

## 2017 Career and Technical Program Graduate Survey Overview for FY 2016 Graduates

The Career and Technical Program Graduate Survey is conducted annually by all Illinois community colleges. The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) requests survey results for specific career and technical programs on a five-year review cycle, and previously requested a 50% response rate for the graduates of those programs. Effective with FY 2016 graduates, the ICCB no longer requests specific survey results and no longer collects and aggregates the survey data or reports on their findings. However, it is important to note that Illinois Central College's Office of Institutional Research annually surveys *each* program's graduates in an effort to enhance the program review efforts of all of the college's career and technical programs. The overall ICC response rate for FY 2016 career and technical graduates was **37.5%**.

### Method

Career and technical program graduates are surveyed six months following completion of the term during which they received their credential(s). July graduates are surveyed the following January, December graduates the following June, and May graduates the following November. This allows for greater comparability among graduates with respect to employment and educational status, as well as the distance from which they assess the college's programs and services, among other variables. FY 2016 includes summer 2015, fall 2015, and spring 2016 graduates.

The Office of Institutional Research provides the survey materials, which include a paper-based survey, a standard cover letter, and a postage-paid envelope. Program coordinators are invited to personalize the cover letter and include a program-specific survey with the mailing, if they so choose. Graduates who return completed surveys prior to the response deadline are entered into a random drawing for incentive prizes. The survey is mailed to non-responders up to three times. For FY 2016, the Office of Institutional Research mailed 1,005 total surveys, of which 960 were deemed deliverable and 360 (37.5% of deliverable surveys) were returned.

### Response Rates

Starting in FY 2016, the ICCB no longer required a 50% response rate from requested graduates. Meeting this requirement (our 5-year average was 49.5%) had become a greater challenge over time for community colleges statewide. Since FY 2012, the ICC response rates for all programs have been falling and increasing intermittently from 43.6% to 45.2%. In FY 2016, our response rate for all programs decrease to 37.5% as our results no longer take into account emphasis on ICCB requested programs. (Exhibit 1)

Many variables may influence whether or not students respond to surveys. Items such as whether the students is employed (Exhibit 2), has a job located within Illinois and in their field of preparation all can contribute to whether the graduates respond including attitudinal characteristics, such interest in the topic at hand<sup>1</sup>. Survey fatigue may also play a role; students appear to be growing weary of requests for "just a few moments" of their time. However, data collected from surveys are often a key component of improvement processes at any institution. While low response rates do not necessarily mean that results are not representative and cannot be generalized to the population, the downward trend and the causes of it are a concern.

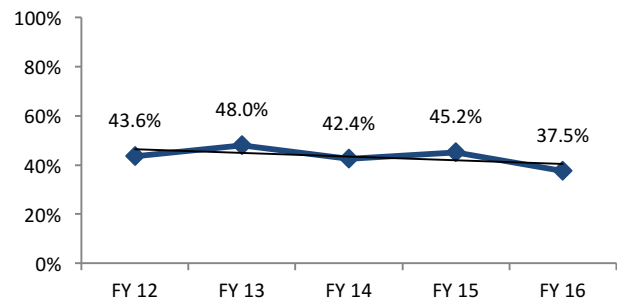


Exhibit 1. Response rates at ICC, all programs

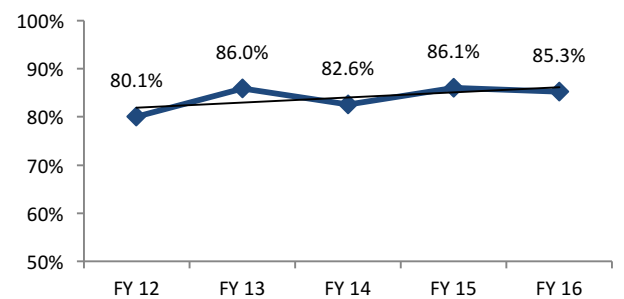


Exhibit 2. Employment rates, ICC responded graduates

<sup>1</sup> Rogelberg, S.G., & Luong, A. (1998). Nonresponse to Mailed Surveys: A Review and Guide. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 7, 60-65.

## Results

### Primary Attendance Objective and Academic Goal

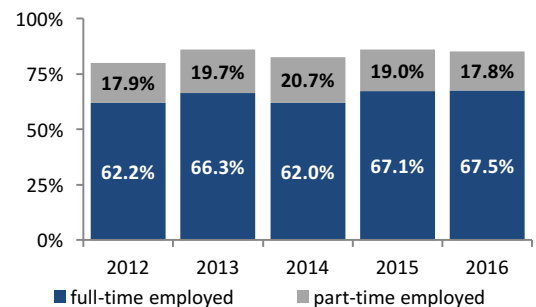
The majority of respondents (69.9 %; N= 251) indicated that they attended ICC to obtain skills needed for entry into a new or different job. This percentage has dropped 1.1% during the recent survey as more graduates have indicated their main objective was to improve skills in their present job (8.1%; up 1.5%) or take coursework to transfer to another college (9.2%; up 1.2%). Nearly all respondents (97.2%; N = 349) agreed that they achieved their primary academic goal(s) while at ICC; more than 78% (N = 282) strongly agreed. Since this question was added to the survey in FY 2007, the percentage of agreement has consistently ranged between 96% and 98% and decreased slightly (.8%) this past year back to the middle-part of the range.

### Current Educational Status

The percentage of respondents enrolled in college courses at the time that they completed the survey decreased significantly from last year's 42.4%. This year, 39.6% (N = 142) reported being currently enrolled in a field of study either related or unrelated to their previous ICC program. This percentage has ranged between 29% and 42% since FY12. The majority of respondents, 56.8%; up 2.2%, have not been enrolled in any college since leaving ICC.

### Current Employment Status

**Employment Rates and Status.** Employment rates have decreased during the past year to 85.3% (N=307); with a 5 year range between 80% and 86%. FY 2015 employment rates had seen a large shift between full-time and part-time employment. (Exhibit 3) Part-time employment decreased another 1.2% in FY 2016 and was 1.2% under the 5 year average. The percentage of respondents employed full-time increased slightly to 67.5% (N = 243) compared to last year. Over the past five years, full-time employment rates have ranged between 62 and 67%.



**Unemployment Rates.** Unemployment rates for FY 2016 respondents seeking employment increased during the year to 6.4% (N = 23). This percentage reversed the decrease in unemployment seen last year but is still 1.3% below the 5 year average of 7.7%. Of the 8.1% (N = 29) who were unemployed and not seeking employment, the majority (51.7%) who answered the question were full-time students while the remainder had health issues or other family responsibilities.

**Job Relatedness.** A little over 78% (N = 243) of employed respondents reported having a job related to their ICC program of study, down .8% from last year. Since FY 2012, this percentage has ranged between 76% and 79%. Of the 21.6% (N = 67) with a job unrelated to their program of study, 21.2% could not find a job in their field of preparation which was down over 8.3% from last year. Generally, the rest who responded (39.4%) found a temporary job while in transition, found a better paying job in another field, or preferred to work in another field, while the rest specified other reasons.

**Job Satisfaction.** Respondents were asked to rate job satisfaction on a four-point scale (4 = very satisfied; 1 = very dissatisfied). FY 2016 respondents rated job satisfaction at 3.24; up .08 from the prior year. Within the past five years, ratings have continually increased from FY 2012 at 3.06 to the current rate at 3.24 in FY 2016.

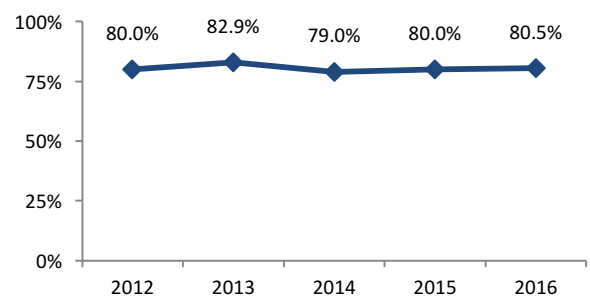


Exhibit 4. Graduates working within the district

**Job Location.** Over 80% (80.5%, N = 243) of respondents remained within the ICC district to work, a slight increase of .5 percentage points compared to FY 2015 which is now exactly average for the past 5 years. Since FY 2012, this percentage has ranged between 79% and 83% (Exhibit 4). The rest of the students found work outside the district but within Illinois (13.3%, a 2.3% decrease) while the rest found work outside Illinois (6.3%, a 2.3% increase).

Each year, it is important to make note of the percentage of graduates who remain within the district to work (still above 80%). These graduates enhance the well-being of all residents by contributing to the pool of workforce skills, adding to the tax base, reducing the burden on social services and the levels of publicly supported subsidies, and increasing the overall level of economic activity through purchases of goods and services.

**Programs and Services Assessment**

Average ratings for programs and services assessment are based on a four-point satisfaction scale (4 = very satisfied; 1 = very dissatisfied). Each year, respondents are **most satisfied with the content of courses taken within their program**. Since FY 2012, ratings have ranged between 3.68 and 3.74. Respondents are consistently **least satisfied with information on current employment opportunities and trends**. Average ratings had been fluctuating year to year, with a 5 year average of 3.24 but this year, this least satisfied area saw the greatest increase from the prior year (Exhibit 5).

Outside of their program, respondents are consistently **most satisfied with equipment, facilities, and materials**. The average rating for this item has ranged from 3.50 to 3.60 for the last five years. Respondents are also consistently **least satisfied with job preparation**, which reflected a rating increase of .14 for FY 2016 which is still above the five-year average of 3.20. Average ratings for this item have ranged from 3.10 to 3.32 for the past five years.

<i>Within major program of study</i>		FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
Most Satisfied	Content of courses in your program	3.69	3.74	3.68	3.69	3.71
Least Satisfied	Information on current employment opportunities and trends	3.09	3.26	3.19	3.27	3.40
<i>Outside of major program of study</i>		FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
Most Satisfied	Equipment, facilities and materials	3.52	3.52	3.52	3.50	3.60
Least Satisfied	Job preparation	3.10	3.20	3.22	3.18	3.32

**Exhibit 5. Most, least satisfied items pertaining to programs**

Over 65% (N = 234) of respondents reported that they used **library/audiovisual services** and rated it the **most satisfactory** service taking into account the past three years scores. Averages for this item have ranged between 3.55 and 3.65 for the past five years. At 3.51, **counseling services** ranked as next among the **most satisfactory** of services using the past three years scores. Counseling replaced tutoring as the 2<sup>nd</sup> most satisfying service since it scored 0.09 points higher than FY 2015. At nearly 82% (N = 294), **academic advising** was the **most used** service with a satisfaction rating of 3.52, up .07 points from last year which was at it’s peak compared to the past 5 years.

For FY 2016, it is important to note that while some programs and services were rated lower than others, none were rated lower than a 3, which represents “somewhat satisfied” on the rating scale. Regarding services, for example, the 3.18 average that **college transfer planning** earned is not a poor rating and it did increase .04 from the prior year. It is still the lowest rated service taking into account the past three years. **Career planning services** was rated 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest for the past 3 years at 3.32, and fell the most of all services; down .09 when compared to the prior year. (Exhibit 6).

		FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
Most Satisfied	1) Library/Audiovisual Services	3.61	3.64	3.55	3.55	3.65
	2) Counseling	3.25	3.39	3.56	3.42	3.51
Least Satisfied	1) College Transfer Planning	3.03	3.16	3.25	3.20	3.24
	2) Career Planning	3.10	3.33	3.28	3.41	3.32

**Exhibit 6. Most, least satisfied items pertaining to services**

*Questions or comments? Please contact the Office of Institutional Research at (309) 694-5362 or at [InstResearch@icc.edu](mailto:InstResearch@icc.edu).*