

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

Survey of First-Year Master's Students

Welcome to the Survey of First-Year Master's Students!

You have been selected to participate in the survey because you are a first-year student enrolled in a master's program.

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

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

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Are you a first-year master's student?

- Yes (*Go to question 2*)
- No (*Please do not complete this survey; it is intended only for first-year master's students.*)

2. In what program are you enrolled? _____

3. When did you first enroll in this program?

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

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

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

5. Are you attending the program primarily full-time or part-time?

- Full-time
- Part-time

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

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

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

- Yes, I visited the campus before enrolling in the master's program (Go to question 8)
- No, but I attended this institution as an undergraduate (Go to question 8)
- No (Go to question 9)

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

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

SECTION 2: FINANCING YOUR EDUCATION

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

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

- Yes, for the university (Go to question 10)
- Yes, for a non-university employer (Go to question 10)
- Yes, self-employed (Go to question 10)
- No, not working for pay (Go to question 11)

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

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

The next few questions ask about how you are financing your education, which includes tuition, fees, books, living expenses, and health insurance.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

15. Were you guaranteed financial support at the time you were admitted to the program?

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

16. Do you have any concern or doubt about your ability to finance your education?

- No, I am confident that I will have adequate funds
- No, I probably will have adequate funds
- Yes, I probably will not have adequate funds
- Yes, I am sure I will not have adequate funds

SECTION 3: YOUR EXPERIENCE SO FAR

17. Do you have an advisor?

- Yes (Go to question 18)
- No (Go to question 19)
- Don't know (Go to question 19)

18. Is it your understanding that your advisor will provide you with regular feedback about your academic progress?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

19. Did your program or department hold an orientation when you started your master's program?

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

20. Does your program or department provide a graduate student handbook (either in print or online)?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

21. Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

<i>When I started the program ...</i>	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A
Requirements of my program were presented in clear, written form					
Academic milestones and timelines were clearly outlined					
Requirements and expectations for assistantships were clearly articulated (for example, in terms of workload, time off, sick time, etc.)					

22. Overall, how satisfied are you with the quality of teaching in your courses so far?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

23. Indicate if you have experienced any of the following during the past 12 months. (Check all that apply.)

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

24. Do you ever have concerns about not being able to complete your degree?

- Yes, frequently (Go to question 25)
- Yes, occasionally (Go to question 25)
- No (Go to question 26)

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

26. What do you like most about the program?

SECTION 4: BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS

These last few questions ask for some demographic information.

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

- Married or in a marriage-like relationship (Go to question 28)
- Living together, unmarried (Go to question 28)
- Widowed/Separated/Divorced (Go to question 29)
- Never married (Go to question 29)
- Prefer not to answer (Go to question 29)

28. Is your spouse/partner currently working?

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

29. Are you ...

- Male
- Female

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

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

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

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

32. What is your citizenship status?

- U.S. citizen (*Go to question 33*)
- Non-U.S. citizen with permanent U.S. resident visa (green card) (*Go to question 33*)
- Non-U.S. citizen with temporary visa (*Go to end of survey. Do not answer questions 33 and 34*)
- Prefer not to answer (*Go to question 33*)

33. Are you Hispanic or Latino/Latina?

- Yes
- No

34. What is your racial background?

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

THANK YOU!

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

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