed by applicants if they feel the role is not applicable to them and their qualifications.

*Therefore, splitting out campaigns by discipline is essential, even if you are recruiting for multiple disciplines. Our statistics show that by being more specific with your targeting, you can help **increase applications by more than 50%!***

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Are you worried about not being able to secure a job? Why?

Response	Percentage
It is more competitive in the market now	40.90%
Employers don't consider International Students	20.58%
Recruitment processes are too difficult	12.62%
Employers are asking for too much from candidates	9.83%
Other	8.23%
I can't find any relevant roles	5.71%
My industry is in a decline	2.12%
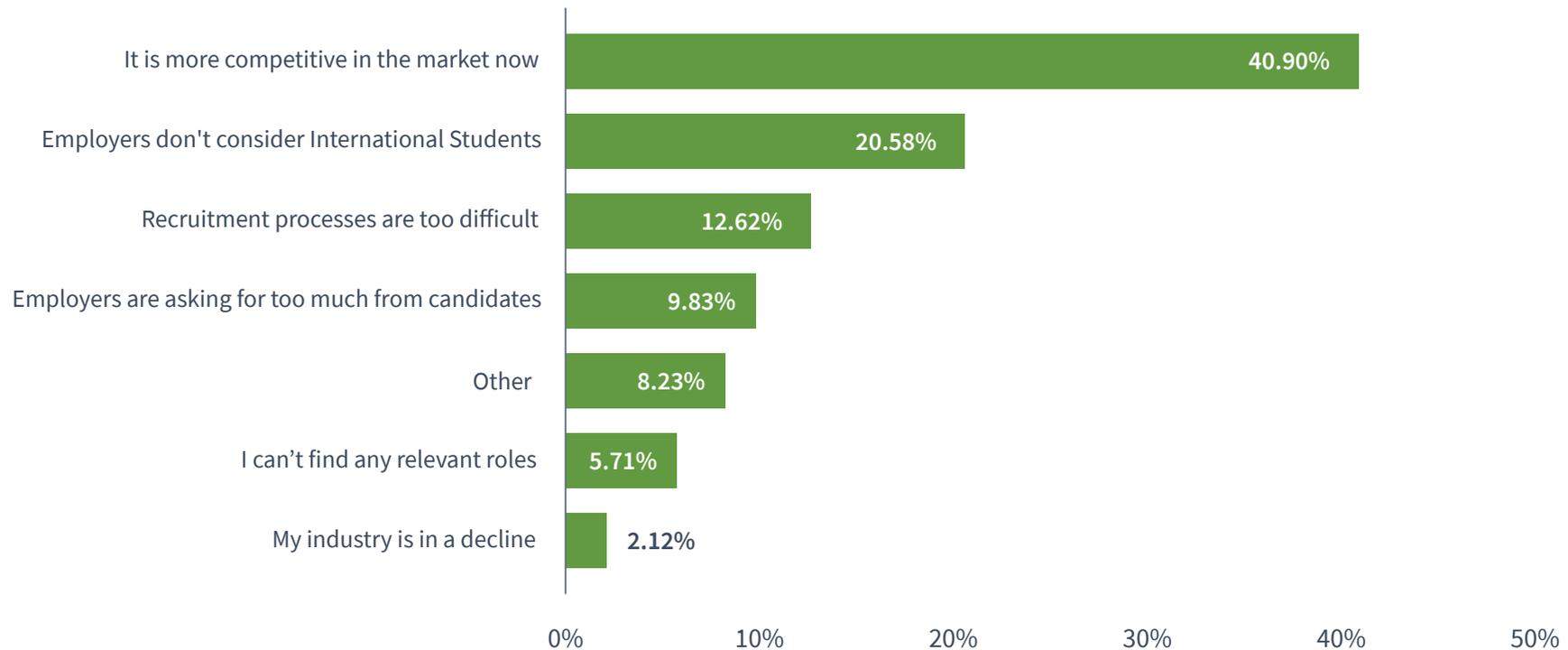
Other responses from students emphasised their concerns about the recruitment process and employer expectations: "it feels like all the grad positions come down to the psychometric test as the make or break for whether we get the job", "They all require EXPERIENCE!!!", "I worry that certain job interview processes may not adequately be able to identify my strengths", "Employers are asking for too much from candidates"

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What sort of role would you most want to apply for?

Entry-level role (31.54%)

Rotational grad program (37.34%)

Specific grad program - in one team/ for duration of program (31.12%)

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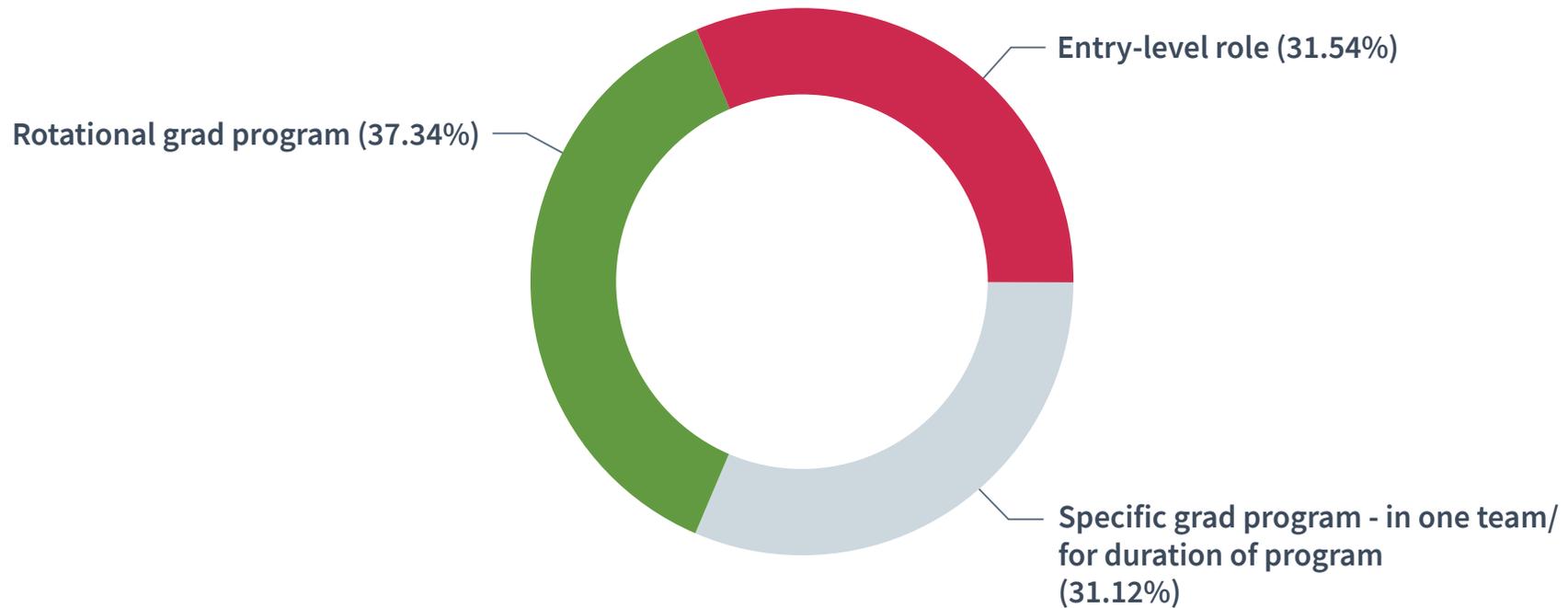
What are the top 3 things you most look for in a role? What would make you choose one employer over another?

| Category	Percentage
Learning opportunities and career development	58.51%
Competitive starting salary	37.76%
Mentoring, coaching and networking opportunities	36.24%
Flexibility (including working from home, work/life balance etc)	34.85%
High-impact and meaningful work	33.89%
Company culture	33.33%
Guaranteed position after completion	30.98%
Diversity & Inclusion policy	17.57%
Well-known company brand	15.21%
Paid or assisted further study or accreditations (MBA, CA etc)	14.94%
International relocation opportunities	12.17%
Rotational program to try different business areas	11.76%
Formal orientation or induction program	11.07%
Other	0.69%

We always encourage you to be as specific as possible in your job ad - and this extends to features of your programs, including training:

- *Will they be able to apply certain real-world skills or work towards a specific job title?*
- *What teams or leaders will they work alongside?*
- *Do they learn about a particular aspect or function of a technology?*
- *What does this program offer grads for your specifically targeted discipline?*

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What about turn-offs? What would make you NOT want to apply for an employer?

Turn-off	Percentage
Low starting salary	53.25%
Lack of Diversity & Inclusion policy	48.96%
No guaranteed position after completion	48.96%
Little flexibility around working from home, work/life balance etc	46.75%
No formal orientation or induction program	42.46%
Unknown company brand	24.90%
Rotational program (would prefer a single placed role)	7.75%
Other	3.46%
None of the above	1.80%

"Employers who advertise for someone who is fit, enthusiastic, vibrant etc. Hard to read those when you have a disability."

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Do/would you keep looking for roles once you've accepted an offer?

Yes - to keep my options open (50.48%)

Yes - to get paid more (7.33%)

Yes - other reason (1.80%)

No - once I've signed a contract that's it (22.27%)

Unsure (18.12%)
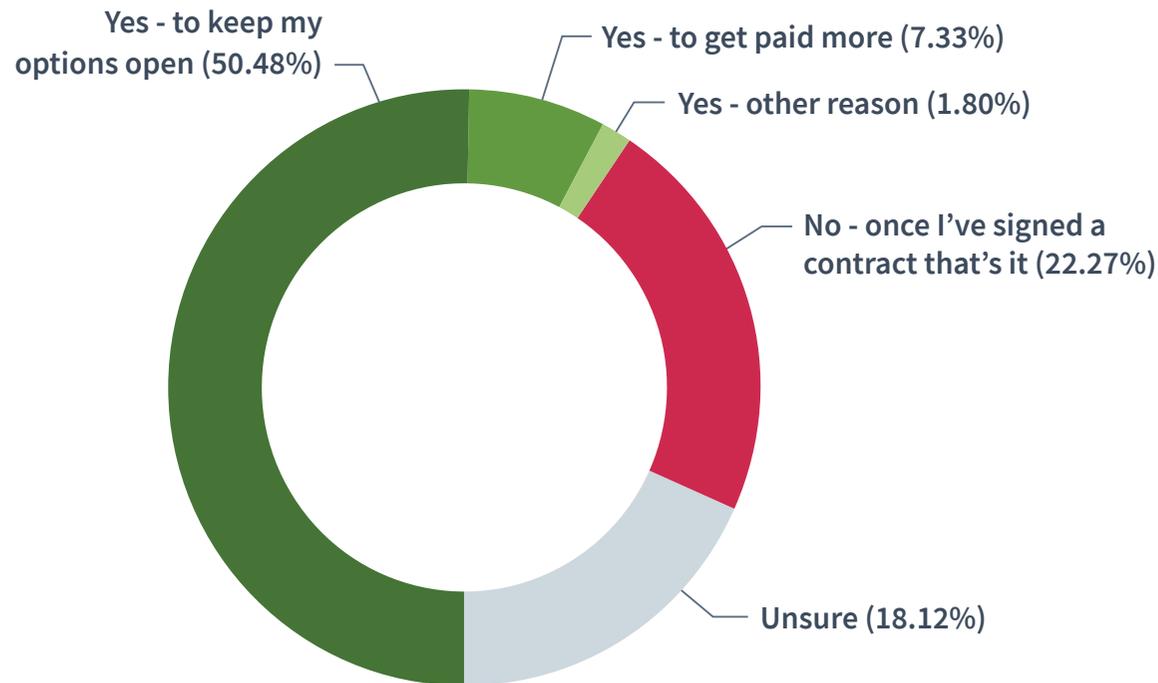
"Depends on timing of preferred offers"

"Purely a practical decision, judging from the horror stories I've heard from candidates getting their offers rescinded at the last minute"

Don't neglect your already hard won talent - give them a reason to say "No - once I've signed a contract that's it" with a well planned keep warm strategy.

What would make you want to renege on a job offer?

Category	Percentage
Another offer was a better opportunity	46.75%
Lack of communication from the company after you accepted their offer	17.84%
Speed of offer (the recruitment process took a long time and/or they took a long time to make an offer)	13.83%
Another offer had better salary	12.17%
I discovered something about the company/ the company received bad press	5.53%
None of the above	2.35%
Other	1.52%

While some of these are out of your control, 'lack of communication' is easily addressable. Students shared HOW they want you to stay in touch on the next page. Hint: personalised communications are key!

Once you've accepted an offer, how would you like an employer to keep in touch until your start date?

Emails – regular personalised "check-ins" with me — **77.18%**

Training & development programs before I start to help me prepare for my new role — **59.20%**

Introduction to my mentor or buddy — **52.56%**

In-person events with my future team at the company, networking events, office tours etc — **43.29%**

Online platform/group to connect with my new grad cohort — **39.00%**

Organised in-person events with my future grad cohort — **35.13%**

Receiving the company newsletter etc — **24.62%**

Other — **0.69%**

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80%

"All of the above, just make sure that you do not seem to forget us!"

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How do you feel about remote work vs. in-office? Which of the following is most appealing to you?

100% working in office (8.71%)

Hybrid - majority remote and some in-office (27.39%)

100% work from home/remote (5.67%)

**Hybrid - majority in office and some remote (58.23%)**
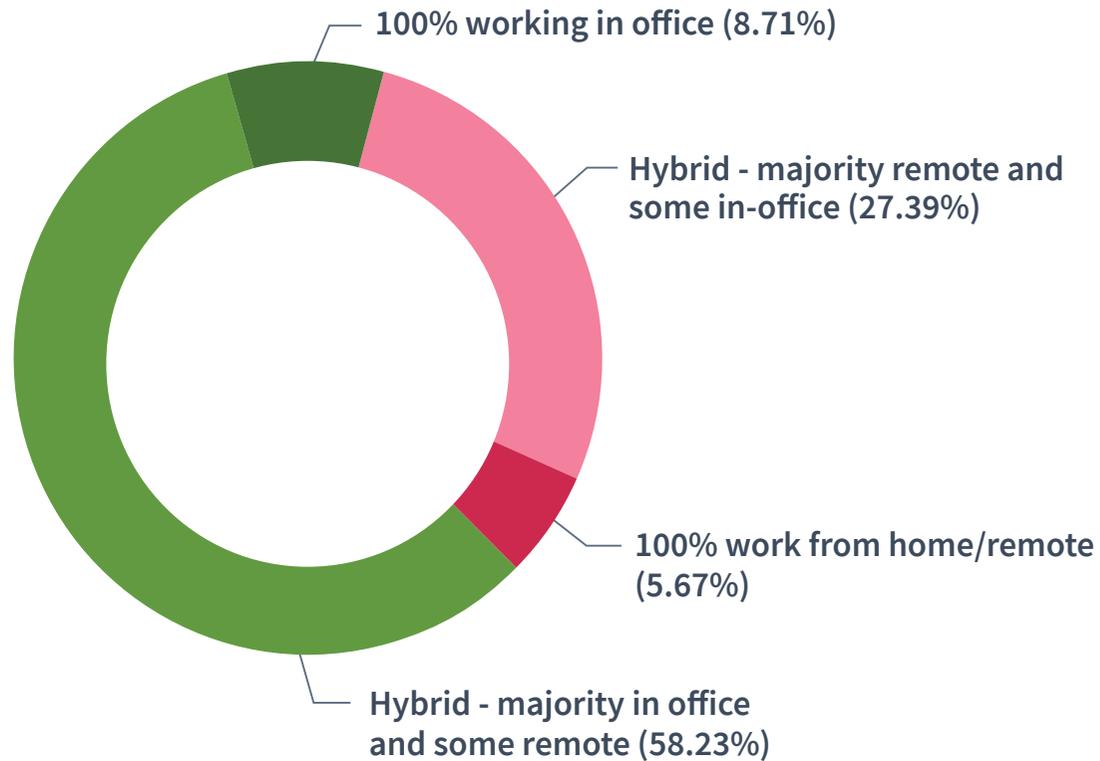
From our user interviews with students and current grads we found Hybrid continued to be the most popular option - with most mentioning the convenience of WFH but that they still want to work in the office for human interaction and training.

"I think I would go for hybrid, even though I wouldn't really mind going to the office all the time. I feel like when I'm in the office it's a lot easier to be switched on."

How long do you expect to stay at your graduate employer?

For the duration of the graduate program only (15.08%)

Less than 2 years (22.27%)

5 years+ (11.62%)

2-5 years (51.04%)
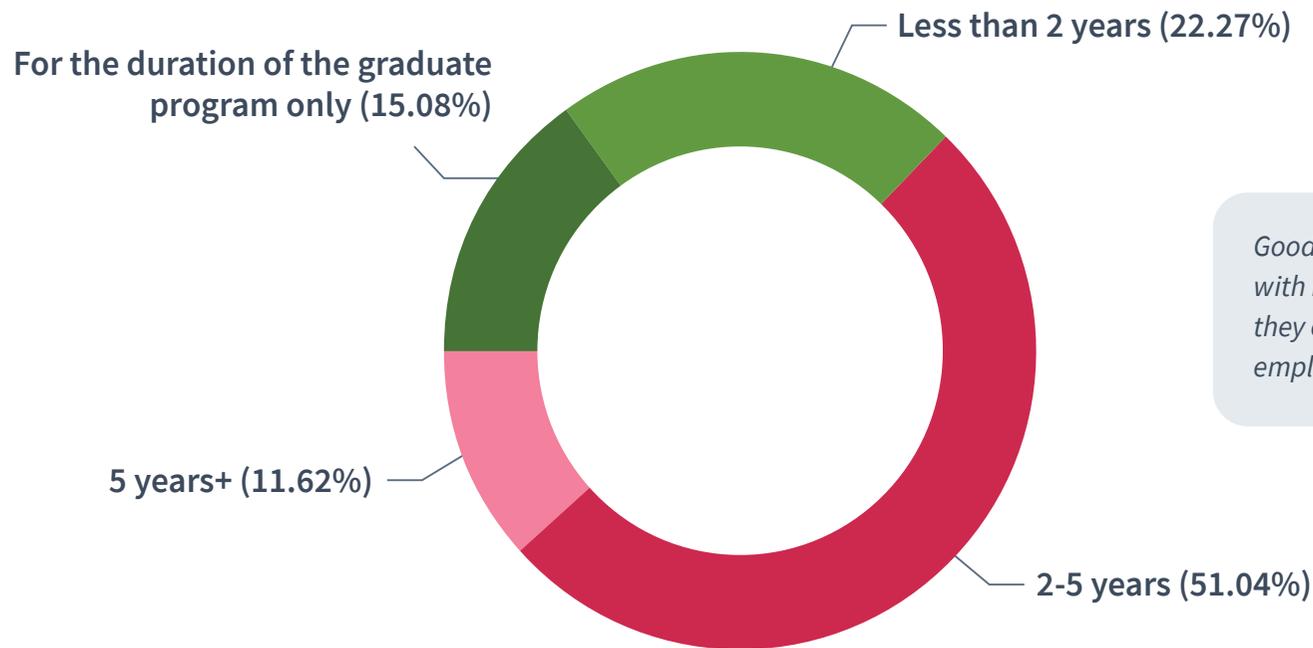
Good news for retention of grads, with most students responding that they expect to stay at their graduate employer for 2-5 years.

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GradConnection | **seek**

Website   au.gradconnection.com

Email   clients@gradconnection.com

LinkedIn   /gradconnection