

**HIGHER EDUCATION AND WORK SURVEY OF  
GRADUATES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI  
WHO GRADUATED BETWEEN 1987 AND 1995**

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**Research Paper**

**Number XXX**

# **HIGHER EDUCATION AND WORK SURVEY OF GRADUATES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI WHO GRADUATED BETWEEN 1987 AND 1995**

## **FOREWORD**

This research presents the results of the tracer study of the graduates of the University of Malawi who graduated between 1987 and 1995. The objective of this tracer study was to examine the career patterns of the graduates and hopefully this tracer study forms a basis for evaluating current programmes of the University of Malawi through the graduates' reactions to the programmes.

This study was undertaken as part of the Association of African Universities (AAU) UNESCO Unitwin network on higher education research in Africa. The valuable data obtained will assist greatly in future planning of activities and programmes in the University of Malawi. It is hoped that this study will complement previous studies of similar nature.

Thanks are due to the Association of African Universities, without whose financial support and guidance, the study would not have been undertaken. The authors would also like to acknowledge the valuable contribution made by Harald Schomburg and Prof. Ulrich Teichler, who during the research acted as resource persons, Mr. N. Chizani of the Centre for Social Research - University of Malawi for developing a programme for data entry and analysis, Mrs Malikebu and Mr. Jeremiah Phiri for their willingness to enter the data on the computers.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The University of Malawi comprises five constituent colleges with a central administration situated in Zomba. The colleges are Bunda College of Agriculture in Lilongwe, Chancellor College in Zomba, Kamuzu College of Nursing in Lilongwe, College of Medicine and The Polytechnic in Blantyre.

From its humble beginnings in the early 60's the University has been the only institution of higher learning in the country. As such it has been entrusted with the responsibility of providing highly trained personnel required both in government and industry, carry out research and provide leadership in all aspects of national development.

The University of Malawi awarded the first certificates to its deserving graduates in 1968. By 1987 the University of Malawi had awarded seven thousand, five hundred and fourteen degrees, diplomas and certificates (7514). Up until 1988, no systematic study had been carried out to determine the influence of its programmes in meeting human resources needs of Malawi society and economy.

A tracer study to shed some light on the above was launched in July 1988 by the then Vice Chancellor Dr. J.M. Dubbey. The tracer study whose implementation was made possible by Human Resource and Institutional Development (HIRD) project of the United States of America covered the period from 1968 to 1987.

The current tracer study has covered the period from 1987 to 1995. This tracer study has special significance. First, it provides a continuation of the process of evaluation of the performance of the University of Malawi, and secondly the results will form the first ever comparative studies with the results from ten other similar studies on higher education in Africa. Selected Universities in Africa, include five from Nigeria, one from Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Malawi.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The main objectives of the tracer study were to:

- (i) investigate the transition process from higher education to work;
- (ii) shed light on the course of employment and work over a five year period after graduation;
- (iii) analyse the relationships between higher education and work in a broad perspective which includes the fulfilment of personal goals such as job satisfaction and objective measurement like job position, income, job security and the type of work;
- (iv) find out what factors are important for professional success of graduates taking into account personal factors like gender, work motivation, acquired qualification during course of study and labour market conditions;
- (v) evaluate on the basis of the experience and views of graduates, central aspects of the University, including resources, facilities and curriculum and get feedback for their improvement;
- (vi) identify key aspects of the continuing professional education of graduates, and themes and kinds of courses, including extent, cost, location, reasons for participation, proposals for University courses.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Between 1987 and 1995, three thousand, nine hundred and thirty - four students (3934) graduated from the University of Malawi. Out of this, two thousand were targeted for this study. Having completed the preparation of the questionnaires, twenty questionnaires were sent out to carefully selected graduates of the University of Malawi to pre-test the questionnaires. Each degree field of study was represented in the pre-test and generally respondents felt that the questionnaire was fairly clear and straightforward though too long. The questionnaire captured all the information required to meet the objectives and it was therefore acceptable.

The researchers then solicited for addresses from all the graduates of the University of Malawi who graduated between 1987 and 1995 through radio and newspaper advertisements. The researchers also visited offices in the city of Blantyre collecting the addresses personally from graduates. Another effective way which was used to trace the graduates was to write Personnel Managers of different organisations and companies which are known for employing a large number of graduates to send the researchers names of all graduates employed by their organisations.

In total, one thousand, nine hundred and seventy-five (1,975) questionnaires were sent by post to graduates, representing 98.7 percent of the targeted population. Properly completed returned questionnaires totaled five hundred and sixty three (563). Eighteen uncompleted questionnaires were received plus twelve partially completed questionnaires from graduates who had either a Diploma or were still unemployed. In total five hundred and seventy-five questionnaires were returned to the researchers, and out of these, thirty (30) questionnaires were discarded. Therefore the rate of return was 28.5 percent.

Most questions in the questionnaire invited the respondents to respond on a five point scale with one representing very good to five representing very bad. The results were entered into the computers using D-Base and then converted to SPSS for analysis. Using year of graduation, sector of employment and Bachelor's degree field, the results were aggregated accordingly.

## **ENROLMENT AND STUDY PROVISIONS**

### **Enrolment**

The number of years of study for the degree programmes in the University of Malawi vary from four to six years. In some cases the period of study is more than six years especially for those courses which require that a candidate spend a year or two before crossing over to that course, for instance Law and Medicine. Up until 1990 Engineering programme was a six years course before changing to present five years while, Nursing is still a six years course. Since the tracer study covered those graduating between 1987 and 1995, the results show that the number of respondents on the year of first enrolment decreases from 6 percent in 1991 to zero in the period 1993 to 1995. It is likely that the majority of students who enrolled in this

period were not yet through with their studies in 1995 and could not participate in this study.

The results (see Table 1) however, show that there was a general increase in the enrolment in the University of Malawi during the period under review. This increase in enrolment is reflected by the increase in number of graduates. About 2 percent of the respondents graduated from the University in 1982, and the number of graduates increased to 18 percent in 1990, reflecting a growth rate of 1.75 percent per annum. Although this growth rate could only be shown up to 1990, it is evident that this general increase in number of graduates continued over the years.

**Table 1**      **Year of First Enrolment in Higher Education by Bachelor's Degree Field (percent)**

	Year of graduation				Total
	87-89	90-91	92-93	94-95	
1971	0	0	0	1	0
1979	2	0	0	0	0
1981	2	0	0	0	0
1982	11	0	0	0	2
1983	20	0	0	0	3
1984	32	4	0	0	6
1985	29	18	1	2	10
1986	3	44	2	1	13
1987	0	32	27	0	16
1988	0	1	35	1	10
1989	2	2	24	26	16
1990	0	0	9	48	18
1991	0	0	2	17	6
1992	0	0	0	3	1
1993	0	0	1	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(65)	(112)	(124)	(138)	(439)

Question 1a1: Year of first enrolment in higher education

## Factors Affecting the Decision to Enrol at a Constituent College of the University of Malawi

Since the University of Malawi has five constituent colleges, some factors had very big impact upon the decision on which of the colleges to enrol at. The factors which were considered were rated on a scale from 1 representing very important to 5 representing not at all important. Table 2 shows the percentage of responses of 1 and 2. Regardless of the year of graduation, sector of employment and the degree field except for Engineering, Nursing, and Bachelor of Science (BSc.), the following factors were considered very important and are presented here in the order of their importance: reputation of the college; admission standards and entry grades; areas of specialisation provided; and practice oriented study programme. Engineering, Nursing and BSc. indicated admission standards and prior grades as highest influencing factors followed by reputation of college, practice- oriented study program and areas of specialisation. Availability and quality of accommodation, availability of scholarships and advice by parents had some influence in the choice of the college. Attractiveness of the town and vicinity to home had very little significance on this choice.

**Table 2 Factors for the Decision to Enrol at the University by Bachelor's Degree Field (percent; responses 1 and 2)**

	Bachelors degree field										Total
	Agric	Comm	Educ	Engin	Arts	Law	Nurs	Admin	BSc	BSoc	
Vicinity at home	1	12	6	8	0	0	0	7	4	8	6
Availability of scholarships	29	9	29	19	42	25	33	29	36	14	23
Availability/quality of accommodation	14	20	37	33	33	25	11	32	23	25	27
Attractiveness of town	0	17	12	27	17	0	11	7	12	9	12
Reputation of the college	70	81	61	77	77	63	22	75	46	74	70
Practice-oriented study programme	64	70	47	75	58	50	67	57	52	40	57
Areas of specialisation provided	37	74	53	69	45	67	56	48	63	62	57
Admission standards and my prior grades	47	81	60	81	77	63	67	52	81	65	66
Advice by my parents	25	33	15	14	27	25	11	15	8	24	20
Count (n)	(77)	(50)	(85)	(80)	(14)	(8)	(10)	(29)	(27)	(90)	(470)

Question 2: How important were the following factors for your decision to enrol at the University of XY? Scale from 1 = very important to 5 = not at all important.

Graduates were asked to rate the study provisions and conditions they experienced at their colleges, using a scale 1 to 5 very good and very bad respectively. The results (Table 3) for responses 1 and 2, show that there are very small differences in study provisions and study conditions in the constituent colleges of the University. Overall, irrespective of the degree field, year of graduation and sector of employment, contacts with fellow students was rated very high (79 percent). Other factors which were considered good are: teaching quality of lecturers (61 percent), structure of degree programme (55 percent); accommodation facilities on campus (48 percent); quality of buildings (45 percent); catering facilities on campus; equipment and stocking of libraries; academic advice offered; assistance for final exams; testing/grading system of exams. Though the overall picture of teaching quality of lecturers is good in the whole University, the Engineering field indicated lowest amongst all degree fields. This is probably due to fewer highly qualified (PhD holder) lecturers in this field. Laboratory facilities in general are poor coupled with the fact that even teaching staff is inadequate.

**Table 3 Assessment of Study Provisions and Study Conditions by Bachelor's Degree Field (percent; responses 1 and 2)**

	Bachelors degree field										Total
	Agric	Comm	Educ	Engin	Arts	Law	Nurs	Admin	BSc	BSoc	
Assistance/advice for your final exam	39	46	40	34	33	29	33	45	26	42	39
Opportunity out of class	38	27	28	26	27	25	50	45	37	32	32
Academic advice offered	59	46	33	29	29	38	50	41	19	38	39
Chances to participate in research projects	71	18	12	9	7	0	50	14	22	18	24
Teaching quality of lecturers	73	68	64	38	73	50	90	41	56	67	61
Structure of degree programme	55	76	36	46	53	63	60	59	48	67	55
Testing/grading system of exams	34	46	30	53	20	14	50	41	48	44	41
Possibility of individual structuring studies	14	17	20	14	40	0	20	21	30	25	20
Provision of supervised practical work	53	31	45	36	27	0	40	46	41	20	37
Contacts with fellow students	71	80	86	85	87	75	80	72	74	75	79
Chance to influence university policy	10	8	12	5	7	13	10	3	4	8	8
Availability of technical equipment	51	23	35	41	33	0	50	16	41	32	36
Quality of equipment of labs	55	19	41	39	27	0	40	13	37	28	36
Supply of teaching material	55	35	38	25	50	14	60	30	22	34	36
Equipment and stocking of libraries	55	42	45	23	73	38	40	46	33	40	41
Accommodation facilities on campus	29	52	49	58	67	57	50	52	41	48	48
Catering facilities on campus	61	36	27	46	67	38	60	21	30	27	38
Quality of the buildings	10	54	49	61	47	63	50	45	41	47	45
Count (n)	(74)	(50)	(86)	(80)	(15)	(8)	(10)	(29)	(27)	(90)	(469)

Question 3: How do you rate the study provision and study conditions you experienced? Scale from 1 = very good to 5 = very bad.

It was observed that there was very little chance by the students to influence University policy. Students' participation in research projects is rated very low except for agriculture and Nursing. Field and the possibility by individuals structuring their studies. Other areas in which the University is poorly rated include: quality of equipment in laboratories; availability of technical equipment; supply of teaching material; provision of supervised practical work; and opportunity of contact with staff out of class. There is an indication (Table 4) that almost all study provisions and study conditions except for possibility of individual structuring studies quality of lecturers and opportunity out of class, have deteriorated over the years and most notably are catering facilities on campus, availability of technical equipment, supply of teaching materials, equipment and stocking of libraries, and quality of equipment of labs.

**Table 4 Assessment of Study Provisions and Study Conditions by Year of Graduation (percent; responses 1 and 2)**

	Year of graduation				Total
	87-89	90-91	92-93	94-95	
Assistance/advice for your final exam	39	44	41	34	39
Opportunity out of class	26	34	26	35	31
Academic advice offered	48	33	34	42	38
Chances to participate in research projects	30	22	21	24	24
Teaching quality of lecturers	64	62	53	64	60
Structure of degree programme	60	58	54	48	54
Testing/grading system of exams	47	37	43	37	40
Possibility of individual structuring studies	17	23	18	19	19
Provision of supervised practical work	40	43	43	28	38
Contacts with fellow students	76	86	75	77	79
Chance to influence university policy	9	7	5	10	8
Availability of technical equipment	42	47	31	29	36
Quality of equipment of labs	44	44	35	26	36
Supply of teaching material	45	42	35	27	36
Equipment and stocking of libraries	53	49	35	34	41
Accommodation facilities on campus	62	62	45	34	48
Catering facilities on campus	49	52	32	28	38
Quality of the buildings	54	53	39	37	44
Count (n)	(70)	(115)	(132)	(145)	(462)

Question 3: How do you rate the study provision and study conditions you experienced? Scale from 1 = very good to 5 = very bad.

## **GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT AND WORK**

### **Beginning of Searching for Employment.**

For any graduate the transition period between graduation and securing the first job can be a very trying period. It involves writing a lot of application letters to various employers and attending interviews. Most companies will not offer employment to new graduates until the final

examination results are known. Knowing that it takes so long to secure a job and the anxiety to receive the first pay after graduation, most of the graduates start searching for employment way before graduation. Table 5 depict some interesting responses from the graduates as to when they started searching for employment. The majority of graduates, 76 percent started the search for employment before graduation and 11 percent began searching for employment after graduation.

**Table 5 Time of Start of Search for Employment by Bachelor’s Degree Field (percent)**

	Bachelors degree field										Total
	Agric	Comm	Educ	Engin	Arts	Law	Nurs	Admin	BSc	BSoc	
Before graduation	92	89	43	79	79	57	20	86	70	87	76
After graduation	7	11	9	17	14	29	0	5	19	10	11
Did not seek employment	1	0	48	4	7	14	70	10	11	3	13
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(71)	(47)	(77)	(77)	(14)	(7)	(10)	(21)	(27)	(90)	(441)

Question 6: When did you start seeking a job?

About 13 percent of the respondents did not seek employment. The largest number (70 percent) of those who did not seek employment were from Nursing and 48 percent from education. Graduates from these fields are normally employed by the government and therefore do not struggle to get a job.

### **Duration of Seeking Employment and Number of Contacts**

The study revealed that in all fields, on average, it took about four months after graduation to secure a job (see Table 6). In education, the average duration was about two months while Public Administration graduates took on average six months representing the longest period before securing a job after graduation.

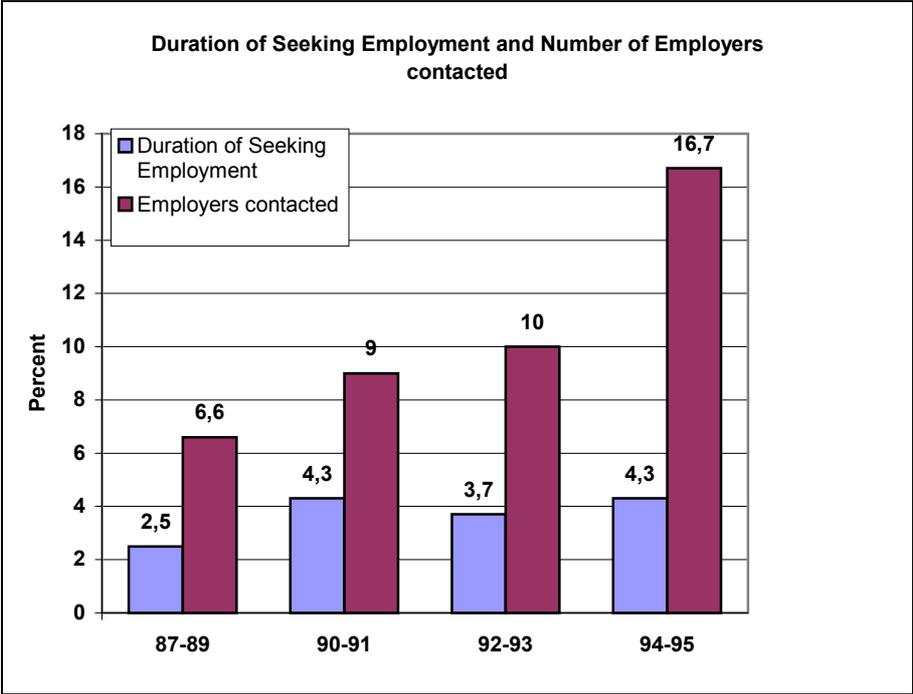
**Table 6 Duration of Seeking Employment by Bachelor's Degree Field (means)**

	Bachelors degree field										Total
	Agric	Comm	Educ	Engin	Arts	Law	Nurs	Admin	BSc	BSoc	
Mean	4.3	4.5	2.1	3.0	4.1	2.6	2.3	6.2	4.4	4.7	3.9
Median	3.0	4.0	2.0	2.0	4.0	1.0	2.5	4.5	3.0	3.0	3.0
Count (n)	(60)	(33)	(50)	(61)	(12)	(5)	(4)	(20)	(22)	(69)	(336)

Question 7: How long did it take you to find your first job after graduation?

Chart 1 shows a general increase in the duration of seeking employment after graduation from 1987 to 1995. There were more job opportunities for those who graduated in 1987 - 1989 and the job market seems to be getting flooded with less job opportunities in 1994 - 1995 period. This flooding is also shown by the number of employing agencies, institution and companies contacted by the graduates before getting a job. An average of about seventeen contacts were made by 1994 - 1995 graduates compared to about seven contacts for those who graduated between 1987 - 1989.

**Chart 1 : Duration of Seeking Employment (Mean in Months) and Number of Employers Contacted before taking up the First Job(Mean)**



## Recruitment Criteria of the Employer

Factors which seem to be important for a graduate of the University of Malawi to be employed as shown in Table 7, suggest that the field of study is the most important. The respondents, irrespective of degree field, year of graduation, and sector of employment rated field of study very highly, 80 percent. This is followed by the main focus of subject area or specialisation 64 percent, personality 46 percent and the grades at the University. From the graduates point of view, grades at the University rated 27 percent and does not seem to be a very important factor. This seems to contradict with the employers' view point who normally attach a lot of importance to the grades. The rating in the nursing field are misleading since they are relatively high and yet they have one major employer - the public sector. These ratings are higher probably due to the few respondents in this field so it may not be a true representation of the real situation.

**Table 7 Recruitment Criteria of the Employer by Bachelor's Degree Field (percent; responses 1 and 2)**

	Bachelors degree field										Total
	Agric	Comm	Educ	Engin	Arts	Law	Nurs	Admin	BSc	BSoc	
Field of study	79	79	90	90	71	100	100	76	59	70	80
Main focus of subject area/ specialisation	42	73	71	67	100	60	100	40	55	65	64
Theme of thesis/projects, if applicable	7	0	5	25	13	0	60	0	5	13	11
Grades at the university	31	38	17	37	10	50	80	14	14	21	27
Reputation of the university	50	33	8	33	9	0	60	5	5	25	26
Reputation of the department	24	30	12	23	0	20	40	37	9	22	22
Previous work experience	14	38	6	30	20	0	40	10	18	14	19
Personality	53	63	19	52	55	40	60	40	24	51	46
Experiences abroad	2	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
My own world view, religion etc.	12	15	4	8	0	0	20	0	14	10	9
Count (n)	(68)	(49)	(62)	(73)	(14)	(7)	(5)	(23)	(23)	(78)	(402)

Question 9: In your opinion, how important were the following factors for being employed? Scale from 1 = very important to 5 = not at all important.

## Initial Training After Graduation

This is an ongoing process for an employees growth and development. Most organisation train their employees in specific areas of their operations. Table 8 shows that on average 43 percent of the respondents received initial training for their first jobs after graduation and 41 percent did not receive any training. This training was mostly on-the-job.

**Table 8 Initial Training After Graduation by Bachelor's Degree Field (percent)**

	Bachelors degree field										Total
	Agric	Comm	Educ	Engin	Arts	Law	Nurs	Admin	BSc	BSoc	
No training	53	29	58	26	47	0	38	38	71	33	41
On the job training	37	49	31	47	40	100	50	35	25	52	43
Training + off-job courses	8	20	3	25	13	0	13	23	4	14	13
Other	1	2	9	1	0	0	0	4	0	1	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(73)	(49)	(78)	(76)	(15)	(8)	(8)	(26)	(24)	(85)	(442)

Question 10: What kind of initial training did you receive for your first job after graduation?

It is interesting to note that of those who graduated between 1987 - 1989, about 66 percent of them received training. Those who graduated in later years 1990 - 91, 1992 - 93 and 1994 - 95, 62 percent, 56 percent and 44 percent respectively (see Table 9). This decreasing trend could be attributed to the fact that many courses taken at the University may have changed to being more job- oriented. By sector of employment and Bachelor's degree field, the training requirements for different sectors differ quite significantly. All law graduates respondents received on the job training and the engineering employment sector has the highest percentage of both on the job training (58 percent) and off-job courses, 29 percent and the least is education with on-the job 26 percent and off-job 2 percent (see Table 10)

**Table 9: Initial Training After Graduation by Year of Graduation (percent)**

	Year of graduation				Total
	87-89	90-91	92-93	94-95	
No training	32	36	40	54	42
On the job training	44	45	45	37	42
Training + off-job courses	22	17	11	7	13
Other	1	3	4	1	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(68)	(109)	(121)	(136)	(434)

Question 10: What kind of initial training did you receive for your first job after graduation?

**Table 10 Initial Training After Graduation by Sector of employment (percent)**

	Sector of employment						Total
	Agri	Engin	Comm	Health	Educ	Publ	
No training	45	12	34	38	67	31	41
On the job training	38	58	47	51	26	52	43
Training + off-job courses	13	29	18	11	2	15	13
Other	5	1	2	0	5	2	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(56)	(84)	(62)	(47)	(135)	(61)	(445)

Question 10: What kind of initial training did you receive for your first job after graduation?

### Change of Employment

The higher percentages of the on-the job training for law and engineering, public administration, nursing and commerce could be due to the fact that these jobs need more practice on some specific type of jobs.

Nearly 50 percent of the respondents have changed jobs and the remaining 50 percent have not changed jobs as yet. Table 11 shows that at least about 97 percent of the cohorts have changed jobs from one to three times. Those who graduated between 1987 and 1989, it is shown that an average 54 percent have changed jobs. On the other hand, of those who graduated between 1994 and 1995, 42 percent have changed jobs. It seems changing of job among other things is a function of time. Since the 1987 - 1989 graduates have stayed for a longer time in employment they have had more opportunity to make cross-over.

**Table 11 Change of Employment by Year of Graduation (percent)**

	Year of graduation				Total
	87-89	90-91	92-93	94-95	
Yes	54	46	52	42	48
No	46	54	48	58	52
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(70)	(115)	(127)	(139)	(451)
Number of times changed job					
1	61	53	61	68	61
2	16	26	26	15	21
3	16	17	12	17	15
4	8	2	0	0	2
5	0	0	2	0	0
8	0	2	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(38)	(53)	(66)	(59)	(216)

Question 11: How many times did you change the employer/employment since your graduation?

Other reasons that could influence more change of employment in these years are the availability of more job opportunities and sometimes poor working conditions. Engineers seem to have changed employment more than any other group up to five times. In fact 2 percent of the engineering respondents changed employment five times (see Table 12). This fact could be attributed to either poor remuneration, or graduate expectations being high, and employment opportunities in this field being better than in other fields. The nursing graduates all changed jobs once, this happened because there was a requirement that the first graduates who once worked in government hospitals should go and teach in private hospital nursing schools.

**Table 12 Change of Employment by Bachelor's Degree Field (percent)**

	Bachelors degree field										Total
	Agric	Comm	Educ	Engin	Arts	Law	Nurs	Admin	BSc	BSoc	
Yes	49	60	25	57	60	38	60	45	58	51	48
No	51	40	75	43	40	63	40	55	42	49	52
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(76)	(50)	(84)	(74)	(15)	(8)	(10)	(29)	(24)	(89)	(459)
Number of times changed job											
1	54	63	90	45	33	0	100	77	79	58	60
2	24	13	10	31	44	33	0	15	0	27	21
3	22	23	0	17	22	67	0	8	7	16	16
4	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	7	0	1
5	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(37)	(30)	(21)	(42)	(9)	(3)	(6)	(13)	(14)	(45)	(220)

Question 11: How many times did you change the employer/employment since your graduation?

### Duration of Work in Present Employment

It was observed that most of the graduates have been in present employment for almost three years. This picture is reflected in the degree field, year of graduation and sector of employment. Most of those who graduated in 1987 - 1989 have been in the present jobs close to five years, while 1990 - 1991, and 1992 – 1993 graduates have been working for almost four and two years respectively (see Table 13 and Table 14)

**Table 13 Duration of Work in Present Employment by Bachelor's Degree Field (means)**

	Bachelors degree field										Total
	Agric	Comm	Educ	Engin	Arts	Law	Nurs	Admin	BSc	BSoc	
Mean	35.4	21.8	41.3	33.4	26.9	33.9	17.8	28.0	39.1	38.4	33.9
Median	27.0	12.5	39.0	28.5	17.0	26.0	11.0	23.0	32.5	33.0	27.5
Count (n)	(66)	(44)	(55)	(64)	(9)	(7)	(9)	(23)	(18)	(71)	(366)

Question 14: How long have you been working?

**Table 14 Duration of Work in Present Employment by Year of Graduation (means)**

	Year of graduation				Total
	87-89	90-91	92-93	94-95	
Mean	55.1	47.3	29.1	15.9	34.0
Median	64.0	54.0	30.5	13.0	27.0
Count (n)	(61)	(91)	(100)	(112)	(364)

Question 14: How long have you been working?

### **Kind of Employer**

From Table 15, 67 percent of all graduates of the University of Malawi are employed in public institutions. The private sector employs 31 percent and very few about 2 percent are involved in self employment and other activities. Lack of initial capital to start own business, lack of confidence to venture into self employment, and generally parents' expectation to be supported after they have done their part in educating their children may be compelling reasons for the new graduate to seek employment as opposed to self employment. It is important to note that up to 3 percent of Engineers went into self-employment.

**Table 15 Kind of Employer by Bachelor's Degree Field (percent)**

	Bachelors degree field										Total
	Agric	Comm	Educ	Engin	Arts	Law	Nurs	Admin	BSc	BSoc	
Public employer	62	31	92	53	79	63	80	76	67	70	67
Private employer	35	67	7	42	21	38	10	24	29	30	31
Self employed	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	3	2	1	1	0	0	10	0	4	0	2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(74)	(48)	(85)	(73)	(14)	(8)	(10)	(29)	(24)	(86)	(451)

Question 17: Please state the kind of your employer? Please tick one item only

Among the 1994 - 1995 graduates 56 percent, a drop of 11 percent from 67 percent were employed by the public and at the same time 42 percent, i.e. 11 percent up from 31 percent were absorbed by the private sector (see Table 16). This may be due to attractive remuneration package offered by private companies assisted by government's new initiative to privatise some of its companies which for a long time have been badly managed.

**Table 16 Kind of Employer by Year of Graduation (percent)**

	Year of graduation				Total
	87-89	90-91	92-93	94-95	
Public employer	60	74	73	56	66
Private employer	39	23	25	42	32
Self employed	0	1	1	0	0
Other	1	2	2	2	2
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(70)	(115)	(126)	(134)	(445)

Question 17: Please state the kind of your employer? Please tick one item only

### Work Assignment

Whether by Bachelor's degree field, year of graduation N by sector of employment, the major area of work assignment 32% of all respondents is in teaching training. This is followed by 8% whose major work assignment is in Management. Advisory services and accountancy and finance absorb 6% each of all the graduates.

5% of all the respondents reported that their major area of work assignment is in planning and organisation and project management. It was surprising to note that no graduates were involved in such major work assignment as environmental, engineering, systems analysis, installation/commissioning, materials management estimating and costing (see Table 17).

**Table 17: Major Area of Work Assignment by Bachelor's Degree Field (percent)**

	Bachelors degree field										Total
	Agric	Comm	Educ	Engin	Arts	Law	Nurs	Admin	BSc	BSoc	
Supervision of production	6	2	3	11	9	0	10	4	5	2	5
Training/teaching	31	13	76	9	27	0	90	11	36	19	32
Preparatory/supervisory	1	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Construction/design	1	0	0	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Advisory services/consulting	11	4	0	3	18	100	0	11	0	8	6
Maintenance & repair	0	0	0	11	0	0	0	0	9	1	3
Controlling	1	0	0	4	0	0	0	4	5	1	2
Data processing	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	14	13	4
Production	1	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Research & development	7	2	3	4	0	0	0	0	9	7	4
Estimating/costing	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Management	10	4	4	6	36	0	0	36	0	4	8
Marketing	10	2	0	4	0	0	0	0	5	4	4
Market research	3	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Material management	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Measurement & testing tech	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Installation/commissioning	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Standard/licencing	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	0	1
Personnel affairs	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	21	0	4	2
Planning of function	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	4	0	4	1
Planning and organization	6	0	3	6	9	0	0	4	0	12	5
Project management	7	4	5	4	0	0	0	7	0	7	5
Accountancy, finance	1	46	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	6
Settle/prepare accts	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Systems analysis	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	5	4	2
Environmental engineering	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
General office work	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(71)	(46)	(80)	(70)	(11)	(2)	(10)	(28)	(22)	(83)	(423)

## Subordinates

On average, 71% of all graduates employed full time do not have subordinates under them. Only 29% do have subordinates (see Table 18). This shows that it takes quite a long time for the graduate from the University of Malawi to take responsibility over other employees. In fact as stated previously, most graduates receive on the job - training two years minimum being common before being appointed to as ustantive post. Little by little depending on performance and other qualities the graduate may be given responsibilities as the employers see fit.

**Table 18: Subordinates by Bachelor's Degree Field (percent)**

	Bachelors degree field										Total
	Agric	Comm	Educ	Engin	Arts	Law	Nurs	Admin	BSc	BSoc	
Yes	27	38	46	13	15	0	40	17	22	31	29
No	73	63	54	87	85	100	60	83	78	69	71
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(74)	(48)	(82)	(71)	(13)	(7)	(10)	(29)	(23)	(86)	(443)

Question 23a: Do you have subordinates?

Looking at subordinates by year of graduation it is interesting to note that only 15% of those who graduated between 1987-89 had subordinates. Those who graduated 1994-95, 42% have subordinates, an indication that recent graduates of the University of Malawi have quickly moved into responsible positions in their respective companies (see Table 19).

**Table 19 Subordinates by Year of Graduation (percent)**

	Year of graduation				Total
	87-89	90-91	92-93	94-95	
Yes	85	76	73	58	71
No	15	24	27	42	29
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(68)	(113)	(124)	(130)	(435)

Question 23a: Do you have subordinates?

## Full time employment

Surprisingly enough respondents of all cohorts are reported to be in full time employment, This is true whether by Bachelor's degree field, year of graduation and sector of employment. Those graduates who graduated between 1987-1989, all were employed full-time, while those who graduated between 1990-1991 only 99% were employed full time. For 1992 to 1995 2% of the total number of graduates were not in full time employment (see Table 20). This is quite significant indicating that the job market is becoming flooded and so difficult to secure a job.

**Table 20 Full-Time Employment by Year of Graduation (percent)**

	Year of graduation				Total
	87-89	90-91	92-93	94-95	
Yes	100	99	98	98	99
No	0	1	1	1	1
Not applicable	0	0	1	1	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(69)	(116)	(126)	(135)	(446)

Question 22: Are you employed full-time?

## Other gainful activities

The majority of graduates from University of Malawi, 82% do not engage themselves in any other gainful activities apart from their full-time employment. Only 15% of the graduate reported that they have other side jobs where possibly they get honoraria. In fact, it is possible that the majority of the 15% may be engaged in small businesses which is becoming normal in Malawi. They may be engaged in tobacco farming, private schools, mini buses stationary business, consultancy and even registered contractors (see Table 21). Graduates from Law, Nursing, Bachelor of Science degree and Engineering fields seem to have high percentages of side jobs. Most of these graduates are employed by the Public Sector, hence lower salaries which in turn tend to encourage these side jobs (see Table 22).

**Table 21 Other Gainful Activities by Bachelor's Degree Field (percent)**

	Bachelors degree field										Total
	Agric	Comm	Educ	Engin	Arts	Law	Nurs	Admin	BSc	BSoc	
Second occupation	1	2	1	7	15	0	0	7	4	1	3
Side jobs, honoraria	13	11	7	21	8	43	30	10	22	16	14
No	85	87	92	69	77	57	70	83	74	80	81
Not applicable	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	4	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(72)	(47)	(83)	(72)	(13)	(7)	(10)	(29)	(23)	(83)	(439)

Question 24: Do you have any other gainful activity?

**Table 22 Other Gainful Activities by Year of Graduation (percent)**

	Year of graduation				Total
	87-89	90-91	92-93	94-95	
Second occupation	3	4	2	2	3
Side jobs, honoraria	17	23	12	9	15
No	77	73	84	90	82
Not applicable	3	1	2	0	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(65)	(114)	(124)	(128)	(431)

Question 24: Do you have any other gainful activity?

### Monthly gross income

From the data provided by the graduates the highest salaries obtained are those reported by the Law graduates with a mean of seven thousand Kwacha, followed by Commerce and engineering graduates with a mean of five thousand four hundred Kwacha each. The lowest salary being those received by graduates from agriculture with a mean close to two Thousand eight hundred Kwacha. The mean gross income therefore for the graduates of Malawi is three thousand eight hundred Kwacha (see Table 23).

**Table 23 Monthly Gross Income by Bachelor's Degree Field (means)**

	Mean	Median	Count (n)
Bachelors degree field			
Agriculture	2796.7	2236.5	(74)
Communication	5439.8	4500.0	(48)
Education	2906.6	2194.0	(78)
Engineering	5397.0	5000.0	(63)
Arts	3348.7	2134.0	(11)
Law	7034.9	8000.0	(7)
Nursery	2945.6	2362.0	(10)
Administration	3356.7	2827.0	(28)
BSc	3733.9	2055.0	(23)
BSoc	3499.8	2218.5	(84)
Total	3812.6	2500.0	(426)

Question 25: How much is your monthly gross income?

The mean monthly gross income for those who graduated between 1987-89 is slightly higher than five thousand Kwacha while those who graduated between 1994-95 the mean gross income per month is less than three thousand Kwacha and in fact it is almost 50% of those who graduated between 1987-89 (see Table 24).

**Table 24 Monthly Gross Income by Year of Graduation (means)**

	Year of graduation				Total
	87-89	90-91	92-93	94-95	
Mean	5220.6	4307.1	3649.7	2767.3	3782.1
Median	4000.0	3000.0	2194.0	2134.0	2500.0
Count (n)	(61)	(110)	(118)	(128)	(417)

Question 25: How much is your monthly gross income?

Looking at the mean gross income by sector of employment, engineering graduates receive better salaries with a mean of five thousand five hundred Kwacha followed by commerce and health sectors each with a mean gross income of four thousand nine hundred. The education sector being the lowest with a mean monthly gross of two thousand four hundred Kwacha (see Table 25).

**Table 25 Monthly Gross Income by Sector of employment (means)**

	Sector of employment						Total
	Agri	Engin	Comm	Health	Educ	Publ	
Mean	2972.9	5509.3	4884.6	4884.0	2431.3	3624.2	3813.2
Median	2406.5	5000.0	4400.0	4167.0	2104.0	2194.0	2500.0
Count (n)	(58)	(77)	(57)	(51)	(135)	(58)	(436)

Question 25: How much is your monthly gross income?

### Kind of Fringe Benefits

From the results of this survey, it seems that fringe benefits tend to increase with the length of service. For example 93% of all graduates who graduated between 1987-89 do receive free housing/Housing allowance while only 60% of those who graduated between 1994-95 do have housing benefit (see Table 26).

**Table 26 Kind of Fringe Benefits received by Year of Graduation (percent; multiple responses)**

	Year of graduation				Total
	87-89	90-91	92-93	94-95	
Housing	93	89	74	60	76
Transportation	40	24	21	13	22
Health	68	41	32	33	40
Education/training	19	17	21	17	18
Retirement	49	56	55	48	52
Other	3	3	2	2	3
No fringe benefit	3	5	10	18	10
Total	274	235	215	192	222
Count (n)	(68)	(115)	(126)	(132)	(441)

Question 26: What kinds of fringe benefits do you receive? Multiple reply possible

All in all it is comforting to note that 77% of all graduates do receive housing allowance/free accommodation, 52% of the respondents indicated that they receive retirement benefit and 40% receive free Health Services. A disturbing figure of 10% of all the respondents do not have any fringe benefits (see Table 27). Only 19% on the other hand receive education/training benefits, of which 27% of this are those employed in the commerce sector only 23% of the graduates indicated that they are provided with transport benefit (see Table 28).

**Table 27 Kind of Fringe Benefits received by Bachelor's Degree Field (percent; multiple responses)**

	Bachelors degree field										Total
	Agric	Comm	Educ	Engin	Arts	Law	Nurs	Admin	BSc	BSoc	
Housing	79	61	75	82	85	100	80	83	75	77	77
Transportation	45	20	5	27	46	43	20	14	13	20	23
Health	38	67	17	62	23	43	60	38	33	34	40
Education/training	14	20	14	14	8	0	30	17	21	34	19
Retirement	37	55	63	47	54	29	40	69	71	48	52
Other	0	0	1	4	0	0	10	3	4	6	3
No fringe benefit	12	8	12	7	8	0	10	3	8	11	10
Total	226	233	187	242	223	214	250	228	225	231	223
Count (n)	(73)	(49)	(83)	(73)	(13)	(7)	(10)	(29)	(24)	(87)	(448)

Question 26: What kinds of fringe benefits do you receive? Multiple reply possible

**Table 28 Kind of Fringe Benefits received by Sector of employment (percent; multiple responses)**

	Sector of employment						Total
	Agri	Engin	Comm	Health	Educ	Publ	
Housing	86	84	61	84	69	85	77
Transportation	48	20	16	55	1	31	23
Health	43	65	66	63	14	21	41
Education/training	19	16	27	24	11	26	18
Retirement	47	56	58	39	49	61	52
Other	0	3	0	6	3	3	3
No fringe benefit	9	5	6	2	21	5	10
Total	252	249	235	273	168	233	223
Count (n)	(58)	(88)	(62)	(51)	(140)	(61)	(460)

Question 26: What kinds of fringe benefits do you receive? Multiple reply possible

## PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

### Use of Professional Knowledge and Skills acquired during studies.

The cohorts were asked to rate the use of professional knowledge and skills acquire during their studies. As stated earlier the scale used from irepresenting to a very high extent to 5 not all. What is clear from the Table 29 is that what is important in the use of professional knowledge acquired during the course of study differ from one degree field to another. However the knowledge of English and Mathematics were highly rated by Law, arts and public administration however did not rate Mathematics as being very important. Knowledge of English was rated 73%, 96% 85% 78% 92% 100% 89% 96% 63% and 87% by graduates from Agriculture commerce, Education, Engineering, Arts, Law, Nursing administration Bachelor of Science and Social Science respectively. This is followed by Mathematics with an average rating of 57% Planning and Management 54% Social Science, rural development 45% rating followed by economic and management with a rating of 44%.

**Table 29 Use of Professional Knowledge and Skills Acquired During Studies by Bachelor's Degree Field (percent; responses 1 and 2)**

	Bachelors degree field										Total
	Agric	Comm	Educ	Engin	Arts	Law	Nurs	Admin	BSc	BSoc	
Maths, Stats	58	65	48	65	13	0	56	24	61	66	57
Natural sciences	49	4	56	34	0	0	25	0	75	10	36
Ecology and conservation	45	0	42	8	0	0	0	8	12	14	23
Livestock & production	68	8	16	2	0	0	0	0	6	10	24
Anatomy, Physiology	33	4	28	0	0	0	100	0	6	0	17
Microbiology, parasitology	33	0	25	2	0	0	70	0	19	0	17
Clinical nursing	2	4	2	0	0	0	90	0	0	0	5
Theory of engineering	16	0	5	80	0	0	0	0	20	3	27
Operation, measurement	4	4	7	36	0	50	0	8	29	11	14
Applied technical fields	2	11	2	49	0	0	0	0	28	11	17
Systems analysis & optimisation	4	27	18	27	0	50	0	8	29	42	22
Planning, design, calculation	16	26	27	50	25	0	14	25	8	29	29
Experimental and practical work	30	4	39	31	33	0	43	8	47	9	27
EDP application	2	19	0	9	0	50	0	0	8	6	6
Accounting	18	78	9	19	20	20	13	29	0	21	27
Planning, management	56	59	44	60	33	50	50	83	41	50	54
Social sciences, rural development	58	25	65	6	46	0	78	79	21	43	45
Economics and management	53	76	14	19	38	0	0	68	8	58	44
Law	2	49	5	2	29	100	0	32	0	0	15
Knowledge of English language	73	96	85	78	92	100	89	96	63	87	84
Count (n)	(75)	(49)	(82)	(75)	(14)	(8)	(10)	(28)	(25)	(87)	(453)

Question 27: To what extent do you use knowledge acquired during your studies in the following areas (if applicable) for your current job? Scale from 1 = to a very high extent to 5 = not at all.

### Expected Abilities and Attitudes

Table 30 and Table 31 summaries the extent to which the following abilities and attitudes are expected irrespective of year of graduation, degree field and sector of employment it is clear that the most important abilities and attitudes required of the graduates are sense of responsibility, self-confidence reliability and willingness to perform/ commitment. In fact all the abilities and attitudes as shown in the tables were rated very highly that is very important except unconventional thinking which received a low rating of 2.6 on a scale of 1 to 5. This represents an average rating of only 46%.

It is interesting to notice that nursing and Law graduates though few of them responded, their ratings for the various abilities and attitudes expected of graduates were very high than the rest of the graduates. For example the ability to express oneself in writing was rated 100% by both Law and Nursing graduates. Similarly reliability, ability to work under pressure independence, sense of responsibility and initiative.

**Table 30 Expected Abilities and Attitudes by Bachelor's Degree Field (arithmetic mean)**

	Bachelors degree field										Total
	Agric	Comm Educ	Engin	Arts	Law	Nurs	Admin	BSc	BSoc		
Willingness to learn	1.6	1.5	1.7	1.6	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.5	2.2	1.7	1.6
Ability to solve problems	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.4	2.0	1.1	1.5	1.3	1.6	1.6	1.5
Reflective capability	2.4	2.3	2.5	2.1	2.3	1.5	1.7	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.3
Ability to express yourself in writing	2.1	1.6	1.7	1.9	1.6	1.1	1.0	1.5	2.2	1.7	1.8
Unconventional thinking	2.6	2.5	2.7	2.7	3.2	1.5	2.1	2.3	2.8	2.8	2.6
Willingness to perform/commitment	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.0	1.4	1.8	1.6	1.5
Ability to coordinate	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.5	1.8	1.6	1.1	1.4	1.8	1.8	1.6
Ability to improvise	2.3	2.1	1.6	1.7	1.9	2.4	1.4	2.3	2.0	2.6	2.0
Reliability	1.6	1.3	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.1	1.0	1.3	1.6	1.6	1.5
Ability to work under pressure	1.8	1.4	1.8	1.5	1.3	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.8	1.7	1.6
Independence	2.1	1.6	2.1	1.8	2.2	1.1	1.4	1.8	2.2	2.0	1.9
Sense of responsibility	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.7	1.1	1.2	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.4
Creativity	1.8	1.8	1.7	1.7	2.1	1.8	1.1	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.8
Economic reasoning	2.1	1.8	2.9	2.2	2.4	2.3	2.1	2.3	3.0	2.1	2.3
Determination	1.8	1.6	1.9	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.4	1.8	1.9	1.8	1.8
Loyalty to institution	1.6	1.4	1.7	1.7	1.4	1.7	1.3	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.7
Persistence	2.2	2.0	2.0	2.2	2.2	1.7	1.6	2.0	2.4	2.4	2.1
Ability to cooperate	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.9	1.9	1.0	1.6	1.6	1.8	1.6
Ability to assert myself	2.1	1.9	2.1	2.1	1.9	2.0	1.1	1.9	2.0	2.2	2.0
Self-confidence	1.6	1.5	1.3	1.6	1.7	1.5	1.2	1.7	1.5	1.6	1.5
Adaptability	1.7	1.6	1.5	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.2	1.7	1.9	1.9	1.7
Leadership qualities	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.7	2.0	1.6	1.4	2.1	1.8	1.6
Initiative	1.6	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.6	1.1	1.1	1.4	1.7	1.6	1.5
Count (n)	(74)	(49)	(83)	(75)	(14)	(8)	(10)	(29)	(25)	(87)	(454)

Question 28: To what extent are the following abilities and attitudes expected from you in your current job? Scale from 1 = to a very high extent to 5 = not at all.

**Table 31 Expected Abilities and Attitudes by Bachelor's Degree Field (percent; responses 1 and 2)**

	Bachelors degree field										Total
	Agric	Comm	Educ	Engin	Arts	Law	Nurs	Admin	BSc	BSoc	
Willingness to learn	88	90	85	81	85	88	90	88	64	86	85
Ability to solve problems	92	84	88	92	62	100	90	93	88	85	88
Reflective capability	55	60	50	70	64	100	70	63	57	56	59
Ability to express yourself in writing	65	81	81	75	93	100	100	86	63	80	77
Unconventional thinking	45	49	42	45	45	83	70	54	38	41	46
Willingness to perform/commitment	87	94	93	90	83	86	100	93	83	87	90
Ability to coordinate	88	90	84	91	85	88	100	93	83	78	86
Ability to improvise	64	67	87	84	75	38	80	61	71	53	70
Reliability	86	98	91	92	92	100	100	93	83	78	89
Ability to work under pressure	78	96	75	89	93	100	90	89	79	81	84
Independence	68	86	67	76	54	100	90	72	58	71	72
Sense of responsibility	92	92	93	93	79	100	100	93	96	90	92
Creativity	80	83	82	80	64	75	100	75	75	71	78
Economic reasoning	72	80	41	56	62	75	70	55	33	66	60
Determination	79	90	75	85	69	88	90	72	71	78	80
Loyalty to institution	85	90	78	79	86	86	90	74	79	78	81
Persistence	64	75	73	58	62	86	80	54	58	55	64
Ability to cooperate	89	94	92	81	71	71	100	82	88	80	86
Ability to assert myself	69	74	71	70	79	75	100	73	70	70	72
Self-confidence	87	90	98	87	77	88	100	83	91	87	89
Adaptability	86	88	90	77	77	75	100	82	71	76	82
Leadership qualities	85	85	83	87	79	75	80	89	67	84	83
Initiative	86	92	93	92	86	100	100	93	83	84	89
Count (n)	(74)	(49)	(83)	(75)	(14)	(8)	(10)	(29)	(25)	(87)	(454)

Question 28: To what extent are the following abilities and attitudes expected from you in your current job? Scale from 1 = to a very high extent to 5 = not at all.

### The usefulness of elements of Study programme to Current Work

The graduates were asked to look at the study programme and rate each element using a scale of 1 to 5. The elements of interest were the course content of their major of study, variety of courses offered, opportunity for specialisation, research emphasis and work experience. The course content of the major study and the variety of courses offered proved very useful for the graduates current work and were rated 2.1 and 2.3 (arithmetic mean) respectively. Research emphasis and work experience were poorly rated with an arithmetical mean of 3.60 (see Table 32). Maybe research at an undergraduate level is not given much prominence and in any case not many faculties in the University of Malawi go beyond the Bachelors degree. Many

undergraduate students finished their courses in the University of Malawi without industrial experience exception being those from Polytechnic and Bunda college of Agriculture and hence poor rating of work experience.

**Table 32 Rating of the Usefulness of Elements of Study Programme by Bachelor's Degree Field (arithmetic mean)**

	Bachelors degree field										Total
	Agric	Comm	Educ	Engin	Arts	Law	Nurs	Admin	BSc	BSoc	
Course content of major	2.6	1.5	2.1	2.0	2.5	2.5	1.4	1.8	2.3	2.3	2.1
Variety of courses offered	1.9	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	1.5	1.5	2.2	3.2	2.5	2.3
Opportunity for specialisation	3.8	2.2	2.5	2.7	3.3	4.5	3.0	2.5	3.2	2.9	2.9
Research emphasis	3.5	4.2	3.6	4.1	3.8	3.3	1.6	3.4	3.8	3.4	3.6
Practical emphasis	2.8	3.3	2.0	3.0	3.2	3.4	1.1	3.0	3.2	3.7	2.9
Work experience	4.2	3.0	3.9	3.1	3.6	2.6	3.3	2.8	4.5	4.0	3.6
Count (n)	(75)	(47)	(86)	(67)	(14)	(8)	(10)	(28)	(25)	(85)	(445)

Question 29: How useful did the following elements of the study program prove for your current work?  
Scale from 1 = very useful to 5 = not at all useful.

### Overall assessment of extent of use of knowledge and skills acquired during studies

Quite interesting and encouraging results to note that nearly 85% of the respondents use the knowledge and skills acquired during their studies at the University of Malawi. In fact 26% of these use their acquired knowledge to a very high extent, while 33% indicate that they too to a lesser extent use acquired knowledge and skills from their studies. About 13% to 15% of the respondents indicated that they do not use the knowledge and skills they acquired during their studies to a very high extent (see Table 33).

**Table 33 Overall assessment of extent of use of knowledge and skills acquired during studies by Bachelor's Degree Field (percent; arithmetic mean)**

	Bachelors degree field										Total
	Agric	Comm	Educ	Engin	Arts	Law	Nurs	Admin	BSc	BSoc	
Extent to which knowledge is used											
To a very high extent	16	45	36	23	14	25	50	32	16	19	26
2	35	29	29	31	50	63	40	39	24	33	33
3	25	18	26	37	21	13	10	18	40	27	26
4	23	8	7	8	14	0	0	11	20	16	13
Not at all	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	2
Arithmetic mean	2.6	1.9	2.1	2.4	2.4	1.9	1.6	2.1	2.6	2.5	2.3
Count (n)	(75)	(49)	(86)	(71)	(14)	(8)	(10)	(28)	(25)	(88)	(454)

Question 31: When you look at your current work tasks altogether: to what extent do you use the knowledge and skills acquired during your course of studies? Scale from 1 = to a very high extent to 5 = not at all.

### Realisation of career plans at the time of graduation

In general quite a large number of graduates feel that they were able to realised the career expected at the time of their graduation, Those who responded that they realised their career expectation to a very high extent reached 24% while 32% responded quite positively that they felt they realisation their career expectation too. It is unfortunate though that between 15% and 24% indicated that they did not realise their career plans (see Table 34).

**Table 34 Realisation of career plans at the time of graduation by Bachelor's Degree Field (percent; arithmetic mean)**

	Bachelors degree field										Total
	Agric	Comm	Educ	Engin	Arts	Law	Nurs	Admin	BSc	BSoc	
Extent of realising career											
To a very high extent	15	27	30	26	14	13	50	32	8	24	24
2	25	35	33	41	36	50	50	25	32	27	32
3	24	18	23	20	14	25	0	18	20	16	20
4	12	12	8	4	7	13	0	11	8	10	9
Not at all	24	8	6	9	29	0	0	14	32	23	15
Arithmetic mean	3.1	2.4	2.3	2.3	3.0	2.4	1.5	2.5	3.2	2.8	2.6
Count (n)	(75)	(49)	(84)	(70)	(14)	(8)	(10)	(28)	(25)	(88)	(451)

Question 30: To what extent have you been able to realise the career you expected at the time of graduation? Scale from 1 = to a very high extent to 5 = not at all.

Table 35 indicate that most of those who did not realise their career plans at the time of graduation were from Bachelor of Science degree fields. These observations are true whether one looks at graduates who graduated between 1987-89 to graduates who graduated between 1987-89 to 1994-95. The same pattern emerges when emerges when one looks the same by sector of employment.

**Table 35 Realisation of career plans at the time of graduation by Year of Graduation (percent; arithmetic mean)**

	Year of graduation				Total
	87-89	90-91	92-93	94-95	
Extent of realising career					
To a very high extent	29	23	23	21	23
2	25	36	38	28	32
3	25	23	13	21	20
4	14	7	9	8	9
Not at all	7	11	17	23	16
Arithmetic mean	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.8	2.6
Count (n)	(69)	(111)	(128)	(136)	(444)

Question 30: To what extent have you been able to realise the career you expected at the time of graduation? Scale from 1 = to a very high extent to 5 = not at all.

### **Appropriateness of Position and status to level of Education.**

Graduates were required to look at their present position and their status and match that with their attained level of education. About 75% of the respondents indicated that their education qualifications were appropriate to their positions and status accorded to them by their organisations. Obviously 25% of the remainder felt strongly that their positions and status did not match their qualification.

Whether one looks at the year of graduation or the sector of employment the results are similar.

It is possible that those whose qualification is no match to their positions and status were trained for example for Engineering but found themselves taking up jobs as science teachers in private secondary schools. This is true of graduates from other disciplines who have found themselves in jobs completely unrelated to their training/Preparation.

## Reason for taking up employment rarely linked to studies

Graduates employed in jobs hardly linked to their studies were influenced by the following reasons:-

- (a) they thought that they would have better career prospects
- (b) they could not find any job closely linked to their studies hence accepted first offer available.
- (c) High income and provision of part time work.

Those graduates who could not find jobs closely linked to their studies were from Bachelor of Science 36%, Bachelor of Social Science 27% Agriculture 32% Education and Arts graduates 15% (see Table 36).

**Table 36 Reason for Taking up Employment Rarely Linked to Studies by Bachelor's Degree Field (percent; multiple responses)**

	Bachelors degree field										Total
	Agric	Comm	Educ	Engin	Arts	Law	Nurs	Admin	BSc	BSoc	
At beginning of my career I have to accept such work	18	7	11	21	8	0	0	5	14	13	13
My current job ensures a higher income	7	2	4	10	23	17	0	5	5	11	8
In doing this job I have better career prospects	21	20	11	28	46	0	11	18	18	24	21
I prefer an occupation not closely connected to my studies	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
I prefer a job not clearly linked to my studies	0	0	1	2	8	0	0	0	0	1	1
My current work is very satisfactory	6	5	7	5	15	0	0	23	5	20	10
I was promoted to a position less linked to my studies	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	1
My current job provides the opportunity for part time work	6	2	15	9	8	17	11	9	5	5	8
My current job allows to work in a preferred locality	10	5	7	0	8	0	0	5	5	5	5
My current job allows me to take into account family needs	8	0	12	5	0	0	0	5	0	5	6
I could not find any job closely linked to my study	32	12	15	7	15	0	0	14	36	27	20
Other	7	2	7	3	0	0	0	5	5	1	4
Not applicable	35	61	41	52	46	67	89	45	32	38	44
Total	155	117	130	141	177	100	111	132	127	150	139
Count (n)	(71)	(41)	(74)	(58)	(13)	(6)	(9)	(22)	(22)	(82)	(398)

Question 33: If you consider your employment and work hardly being linked to your knowledge and your level of education: why did you take it up? Multiple reply possible

It is apparent that the percentage of those graduates working in jobs not linked to their studies is showing steady increase with years of graduation. For example those who graduated in 1987-89, 9% could not find jobs closely linked to their studies, while those who graduated 1994-95 a staggering 34% could not find jobs closely linked to their studies (see Table 37).

**Table 37 Reason for Taking up Employment Rarely Linked to Studies by Year of Graduation (percent; multiple responses)**

	Year of graduation				Total
	87-89	90-91	92-93	94-95	
At beginning of my career I have to accept such work	11	14	13	14	13
My current job ensures a higher income	11	9	6	3	7
In doing this job I have better career prospects	25	23	18	18	20
I prefer an occupation not closely connected to my studies	0	0	0	1	0
I prefer a job not clearly linked to my studies	2	2	0	0	1
My current work is very satisfactory	14	12	9	4	9
I was promoted to a position less linked to my studies	0	1	2	1	1
My current job provides the opportunity for part time work	7	7	8	8	8
My current job allows to work in a preferred locality	5	5	3	7	5
My current job allows me to take into account family needs	5	5	9	5	6
I could not find any job closely linked to my study	9	14	15	34	20
Other	9	3	5	2	4
Not applicable	48	44	46	39	44
Total	146	140	134	136	138
Count (n)	(56)	(95)	(117)	(122)	(390)

Question 33: If you consider your employment and work hardly being linked to your knowledge and your level of education: why did you take it up? Multiple reply possible

Most graduates who could not get jobs rarely linked to their studies are employed in the education sector. Those graduates who thought that they would have better career prospects were employed in Health Sector, Commerce, agriculture, engineering and public administration.

## Satisfaction with characteristics of professional situation

Generally speaking graduates of the University of Malawi are satisfied in their professional endeavours/situation. They are satisfied in their use of the qualifications obtained, working in demanding positions, their job security and opportunity to benefit society, From their responses, it is apparent that most graduates even when one looks at year of graduation and sector of employment, they are not satisfied with their income. With a scale rating of 1 to 5 the arithmetical mean from the responses was 3.9 other characteristics of the graduates professional in which they were not satisfied was fringe benefits, equal treatment of employees equipment of the workplace promotion prospects (see Table 38).

**Table 38 Satisfaction with Characteristics of Professional Situation by Bachelor's Degree Field (arithmetic mean)**

	Bachelors degree field										Total
	Agric	Comm	Educ	Engin	Arts	Law	Nurs	Admin	BSc	BSoc	
Content of work/professional tasks	2.9	2.1	2.1	2.3	2.7	2.3	1.9	2.4	2.8	2.6	2.4
Working atmosphere	3.3	2.6	3.0	3.0	3.2	2.9	2.6	2.8	3.5	3.2	3.0
Job security	2.6	2.5	2.0	2.6	2.1	2.4	2.2	2.0	2.6	2.4	2.4
Use of qualification acquired	2.8	2.1	2.5	2.2	2.9	1.6	1.8	2.3	3.0	2.7	2.5
Working in demanding position	2.6	1.9	2.6	2.0	1.8	1.9	2.6	1.8	2.8	2.3	2.3
Position achieved	3.4	2.9	3.7	3.0	3.4	2.9	2.9	3.1	3.7	3.4	3.3
Income	4.0	3.4	4.4	3.5	4.0	3.8	4.0	4.0	3.7	3.8	3.9
Promotion prospects	3.8	2.8	4.2	3.1	3.7	3.1	3.6	3.1	3.7	3.4	3.5
Opportunity to benefit society	2.3	2.5	2.1	2.4	1.8	1.8	2.2	2.4	2.6	2.4	2.3
Chance of realising my own ideas	3.3	2.5	3.5	2.5	3.1	3.1	2.5	2.7	3.6	3.0	3.0
Fringe benefits	3.6	3.4	4.3	3.3	3.8	3.6	2.9	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.7
Opportunity of continuous learning	3.4	2.9	3.6	3.2	3.5	3.6	2.6	3.2	3.3	2.7	3.2
Equipment of the workplace	3.9	3.2	3.9	3.5	4.1	3.4	3.2	3.8	3.8	3.5	3.6
Workplace surroundings	3.6	3.4	3.2	3.3	3.8	3.6	2.8	3.3	3.7	3.4	3.4
Equal treatment of employees	4.0	3.1	3.9	3.6	3.4	3.4	3.6	3.4	3.7	3.5	3.6
Count (n)	(74)	(49)	(86)	(71)	(14)	(8)	(10)	(29)	(25)	(88)	(454)

Question 34: To what extent are you satisfied with the following characteristics of your professional situation? Scale from 1 = to a very high extent to 5 = not at all.

May be one can obviously say that fringe benefits in general are accorded to those who have worked many years for the organisation. Promotion prospects usually depends on the abilities and performance of the individual. If management is satisfied that a graduate is promotable, they will promote him.

## General Job Satisfaction

From Table 39 66% of the graduates of University of Malawi are satisfied with their present jobs. An additional 10% indicated that they are satisfied with their current jobs to a very high extent. Only about 25% indicated that they are satisfied with their current jobs to a very high extent. Only about 25% of all the respondents indicated dissatisfaction with their current jobs. This job dissatisfaction is highest in the education sector. May be factors which contributed to this situation is how salaries promotion prospects almost nil, delayed salaries and constantly working under pressure as the result of increased enrolment in government and private secondary schools. This may explain why results at Malawi school certificate of Education are low.

**Table 39** General Job Satisfaction by Bachelor's Degree Field (percent; arithmetic mean)

	Bachelors degree field										Total
	Agric	Comm	Educ	Engin	Arts	Law	Nurs	Admin	BSc	BSoc	
Extent of satisfaction of prof situation											
To a very high extent	8	11	10	9	0	14	20	15	0	13	10
2	26	45	17	40	23	57	40	22	26	40	32
3	36	28	34	37	46	0	30	56	35	26	34
4	16	13	20	10	23	14	10	4	17	12	14
Not at all	14	4	19	4	8	14	0	4	22	8	10
Arithmetic mean	3.0	2.6	3.2	2.6	3.2	2.6	2.3	2.6	3.3	2.6	2.8
Count (n)	(74)	(47)	(86)	(70)	(13)	(7)	(10)	(27)	(23)	(84)	(441)

Question 35: Altogether, to what extent are you satisfied with your professional situation? Please take also into account in your statement any professional sidelines. Scale from 1 = to a very high extent to 5 = not at all.

## Personal Importance Of Occupation Characteristics

University of Malawi graduates like graduates from other universities attach great importance to the following characteristics of their occupation:

- (i) The possibility of using acquired Knowledge;
- (ii) Job security;
- (iii) The chance of doing something useful for society;
- (iv) Good career prospects;
- (v) Opportunity for pursuing continuous learning;
- (vi) Good working atmosphere and the possibility of working in a team.

It is interesting to note from Table 40, that most graduates do not attach a lot of importance to having a lot of free time or chances of political influence. In Table 41 the same results are shown as percentages of responses of 1 and 2 but comparing responses of graduates by year of graduation.

**Table 40 Personal importance of occupation characteristics by Bachelor's Degree Field (arithmetic mean)**

	Bachelors degree field										Total	
	Agric	Comm	Educ	Engin	Arts	Law	Nurs	Admin	BSc	BSoc		
Largely independent disposition of work	3.0	2.4	2.7	2.8	3.0	2.3	1.8	2.3	2.9	2.6	2.7	
Opportunity of undertaking scientific work	2.5	4.1	3.1	2.3	4.0	4.3	2.2	3.6	2.4	3.3	3.0	
Clear and well-ordered tasks	2.6	2.2	2.4	2.4	2.7	2.1	1.6	2.6	2.8	2.6	2.5	
Possibilities of using acquired knowledge	2.1	1.6	1.8	1.8	2.2	1.4	1.4	2.0	1.8	1.8	1.8	
Job security	2.1	2.2	1.6	2.0	2.2	1.9	1.4	1.9	2.1	1.8	1.9	
Social status and respect	2.5	2.1	2.3	2.5	2.3	1.9	1.9	2.2	2.5	2.2	2.3	
Opportunity of pursuing own ideas	2.6	2.3	2.6	2.3	2.8	2.1	1.3	2.1	2.3	2.2	2.4	
Good working atmosphere	2.3	1.8	1.9	2.2	2.3	1.9	1.3	2.3	2.4	2.0	2.1	
Opportunity of pursuing continuous learning	2.4	2.0	2.2	2.1	2.5	2.1	1.2	2.3	2.1	1.7	2.1	
High income	2.8	2.2	2.5	2.3	2.9	1.3	2.1	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	
Chances of political influence	4.4	4.4	4.5	4.3	4.1	4.5	3.7	3.2	4.3	4.3	4.3	
Demanding job tasks	3.0	2.1	2.9	2.2	2.3	2.0	1.8	1.8	2.5	2.4	2.5	
Good career prospects	2.4	1.9	2.4	1.8	2.7	1.1	1.3	2.1	2.3	1.9	2.1	
Lot of free time	4.0	4.0	3.5	4.1	3.5	4.3	4.0	3.6	3.8	4.0	3.9	
Co-ordinating and managing tasks	2.3	2.2	2.3	1.9	2.7	2.1	1.8	1.7	2.6	2.3	2.2	
Possibility of working in a team	2.2	2.1	2.3	2.2	2.2	1.7	1.7	2.0	2.5	2.3	2.2	
Chance of doing something useful for society	1.9	2.1	1.8	1.8	1.5	1.4	1.5	1.7	2.2	2.0	1.9	
Count (n)	(75)	(49)	(84)	(75)	(15)	(7)	(10)	(28)	(24)	(90)	(457)	

Question 36: How important are the different characteristics of an occupation for you personally? Scale from 1 = very important to 5 = not important at all.

**Table 41 Personal importance of occupation characteristics by Bachelor's Degree Field (percent; responses 1 and 2)**

	Bachelors degree field										Total
	Agric	Comm	Educ	Engin	Arts	Law	Nurs	Admin	BSc	BSoc	
Largely independent disposition of work	28	51	43	25	36	57	80	52	38	49	41
Opportunity of undertaking scientific work	59	7	39	62	8	0	70	23	58	31	41
Clear and well-ordered tasks	49	70	56	52	46	71	90	43	42	50	54
Possibilities of using acquired knowledge	73	87	77	84	69	100	100	77	71	75	78
Job security	72	68	84	71	60	71	90	73	71	75	74
Social status and respect	61	66	64	51	60	71	70	63	71	69	63
Opportunity of pursuing own ideas	53	63	51	64	47	71	89	73	58	61	59
Good working atmosphere	59	85	72	65	58	71	90	54	58	73	69
Opportunity of pursuing continuous learning	59	75	64	65	54	86	90	50	75	83	69
High income	46	68	57	64	40	100	70	50	58	60	58
Chances of political influence	7	9	5	8	7	0	20	32	13	11	10
Demanding job tasks	37	72	42	67	62	86	60	81	63	57	57
Good career prospects	61	74	63	75	53	100	90	63	71	75	70
Lot of free time	15	13	23	7	14	0	0	15	17	12	14
Co-ordinating and managing tasks	64	70	59	75	50	71	70	84	54	63	66
Possibility of working in a team	66	68	65	69	57	86	80	78	58	63	67
Chance of doing something useful for society	74	72	77	78	87	86	80	83	67	74	76
Count (n)	(75)	(49)	(84)	(75)	(15)	(7)	(10)	(28)	(24)	(90)	(457)

Question 36: How important are the different characteristics of an occupation for you personally? Scale from 1 = very important to 5 = not important at all.

## CONCLUSION

Although the number of respondents to the questionnaires was low about 29.4 percent, a lot of valuable information has been gathered.

During the period under review, 1987 to 1995, there was a general increase, about 2 percent, in the enrolment in the University. This increase has had some negative effects on study provisions due to lack of growth in terms of resources within the University. The University of Malawi, in general, except for few courses, has provided very little chances to students to participate in research, to influence university policy and the possibility of individual students to structure their studies. The University has, however, maintained other study provision at a high level, for example, students interaction, teaching quality of lecturers, accommodation facilities on campus, just to mention a few. Despite the fact that the University of Malawi is one institution, graduates have varied reasons for enrolling to a particular college by the reputation of the college, admission standards and the student grades, practice-oriented study programmes, and areas of specialisation provided. The courses being offered have generally changed in all constituent colleges of the University of Malawi towards to more job-oriented. This has enabled most of the graduates to work with little or no initial training after graduation. For those that have received some training, it has been mostly on-the-job.

The opportunities of securing a job by a graduate have declined over the years. Searching for employment starts way before graduation for most of the graduates. The period of seeking employment has increased from an average of 2.5 months in 1987-89 to an average of 4.3 months in 1994-95. Consequently, this has increased the number of contacts that a graduate has to make before securing a job from an average of seven contacts in 1987-89 to an average of seventeen contacts in 1994-95.

Most of the graduates have changed jobs more than once. A high percentage of those who have changed jobs once or twice are graduates who graduated between 1992 and 1995. This is the case because recently most graduates are employed initially in jobs not linked to their training due to job scarcity. They only move to jobs related to their training later, hence the high number of graduates who have changed employment.

The majority of the University of Malawi graduates are employed in the education sector (public employer). Most of these fill vacancies in secondary schools as teachers. Very few of the graduates are not on full-time employment. Although the number of graduates who are not full-time has increased over the years, the increase is not significant. Malawian graduates generally find it unusual to engage themselves in other side jobs besides their full-time employment.

Different degree fields fetch different salary packages. This also depends upon the sector of employment. The monthly gross income from full-time employment for those employed in the public sector is pathetically low. Unfortunately, coupled with low salaries, they do not have substantial fringe benefits. Most of them enjoy only housing and retirement benefits.

The use of professional knowledge and skills acquired during studies is a very important factor in job satisfaction. This usage differ from one degree field to another but general, for UNIMA it is to a very high extent. The knowledge of English which is the official language in Malawi was highly rated. This indicates that the communication skills are very important irrespective of which degree field. In addition to the knowledge and skills Mich graduates use, other abilities and attitudes which graduates of the University of Malawi seem to have faired well are:

- (i) Sense of responsibility;
- (ii) Self confidence;
- (iii) Reliability;
- (iv) Ability to solve problems;
- (v) Initiative;
- (vi) Willingness to learn
- (vii) Ability to work under pressure; and
- (viii) Leadership qualities.

The course content as well as the variety of courses offered proved very useful to graduates current work. Quite a large number of graduates feel that they are able to realise the career they expected at the time of their graduation, and in addition they are generally satisfied in their use of the qualifications they obtained, working in demanding positions, their job security and opportunity to benefit society, except for their income, fringe benefits, equal treatment of employees, equipment of the workplace and promotion prospects.