

2018 Career and Technical Program Graduate Survey Overview for FY 2017 Graduates

The Career and Technical Program Graduate Survey is conducted annually by all Illinois community colleges. The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) had requested survey results for specific career and technical programs on a five-year review cycle, requiring a 50% response rate for the graduates of those programs. Effective with FY 2016's 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 2017 career and technical graduates was **33.4%**.

Method

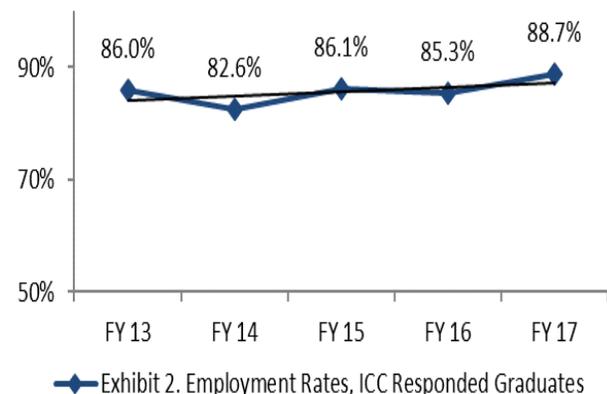
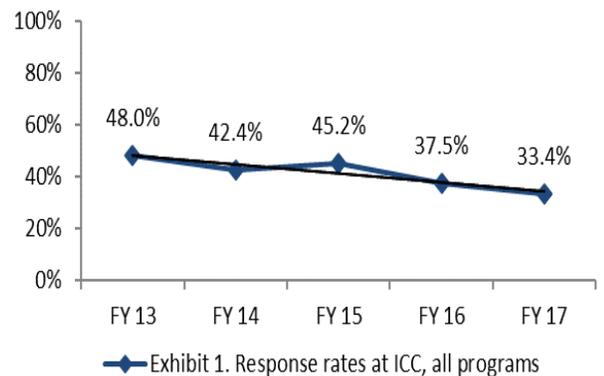
Career and technical program graduates are surveyed six months following completion of the term during which they received their credential(s). July graduates are surveyed the following January, December graduates the following June, and May graduates the following November. This allows for greater comparability among graduates with respect to employment and educational status, as well as the perspective from which they assess the college's programs and services, among other variables. FY 2017 includes summer 2016, fall 2016, and spring 2017 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. Non-responders from the first mailing receive an additional mailing. For FY 2017, the Office of Institutional Research mailed 903 total surveys, of which 876 were deemed deliverable and 293 (33.4% 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 49.8%) had become a greater challenge over time for community colleges statewide. Since FY 2013, the ICC response rates for all programs had fallen from 48.0% to 33.4%. In FY 2017, ICC's response rate for all programs decreased to 33.4% as our results no longer take into account an 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 a graduate's response, as well as attitudinal characteristics, such as interest in the topic at hand¹. 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.



¹ 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 (77.5 %; N= 227) indicated that they attended ICC to obtain skills needed for entry into a new or different job. This percentage has increased by 7.6% during the recent survey as fewer graduates have indicated their main objective was to improve skills in their present job (6.1%; down 1.9%). Respondents indicating their primary objective was to take coursework to transfer to another college also decreased (4.8%; down 4.4%). Nearly all respondents (97.6%; N = 284) agreed that they achieved their primary academic goal(s) while at ICC; more than 80.0% (N = 235) strongly agreed. Since this question was added to the survey in FY 2007, the percentage of agreement has consistently ranged between 96.0% and 98.0% and increased slightly (.4%) 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 has decreased from a high of 42.4% in 2015 to 39.6% in 2016, and further decreased to a reported 36.7% in 2017. This percentage has ranged between 29.0% and 42.0% since FY12. The majority of respondents, 58.6%, have not been enrolled in any college since leaving ICC, an increase of 1.7% over the prior year.

Current Employment Status

Employment Rates and Status. Employment rates among graduates have increased during the past year to 88.7% (N=259) - the highest reported rate during the past 6 years. There was a significant increase (6.9% N=72) in part-time employment (Exhibit 3). The percentage of respondents employed full-time decreased slightly to 64.0% (N = 187) compared to last year. Over the past five years, full-time employment rates have ranged between 62.0 and 67.5%.

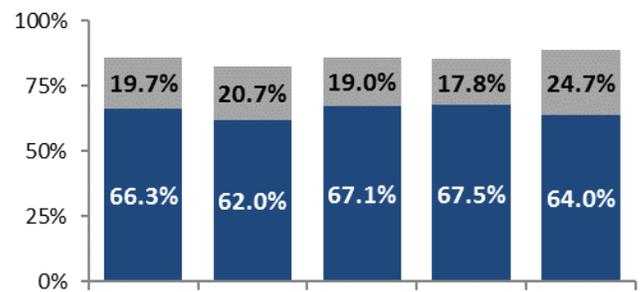


Exhibit 3. Employment status

Unemployment Rates. Unemployment rates for FY 2017 respondents seeking employment decreased during the year to 5.8% (N = 17). This percentage is below the 5 year average of 6.4%. Of the 5.5% (N = 16) who were unemployed and not seeking employment, the majority (62.5%) who answered the question were full-time students while the remainder indicated they had health issues or other family responsibilities.

Job Relatedness. Some 79.9% (N = 215) of employed respondents indicated having a job related to their ICC program of study, up 1.5% from last year. Since FY 2013, this percentage has ranged between 77.5% and 79.9%. Of the 20.1% (N = 54) with a job unrelated to their program of study, 25.0% could not find a job in their field of preparation, up 3.8% from last year. Generally, the rest who responded (40.4%) 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 (34.6%) specified other reasons.

Job Satisfaction. Respondents were asked to rate their current job satisfaction on a four-point scale (4 = very satisfied; 1 = very dissatisfied). FY 2017 respondents rated job satisfaction at 3.26; up .02 from the prior year. Within the past five years, ratings have continually increased from FY 2013 at 3.12 to the current rate at 3.26 in FY 2017.

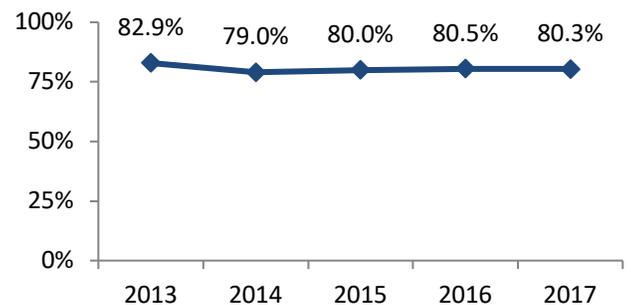


Exhibit 4. Graduates working within the district

Hours per Week/Rate of Pay. Employed respondents worked an average of over 34.38 hours per week, excluding overtime. At \$17.19, the rate of pay was above the five-year average of \$16.33 per hour.

Job Location. Over 80% (80.3%, N = 204) of respondents remained within the ICC district to work, a slight decrease of 0.2 percentage points compared to FY 2016. This was slightly less than the 5-year average of 80.5%. Since FY 2013, this percentage has ranged between 79.0% and 82.9% (Exhibit 4). The rest of the graduates found work outside the district but within Illinois (13.8%, a 0.5% increase) while the rest found work outside Illinois (5.5%, a 0.8% decrease).

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 2013, 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 3.30. This year, the rating was slightly above average at 3.38 (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 decrease of .11 for FY 2017 which is slightly lower than the five-year average of 3.23. Average ratings for this item have ranged from 3.18 to 3.32 for the past five years.

<i>Within major program of study</i>		FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017
Most Satisfied	Content of courses in your program	3.74	3.68	3.69	3.71	3.73
Least Satisfied	Information on current employment opportunities and trends	3.26	3.19	3.27	3.40	3.38
<i>Outside of major program of study</i>		FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017
Most Satisfied	Equipment, facilities and materials	3.52	3.52	3.50	3.60	3.57
Least Satisfied	Job preparation	3.20	3.22	3.18	3.32	3.21

Exhibit 5. Most, least satisfied items pertaining to programs

Nearly 70.0% (N = 205) of respondents reported that they used **library/audiovisual services** and rated it the **most satisfactory** service over the past three year's surveys. Averages for this item have ranged between 3.55 and 3.65 for the past five years. At 3.48, **counseling services** ranked as the next **most satisfactory** of services using the past three year's outcomes. Counseling replaced tutoring as the 2nd most satisfying service as it scored 0.06 points higher from FY 2015. At nearly 84.0% (N = 245), **academic advising** was the **most used** service with a satisfaction rating of 3.43, down .09 points from last year which was its peak score over the past 5 years.

For FY 2017, it is important to note that while some programs and services were rated lower than others, none were rated lower than a 3.00, which represents "somewhat satisfied" on the rating scale. Regarding services, for example, the 3.30 average that **college transfer planning** earned is not a poor rating and it did increase by .06 from the prior year. It is still the lowest rated service taking into account the past three years. **Career planning services** was rated 2nd lowest for the past 3 years at 3.37, but actually improved this past year- up .05 when compared to the prior year (Exhibit 6).

		FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017
Most Satisfied	1) Library/Audiovisual Services	3.64	3.55	3.55	3.65	3.65
	2) Counseling	3.39	3.56	3.42	3.51	3.48
Least Satisfied	1) College Transfer Planning	3.16	3.25	3.20	3.24	3.30
	2) Career Planning	3.33	3.28	3.41	3.32	3.37

Exhibit 6. Most, least satisfied items pertaining to services

Questions or comments? Please contact the Office of Institutional Research at (309) 694-8551 or at InstResearch@icc.edu.