



University College Maastricht: alumni survey factsheet 2017

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ROA Fact Sheet

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Researchcentrum voor Onderwijs en Arbeidsmarkt | ROA
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How do alumni of University College Maastricht (UCM) look back on their undergraduate education? Do they feel that they received a good education and did their programme provide them with a valuable network? What kind of graduate programmes did they attend after graduation? And how likely are UCM graduates to find a suitable job? These questions, as well as others, were the subject of an alumni survey, which was carried out by the Research Centre for Education and the Labour Market (ROA) at the end of 2017. In total, 558 alumni of UCM participated in the survey, for a response rate of 37%.

This factsheet presents a range of significant findings. In order to present these effectively, a distinction has been made between alumni who graduated earlier than 2013 (the 2005-2012 cohorts) and alumni who graduated after 2012 (the 2013-2017 cohorts). On average, the former group of respondents graduated slightly more than 7 years ago and the latter group of respondents graduated slightly more than 2 years ago.

Looking back at the programme

UCM alumni are generally very satisfied with the programme. More than nine out of ten alumni (92%) would attend the same programme if they could choose again. Only 1% would choose a Liberal Arts & Sciences programme, but at another university. The remaining 7% would not have chosen a Liberal Arts & Sciences programme or would not have enrolled in any higher education programme at all, if given the choice again.

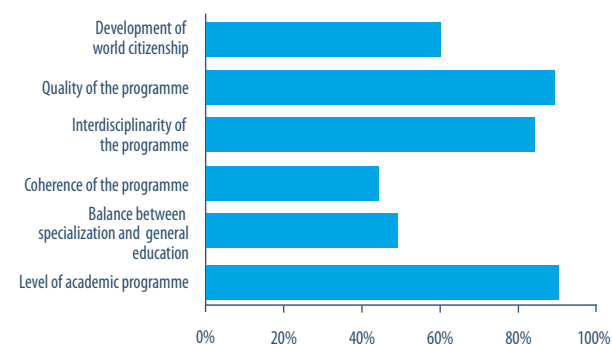
Figure 1 illustrates graduates' evaluation of specific aspects of the UCM programme.¹ Alumni are most satisfied with the interdisciplinary nature, the academic level, and the quality of the programme. Each of these aspects is evaluated as "good" by at least 80% of alumni. 60% of alumni felt the development of world citizenship was 'good', and the coherence of the programme as well as the balance between specialisation and general education are aspects of the programmes which are positively evaluated by at least 40% of alumni.

During their studies, the majority of students participated in extracurricular activities. Three out of four alumni volunteered in a (student) organisation and

almost 80% of respondents followed a semester abroad. One out of four alumni indicated that they did an internship and a similar percentage had a study-related side job.²

FIGURE 1.

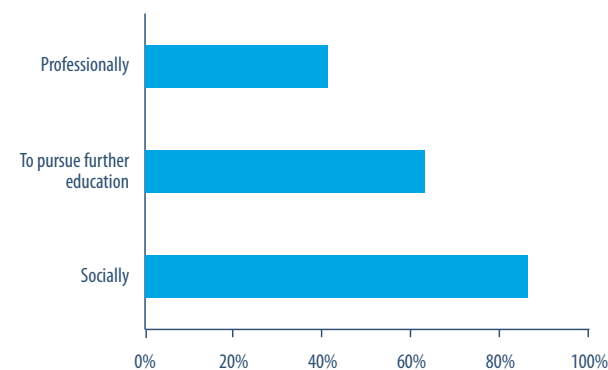
Evaluation of specific aspects of UCM programme: % good



Source: Alumni Survey UCM (ROA)

FIGURE 2.

Benefitted from the social network established at UCM to (very) high extent: %



Source: Alumni Survey UCM (ROA)

Note: Alumni could indicate more than one area of benefit from their network.

About three quarters of UCM alumni (73%) indicated that they were able to establish a valuable network during their undergraduate education. 41% percent of those who established a useful network stated that they benefitted professionally from this network. Furthermore, 63% indicated that they also made use of their network during their graduate education. This percentage is higher for more recent graduates (67%) than for those who graduated in the earlier cohorts

1 Measured on a four-point Likert scale from 1= good to 4= insufficient.

2 However, a side job not related to their studies was more common (59%).

(57%). 86% of alumni reported that they have benefitted from this network socially. This percentage does not differ between the two groups.

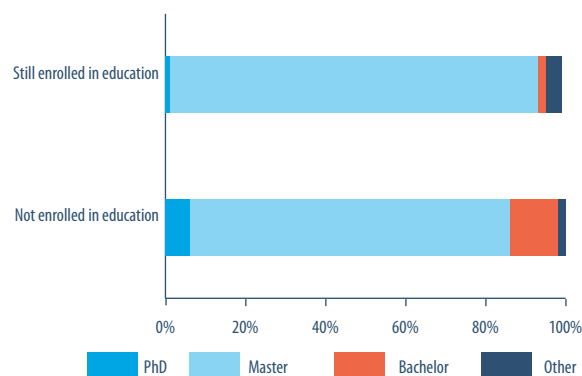
Alumni from UCM are also willing to provide UCM with a valuable network: 96% of graduates are willing to contribute to the programme in some way, for example by informing prospective students about the programme and life after graduation or by organizing a workplace visit.

Graduate study

After graduating from UCM, 91% of alumni pursued graduate education. Figure 3 separates these alumni into two groups: those who were still in education when the survey was conducted and those who were not. For both groups, a master's degree is most frequently the (current) highest level of follow-up study programme. Among alumni who are currently not enrolled in education, almost 31% graduated from a master's programme at one of the top 100 universities in the world (as ranked by the Times Higher Education World University Ranking).³ For those still enrolled in a master's programme, this percentage is almost 30%. For the top 50 and top 25 universities, these percentages are 20% and 13% respectively for those still studying and 24% and 17% respectively for those who already graduated from a master's programme. Moreover, figure 3 shows that about 6% of those who are currently not enrolled in education obtained a PhD.

FIGURE 3.

Further educational tracks by current situation



Source: Alumni Survey UCM (ROA)

UCM attracts students from all over the world: 65% of the respondents did not live in the Netherlands when they applied for the programme. 36% of these 'international'⁴ students continued their education in the Netherlands.

This section will explore which academic disciplines UCM graduates study in their further education. Table 1 shows the ten most common fields of study that respondents of the survey enrolled in.⁵ The most frequently indicated field was political science (14% of the mentioned programmes), followed by psychology (13%), international relations (10%), and law (10%). The next most frequently chosen fields are business economics (7%), neuroscience (6%), sociology (6%), philosophy (6%) and economics (5%).

³ Based on the World University Rankings 2016-2017 (https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/2017/world-ranking#!/page/0/length/25/sort_by/rank/sort_order/asc/cols/stats).

⁴ The group of international students includes students of Dutch nationality who lived abroad when applying for the UCM programme.

⁵ Respondents could report up to three follow-up study programmes.

University College Maastricht: alumni survey factsheet 2017

TABLE 1.

Top 10 fields of study in further education

	All	0-4 years since graduation	5 years or more since graduation
Political Science	14	9	19
Psychology	13	8	19
International Relations	10	12	9
Law	10	11	10
Business Economics	7	6	8
Neuroscience	6	8	4
Sociology	6	6	5
Philosophy	6	5	6
Economics	5	4	6
Environmental Science	3	3	4
Life Science	3	3	4

Source: Alumni Survey UCM (ROA)

93% of graduates felt their undergraduate programme successfully prepared them for further education to a (very) high extent. At the same time, 40% of alumni indicated that their programme helped them to a (very) high extent in finding a suitable graduate programme.

About 80% of alumni indicated that there were no additional requirements for entering their follow-up study programme.⁶ Of the graduates who applied for a follow-up study programme, 73% were accepted into their preferred programme. Of those rejected, 36% reported that they were not given a reason for their rejection, while 26% indicated that they had not taken certain courses. Of those rejected by their preferred programme, only 9% decided not to pursue any further education, 84% attended another programme and 7% decided to take the courses required for their preferred follow-up programme.

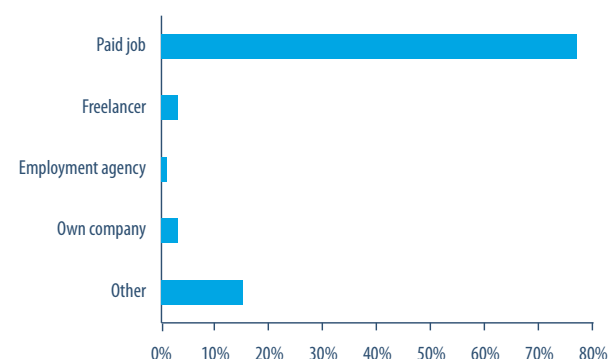
Current situation

What are UCM graduates currently doing? The survey reveals that 28% are still studying. Of those alumni who have entered the labour market⁷, 94% are working and only 6% are unemployed.⁸ Figure 4 shows the type of

employment: 77% work for an employer, another 3% work as freelancers and 3% own their own company. Less than 1% work via an employment agency. The remaining 15%, classified as 'other', include alumni with a PhD contract (8%).

FIGURE 4.

Type of employment



Source: Alumni Survey UCM (ROA)

Note: The figure only includes alumni who are part of the labour force.

Table 2 shows the top 5 occupations among those employed. The majority of employed alumni (21%) end up in research-related occupations; these are followed by alumni working in advisory occupations (14%). Educational occupations (11%), financial or business occupations (9%) and commercial occupations (8%), complete the top 5.

⁶ This indicator only measures the requirements needed for the first of a maximum of three follow-up studies in the survey.

⁷ Being part of the labour force means currently looking for a job or working for at least 1 hour per week, excluding students.

⁸ The unemployment figure for those who graduated up to 4 years ago is 10% and for those who graduated more than 4 years ago 3%.

TABLE 2.

Top 5 fields of work for graduates who are currently employed

	0-4 years	5 years or more	Total
Research occupation (e.g. researcher, medical laboratory technician, medical analyst)	22%	20%	21%
Advisory occupation (e.g. Human Resources employee, lawyer, legal service provider, staff member)	14%	15%	14%
Educational occupation (e.g. teacher, lecturer, principal)	10%	12%	11%
Financial/business occupation (e.g. bank employee, financial specialist, business consultant)	8%	10%	9%
Commercial occupation (e.g. sales employee, commercial agent, public affairs consultant, marketing specialist)	9%	7%	8%

Source: Alumni Survey UCM (ROA)

As stated above, UCM attracts students from all over the world. Table 3 gives an overview of the top 5 countries in which graduates are currently working. One in three works in the Netherlands. Of those, about 31% did not live in the Netherlands when applying for UCM. This implies that nearly one in five international UCM alumni stayed in the Netherlands to work after finishing their studies. The other countries in the top 5 suggest that UCM alumni tend to work close to the Netherlands: Germany (26%), the UK (11%) and Belgium (4%). Moreover, about 3% of graduates work in Switzerland. In many cases respondents working abroad are alumni that return to their 'home' countries after graduation.

TABLE 3.

Top 5 countries where graduates work

	%
Netherlands	36
Germany	26
United Kingdom	11
Belgium	4
Switzerland	3

Source: Alumni Survey UCM (ROA)

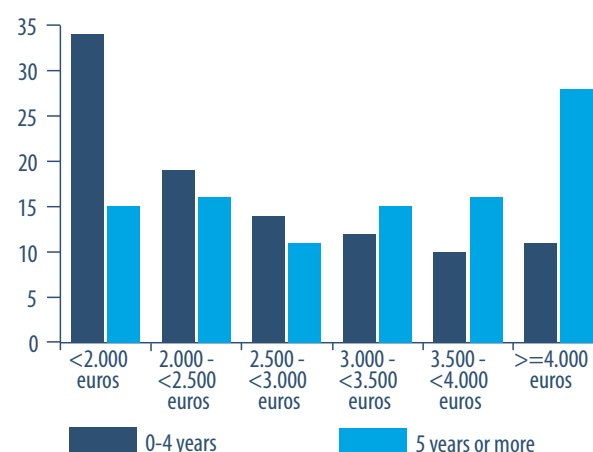
Figure 5 shows the gross monthly income of working UCM alumni.⁹ This income has been measured in categories.

⁹ The income is only calculated for respondents belonging to the work force. By doing this, we exclude respondents currently in education with side-jobs.

ries.¹⁰ For the sake of clarity, the categories above 4,000 euros a month are grouped together.

FIGURE 5.

Gross monthly income



Source: Alumni Survey UCM (ROA)

Figure 5 shows that alumni who graduated in the last four years frequently earn less than 2,000 euros gross per month. For the 'older' group of alumni, the proportion of graduates who earn less than 2,000 euros a month is significantly lower. Earning less than 2,000 euros is generally related to working less than 30 hours a week. Of the more recent alumni, another 19% earn between 2,000 and 2,500 euros gross per month and 14% earn between 2,500 euros and 3,000 euros per month. Of those alumni who graduated at least four years ago, the largest group earns at least 4,000 euros per month and around 45% earn at least 3,500 euros per month.

Having a job does not necessarily imply that this job matches one's individual preferences and qualifications. For that purpose, it is important to consider whether there is a so-called 'vertical' match. This describes whether alumni have jobs that require at least their highest obtained degree. Hence, we compared the minimum level that is required for their job with their highest degree obtained. A distinction was made between those who hold a master's degree or higher and those with a bachelor as highest degree obtained.¹¹

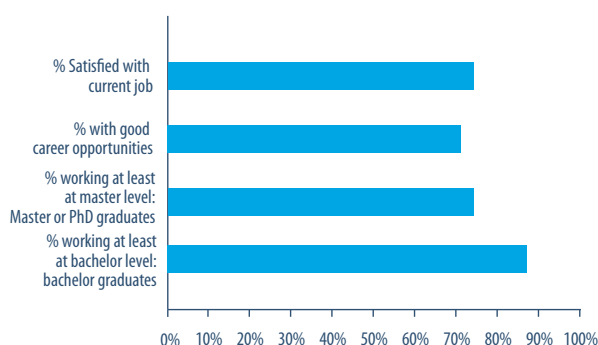
¹⁰ The first category of this income variable was <2,000 euros. The subsequent categories are 500 euros higher each time, and the last category is >=10,000 euros.

¹¹ Again, we only include those alumni who are part of the working labour force.

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Among the latter group (see figure 6), 87% have a job at least at a bachelor level. Among alumni with a master's degree or PhD, 74% have a job that requires at least a master's degree. The numbers are generally higher for those who graduated more than four years ago compared to those who graduated in the last four years

FIGURE 6.
Employability indicators



Source: Alumni Survey UCM (ROA)

Next, we consider whether employed alumni see enough opportunities for their professional development and whether they are satisfied with their jobs. Of currently employed alumni, 71% believe that they have (very) many career opportunities. Moreover, 74% of graduates are (very) satisfied with their job. These numbers do not differ substantially between those who graduated more than four years ago and those who graduated more recently.

Finally, we discuss the professional capabilities alumni have and the extent to which they have succeeded in acquiring the competencies UCM seeks to instil in their graduates. Respondents were asked to indicate on a 5-point Likert scale a) the extent to which they possess the skills and competencies UCM has defined as essential learning outcomes, b) the extent to which these are required by their employers, and c) the extent to which they think that the UCM programme contributed to the level they have achieved (see table 4). First of all, the findings indicate that a relatively high percentage of alumni possess these capabilities to a (very) high extent. Secondly, a relatively high percentage of alumni indicate that UCM contributed to a (very) high extent to that professional capability. Finally, the results regarding the extent to which these capabilities are required in their

current work are more mixed. At least four out of five alumni indicate that 'excellent academic skills', 'ability to approach questions or issues in an interdisciplinary way' as well as 'intellectual curiosity' are required to a (very) high extent in their current work. On the other hand, just around 70% of alumni indicate that 'multidisciplinary breadth combined with depth of knowledge in a chosen concentration' and 'attitudes and skills for active participation as citizens' are required to a (very) high extent in their current work.

TABLE 4.
Professional capabilities

		Level required for the current job	The level of the respondent	Extent to which UCM contributed to the level
Multidisciplinary breadth of academic knowledge combined with depth of knowledge in a chosen concentration area	%	67	86	85
Ability to approach questions or issues in an interdisciplinary way	%	81	92	93
Excellent academic skills including communication skills, critical thinking skills, research skills and learning skills	%	89	92	93
Attitudes and skills for active participation as citizens in society, including international and intercultural understanding, social skills and a will to contribute to solving social issues	%	71	87	77
Intellectual curiosity, reflexivity, and an open mind	%	83	95	88

Source: Alumni Survey UCM (ROA)

Note: Percentages display the answers 'to a (very) high extent'. Percentages in the first column are only based on respondents currently working.

Colofon

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