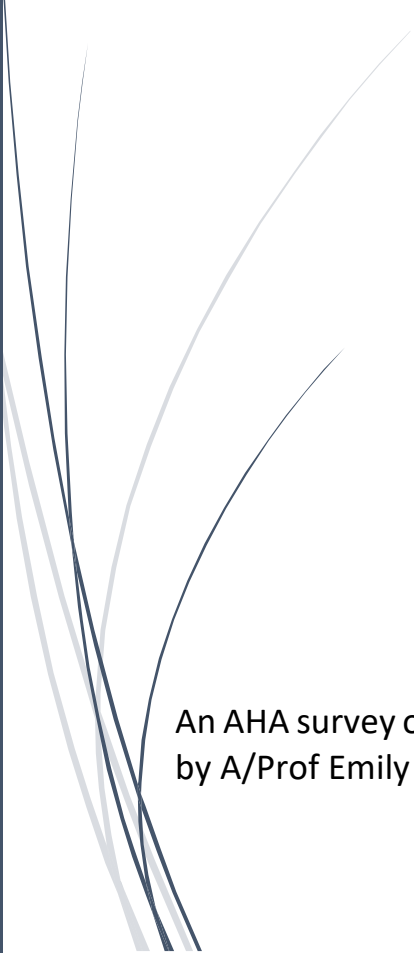




June 2022

History “Opened Many Doors”:

The Australian Historical Association’s
History Graduates Survey



An AHA survey on the relationship between degrees in History and employment
by A/Prof Emily O’Gorman, A/Prof Nancy Cushing, and Rochelle Chand

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Preface

Every couple of years, the Australian Historical Association produces an informed and detailed report on a topic of concern for its members and the profession. These research reports are an integral part of the work of the AHA Executive Committee and help us to benchmark the discipline of History in Australia from a teaching and learning perspective. Generally, too, the research is in response to specific concerns of our membership and the broader profession and provides us with a litmus test as to the state of the discipline at any one time. In that sense, this work is valuable and important for the AHA.

The last two commissioned reports from the AHA executive concerned the state of History within universities in Australia and New Zealand in 2018, and a survey on the casualisation within the History discipline at Australian universities in November 2019.¹ Both these research reports confirmed our fears of a major shift in recent times regarding the employment of historians in the university sector and the increasing casualisation of the academic workforce. This has unfortunately happened across disciplines over the last twenty years and having the in-depth research helps us to inform our advocacy work and efforts to support our members affected by these events.

I am, therefore, delighted to present the AHA Executive’s latest work conducted by the committee members responsible for the Teaching and Learning portfolio, Nancy Cushing and Emily O’Gorman. On behalf of the AHA, I thank them very much for their countless hours of volunteer labour, and acknowledge, too, research assistant and co-author, Rochelle Chand, whose expertise was invaluable. The report is reflective of the disruption and chaos caused by the Covid-19 pandemic

¹ Romain Fathi and Lyndon Megarrity, *You Matter. The Australian Historical Association’s Casualisation Survey*, November 2019; Martin Crotty and Paul Senduik, *The State of the Discipline: University History in Australia and New Zealand, Report to the Australian Historical Association Executive*, March 2018. Earlier AHA studies include Carly Millar and Mark Peel, “Australian Historical Association 2003-4 History Curriculum Review – Final Report to the AHA Executive”, 2004; Jill Roe, “History at the Crossroads”, *Australian Historical Association Bulletin*, no. 95, Summer 2002/3; Norman Etherington, “The Historical Profession in our Universities: Trends and Prospects”, *Australian Historical Association Bulletin*, no. 83, 1996.

in the tertiary education sector and to the humanities in particular. We wanted to have some detailed and rigorous data with which to respond to the introduction of the 2020 Job-Ready Graduates and Supporting Regional and Remote Students legislation that has meant a 113% increase in student fees for many humanities subjects, including History. The AHA believes that this decision was short-sighted and demonstrated a lack of understanding of the integral importance of History, a discipline that promotes critical inquiry and critical thinking and a host of workplace and citizen attributes.

The results of this History Graduates Survey Report will help the AHA and others advocate and lobby for the discipline of History. It is evidence-based using both qualitative and quantitative data, and focuses on the diversity and flexibility of employment outcomes for History graduates. The aim is for these findings to be widely used by our AHA members and the broader Australian community to argue successfully that, quite simply, History matters, and students of History play an invaluable role in our society, in whatever field of endeavour they end up.

Melanie Oppenheimer

AHA President

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Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the 791 respondents who shared their information, experiences, and observations in the History Graduates Survey. We were struck not only by the number of people who were willing to take part in the survey but also by the depth of many of their reflections on the influence of a History degree on their lives and careers. This response rate was greatly assisted by all those who shared the survey via social media.

We would also like to thank those who donated funds which enabled the employment of a research assistant to support the analysis of the survey responses: the Australian Historical Association (\$500); Australian National University's School of History (\$500); Australian Catholic University's School of Arts (\$100); Monash University (\$500); and anonymous donors (\$1000).

The Heads of History from university departments across Australia gave valuable advice and feedback on the survey. The following university alumni offices distributed the report to their membership, for which we are grateful: James Cook University, University of Canberra, University of Notre Dame, and University of Western Australia. Aspects of the survey's dissemination were expertly facilitated by the Australian Historical Association's Executive Officer Bethany Phillips-Peddlesden.

Lastly, we would like to thank the President and Executive Committee of the Australian Historical Association for their support and advice throughout the development and analysis of the survey.

Executive Summary

Key Findings

- The more traditional career pathways of History Graduates in the education (primary, secondary, and tertiary) and government sectors persist although University sector employment currently presents many barriers.
- The private sector is an important employer of History graduates, only slightly behind government sector employment.
- History graduates have pursued diverse career pathways and many are highly aware of how the transferable skills, specialised but flexible knowledge, and disciplinary expertise developed in their degrees have enhanced their value in the workplace.
- Graduates reported that their skills were often not readily recognised by employers, especially in non-traditional employment sectors. More recent graduates sometimes had difficulty communicating this value to potential employers.
- The employment value of History degrees needs to be better communicated to students, their families, employers, and governments.
- While employable skills are developed through History degrees, their value is much greater in that the study of History prepares graduates to navigate complex social and ethical issues both in and beyond the workplace.

Key Recommendations

- Those considering enrolment in History and current students should be provided with information on how their degree will link with future careers, including the need to anticipate completing further specialist study and that the career pathway may be non-linear
- The employment value of History degrees needs to be better communicated to employers, and governments.
- While emphasis on the value of History degrees in the workplace is needed to address current misperceptions, it should not be at the expense of recognition of the more holistic value of History study in preparing individuals to navigate complex social and ethical issues at work and as citizens.

Initial Steps

- We have developed two open access resources aimed at communicating employment pathways to students (Appendix A) and employers (Appendix B)
- We have included summary and sample data as appendices in order to encourage further analysis and development of resources (Appendix D and E).

I. Background

As a key task of the Teaching and Learning portfolio of the Australian Historical Association (AHA) Executive Committee, Associate Professors Nancy Cushing and Emily O’Gorman were asked to develop, administer and analyse a survey of History graduates in Australia with a focus on employment outcomes. The intention was to provide an evidence-based response to the implication in the Federal government’s Job-Ready Graduates Package that those with degrees in the Humanities were not acquiring skills and attributes which would be useful in future workplaces.² Our specific aims were to:

1. Gain a better understanding of the career pathways and employability of those with an undergraduate or postgraduate degree in History or a degree that was historically-focused
2. Facilitate wider discussion of diverse employment pathways for History graduates
3. Identify issues relating to the employability of History graduates

A survey instrument was developed in consultation with Romain Fathi and Lyndon Megarrity who conducted the AHA’s 2019 “You Matter” survey focusing on the casualisation of the History workforce at universities.³ Using GoogleForms as the platform, O’Gorman and Cushing produced a 33 question survey (Appendix C) which sought to collect anonymous quantitative and qualitative information data from History graduates. It was designed to capture a “snapshot” of the current employment of those who have completed a History degree at any level and at any time in the past, with longer form questions asking respondents to reflect on the influence of their History degree(s) on their career pathways more fully. After receiving feedback from the AHA Executive Committee and making refinements to the survey instrument, it was opened on 1 March 2021. The survey was distributed via the AHA’s social media channels and newsletter; and communications by James Cook University, University of Canberra, University of Notre Dame, and University of Western Australia to their alumni. The link to the survey was further shared on social media. For example the AHA’s original tweet

² Department of Education, Skills, and Employment, Australian Government, “Job-ready Graduates Package”, <https://www.dese.gov.au/job-ready>, accessed 27 January 2022.

³ Romain Fathi and Lyndon Megarrity, *You Matter. The Australian Historical Association’s Casualisation Survey*, November 2019.

about the survey was retweeted 41 times. The survey closed on 1 July 2021. It attracted 791 valid responses.⁴

The collated responses were analysed in terms of the original aims of the survey (noted above) using a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques. Qualitative analysis focused on close reading of mid- and long-form questions, primarily by O’Gorman and Cushing. From these we have selected examples and case studies to both illustrate and interrogate trends as well as to showcase the variety of responses (Section 5). Quantitative analysis centred on: 1. producing tables and graphs to collate answers to multiple choice questions; 2. coding the answers to the “other” option in multiple choice sets; and 3. coding mid- and long-form answers to establish trends within them. This quantitative analysis was led by Rochelle Chand (Macquarie University) who was appointed as a Research Assistant by the AHA for this purpose.⁵ All Tables and Figures referred to in this report are in Appendix D, which also includes a more detailed discussion of the quantitative data analysis methodology.

This report presents our findings. Read in combination with other statements of the social, economic and personal value of History, as endorsed by Australia’s four History Councils - <https://historycouncilnsw.org.au/about/value-of-history-statement/> - we hope that it can assist members of the AHA to communicate the value of History degrees specifically in terms of employment to current and intending students and their families, university hierarchies, policy makers and funding bodies.

Graduate Employment: History and The Humanities

Australian universities from their foundations in the 1850s were associated with career preparation. Generalist degrees, including those with majors in History, have long been seen as problematic in this regard. With Arts contributing one-third of all graduates in the first decades of the twentieth century, universities began to address the employment issue by setting up appointment boards to facilitate job searches, assuming most would find work in teaching and the public

⁴ 797 people responded to the survey. Of these, 791 respondents had completed a university degree with a major or specialisation in History or that was historically-focused while the other 6 respondents had not (see Appendix D and Table 1). These responses were not included in the analysis of the survey data

⁵ Funding for this research assistance was generously donated. For details, see the Acknowledgements section of this report.

service.⁶ Tamson Pietsch and Gabrielle Kemmis's study of a largely male cohort of 773 Arts graduates who had served in the First World War confirmed this assumption, with 53% employed as school teachers, 18% lecturing at the tertiary level and 17% in government and the public service, although there were also pathways into law, health, banking and forestry.⁷

Turning specifically to History, a survey of the 575 honours graduates of the University of Melbourne's School of History was reported on in 1971, covering the period from 1937 to 1966.⁸ Men constituted 59% of this group overall, but a higher proportion of the women graduates responded to the survey (75% compared with 68%). Employment outcomes were separately analysed by sex, with the largest number (43% of the men) working in tertiary education. Other well represented areas were high school teaching, clergy and the Commonwealth Public Service. For women, a slightly higher proportion worked within universities (46%), followed by secondary teaching and librarianship.

The issue of employable skills arose again in the 1980s within the discussions of the so-called Dawkins Reforms, the suite of changes made to the tertiary education sector in the late 1980s under education minister John Dawkins. While supporters of the Humanities advanced arguments about their importance for active citizenship and human development, the Labor government was seeking evidence of how study of the arts aided the development of "conceptual, analytical and communication skills". The Arts were called upon to inculcate the "general problem solving skills of inquiry, analysis and synthesis ... essential to the building of a flexible, versatile workforce able to cope with rapidly changing technology".⁹ With more students attending university and more studying Arts and related degrees, governments continued to be the largest single employer of Humanities graduates, with one-third finding employment in teaching and the public service, while the remainder of those who worked were in the private sector.¹⁰

In the 2000s, anxiety about employability continued although History on many measures was highly successful. It was the most offered major in the BA across

⁶ Tamson Pietsch and Gabrielle Kemmis, "The Careers of Humanities Students in Interwar Australia", *History of Humanities* 6, no. 2 (2021): 617.

⁷ Pietsch and Kemmis, "The Careers of Humanities Students in Interwar Australia", 625; 628.

⁸ Geoffrey Serle, "A survey of honours graduates of the University of Melbourne School of History, 1937-1966", *Historical Studies*, 15, no. 57 (1971): 43-58.

⁹ J. S. Dawkins, Higher Education: A Policy Statement (1988) quoted by Ian Hunter in "Accounting for the Humanities", *Meanjin* 48, no. 3 (1989): 439.

¹⁰ Ian Hunter, "Accounting for the Humanities", *Meanjin*, 48, no. 3 (1989): 445.

Australia, 88% of university History disciplines were rated as at or above world standard in the 2012 Excellence in Research Australia exercise, and students gave History a very high satisfaction rating of 89.7% on the Graduate Course Experience survey of the same year.¹¹ Concern that History, and other areas in the Humanities, did not offer the government sufficient return on investment influenced the Morrison Coalition government's Job-Ready Graduates package of 2020. It used a new course pricing structure to direct students "to study areas that will be in demand because of the likely labour force and national priorities that will emerge in the future"¹² and away from those not recognised as contributing to national priorities. The current study is a response to the Job-Ready assumption that History graduates were unable to contribute to these priority areas. It deliberately foregrounds self-reporting by History Graduates of the value of their degrees to current and past employers.

¹¹ G. Turner and K. Brass, *Mapping the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences in Australia*. Canberra: Australian Academy of the Humanities, 2014, 31, 37, 61.

¹² Talking points for career advisors, Job-ready Graduates Higher Education Reform Package, Department of Education, Skills and Employment file:///D:/USB%20Drive/1051/Job-ready%20Graduates%20-%20Career%20Advisor%20Talking%20Points2.pdf (accessed 9 March 2022).

II. Who Completed the Survey?

The survey was aimed at people with History degrees from Australian universities and/or those with History degrees from overseas institutions who are currently working in Australia. Most respondents (91%) had obtained their highest History degree from an Australian university. Of these, the greatest number had completed their History qualifications in NSW (37%) or Victoria (33%), with the next highest geographical representation from the ACT (6%). Only one respondent had completed their highest History qualification in the Northern Territory (Table 8 and Figure 7).

As a self-selected sample, there are likely to be particular biases in the survey responses. Some features of the respondents were clearly not representative of History graduates overall, including that the highest level History degree for 32% was a PhD, and for only 27% a Bachelor level degree (Table 3 and Figure 2). We are also aware that due to the method of survey distribution (noted in the Introduction), particular networks may have been reached more readily than others. For example, those working in public service or other professions may not be adequately represented and those in academia over-represented. We have no means of estimating how many History graduates live in Australia and so cannot claim that our number of respondents captures any particular proportion of them.

Despite these provisos, the sample can claim some representativeness. We asked respondents to indicate their primary field(s) of historical specialisation, with the option to select up to three fields based on the latest Field of Research Codes (which will be used by the Australian Research Council from 2022). The number of responses to this question was the same as the total number of survey participants, indicating that respondents likely selected just one field each. The most common field was Australian History (49%), with European History (excluding British, classical Greek and Roman) the next most common (20%). A number of respondents indicated areas of specialisation in some newer areas of study such as Gender History (10%), Environmental History (4.5%), and Histories of Race (3%) (see Table 9). It is notable that each specialisation was selected by at least one respondent, signalling that a wide spectrum of historical areas was captured in the survey.

Both very recent graduates and those in mid-career were well represented. More than half of respondents (52.5%) graduated with their highest History qualification within the last 10 years, with 20% graduating in the last 2 years (see Table 7 and Figure 6).

We asked respondents to indicate their age in terms of 4-5 year ranges. All respondents who answered this question were over 20 years of age (20 respondents did not answer this question). The largest group of respondents were aged over 60 (21%), followed by respondents aged between 26-30 (13%) and 36-40 (13%) (see Table 6 and Figure 5). Only 10 respondents (1%) indicated that they were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people (Figure 4).

Most respondents were currently employed (82%) (see Table 11).¹³ The vast majority indicated their positions were based in Australia (95%), with the next highest number working in New Zealand (2.5%) (see Table 10). Just over half of those currently employed (53%) said that they were in full-time continuing roles, signalling that an equal number of those in precarious employment have been captured (Table 17 and Figure 16). The “not employed” category made up 18% (140) representing those who had retired, returned to full-time study, worked in voluntary capacities or were currently seeking employment (see Table 11).

We asked respondents to indicate their annual income according to current individual income tax brackets as set by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO). In this sample, 66% earned \$45,001 or more per year, with 5% earning over \$180,001 (see Table 2 and Figure 1). This appears to be slightly higher than national averages based on the most recently available ATO data, which indicates 61% of individuals earned over \$37,000, and 3.5% over \$180,001 in 2018-19.¹⁴ The greatest number of respondents (47%) had a yearly income of \$45,001 - \$120,000. Some respondents 3% preferred not to indicate their income.

The gender profile of respondents was uneven. One percent of respondents identified as non-binary and 29% as male. There was a strong response rate

¹³ This figure is based on people's responses to a question about which sector they worked in, with 140 people indicating they were not employed, which would mean 651 were employed. Responses to other questions give different figures for employment and non-employment, and in many cases respondents had the option to indicate they ‘preferred not to say’. In cases of ambiguity, we have selected the most conservative figure to avoid overstating employment.

¹⁴ ‘Taxation statistics 2018-19’, Australian Taxation Office, accessed 31 January 2022, <https://www.ato.gov.au/About-ATO/Research-and-statistics/In-detail/Taxation-statistics/Taxation-statistics-2018-19/?anchor=Individualsstatistics#Chart6Individuals>

amongst female-identifying persons, at 70% (see Table 4 and Figure 3). While this is a similar percentage to the “You Matter” Survey for which 64% respondents were female, the purpose of that survey – casualisation – was very different and, as the authors note, that issue may have disproportionately affected women.¹⁵ Our survey was rather aimed at all History graduates and it is unclear whether our percentages favouring women are representative of the gender of History graduates generally or if there are other factors influencing this result. We cannot easily contextualise these percentages as we have only been able to obtain very limited information about the whole cohort of either recent or past History graduates, largely due to the type of data that is collected and retained by universities and its accessibility. Based on the information we have been able to gather, the proportion of recent undergraduate History students who are female-identifying is closer to 50-60% (although the gender profile of this cohort varies considerably between years and institutions).¹⁶ There is some research that suggests women generally participate in online research more frequently than men, which may be one explanation for the high proportion of female respondents, repeating the pattern of participation in the 1971 University of Melbourne study.¹⁷

¹⁵ Romain Fathi and Lyndon Megarrity, *You Matter: The Australian Historical Association's Casualisation Survey*. Canberra: The Australian Historical Association, November 2019.

¹⁶ Based on data supplied by Monash University, University of Adelaide, University of Western Australia, Australian Catholic University, and Deakin University for the last 1-4 years.

¹⁷ William G. Smith, “Does Gender Influence Online Survey Participation?: A Record-linkage Analysis of University Faculty Online Survey Response Behavior”, PhD Thesis, 2008, San Jose State University.

III. Survey Analysis: Diverse Avenues of Employment

The survey confirmed that historians are employed in a wide range of roles across the public and private sectors, from primary and secondary teachers and government policy makers to owners of IT consultancies and antique fabric dealers (Table 11 and Figure 10).

As shown in Table 11, education (including primary, secondary, and tertiary levels) was the area in which the greatest number were employed (44%), a finding which has been consistent for a century although it may be amplified here because of the methods used to reach respondents, as noted above. It was evident in responses to the final reflective question that some combined work in primary or secondary education with private employment. Those who reported working in University settings were employed as teaching and research academics as well as in professional roles, including as librarians, in research support and in management (see Figure 18 and Table 19). Responses provided evidence of the difficulty of securing employment as academics, with 32% saying that had been their intention in deciding to study History, while just 99 were currently employed by a university (Table 12). This may reflect a decline in positions for academic historians since 2012 when History had the largest number of full-time equivalent staff in the Humanities, at 522.2.¹⁸ Notably, those who indicated they studied History with the intention of working in the university sector were made-up from a combination of Bachelors, Honours, and PhD History graduates. Further, not all those who studied a PhD intended to work in the University sector.

Government roles outside of education accounted for 16% of respondents. Of those who were employed in the Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums (GLAM) sector, many had work in university and local council libraries (Table 11 and Figure 10).

Private enterprise was also a significant area of employment at 13%. For some, work in the retail and hospitality sectors was being undertaken during the completion of an advanced degree. Others were employed in non-university research institutes (Table 11 and Figure 10).

¹⁸ Turner and Brass, *Mapping the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences in Australia*, 138.

Smaller clusters (fewer than 40) existed in non-government organisations (including churches and trade unions), health and aged care, self-employment (as consultants in the fields of History and Archaeology, writers and grants writers) and the arts, cultural and entertainment media (Table 11 and Figure 10).

There were 140 respondents (17.5%) who reported that they were not currently employed (Table 11). This included students and the retired (some not by choice), those in carer roles, and those in unpaid/voluntary roles with universities and associations. At least 37 noted that they were unemployed and actively seeking paid work, and others reported being underemployed (see Table 16 and Figure 17).

Of those who were employed (82%), most worked in continuing full-time (53%) or continuing part-time (10%) positions (Table 17). Non-continuing work was reported by those in fixed-term (20%) and casual positions (13%).¹⁹ Some of the casual work was undertaken around study commitments while others were in ongoing casual roles as markers, research assistants and consultant historians. The lack of benefits such as superannuation and paid leave for those employed on a casual basis or as contractors was noted.

¹⁹ For more information on casualisation in the tertiary education sector see Romain Fathi and Lyndon Megarrity, "You Matter: The Australian Historical Association's Casualisation Survey". Canberra: The Australian Historical Association, November 2019.

IV. “How Has a History Degree Influenced Your Career?”: A Qualitative Analysis

The survey ended with the optional, open-ended, long form question: “How has a History degree influenced your career?”. This was intended to give respondents the opportunity to reflect on and explain more fully how a History degree had shaped their career pathways. Although placed at the end of the survey, respondents were keen to provide an answer, with 551 or 70% addressing it.

A striking aspect of the responses were the strong views people expressed about the influence of a History degree on their career. In order to gain greater insight into this aspect, we employed a “sentiment analysis” of this question whereby responses were coded according to whether they indicated a generally positive view of the influence of a History degree on an individual’s career, a mixed but generally positive view, mixed but generally negative, a negative view, neutral, or there was no sentiment evident. Most were clearly positive (255; 46%), with only a small number expressing wholly negative views (18; 3%). The mixed positive responses accounted for 3% (19 responses) and mixed negative for 1% (8 responses), with the rest either neutral or no sentiment.

Respondents with positive sentiments were clear about what they had gained from their study of History and how it had assisted them to obtain employment and contribute in their workplaces. In order to do justice to these rich qualitative data, our analysis below aims to give a platform to respondents for explaining the value of a History degree through quotations selected to emphasise the diversity of possible career pathways. As such it does not claim to be representative across the sample but rather to showcase the avenues open to people who have undertaken History degrees and to draw out some common themes.

We have grouped selected responses under the following 4 themes:

- transferable skills
- specialised but flexible knowledge
- History careers
- the role of passion for History in shaping individual careers

We would like to note that these themes are closely related and in many instances are difficult to separate. A ‘History career’, for example, is clearly a spectrum and can span many different sectors, from media to GLAM to self-employment through

consultancy. Another strong theme in the responses was that careers are multifaceted. Many respondents changed careers and sectors several times, as they grappled with major life events, and pursued opportunities in the field of History and outside of it.

Transferable skills

Amongst a range of individual narratives, common themes were the development of the transferable skills which have been foregrounded since the time of the Dawkins Reforms of the 1980s: critical thinking, analysis, writing, evidence-based argumentation, reflection, synthesis, contextualisation, and an appreciation of diverse cultural perspectives. One respondent working in public service wrote:

Capability in critical thinking and analysis, and capacity to identify key points, and develop summaries and recommendations from the evidence is the bread and butter skillset of public servants. So many people don't have this. If you do and you write well, there is always a job for you.

Another, who worked in the finance sector, stated:

Developed a critical thinking capacity that stood me in good stead throughout my working career in banking and finance.

This point was further developed by a respondent who found that their History degree informed their practice as an auditor, enhancing their professional practice:

The ability to identify potential sources of evidence, critically weigh the relative weight of that evidence in supporting a conclusion, and presenting the evidence is at the core of an auditor's responsibility to obtain sufficient appropriate evidence to provide an audit opinion. These skills were developed in my history degree, not my accounting degree, although obviously the accounting degree guided the initial choice of career.

A number of these skills are common across many humanities and social science subjects and might, for example, be understood as part of the value of a Bachelor of Arts degree more broadly but History specialisations clearly make strong contributions to the development of these broader transferable skills.

Specialised but flexible knowledge

Alongside these transferable skills, respondents noted that History training developed specific kinds of approaches, knowledge, and skills that were valuable across various career pathways. These are skills that are particular to the discipline of History and/or are needed in greater depth for historical enquiry as compared to other humanities and social sciences disciplines. For example, one respondent who worked in a senior role within the Australian government wrote:

It gave me research, writing and analytical skills and a broad context for contemporary world events that enabled me to make the transition to providing policy-relevant analysis for the Australian government and advancing to the Senior Executive Service before retirement.

This response highlights that skills in historical contextualisation are important in policy analysis. Indeed, others, including those with a PhD, also commented on the usefulness of a History degree within the public service. For example:

It has led to my career in its entirety. Without it, I would not have secured Commonwealth public service employment doing what it is that I do. I am one of the lucky few who have been able to directly translate the skills and content of my PhD into permanent, ongoing public service employment.

Here we can sense the perceived challenges involved in translating specialised doctoral work in History beyond academia, as well as the potential for developing transferable skills in the process of undertaking a large, independent project.

Another respondent who worked as a lawyer noted the value of a History degree in constructing and interrogating evidence-based narratives:

There are many skills that are directly applicable to my work as a litigation lawyer, including thinking critically, critically analysing evidence, working out what story that evidence tells, and writing persuasively.

Along similar lines, another respondent wrote:

So difficult to condense, but would include research skills, organisation of data, respect for evidence and sources, ability to communicate research, formulate original hypotheses, appreciate the complementary value of

individual life experience and structural change, and an enduring sense of perspective. Forever grateful.

A related trend among respondents was pairing History and another degree (such as Law or Education), which together fostered distinctive skills and strengths that were useful in their employment. One respondent attributed their pairing of History and Media to their career success:

While I attained a double major in Modern History and Media, it would be incorrect to assert that my media major/degree was the reason I attained communications roles in unions and NGOs. My historical study and postgrad research allowed me to stand out researching and presenting for roles and transferable skills. My historical study also allowed me to develop critical thinking skills that I believe are lacking across industries.

For some, training in History gave them greater interest and insight into the history of professions and fields in which they primarily worked, such as medicine. For example, History:

Gave me context for modern political and medical circumstances. I am approaching the end of a Psych Masters and the history I studied has provided me with insight into the development of my new career.

For some, a History degree also gave them perspective on their own personal career experiences. For example, one respondent stated:

It's qualified me to work in higher education, but probably more importantly it's taught me how to make sense of career-related difficulties. There's no way that I'd have been able to process years of precarious employment without the perspective that my degree in history provided.

In short, History degrees offer specific knowledge sets and skills that are valuable to a diverse range of careers.

History careers

Many respondents were working in roles directly centred in the field of History. Importantly, these took a wide variety of forms, including museum curators, librarians, archivists, academics and teachers.

Typical responses were:

In fact I am deeply grateful for my two degrees (hons and MA by research) in history which not only set me up for my initial employment in the tertiary sector, but have continued to be a foundation for my research career and [senior academic roles] I draw deeply on my experience as a historian, and have also continued a lifelong research interest in forms of knowledge and experience associated with history

And:

It has been the bedrock of all facets of my career as a public historian, professional historian and museum curator.

For some, study of History was a requirement, but the love of History encouraged them to take History-related initiatives beyond their core role:

I'm a history teacher, but I also teach genealogy as a co curricular activity and am currently involved in creating a heritage centre for the school.

Some respondents indicated that rather than doing a History degree to gain a specific job, their interest in and knowledge of a particular career path was developed *through* their History degree(s) alongside the skills they learnt. For example:

Without my BA in Ancient and Modern History I would never have considered working in a library - let alone becoming a research liaison librarian! The skills I gained in researching, analysing and networking are skills I use every single day in my job.

For others, it was only through employment unrelated to History study that they became aware of particular roles for which their History degrees were directly relevant:

I wouldn't have the job I love in a local government archives if not for my history degrees. But it was my paid work outside the academy (in a public

library) while I was studying that made me aware such a job was possible and that I was qualified for it.

Others used additional History qualifications to further specialise in specific fields and practises in order to gain employment in a particular sector. For example:

I work on history documentaries, such as *Who Do You Think You Are*. I did a MA in Public History so I could work in history outside the academic sector and for a large part of my career I have worked on history [television] programs, which has been amazing.

Non-linear career pathways

Many responses highlighted the increasingly common winding pathways of the respondent's career. This included moving between what might all be considered 'History-related careers' and/or moving between quite different sectors. For example:

[History] has been my career, whether I've worked in heritage organisations, for government, in policy work, as a private consultant, and as a sometime academic. I feel very lucky to have made a living doing it.

Others who were early or mid career emphasised that a History degree had helped them gain employment but they would like to align their study and career path more directly:

[My History degree] has helped me to gain employment in the university sector, although my primary job as professional administration staff is not where I would like to ultimately end up in my career.

Some had changed sectors several times:

I started my career in the media, working on historical projects without a history degree. Loved the field, so decided to study it. After many years working in other fields (business & non-academic education) I've returned to history because it provides me with great satisfaction, and I can utilize my other skills to support the History industry. I see History as continuing to support my next career move as well - a multi disciplinary endeavor, with History at its heart. I believe it's important for young Historians to

expect that their careers will be multi-faceted and that, like other endeavors, history teaches us that nothing lasts forever, so be prepared to broaden your skills in order to survive & thrive.

Through many of the responses we can see a tension respondents experienced and successfully resolved between the need to earn a living, striving for career success, and a passion for History.

“Simply, the love of history!”: The role of passion and interest in History in shaping careers and lives

Importantly, a common theme was that undertaking a History degree led to a love of the field that shaped not only people’s careers, but their lives. This was encapsulated by one respondent's answer to the question as to how a History degree has influenced their career: “Simply, the love of history!”. This interest and passion for History for some meant pursuing an existing career pathway in History, for others undertaking volunteer roles, and for others still, finding ways of incorporating History into their careers, including combining this with other interests to develop their own businesses. For example:

I would say that a degree in history (and the critical thinking that I learned in an arts degree generally) has influenced the core of the person that I am and so has influenced every aspect of my life and thinking. My passion for social history – and women's history in particular - that was fostered during my history degree directly informs and... enriches many aspects of my antique textile business!

Many respondents stated that they valued their History degree(s) as it had helped them in navigating and making sense of complex ethical, political, and/or social issues both within and beyond their careers. For example, History degrees:

Initially led to teaching, but probably my history studied fuelled curiosity to look at the world from a variety of perspectives

And:

Inspired a passion, provided skills and understanding of how and why those skills are important, inspired social justice, provided knowledge

And:

I became a historian at a major museum. I am living the dream. But even before I had my big break, doing the PhD allowed me into a richer intellectual world and made me a better person. It taught me to think critically; it taught me how to read -- really read -- and helped me think about the past, society, power, the individual and the state.

Some respondents explained that their History degrees and studying something they were passionate about helped them through difficult times in their lives which has had a lasting impact. For example, one respondent wrote:

I feel that doing an undergraduate degree in history prevented me from leaving higher education at quite a vulnerable time. Having something to reignite my passion for learning was more important in my early twenties than strategically positioning myself into a career path, especially because I had not necessarily settled on what I wanted to do. It also directly led me to my first job in communications working for a domestic violence service, as I received this through an arts internship program...

Another wrote:

My studies changed my life for the better, in fact my studies helped me deal with my disabilities and survive psychologically.

As these informants make clear, History degrees – and, more broadly, humanities and social science university education – can provide the space for exercising intellectual freedom and curiosity, and developing the varied perspectives through which people find purpose and meaning, and grapple with critical personal and professional issues. These insights are carried with them into workplaces, informing relationships with clients and colleagues, ethical practice and resilience.

Challenges in linking study of History with careers

A few respondents reported that they regretted their choice of studying History because of the challenges of finding work after graduation. Concerns raised about employment included difficulty in obtaining primary and secondary education positions in which they could directly use their degrees to teach History subjects

and a lack of understanding by employers about the skills they had obtained in their History degree(s). Regarding academic employment, respondents raised concerns about workplace culture within universities, casualisation and the need to pursue further education to secure a role in the university sector. Respondents identified networking, flexibility, adaptability and diversifying skills as important strategies for enhancing employment opportunities. One wrote: “Cast your net wide. I have picked up experience in other areas which led to jobs I wouldn’t have ever considered I would end up in.”

Ultimately, the responses strongly indicated that lives and careers are deeply entangled, underpinned by passion, personal circumstances and opportunity. A small minority of respondents stated that their History degree had been pursued out of interest and did not help their future career. For example:

I don't think my history degree has particularly impacted my career trajectory. Frankly I think the main value of doing a history degree is to satisfy your interest and, unless you're interested in an academic career, I don't think it affects your employment prospects either way.

This lack of connection, or even negative perception, was also reported as having been encountered amongst potential employers:

The critical and creative thinking skills cultivated through historical study have distinguished me in my workplaces, but perceived lack of directly applicable experience is often a barrier to employment.

Although studying History as an end in itself is a valid motivation, in light of the rich accounts of how a History degree has enabled and shaped careers, these views illustrate why this report is needed. The responses reveal both the value of History degrees for traditional and diverse employment pathways and the need to articulate more explicitly this value to potential employers and students. The appendices in this report aim to demonstrate the value of a History degree to a range of audiences, including prospective students and employers and so support the more explicit recognition of the value of History degrees and encourage opportunities for History graduates.

V. Final Remarks: Findings and Recommendations

Deep in my soul I understand myself as a historian, and know this shapes my work every day, even when it's not explicitly part of my job description.

Quantitative and qualitative data generated by the History Graduates Survey reveal both continuities and new challenges for History graduates seeking employment. The long established career pathways of History graduates in the education (primary, secondary, and tertiary) and government sectors are still present and are providing many with opportunities to contribute the skills and knowledge gained through their studies to these essential fields. However, of those who undertook their History studies with the intention of pursuing an academic career, more than half have not done so, with many respondents indicating difficulty in securing university employment. This is not because of any shortcoming in their degrees, but because of contraction of the sector, casualisation and increasing competition for scarce positions.

At the same time, history-related employment is diversifying, with a wide range of opportunities for public historians in the GLAM sector and in such diverse fields as health care, social assistance, management and professional services. The survey revealed that the private sector is already an important employer of History graduates. Indeed, the number of respondents employed in the private sector (104) was not far behind the number employed in the government sector (126) (Table 11). Growth in this area is expected to continue. The federal government's Labour Market Insights site identifies a strong demand for Social Professionals to research and study human society, noting historians as a key specialisation in this category.²⁰

Within these general trends, it is evident from the survey that History graduates have pursued diverse career pathways in a wide range of public and private employment, applying their transferable skills, specialised but flexible knowledge, and disciplinary expertise. While some enjoyed simple and straightforward paths to satisfying careers, many drew on their capacity for networking, flexibility and adaptability as they navigated portfolio careers, with time spent in both the public and private sectors, and in continuing and short-term positions.

²⁰ Labour Market Insights, National Skills Commission, Australian Government, <https://labourmarketinsights.gov.au/occupation-profile/social-professionals?occupationCode=2724> (accessed 11 March 2022).

The nature and range of employment and career pathways evident within the survey are not fully recognised within the Job-Ready Package nor, indeed, by all History graduates. In fact, some survey respondents noted that employers did not appreciate or know about the skills those with a History degree could bring into various workplaces and others did not realise the possible career pathways until they were part way through their degrees or applying for jobs. Perhaps this partly reflects the multifaceted nature of job markets in which it is impossible to know all employment avenues ahead of time, but it also speaks to the open-ended nature of study as a journey of learning and self discovery.

We argue that the limited understanding of how History graduates can contribute in workplaces demonstrates that there is a need to communicate better and more explicitly the value of History degrees. We see this as a key role for the AHA. To this end, and as part of this report, we have developed a set of resources aimed at communicating the value of History degrees to prospective and current students and to employers. These are included as appendices and are freely available for use by History teachers, university, departments, employers, and individuals. These resources should prove to be a step towards creating a better understanding of the career pathways for History graduates.

We hope this report encourages further discussion and analysis of these issues, and supports others to create resources to explain the value of History degrees, shifting the burden of communicating the value of the study of History from the individual alone. To facilitate this process, we have included the full set of quantitative data summaries and analysis as an appendix. In addition, a separate appendix presents a selection of the longer form responses to the final question of the report: “How has a History degree influenced your career?”. The answers to this question were in many ways the most illuminating aspect of the survey, providing in-depth insights into people’s careers and lives. This sample gives a sense of the diversity and nuance of the responses.

Crucially, the survey and report have highlighted that History degrees are not just employment pathways. They shape ways of thinking and acting in the world in a broader and perhaps more profound sense, from making sense of personal crises and complex ethical situations both during and after university study, to navigating non-linear career pathways and situating current events in historical perspective. Importantly, professional careers and private lives are not easily

separated. Rather they are worked through together, moulded through passion, opportunity, and personal circumstances.

VI: Appendix A: Open Day and Career Information Sheet for Undergraduate History Major Content

The information below is designed for undergraduate History majors and is based on the findings of the 2022 Australian Historical Association's History Graduate Survey. Education providers are invited to draw on it as needed when designing materials to inform potential students about the programs they offer.

History

Description

Historians seek to examine social, political, and economic change over time. They record, document and analyse past circumstances and events to reveal the role of actors, relationships and ideas in shaping our world.

Key features

In studying History you will gain specialist knowledge in historical methods, research and analysis that can be utilised in diverse employment pathways, alongside skills that are developed in all humanities and social sciences university graduates. The skills you will gain include:

- Historical contextualisation
- The location and critical evaluation of different kinds of evidence
- Constructing an argument using evidence
- Specialist knowledge of sources
- Specialist knowledge of historical periods
- Critical thinking and analysis
- Capacity to develop summaries and make recommendations
- Oral and written communication skills

Employment Opportunities

An undergraduate History major equips you with both specialist knowledge and flexible skills that can be used in diverse career pathways. History graduates work in education, from primary to university, and the GLAM (Galleries, Libraries, Archives, and Museums) sector. Many also have roles in government and business. A History major is complementary to other programs of study, including Law, Communications, Education and Media.

Those with History majors typically work in the following areas:

- Historical research
- Historical record keeping
- History communication
- Heritage and conservation
- Education
- Policy research and analysis
- Social research and analysis

Employers of History graduates include:

- Local, state and federal government
- Non-Government Organisations (NGOs)
- Consultancies (e.g. heritage)
- Libraries
- Archives
- Museums
- Education providers such as schools and universities
- Media companies

In addition, History graduates are employed in a wide range of other roles and sectors, including diplomacy, health, banking and finance..

Testimonials of History graduates from the Australian Historical Association's History Graduates Survey in 2021:

"History has always been a strong passion of mine. Pursuing history at the tertiary level has allowed me to step into a career in the GLAM sector and it continues to inform my practice as a curator."

"I wouldn't have the job I love in a local government archives if not for my history degrees."

"Without my BA in Ancient and Modern History I would never have considered working in a library - let alone becoming a research liaison"

librarian! The skills I gained in researching, analysing and networking are skills I use every single day in my job."

"It gave me research, writing and analytical skills and a broad context for contemporary world events that enabled me to make the transition to providing policy-relevant analysis for the Australian government and advancing to the Senior Executive Service before retirement".

"I work on history documentaries, such as Who Do You Think You Are. I did a MA in Public History so I could work in history outside the academic sector and for a large part of my career I have worked on history [television] programs, which has been amazing."

Further information and resources

Additional information, including further quotes from History graduates, can be found in the Report on the Australian Historical Association's History Graduates Survey (2022).

See also the Value of History Statement endorsed by Australia's History Councils: <https://historycouncilnsw.org.au/about/value-of-history-statement/>

Membership of History-related professional associations will give History teachers, academics and careers advisors access to information on relevant job opportunities, professional events, and networks. Some key professional associations are:

Australian Historical Association: www.theaha.org.au

Australian Society of Archivists: www.archivists.org.au

Professional Historians Australia: <https://www.historians.org.au/>

The Research Society: <https://researchsociety.com.au/>

The History Teachers' Association of Australia:
<http://www.historyteacher.org.au/>

VII. Appendix B: Information on History Graduates for Employers

In challenging times, it is essential to the success of your business that you locate and employ the right staff. Faced with graduates of a range of degrees, some employers are unaware of what their particular skills and attributes might be. History is one of these areas.

Historians seek to examine how human societies change over time, paying particular attention to social, political and economic factors. To do so, they record, document and analyse past circumstances and events, drawing out the role of actors, relationships and ideas in shaping our world.

The training received by historians to enable them to undertake these tasks makes them valuable employees in many settings. In order to assist employers to understand what a History graduate could bring to their workplace, in 2021 the Australian Historical Association conducted an online survey of History graduates which attracted responses from almost 800 individuals. They told us about the wide range of positions they held and how they were contributing to workplace culture and outcomes. Key areas were:

1. Skills in research, analysis and communication

- *There are many skills that are directly applicable to my work as a litigation lawyer, including thinking critically, critically analysing evidence, working out what story that evidence tells, and writing persuasively.*
- *The most important part of my degree was developing my analytical skills. Post university, I learned how to apply these skills to influence program and policy development in a public service career.*
- *The ability to research, argue a given position and communicate clearly (both written and verbal) has been invaluable throughout my entire career. I have been offered jobs in the IT industry, not due to my technical knowledge, but because of my communications skills. These were established through my history degree*
- *Studying history has taught me a range of transferable skills, especially research, lateral/logical/critical thinking; understanding the nub of an issue; and being able to articulate things clearly but concisely.*

2. Perspective

- *[Without my History degree], I couldn't have really appreciated the aphorism about not being to understand the present unless the past is understood. In Social Work, the field I have mainly worked in, there are new "technologies" and the embracing of "progressive" developments, which are really important to respond to from an awareness of what has gone before. Studying History has helped me with this perspective.*
- *[History made me] think about the big picture*

3. Empathy and ethics

- *[The study of History] helps you understand people, environments, economics, social issues and politics. It helps you see the interdisciplinary nature of problems and see different perspectives. It makes you a well rounded and thoughtful person.*
- *The study of history, for me, was the study of people and societies. It highlighted history's losers, winners, those with a voice and those without - all of which led me to a career in social care/justice.*

These attributes of History graduates have long been appreciated in the public sector and are increasingly attracting the attention of private sector employers, where almost as many of our respondents were working. The QILT Graduate Destination Survey for 2021, found that 81.7% of Humanities, Culture and Social Science graduates were employed within four months of completion and were earning a median salary of \$62, 600, both rates just slightly below the figures for all graduates (file:///D:/USB%20Drive/AHA/2021-gos-national-report749de703c946469d834f212ba7eb47e0.pdf). The QILT 2021 study of employer satisfaction found that graduates in the area of Societies and Cultures were rated above the average for all fields of study for preparedness, ensuring they begin to contribute to core goals straight away (https://qilt.edu.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/2021-ess-national-report.pdf). Future projections are for increasing opportunities in sectors where Humanities graduates often find work, including education and training, social assistance and professional services (<https://joboutlook.gov.au/careers/future-outlook/>).

History graduates bring a suite of skills and attributes which make them not only valuable to advancing the aims of the enterprise but to creating positive and inclusive workplace cultures.

Further information and resources

Additional information, including further testimony from History graduates, can be found in the Report on the Australian Historical Association's History Graduates Survey (2022).

See also the Value of History Statement for a succinct summary of the value of history for the economy, society and the individual:

<https://historycouncilnsw.org.au/about/value-of-history-statement/>

VIII. Appendix C: Survey Questions

History Graduates Survey, Australian Historical Association

Purpose of the survey:

- To gain a better understanding of the career pathways and employability of all those with an undergraduate or postgraduate degree in history or a degree that was historically-focused.
- To facilitate wider discussion of diverse employment pathways for history graduates.
- To identify and address issues relating to the employability of history graduates.

Terms and Conditions:

Answers provided to this survey are anonymous. This survey is conducted by Dr Emily O’Gorman and Associate Professor Nancy Cushing, on behalf of the Australian Historical Association (AHA) Executive. O’Gorman and Cushing are current members of the AHA Executive Committee (2020-22), Teaching and Learning Portfolio. Once the survey is closed, it will be deleted from Google Forms and the CSV file will be retained by O’Gorman and Cushing on a password protected platform until they have produced a report or other material for the Executive Committee of the AHA, after which time (or shortly thereafter) the file will be erased. It is the goal of the AHA to make public the report obtained from the data. The Executive Committee may also wish to publish information in journals or media outlets about the outcomes of the survey. By taking part in this survey you agree to these terms and conditions. While the survey is anonymous, there are many questions where you can provide qualitative answers. We do not wish to limit the scope of your answers. However, be aware that if you provide details of particular incidents or stories, it is possible that other people aware of those incidents would be able to identify you. It is anticipated that a report on the survey be submitted to the AHA's Executive Committee in December 2021 for release in 2022.

*Required

1. Do you hold a university degree with a major or specialisation in history or that was historically-focused? *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

2. What is your current yearly individual income? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 0 – \$18,200
- ☐ \$18,201 – \$45,000
- ☐ \$45,001 – \$120,000
- ☐ \$120,001 – \$180,000
- ☐ \$180,001 and over
- ☐ Not currently employed
- ☐ Prefer not to say

3. What is your highest qualification in history or in an historically-focused field? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Bachelor
- ☐ Honours
- ☐ Graduate Diploma
- ☐ Masters coursework
- ☐ Master of Research (MRes)
- ☐ Master of Philosophy (MPhil)
- ☐ Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
- ☐ Other: _____

4. Is your gender: *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Other: _____

5. Are you of Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

6. What is your age group? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Under 20
- ☐ Between 20-25
- ☐ Between 26-30
- ☐ Between 31-35
- ☐ Between 36-40
- ☐ Between 41-45
- ☐ Between 46-50
- ☐ Between 51-55
- ☐ Between 56-60
- ☐ 60 and above

7. When was your highest degree qualification in history or historically-focused field conferred? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 0-2 years ago
- ☐ 3-5 years ago
- ☐ 6-10 years ago
- ☐ 11-20
- ☐ 21-40 years ago
- ☐ over 40 years ago

8. Is your highest history or historically-focused qualification from a university in: *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Australia - Queensland
- ☐ Australia - New South Wales
- ☐ Australia - Northern Territory
- ☐ Australia - Western Australia
- ☐ Australia - South Australia
- ☐ Australia - Victoria
- ☐ Australia - Tasmania
- ☐ Australia - Australian Capital Territory
- ☐ New Zealand
- ☐ Elsewhere in the Pacific
- ☐ Asia
- ☐ Middle East
- ☐ Africa
- ☐ Europe
- ☐ North America
- ☐ South America
- ☐ Other: _____

9. Which field(s) of historical research did your degree(s) primarily specialise in (check up to three): *

Tick all that apply.

- ☐ Archaeological science
- ☐ Archaeology of Asia, Africa and the Americas
- ☐ Archaeology of Australia (excl. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander)
- ☐ Archaeology of Europe, the Mediterranean and the Levant
- ☐ Archaeology of New Zealand (excl. Māori)
- ☐ Digital archaeology
- ☐ Historical archaeology (incl. industrial archaeology)
- ☐ Maritime archaeology
- ☐ Archival, repository and related studies
- ☐ Critical heritage, museum and archive studies
- ☐ Cultural heritage management (incl. world heritage)
- ☐ Digital heritage
- ☐ Heritage and cultural conservation
- ☐ Heritage collections and interpretations
- ☐ Heritage tourism, visitor and audience studies
- ☐ Intangible heritage
- ☐ Materials conservation
- ☐ Asian history
- ☐ Australian history
- ☐ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander History
- ☐ History of Indigenous peoples outside Australia
- ☐ Biography
- ☐ British history
- ☐ Classical Greek and Roman history
- ☐ Digital history
- ☐ Environmental history

- ☐ European history (excl. British, classical Greek and Roman)
- ☐ Gender history
- ☐ Global and world history
- ☐ Historical studies of crime
- ☐ Histories of race
- ☐ History of empires, imperialism and colonialism
- ☐ History of religion
- ☐ History of the pacific
- ☐ International history
- ☐ Latin and South American history
- ☐ Middle Eastern and North African history
- ☐ Migration history
- ☐ New Zealand history
- ☐ North American history
- ☐ Sub-Saharan African history
- ☐ Transnational history
- ☐ History and philosophy of engineering and technology
- ☐ History and philosophy of law and justice
- ☐ History and philosophy of medicine
- ☐ History and philosophy of science
- ☐ History and philosophy of the humanities
- ☐ History and philosophy of the social sciences
- ☐ History of ideas
- ☐ History of philosophy

Other: ☐ _____

10. If you are currently working, where is your position based?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Australia
- ☐ New Zealand
- ☐ Pacific
- ☐ Asia
- ☐ Middle East
- ☐ Africa
- ☐ Europe
- ☐ North America
- ☐ South America
- ☐ Other: _____

11. In which sector are you currently primarily employed: *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ University
- ☐ Primary or Secondary Education
- ☐ Government
- ☐ Private/business
- ☐ Non-Government Organisation
- ☐ Media (e.g. public broadcasting, commercial media, media and communications)
- ☐ Not employed
- ☐ Other: _____

12. When studying history, was your first intention to secure employment in the university sector? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

13. If you answered that your primary intention was to work in the university sector, are you currently (go to next question if not applicable):

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Employed in the university sector
- ☐ Transitioned to another sector

14. If you answered that your primary intention was to work in the university sector and that you are currently not employed in this sector, please comment on why this is the case, and what were the obstacles you faced? (go to next question if not applicable)

15. If you transitioned from the university sector to other sectors, do you have tips and recommendations you would like to share? (go to next question if not applicable)

16. If you are currently not employed (in any sector) are you currently: (check all that apply; go to next question if not applicable)

Tick all that apply.

- ☐ Seeking employment – university sector
- ☐ Seeking employment – primary or secondary education sector
- ☐ Seeking employment – government sector
- ☐ Seeking employment – private/business sector
- ☐ Seeking employment – non-government organisation (NGO) sector
- ☐ Seeking employment - other
- ☐ Primary carer
- ☐ Retired
- ☐ Unable to work (e.g. due to illness)

Other: ☐ _____

17. If you are employed (in any sector), is your employment: (go to next question if not applicable)

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Continuing full-time
- ☐ Continuing part-time
- ☐ Fixed-term full-time
- ☐ Fixed-term part-time
- ☐ Casual
- ☐ Other: _____

18. If you work in the university sector, is your role in a unit (Discipline/Department/School) of: (go to next question if not applicable)

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ History
- ☐ Heritage
- ☐ Archaeology
- ☐ Australian Studies
- ☐ Other: _____

19. If you work in the university sector, is your role primarily: (go to next question if not applicable)

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Academic - Research/Teaching/Service
- ☐ Academic – Research/Service
- ☐ Academic – Teaching/Service
- ☐ Academic – Research
- ☐ Academic – Teaching
- ☐ Professional - Administrative
- ☐ Other: _____

20. If you work in the primary or secondary education sector does your role primarily involve: (go to next question if not applicable)

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Teaching students
- ☐ Administration
- ☐ Management
- ☐ Consulting
- ☐ Other: _____

21. If you work in the primary or secondary education sector, are you primarily employed within: (go to next question if not applicable)

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Public Schools
- ☐ Private Schools
- ☐ Other: _____

22. If you work in the government sector, at which level of government is your role: (go to next question if not applicable)

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Federal
- ☐ State/Territory
- ☐ Local Government
- ☐ Other: _____

23. If you work in the government sector, what is the primary focus of your role: (go to next question if not applicable)

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Diplomacy
- ☐ Policy
- ☐ Analysis
- ☐ Research
- ☐ Outreach and engagement
- ☐ Collections (acquisitions, maintenance, access)
- ☐ Other: _____

24. If you work in the private/business sector, what best describes you: (go to next question if not applicable)

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ I own/have a significant financial stake in a small business (under 100 employees)
- ☐ I own/have a significant financial stake in a large business (over 100 employees)
- ☐ I work for a small business (under 100 employees)
- ☐ I work for a large business (over 100 employees)
- ☐ Other: _____

25. If you work in the private/business sector, do you own or work for a consultancy? (go to next question if not applicable)

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

26. If you work in the private/business sector please provide a brief description of the nature of your work: (go to next question if not applicable)

27. If you work in a non-government organisation (NGO), does it primarily focus on: (go to next question if not applicable)

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Environmental issues
- ☐ Social justice issues
- ☐ Other: _____

28. If you work in a non-government organisation (NGO), do you primarily undertake: (go to next question if not applicable)

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Research
- ☐ Community outreach and engagement
- ☐ Policy development
- ☐ Other: _____

29. If you work in media, what best describes you (go to next question if not applicable):

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Employed by a company
- ☐ Own a company (with employees)
- ☐ Freelance
- ☐ Other: _____

30. If you work in media, how would you best describe the nature of your work (go to next question if not applicable):

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Public broadcasting
- ☐ Commercial media
- ☐ Media and communications
- ☐ Other: _____

31. Which skills do you consider were outcomes of your history degree(s) (select all that apply): *

Tick all that apply.

- ☐ Research methods and methodologies
- ☐ Ethical research principles
- ☐ Critical thinking and analysis
- ☐ Specialist knowledge of sources
- ☐ Specialist knowledge of particular historical period
- ☐ Historical contextualisation
- ☐ Writing skills – academic
- ☐ Writing skills – general
- ☐ Networking
- ☐ Oral presentation skills
- ☐ Community outreach and engagement
- ☐ All of the above
- ☐ None

Other: ☐ _____

32. Of these, which do you apply in your current workplace? (select all that apply) *

Tick all that apply.

- ☐ Research methods and methodologies
- ☐ Ethical research principles
- ☐ Critical thinking and analysis
- ☐ Specialist knowledge of sources
- ☐ Specialist knowledge of particular historical period
- ☐ Historical contextualisation
- ☐ Writing skills – academic
- ☐ Writing skills – general
- ☐ Networking
- ☐ Oral presentation skills
- ☐ Community outreach and engagement
- ☐ All of the above
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Not currently employed

33. Please provide a brief statement about how a degree in history has influenced your career:

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IX. Appendix D: Tables and Figures Summarising Survey Responses (includes commentary on data analysis)

Methodology: Quantitative Analysis

The data was summarised in Microsoft Excel using pivot tables for applicable indicator variables. This was largely used for questions related to demographic data where respondents had to select a choice from several options (Questions 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 25, 32).

Responses to questions where respondents were required to select an option or input text (Questions 3, 8, 9, 10, 11, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31) were summarised using a similar method. Where respondents chose to input their own responses, these were categorised under one of the existing options, or new categories were created where necessary. For questions where respondents were required to input a response (Questions 14, 15, 26), responses were manually coded according to recurring themes. Some responses discussed several themes, so categories are not mutually exclusive.

Responses to Question 33 were analysed using a combination of sentiment analysis and thematic coding. Coding of responses related to the three areas. Firstly, responses were coded according to several recurring themes. Responses that explored specific transferable skills that had been gained through the completion of a history degree were coded according to the key skills discussed. Similarly, responses that explored various aspects specifically linked to employability (such as being underpaid) were coded to reflect this. The sentiment analysis produced four mutually exclusive categories (positive, negative, mixed and no sentiment), whereas key themes, skills and employability aspects were not mutually exclusive.

Profile of respondents

- 797 people responded to the survey. Of these, 791 respondents had completed a university degree with a major or specialisation in history or that was historically-focused while the other 6 respondents had not (see Table 1) - these responses were not included in the analysis of the survey data
- Majority of respondents (roughly 50%) had a yearly income of \$45,001 - \$120,000 (see Table 2 and Figure 1).
- The highest qualification received in history varied among the respondents. The most common responses were: PhD (32%), Bachelor's Degree (27%), and

Honours (15%). A more detailed breakdown of the highest qualification can be found in Table 3 and Figure 2.

- Most respondents identified themselves as female (70%), with a further 28.8% identifying as males (see Table 4 and Figure 3).
- Ten respondents stated that they were of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin (see Table 5 and Figure 4).
- By age, the largest group of respondents were aged 60 and above (169 respondents), followed by respondents aged between 26-30 (102 respondents) and 36-40 (101 respondents) (see Table 6).

Question 14: Respondents commonly discussed the lack of opportunities for both casual and permanent roles (with some responses discussing the trend of casualisation). Other common responses explored poor workplace culture within universities and the need to pursue further education to secure a role in the university sector.

Question 15: The most common responses discussed the importance of being flexible, the need to pursue other options, and the importance of emphasising transferable skills.

Questions 33: Common responses were related to challenges and benefits a history degree provided with regard to securing employment, particularly, the lack of opportunities available and the role of history degrees as an entry pathway to certain roles. Other common responses explored how a history degree helped respondents develop transferable skills in critical thinking, research and writing.

Tables

Table 1: Do you hold a university degree with a major or specialization in history or that was historically focused?

Yes	791
No	6
Total	797

Table 2: What is your current yearly individual income?

0 – \$18,200	61
\$18,201 – \$45,000	99
\$45,001 – \$120,000	373
\$120,001 – \$180,000	110
\$180,001 and over	39
Not currently employed	87
Prefer not to say	22

Table 3: What is your highest qualification in history or in an historically-focused field?

Bachelor	215
Graduate Diploma	44
Honours	122
Masters (coursework)	145
Masters (thesis only)	16
PhD	249

Table 4: Gender

Female	554
Male	229
Non-binary	7
Prefer not to say	1

Table 5: Are you of Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?

No	781
Yes	10

Table 6: What is your age group

Between 20-25	58
Between 26-30	102
Between 31-35	77
Between 36-40	99
Between 41-45	75
Between 46-50	89
Between 51-55	64
Between 56-60	59
60 and above	168

Table 7: When was your highest degree qualification in history or historically-focused field conferred?

0-2 years ago	158
3-5 years ago	123
6-10 years ago	134
11-20 years ago	173
21-40 years ago	161
over 40 years ago	42

Table 8: Is your highest history or historically-focused qualification from a university in:

Australia - Australian Capital Territory	44
Australia - New South Wales	292
Australia - Northern Territory	1
Australia - Queensland	42

Australia - South Australia	37
Australia - Tasmania	14
Australia - Victoria	262
Australia - Western Australia	29
New Zealand	21
Asia	1
Europe	28
North America	20

Table 9: Which field(s) of historical research did your degree(s) primarily specialise in:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander History	49
Ancient History	1
Archaeological science	10
Archaeology of Asia, Africa and the Americas	6
Archaeology of Australia (excl. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander)	2
Archaeology of Europe, the Mediterranean and the Levant	29
Archaeology of New Zealand (excl. Māori)	1
Architectural history	1
Archival, repository and related studies	24
Art history	1
Asian history	62
Australian history	389
Biography	27
British history	127
Canadian History	1
Celtic History	1
Classical Greek and Roman history	114
Critical heritage, museum and archive studies	33
Cultural heritage management (incl. world heritage)	14
Digital archaeology	2

Digital heritage	4
Digital history	4
Economic History	1
Environmental history	34
European history (excl. British, classical Greek and Roman)	156
Gender history	78
General history degree	2
Global and world history	101
Heritage and cultural conservation	22
Heritage collections and interpretations	14
Heritage tourism, visitor and audience studies	5
Historical archaeology (incl. industrial archaeology)	11
Historical studies of crime	12
Histories of race	24
History and philosophy of engineering and technology	3
History and philosophy of law and justice	9
History and philosophy of medicine	17
History and philosophy of science	20
History and philosophy of the humanities	22
History and philosophy of the social sciences	9
History education	2
History of empires, imperialism and colonialism	134
History of ideas	38
History of Indigenous peoples outside Australia	19
History of philosophy	5
History of religion	48
History of the pacific	20
Intangible heritage	6
International history	43
Jewish history	1
Labour History	2
Latin and South American history	10
Local, family and applied history	3
Maritime archaeology	1

Materials conservation	2
Medieval and early modern history	2
Middle Eastern and North African history	16
Migration history	24
Military & Diplomatic History	2
New Zealand history	12
North American history	53
Public History	2
Social History, Music 1965 - 1975	1
Sub-Saharan African history	1
Transnational history	25
Use of Literature as a primary source in History	1

Table 10: If you are currently working, where is your position based?

Africa	1
Asia	5
Australia	616
Europe	14
New Zealand	20
North America	7
Not Currently Working	15
Pacific	3

Table 11: In which sector are you currently primarily employed:

GLAM	5
Government	126
Healthcare	6
Media	13
Non-Government Organisation	38
Not employed	140
Primary or Secondary Education	167

Private/business	104
Religious Institution	1
Self Employed	9
University	182

Table 12: When studying history, was your first intention to secure employment in the university sector?

No	540
Yes	251

Table 13: If you answered that your primary intention was to work in the university sector, are you currently (go to next question if not applicable):

Employed in the university sector	114
Transitioned to another sector	113

Table 14: If you answered that your primary intention was to work in the university sector and that you are currently not employed in this sector, please comment on why this is the case, and what were the obstacles you faced? (go to next question if not applicable)

Lack of opportunities	94
Lack of support	3
Needed further education	19
Personal reasons	17
Poor workplace culture	18
Retired	6
Transitioned to another sector	7

Table 15: If you transitioned from the university sector to other sectors, do you have tips and recommendations you would like to share? (go to next question if not applicable)

Be confident	3
Be flexible	23
Be lucky	2

Be open minded	9
Get experience	10
Network	8
Persistence	2
Pursue other options	17
Transferable skills	15
Upskill	8

Table 16: If you are currently not employed (in any sector) are you currently: (check all that apply; go to next question if not applicable)

Not actively seeking employment	11
Primary carer	11
Pursuing further education	22
Retired	81
Seeking employment – government sector	4
Seeking employment – multiple sectors	37
Seeking employment – non-government organisation (NGO) sector	2
Seeking employment - other	4
Seeking employment – primary or secondary education sector	2
Seeking employment – private/business sector	2
Seeking employment – university sector	8
Unable to work (e.g. due to illness)	7

Table 17: If you are employed (in any sector), is your employment: (go to next question if not applicable)

Casual	87
Consulting	15
Continuing full-time	343
Continuing part-time	66
Fixed-term full-time	79
Fixed-term part-time	49

Not currently working	4
Pursuing further education	2

Table 18: If you work in the university sector, is your role in a unit (Discipline/Department/School) of: (go to next question if not applicable)

Administration	22
Arts	13
Australian Studies	5
Business	5
Education	10
History	92
Humanities	13
Interdisciplinary	3
Law	5
Science	4

Table 19: If you work in the university sector, is your role primarily: (go to next question if not applicable)

Academic – Research	32
Academic – Research/Service	17
Academic - Research/Teaching	2
Academic - Research/Teaching/Service	57
Academic – Service	2
Academic – Teaching	28
Academic – Teaching/Service	7
Professional - Administrative	51

Table 20: If you work in the primary or secondary education sector does your role primarily involve: (go to next question if not applicable)

Administration	6
Consulting	7
Management	20
Teaching students	156

Table 21: If you work in the primary or secondary education sector, are you primarily employed within: (go to next question if not applicable)

Private Schools	73
Public Schools	102

Table 22: If you work in the government sector, at which level of government is your role: (go to next question if not applicable)

Federal	52
Local Government	21
State/Territory	76

Table 23: If you work in the government sector, what is the primary focus of your role: (go to next question if not applicable)

Administration	8
Analysis	8
Collections (acquisitions, maintenance, access)	30
Diplomacy	4
Legal	8
Other	3
Outreach and engagement	25
Policy	27
Research	25

Table 24: If you work in the private/business sector, what best describes you: (go to next question if not applicable)

I own/have a significant financial stake in a large business (over 100 employees)	3
I own/have a significant financial stake in a small business (under 100 employees)	50
I work for a large business (over 100 employees)	48
I work for a small business (under 100 employees)	36

Table 25: If you work in the private/business sector, do you own or work for a consultancy? (go to next question if not applicable)

No	85
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Yes	57
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Table 26: If you work in the private/business sector please provide a brief description of the nature of your work: (go to next question if not applicable)

Academia	1
Administration	1
Advocacy	2
Architect	1
Auditor	2
Author	1
Barrister	2
Builder	1
Communications	6
Consulting historian	35
Contractor	1
Cultural Management	1
Customer Service	3
Data	1
Digitisation	1
Executive	6
Film	1
Finance	1
Food Safety	1
IT	9
Lawyer	10
Management	4
Presenter	1
Researcher	10
Retail	4
Sustainability	4
Teacher	4
Tour operator	1
Religious official	1
Museum	2

Musician	1
Pathology	1
Photography	1
Producer	2
Psychoanalysis	3
Editor	1
Writer	3

Table 27: If you work in a non-government organisation (NGO), does it primarily focus on: (go to next question if not applicable)

Education	3
Employment	3
Environmental issues	2
Healthcare	3
History	3
Legal issues	1
Religion	2
Social justice issues	23

Table 28: If you work in a non-government organisation (NGO), do you primarily undertake: (go to next question if not applicable)

Administration	3
Community outreach and engagement	23
Policy development	8
Research	16

Table 29: If you work in media, what best describes you (go to next question if not applicable):

Employed by a company	10
Freelance	11
Own a company (with employees)	1

Table 30: If you work in media, how would you best describe the nature of your work (go to next question if not applicable):

Commercial media	3
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Media and communications	13
Public broadcasting	4
Quality control	1

Table 31: Which skills do you consider were outcomes of your history degree(s) (select all that apply):

Research methods and methodologies	635
Ethical research principles	283
Critical thinking and analysis	677
Specialist knowledge of sources	486
Specialist knowledge of particular historical period	488
Historical contextualisation	543
Writing skills – academic	590
Writing skills – general	505
Networking	115
Oral presentation skills	302
Community outreach and engagement	124
All of the above	120
None	1

Table 32: Of these, which do you apply in your current workplace? (select all that apply)

Research methods and methodologies	413
Ethical research principles	219
Critical thinking and analysis	546
Specialist knowledge of sources	300
Specialist knowledge of particular historical period	241
Historical contextualisation	322
Writing skills – academic	307
Writing skills – general	475
Networking	150
Oral presentation skills	301
Community outreach and engagement	174
All of the above	113
None of the above	23

Not currently employed	98
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Table 33a. Sentiment Analysis of responses to: “Please provide a brief statement about how a degree in history has influenced your career:”

Positive	424
Mixed	47
Negative	46
No sentiment	29

Table 33b. Key themes of responses to: “Please provide a brief statement about how a degree in history has influenced your career:”

Confidence	12
Discipline	4
Empathy	12
Employability	261
Ethics	2
Further education	14
Leadership	2
Luck	5
Passion	78
Personally rewarding	53
Shaping worldview	102
Specific knowledge and skills	64
Transferable Skills	196

Table 33c. Key skills discussed in responses to: “Please provide a brief statement about how a degree in history has influenced your career:”

Communication	39
Critical thinking	112
Creativity	5
Interpreting	5
Organisation	5
Presentation	6

Research	74
Writing	61

Table 33d. Key employability issues discussed in responses to: “Please provide a brief statement about how a degree in history has influenced your career:”

Credibility	10
Flexibility	6
Lack of opportunities	31
Necessary qualification	26
Networking	18
Underpaid	13
Undervalued	7
Workplace culture	4

Figures

Figure 1: Pie chart of current yearly individual income

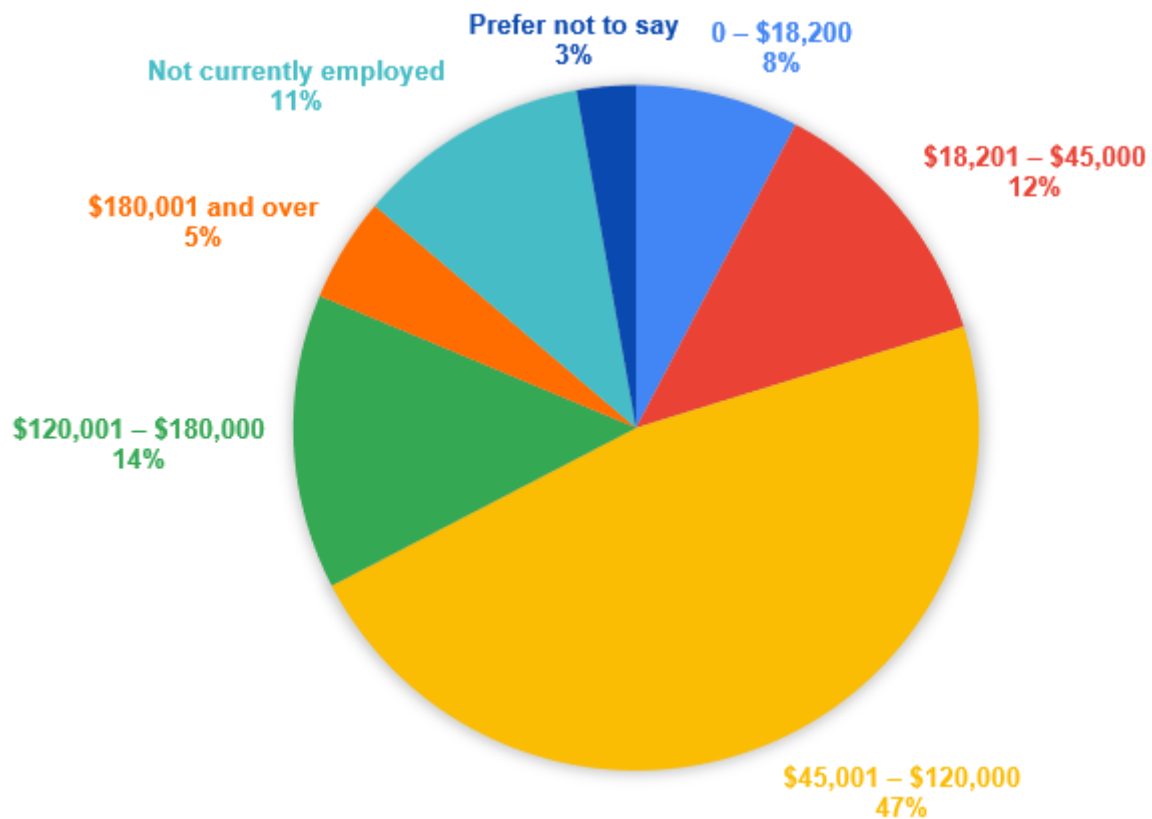


Figure 2: Pie chart of highest qualification in history or in an historically-focused field

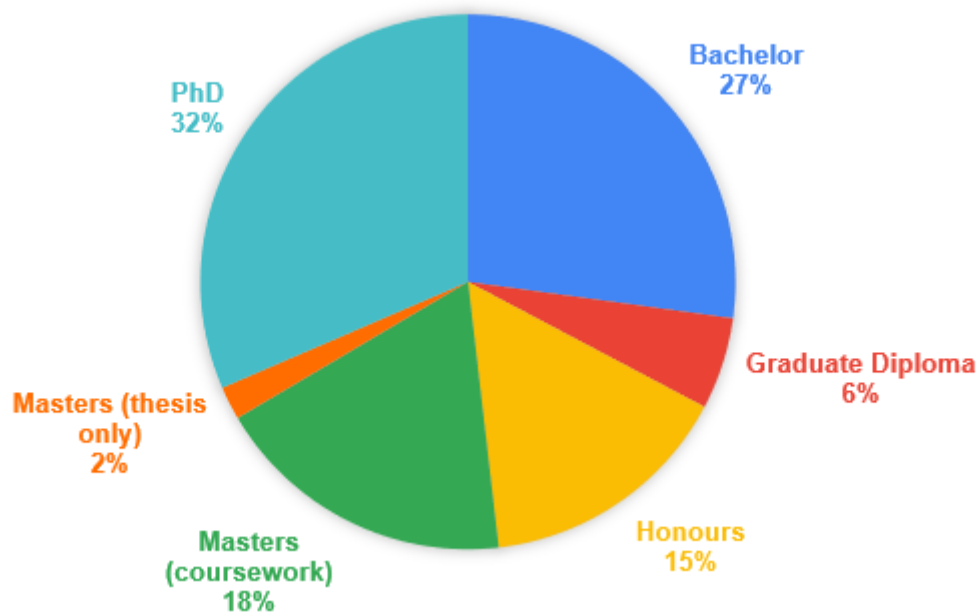


Figure 3: Pie chart of gender of respondents

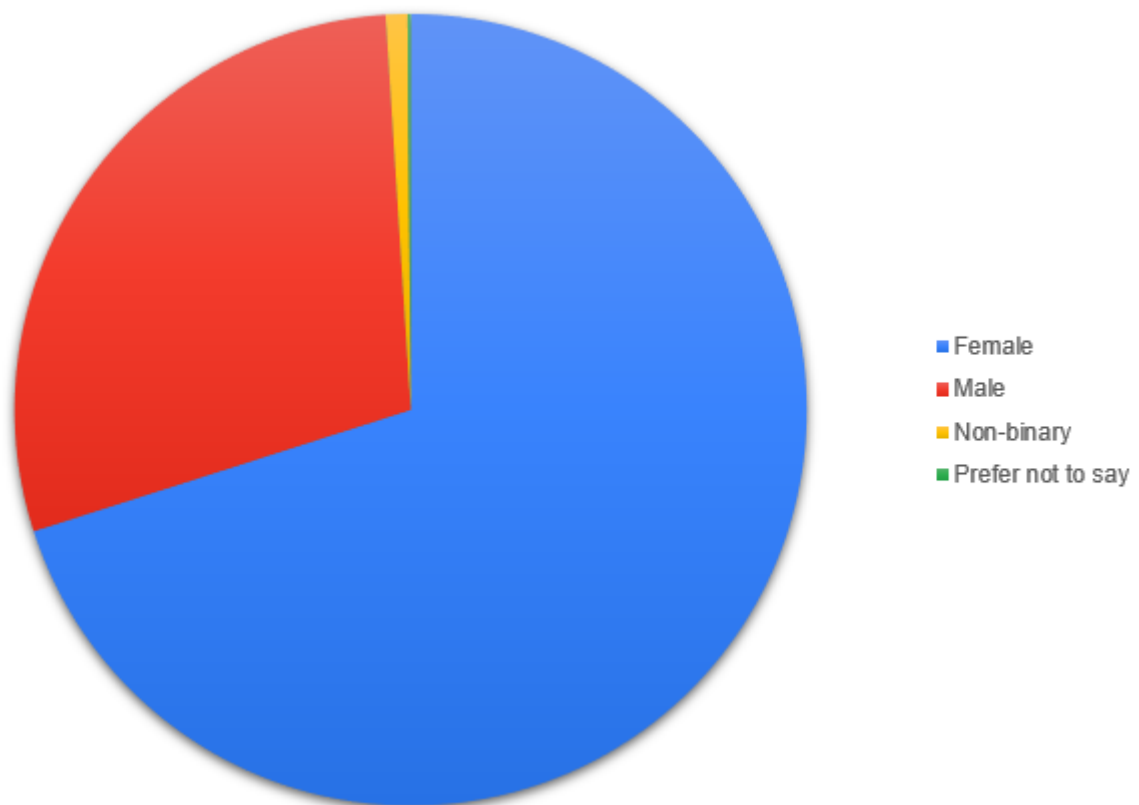


Figure 4: Pie chart of respondents of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin



Figure 5: What is your age group

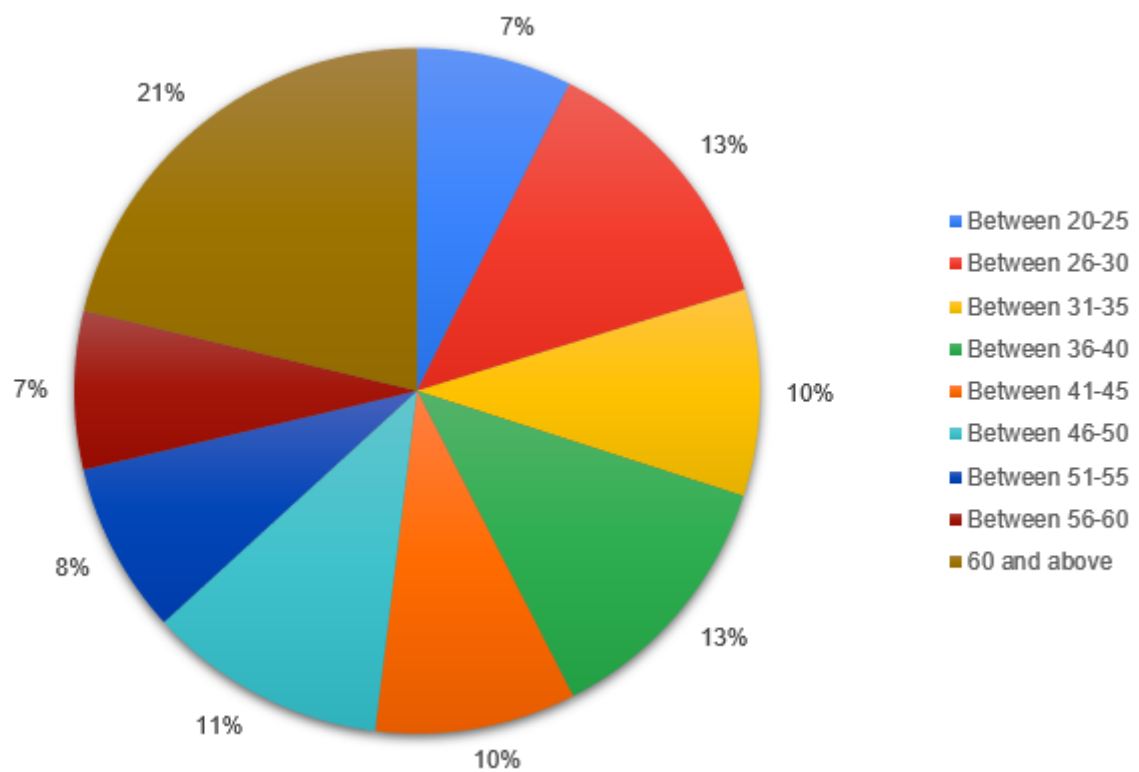


Figure 6: When was your highest degree qualification in history or historically-focused field conferred?

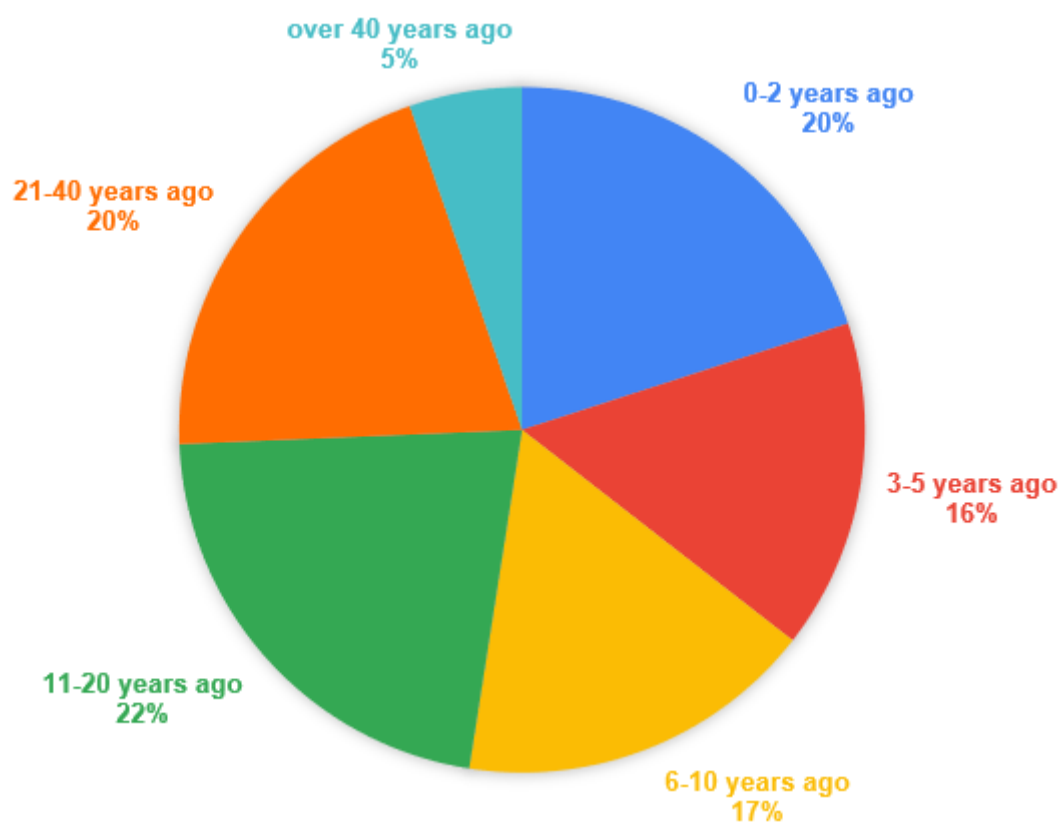


Figure 7: Is your highest history or historically-focused qualification from a university in:

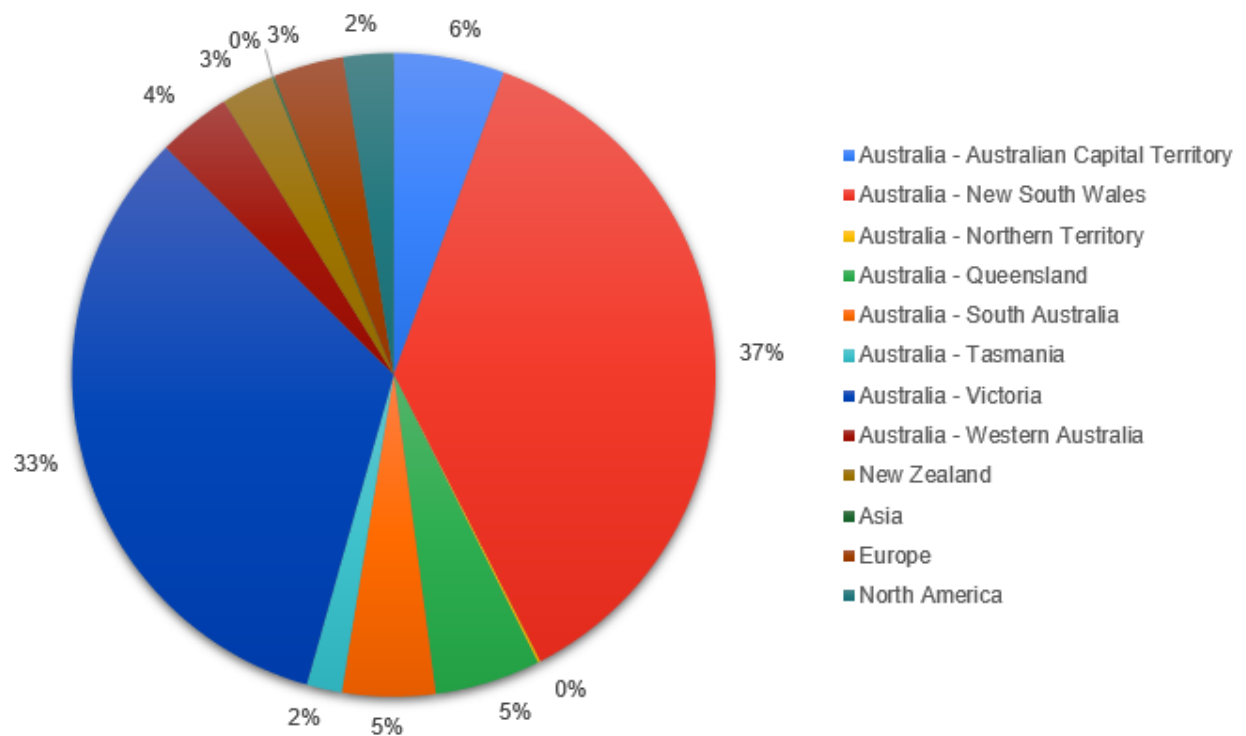


Figure 9: If you are currently working, where is your position based?

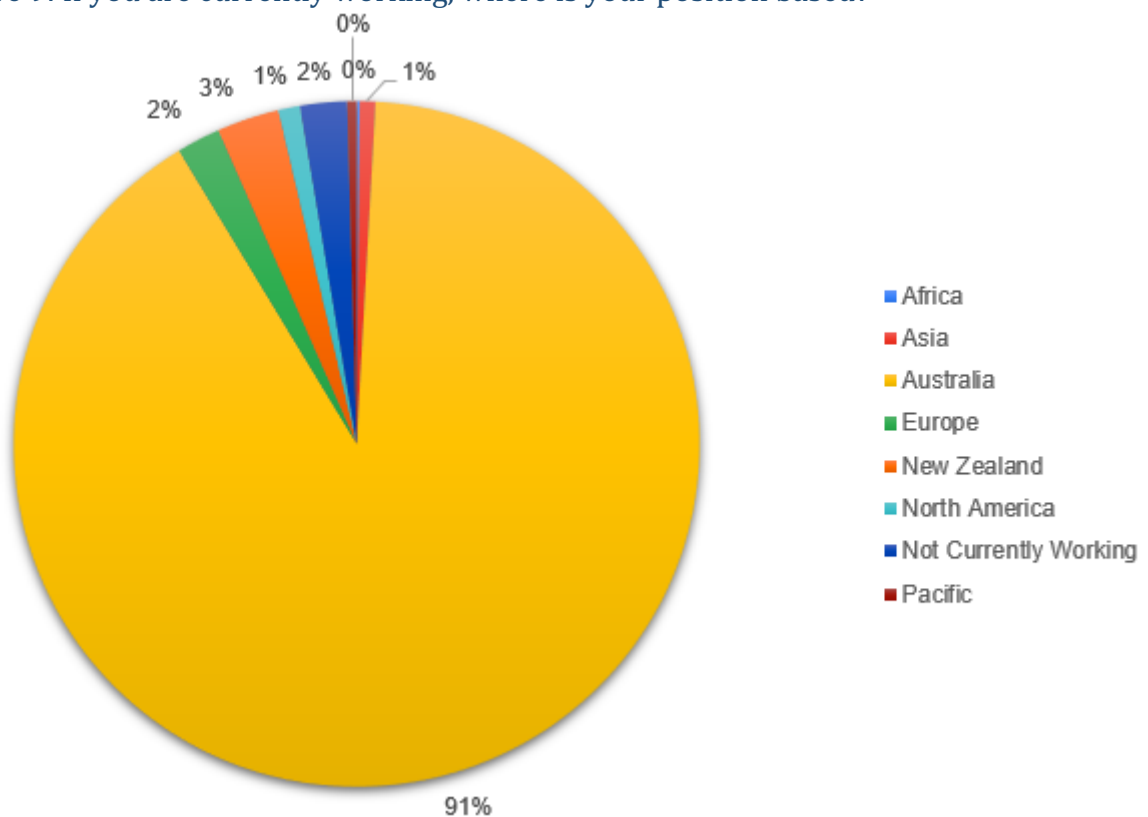


Figure 10: In which sector are you currently primarily employed:

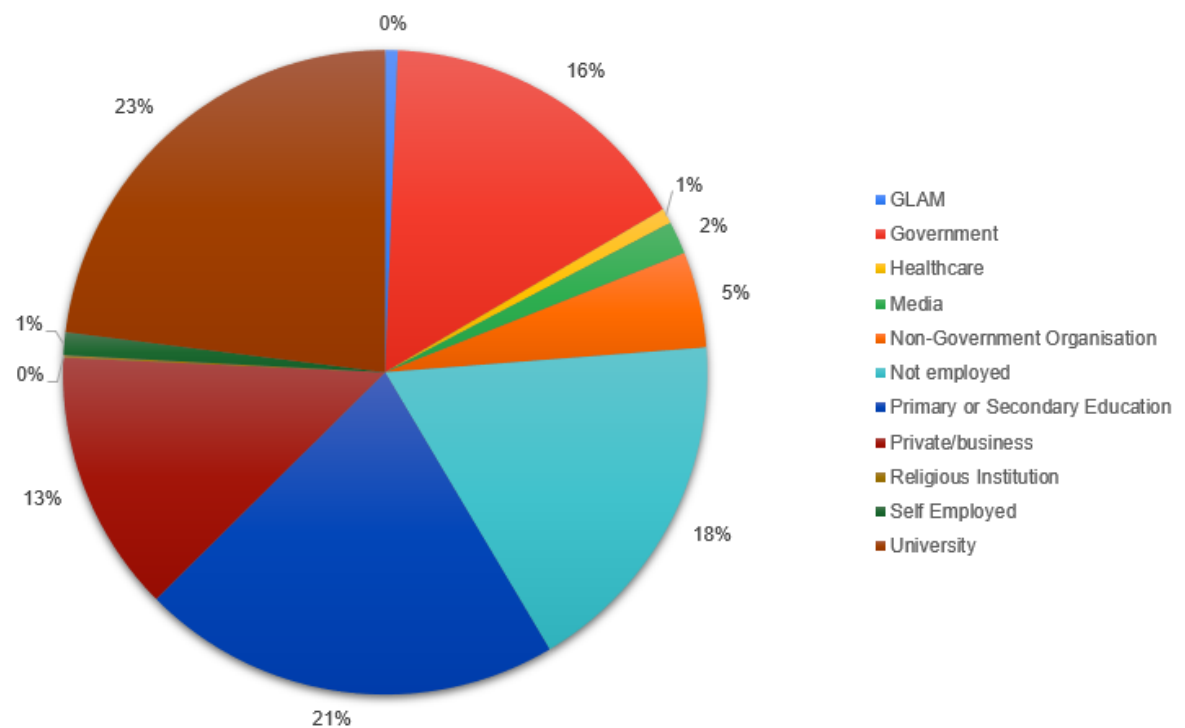


Figure 11: When studying history, was your first intention to secure employment in the university sector?

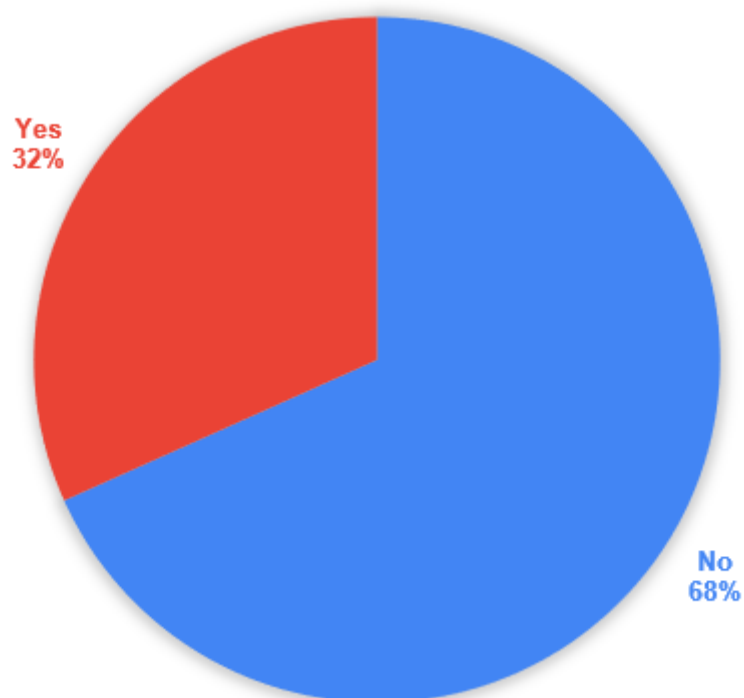


Figure 12: If you answered that your primary intention was to work in the university sector, are you currently (go to next question if not applicable):



Figure 13: If you answered that your primary intention was to work in the university sector and that you are currently not employed in this sector, please comment on why this is the case, and what were the obstacles you faced? (go to next question if not applicable)

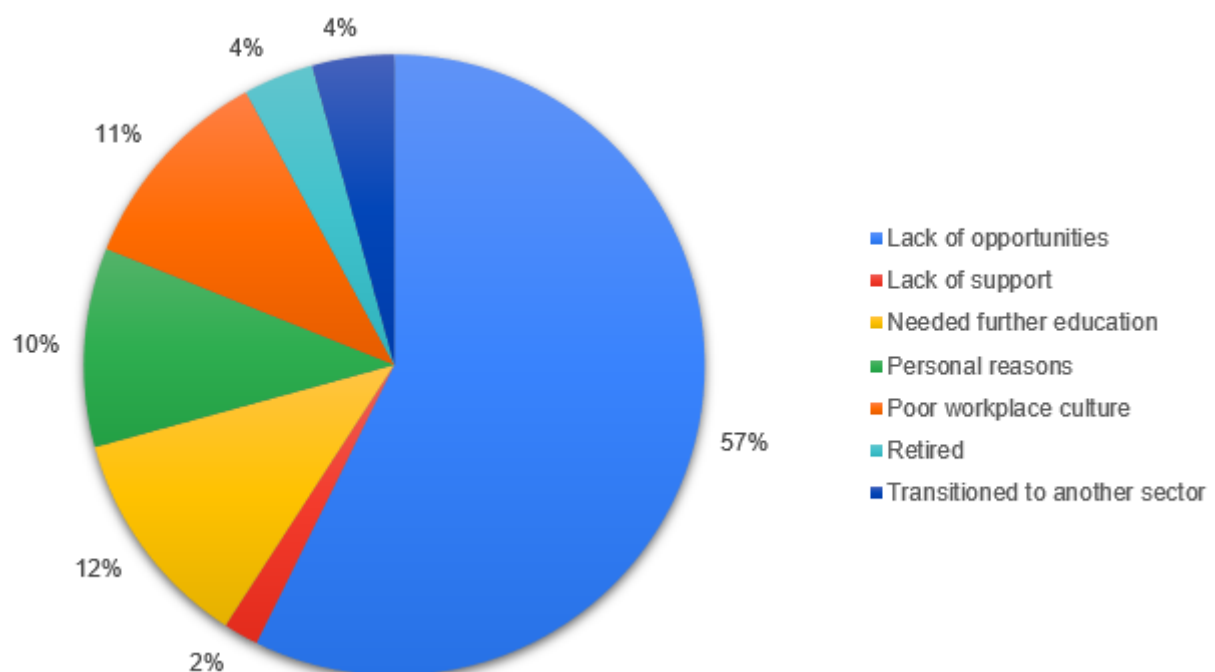


Figure 14: If you transitioned from the university sector to other sectors, do you have tips and recommendations you would like to share? (go to next question if not applicable)

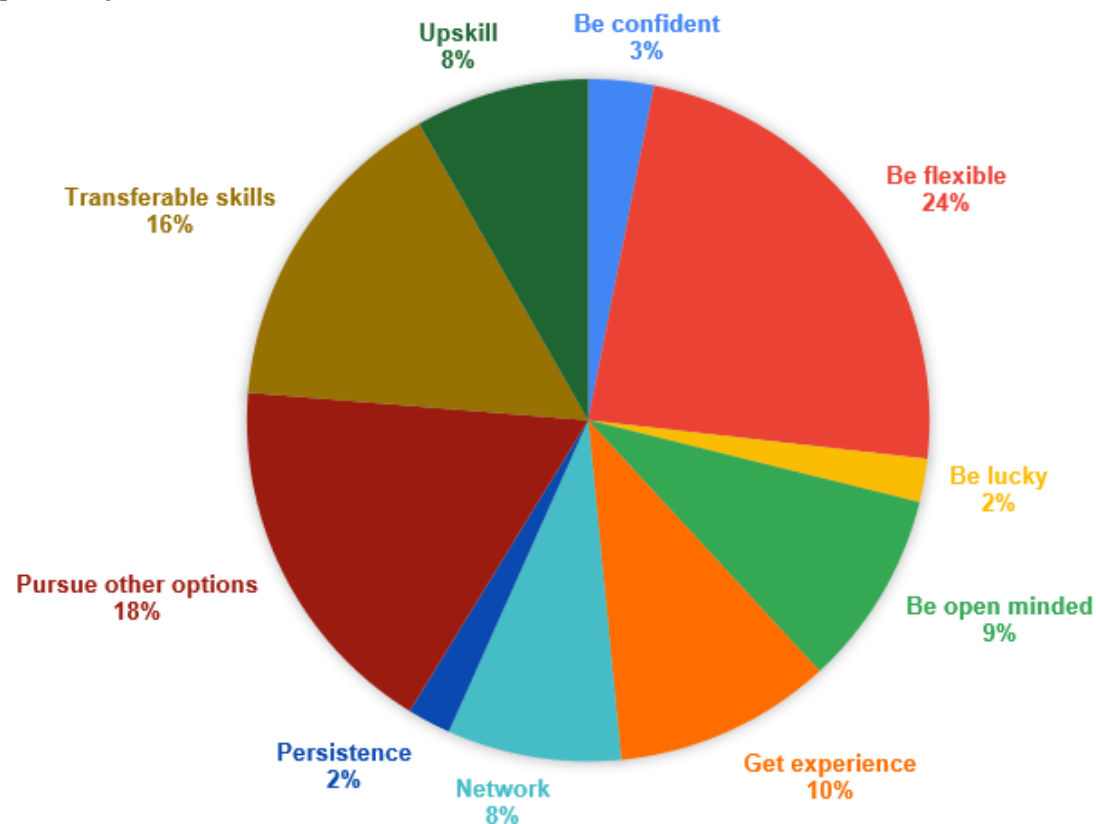


Figure 15: If you are currently not employed (in any sector) are you currently: (check all that apply; go to next question if not applicable)

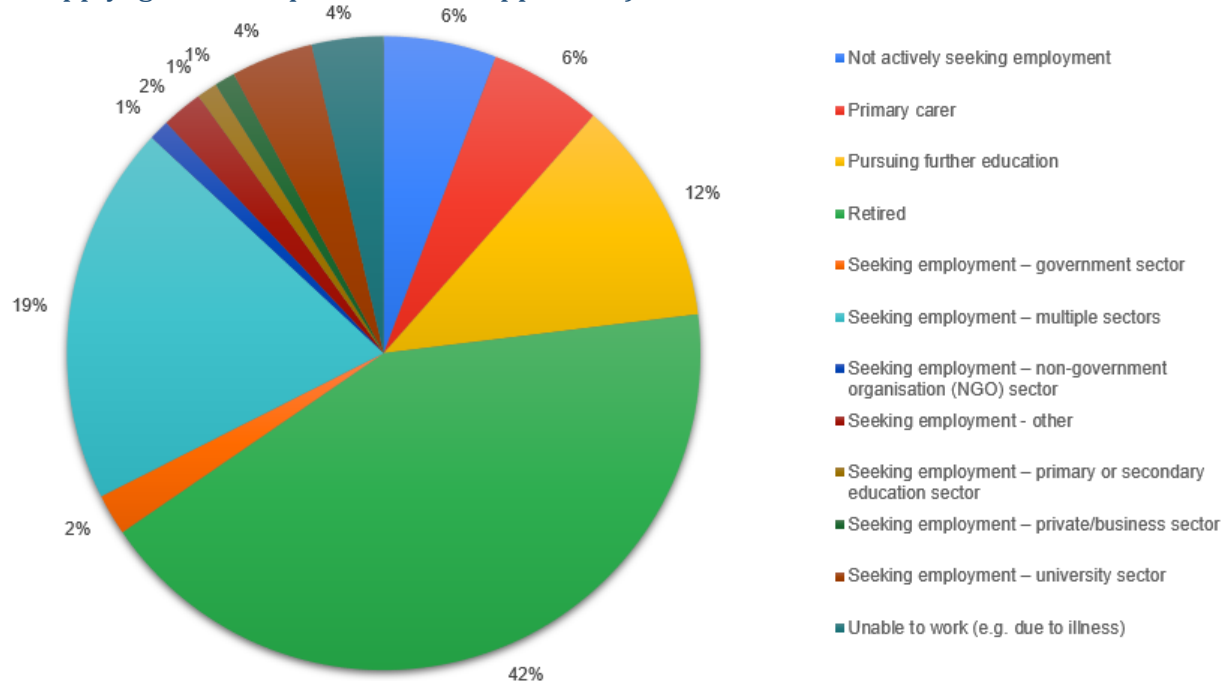


Figure 16: If you are employed (in any sector), is your employment: (go to next question if not applicable)

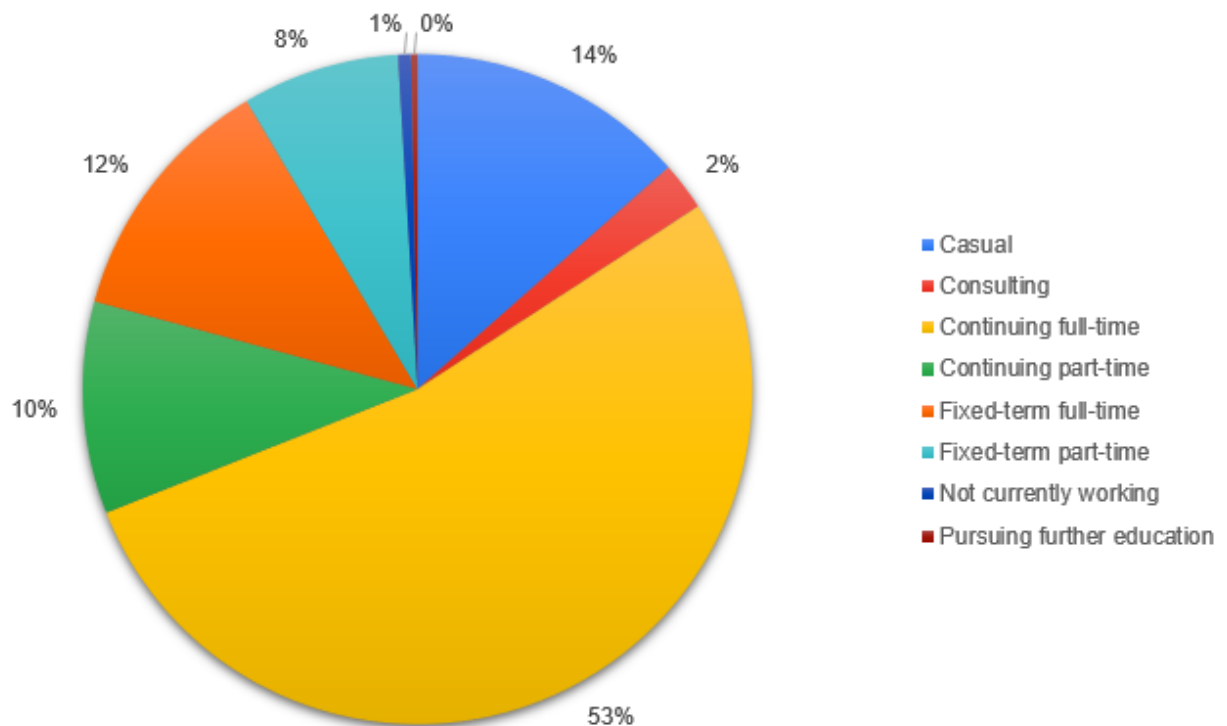


Figure 17: If you work in the university sector, is your role in a unit (Discipline/Department/School) of: (go to next question if not applicable)

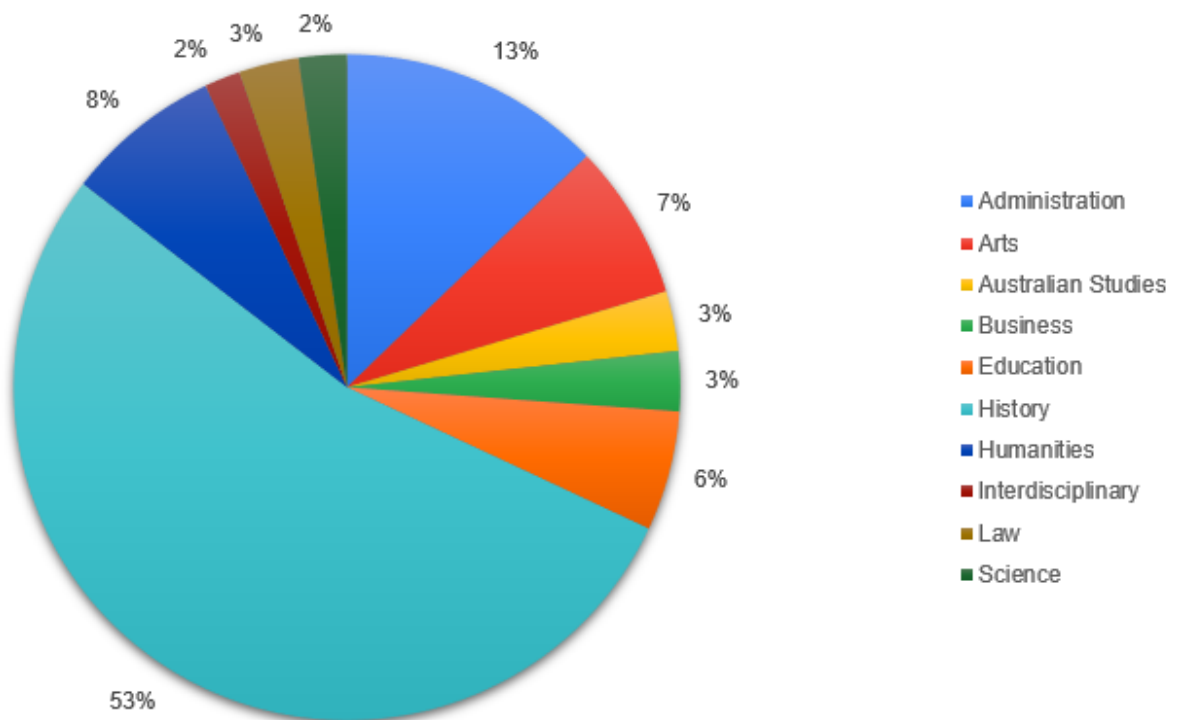


Figure 18: If you work in the university sector, is your role primarily: (go to next question if not applicable)

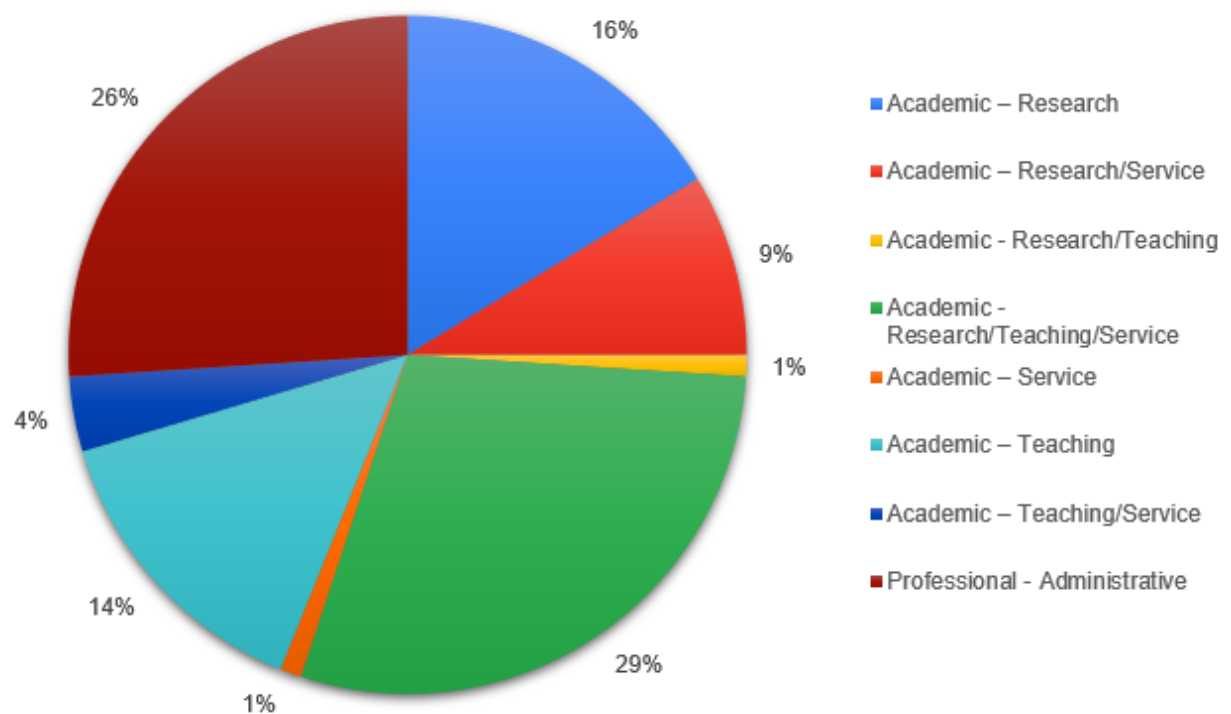


Figure 19: If you work in the primary or secondary education sector does your role primarily involve: (go to next question if not applicable)

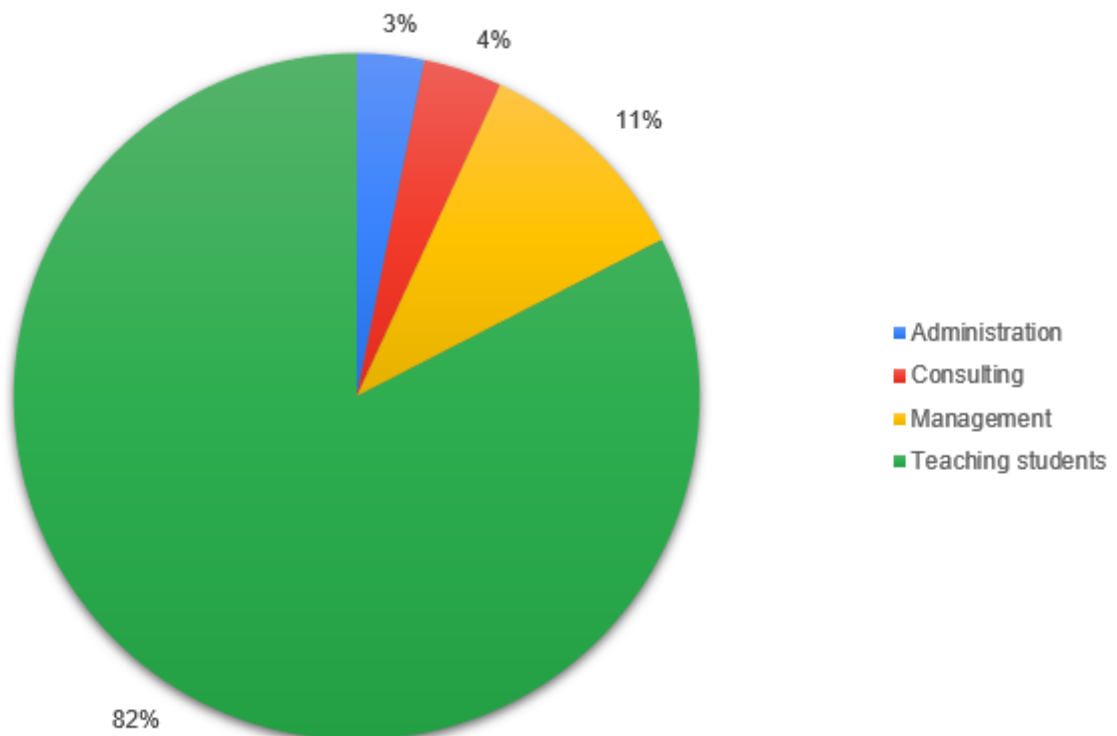


Figure 20: If you work in the primary or secondary education sector, are you primarily employed within: (go to next question if not applicable)



Figure 21: If you work in the government sector, at which level of government is your role: (go to next question if not applicable)

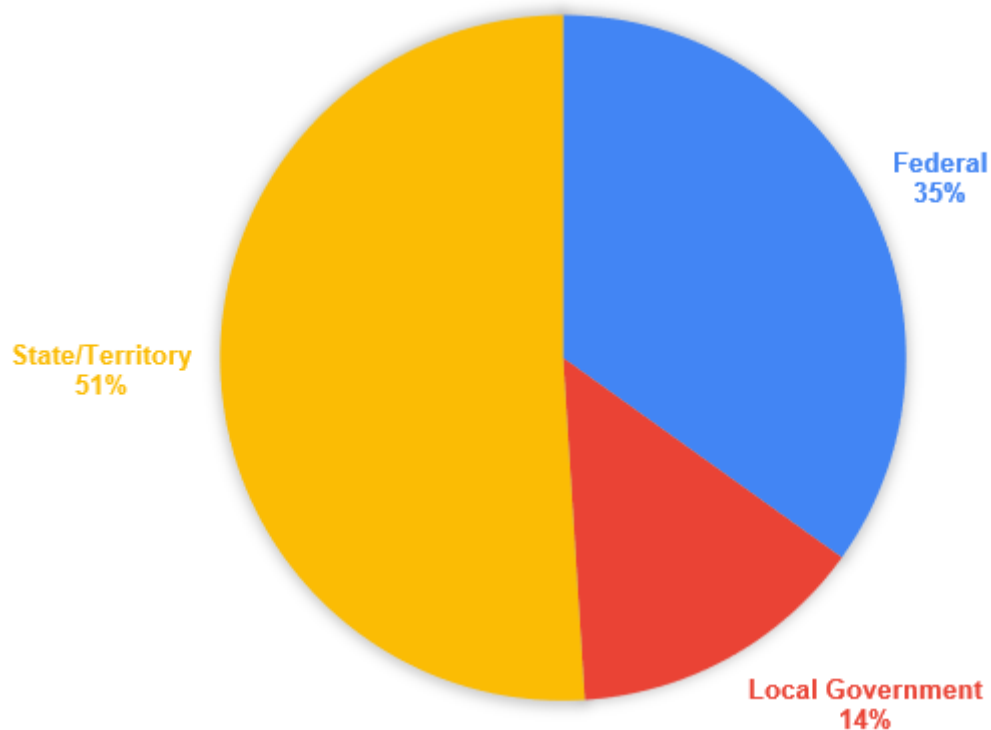


Figure 22: If you work in the government sector, what is the primary focus of your role: (go to next question if not applicable)

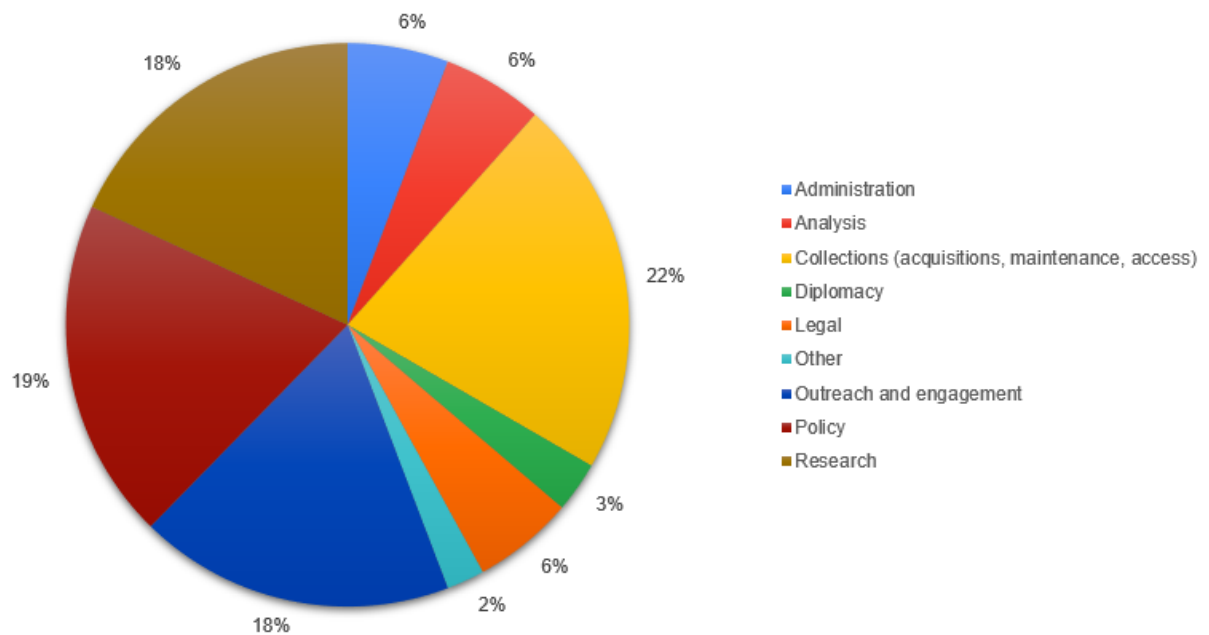


Figure 23: If you work in the private/business sector, what best describes you: (go to next question if not applicable)

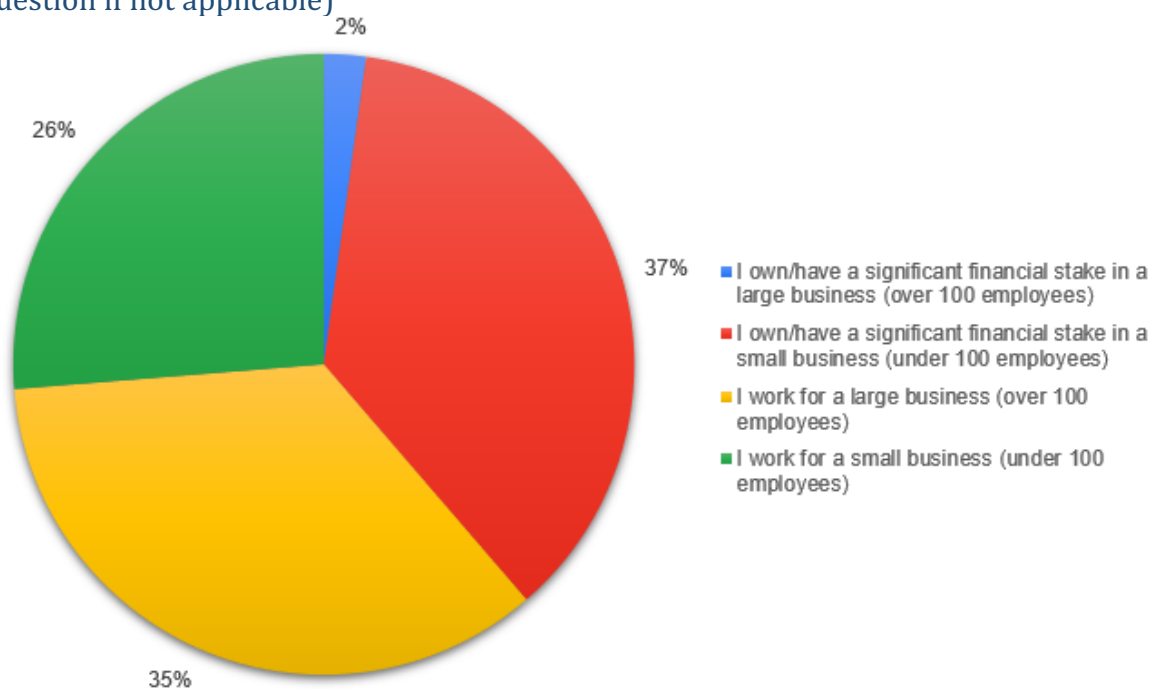


Figure 24: If you work in the private/business sector, do you own or work for a consultancy? (go to next question if not applicable)



Figure 26: If you work in a non-government organisation (NGO), does it primarily focus on: (go to next question if not applicable)

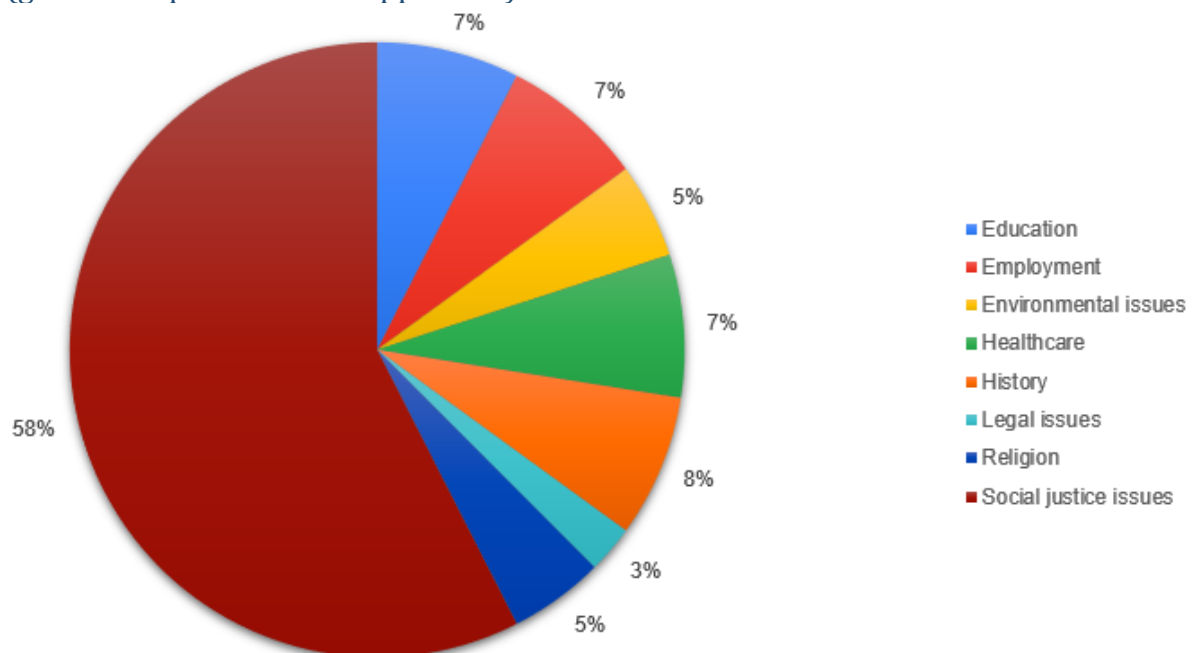


Figure 27: If you work in a non-government organisation (NGO), do you primarily undertake: (go to next question if not applicable)

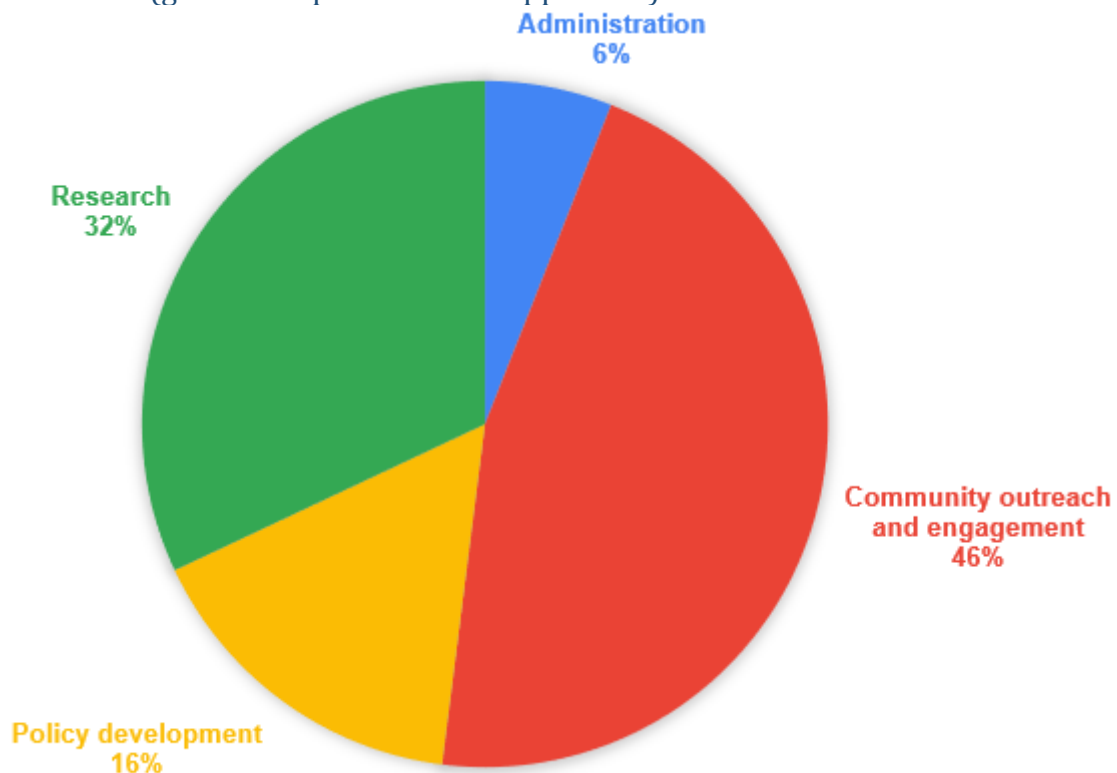


Figure 28: If you work in media, what best describes you (go to next question if not applicable):

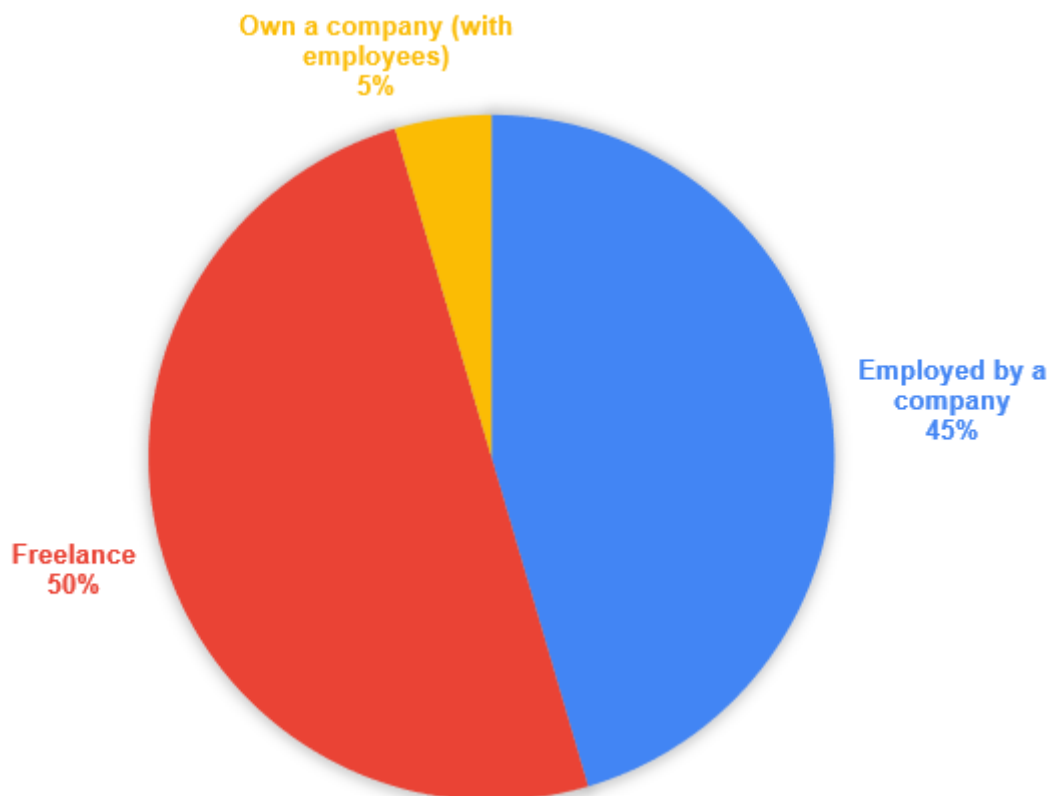


Figure 29: If you work in media, how would you best describe the nature of your work (go to next question if not applicable):

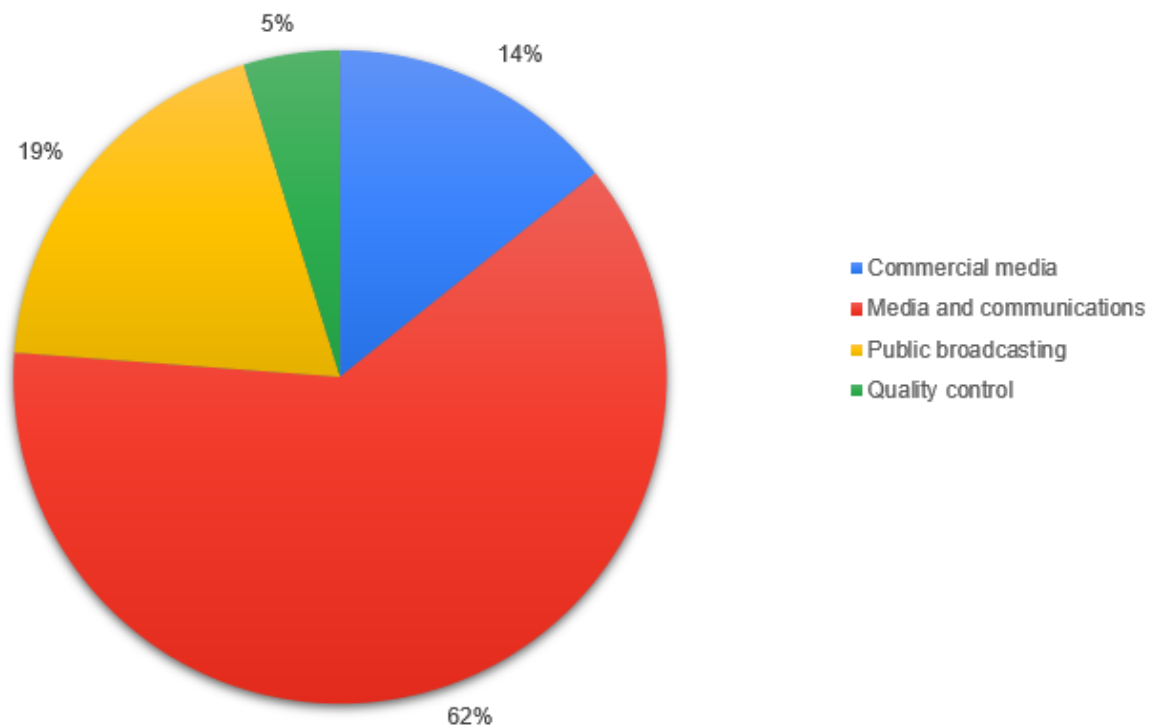


Figure 30: Which skills do you consider were outcomes of your history degree(s) (select all that apply):

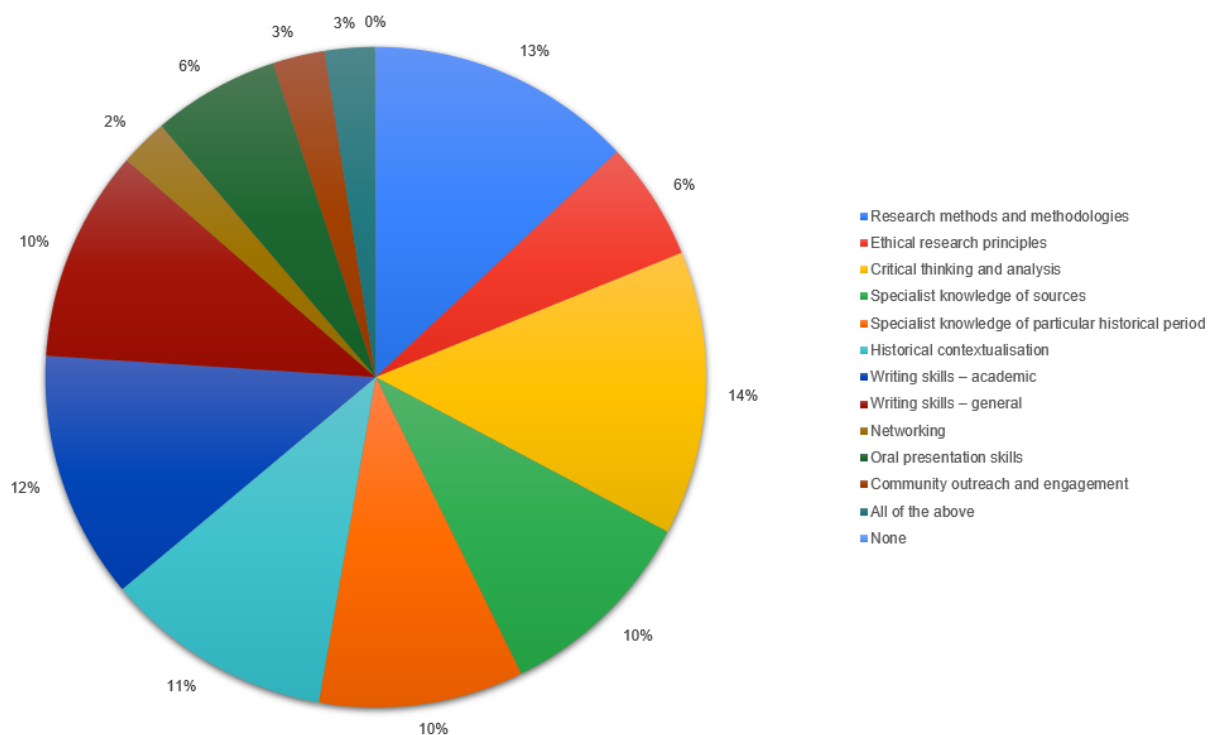


Figure 31: Of these, which do you apply in your current workplace? (select all that apply)

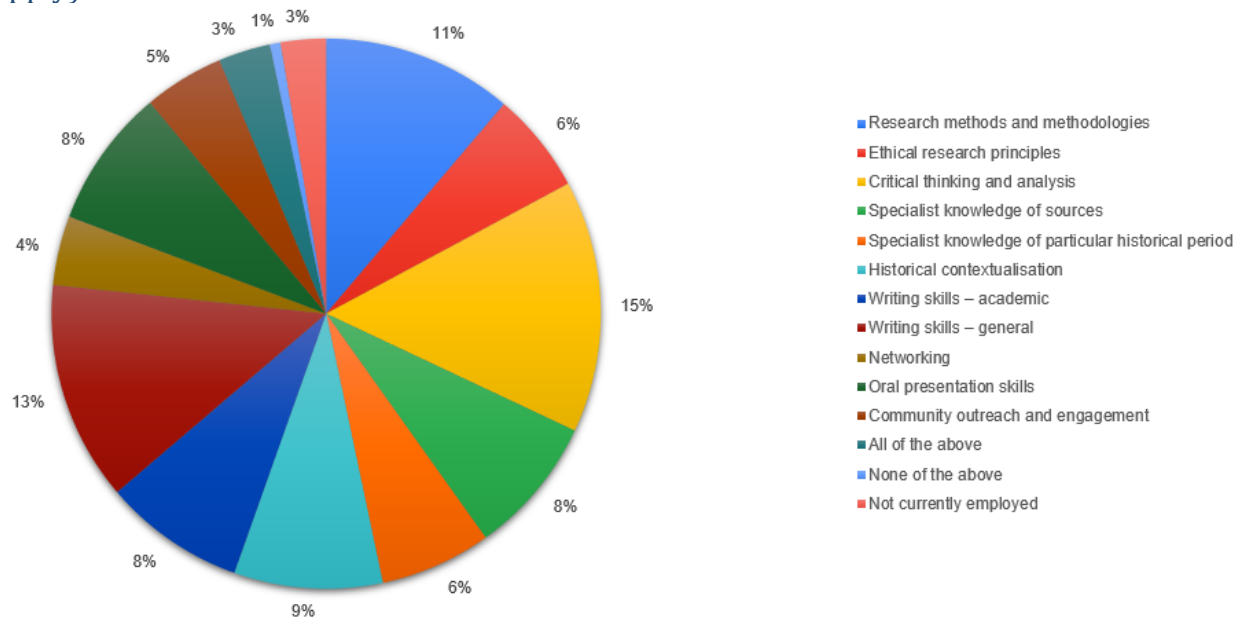


Figure 33a. Sentiment Analysis of responses to: “Please provide a brief statement about how a degree in history has influenced your career:”

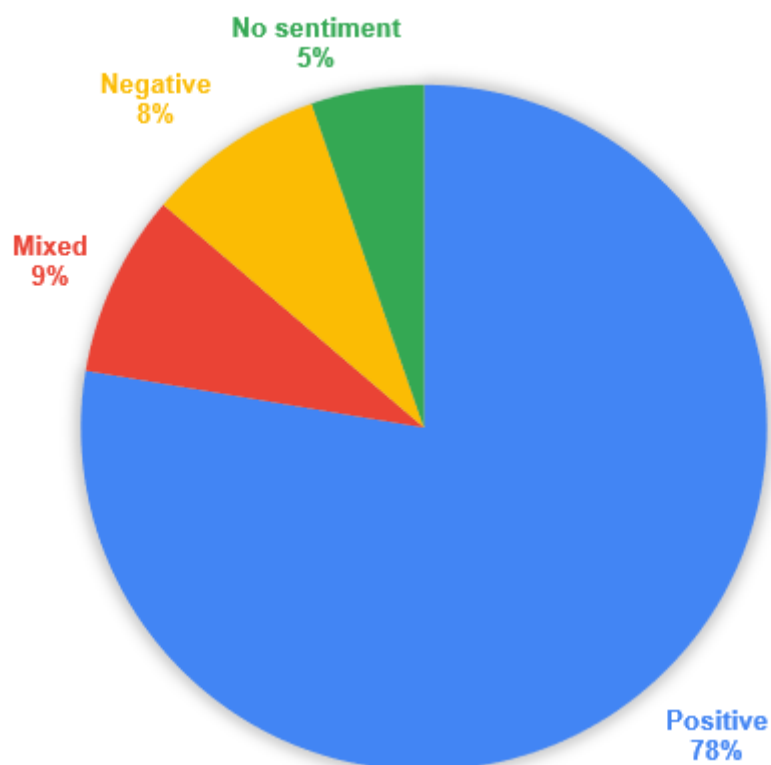


Figure 33b. Key themes of responses to: “Please provide a brief statement about how a degree in history has influenced your career:”

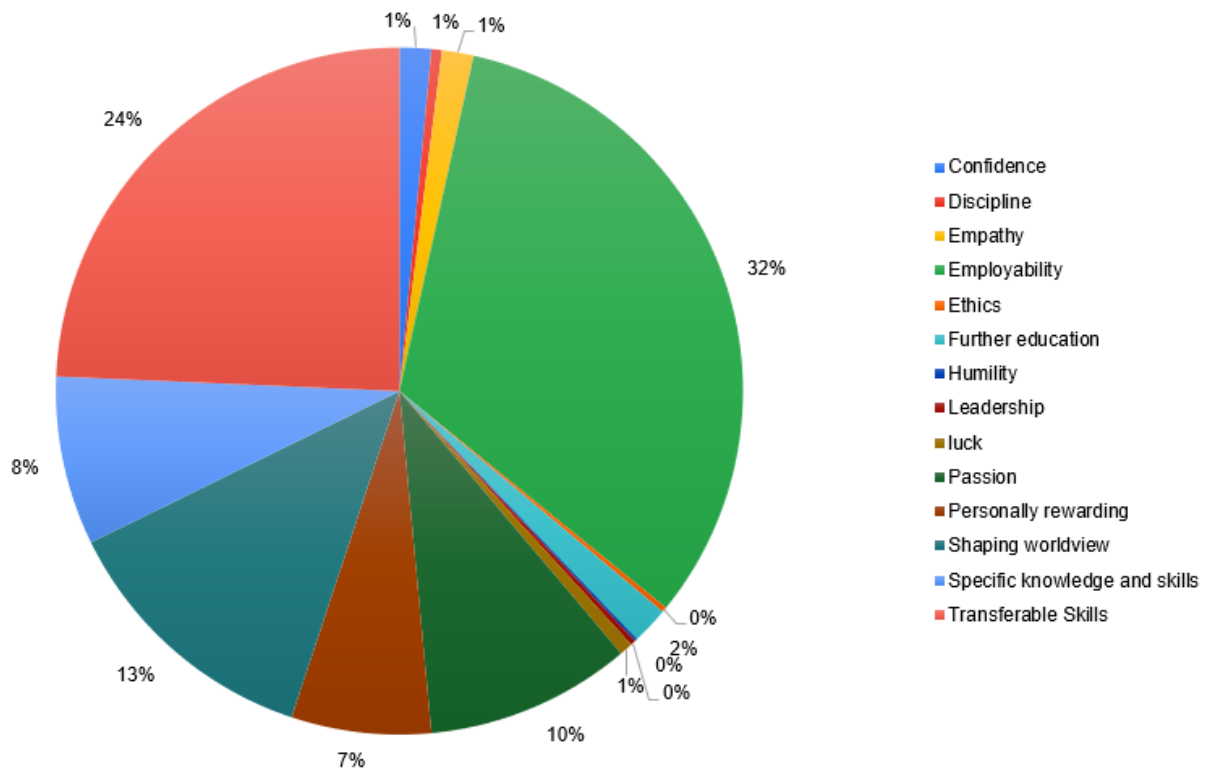


Figure 33c. Key skills discussed in responses to: “Please provide a brief statement about how a degree in history has influenced your career:”

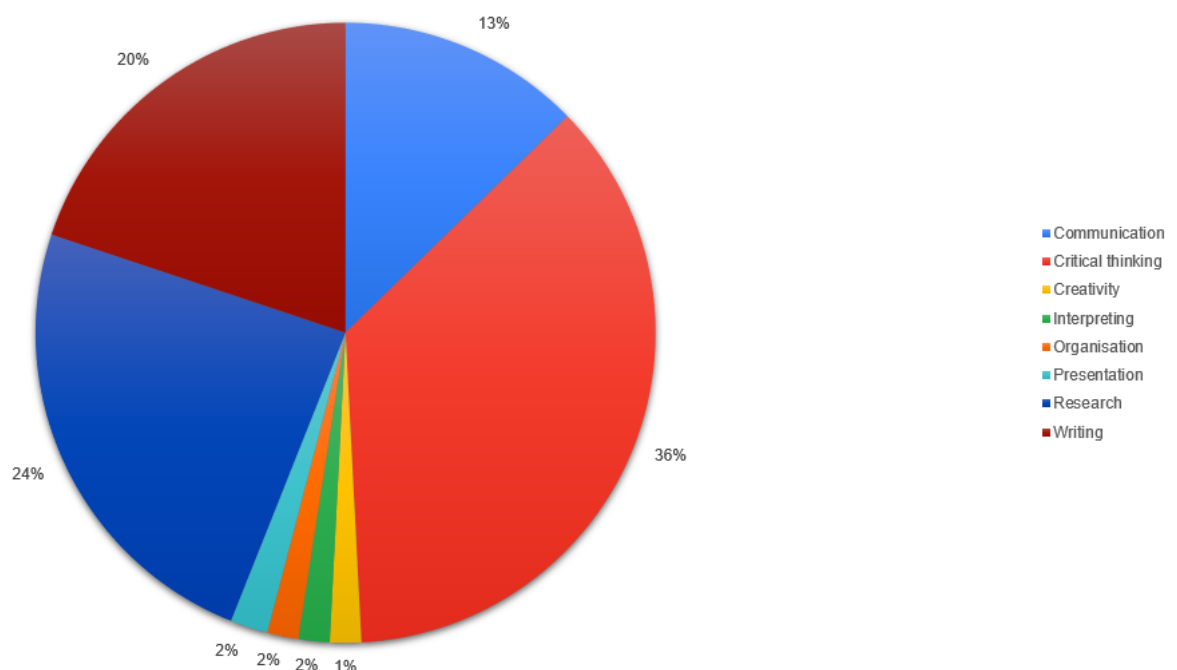
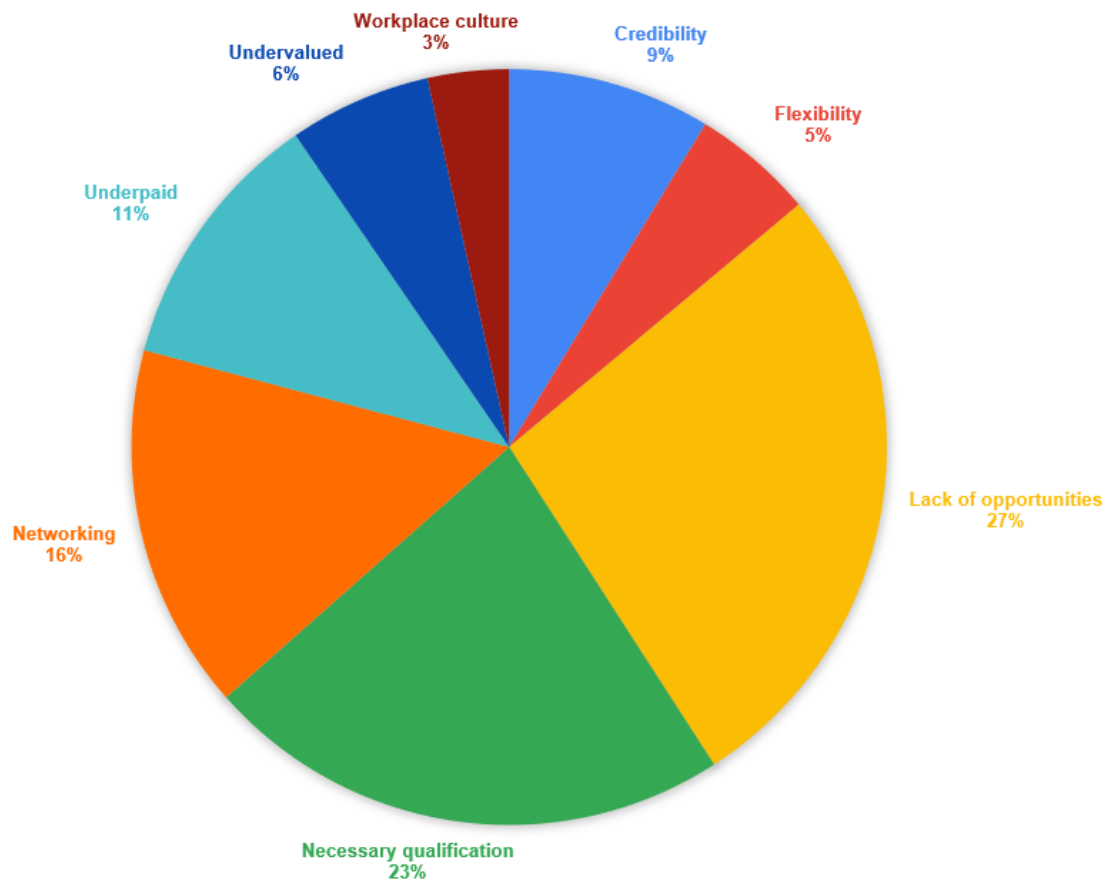


Figure 33d. Key employability issues discussed in responses to: “Please provide a brief statement about how a degree in history has influenced your career:”



X. Appendix E: Selected responses: “How Has a History Degree Influenced Your Career?”

In the table below are 50 of the more than 500 responses to the final question of the survey: “How has a History degree influenced your career?”.

This selection is not representative. Rather, responses were chosen:

- to demonstrate the breadth of employment pathways and positions held by respondents
- to showcase particularly good articulations of what respondents gained from their History degrees and how this has influenced their employment pathways
- to provide evidence of the challenges some faced in having their study of History recognised as an asset in the workplace.
- that were additional to those we drew on elsewhere in the report.

Some answers have been edited for length or to protect anonymity.

Working in libraries and archives while undertaking research for my PhD led me to pursue a career in research services and digital research infrastructure in an academic Library. My research background has been extremely beneficial in this career and contributed to my career progression to a senior management position.

Worked for years as a public historian following MA in Public/Applied history. Then transitioned to university sector for 10 years but not in history (skills in oral history interviewing and documentary analysis enabled me to work in research in social science field). I did a PhD in history during this time. Then transitioned back to academic history where I worked for 5 years. Now working as independent researcher in history. Broad range of skills, particularly writing and applied research skills acquired during undergraduate and masters history degrees enabled me to be employed quite broadly for many years. However, in the 30 or so years since completing my undergraduate degree my work was always insecure fixed term contracts, including in the university sector. While the university sector work was, I considered, well paid, when working outside the university sector, it was sometimes poorly paid.

Most recently I have been collaborating with another historian and a family member to produce a play that both uncovers a long-lost family history and interrogates the way that professional and family historians can reconstruct the past together. Working in history has brought me great joy and intellectual satisfaction.

I have only recently submitted my PhD so yet to see if or how it helps progress my career. My MA (2007) in a different field but with a history focus certainly shaped my career in the museums and heritage sector and led me to formalise my qualifications in history. My history degree has however enriched my life and way of thinking immeasurably.

I would like to move into academia / teaching in history and/or heritage studies but I'm not confident about job prospects since COVID-19 negative impact on universities.

When I studied History as an undergraduate I didn't have the space/time context that one develops with age/life experience; I couldn't have really appreciated the aphorism about not being to understand the present unless the past is understood. In Social Work, the field I have mainly worked in, there are new "technologies" and embraces of "progressive" developments, which are really important to respond to from an awareness of what has gone before. Studying History has helped me with this perspective.

Without my BA, and the PhD that followed, I would never have got a university job, and if the degrees had not been in History I would never have got the job back in an Australian History Department - so clearly having a history degree influenced my career! Like many of us in the profession, I didn't start out planning to be a historian. In fact I started a Law degree but fell in love with History because I was lucky enough to have wonderful university history teachers. To my parents' horror I gave up law and took a punt on history. It turned out ok in the end, and I've been very lucky in my work and my colleagues, but it's been a hell of a winding path.

Was a good base for pivoting into other work, heritage consulting and now museum outreach. Could not have found work in a regional location without additional study though. History degree had been the value add to employers. I don't think I'll ever be employed as a historian, even though it's the base for everything I do.

My History Honours has enabled me to teach Senior Secondary Australian and Modern History; write curriculum for the [state education accrediting board] and become Chief Examiner in the subject area statewide. However the reduction in yr 12 subjects required to complete the [accredited subjects] has seen a dramatic reduction in senior secondary students choosing to undertake History subjects as they don't see a direct link from the subject area to employment.

To be frank, I did the degrees for my own reasons. They had no influence on my career.

I think it has made me more aware of the importance of life-long learning and having a passion for your career

My history degree has provided me with a wide range of transferable skills that allowed me to easily enter into secondary education and interact with other humanities subjects. It has provided me with the skills of critical thinking, empathy and understanding, as well as informed citizenship - which is a core component of what I teach - and how to critically read information, which has been vital over the past couple of years with particular trends such as fake news. Most importantly, my history degree expanded the materials that I would read or interact with to better understand various perspectives, events, and people. This has allowed me to be much more critical and allowed for deeper thinking.
The study of history, for me, was the study of people and societies. It highlighted history's losers, winners, those with a voice and those without - all of which led me to a career in social care/justice.
The specialisation of a PhD has focussed my career on academia. I left academia for a long time and worked in the government sector, but found this unsatisfying, and that there was a lot of hostility to women with high educational qualifications.
The skills gained in a History degree are increasingly in demand from employers. They are highly transferable skills. I do feel however that the course I did 15 years ago is now very out of date and I wish it had given me skills in digital history and oral history for example.
The Ph.D in History and Philosophy of Science, and the Master of Science before that, certainly helped me to gain seniority I might not otherwise have got. But it also helped me to reflect deeply on the nature of the enterprise I was involved in - that is, population screening [in the area of women's reproductive health].
My history degrees gave me a foundation of critical skills to think about the world, and some understanding of our world as it's been made. I joined the foreign service and these skills have always been highly relevant, and shape how I learn new subjects/problems. The foreign service and government generally need people from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds; history is essential among them, and has given me distinct analytical and critical perspectives that are often lacking among all the lawyers and economists. There is no better way into most of the complex foreign policy problems that we face than through their history.
The critical and creative thinking skills cultivated through historical study have distinguished me in my workplaces, but perceived lack of directly applicable experience is often a barrier to employment.
The ability to research, argue a given position and communicate clearly (both written and verbal) has been invaluable throughout my entire career. I have been offered jobs in the IT industry, not due to my technical knowledge, but because of my

communications skills. These were established through my history degree (with a minor in English literature).
The ability to look at the world & think critically about how society/culture/institutions came to be the way they are is invaluable in any career & in life, more broadly.
I was previously trained in accountancy and studied out of an interest in history. I am now completing a Bachelor degree to attempt to transition into historical research.
Studying history strengthens your critical thinking and writing skills. It also helps you understand people, environments, economics, social issues and politics. It helps you see the interdisciplinary nature of problems and see different perspectives. It makes you a well rounded and thoughtful person.
Provided a broad education and increased my exposure to other cultures. I developed excellent writing skills and an ability to read widely across disciplines. It also equipped me with the confidence to engage with all levels of academia which has been invaluable in my current career (research administration and management). Critical thinking and planning are also a large part of my role. My undergraduate degree helped with all these aspects of my current career
Opened the world and many doors. Straightened up my loose thinking. Educated me about other cultures. Kept my feet on the ground in a shifting university environment. Gave me perspective and contexts to understand these shifting grounds. Consolated me in the storm of changes.
As a high school History teacher my degree has equipped me with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively teach my students. I have been able to help train my colleagues who teach History but did Geography degrees. Research skills have been important as I conduct detailed research both for my own understanding of each topic and also to provide high quality resources for my students.
Deciding to study history has equipped me to teach students not just events, but to build empathy, critical thinking and other essential skills. It was absolutely one of the best decisions I've made.
How much time have you got? It instilled in me a seemingly insatiable thirst for knowledge and interest in subjects and perspectives that are foreign to me. It made me a more tolerant and open minded person and feel more confident as a result of the knowledge that I offer, rather than an arrogance about my personal qualities. It helped me be humble in my own achievements, while taking joy at seeing other people succeed. And, it instilled in me a love/hate relationship with Cicero, Plutarch and their philosophies, amongst others. I

really could go on, but I credit these things to having possibly the most inspiring and giving duo of teachers ...[edited for anonymity].
Inspired international work for nearly a decade, awareness of cultures, ability to work across and between cultures, flexibility and understanding. Resilience.
It hasn't. I have received derogatory feedback from employers for having an 'arts degree' during interviews. People are more receptive to my trade qualification which I attained before university study. I'm currently looking at further HDR degrees, but I'm fully aware this could lead to no further career opportunities and I'll need to return to working full time in my previous career.
It inspired me to continue on to study and practice architecture as I discovered that buildings are the ultimate primary source in terms of understanding cultural, social and economic change throughout history.
I love my job and my history degree is what got me to being a teacher. It allows me to continually learn more and know how to find out more information and provide it in an engaging way to high school students.
My critical thinking skills have been crucial to the development of our business. Understanding the operation of gender and race in our society and their historical roots are important in an industry with very little understanding of these issues. I am passionate about demonstrating that a history degree provides transferable skills that are in great shortage in the IT industry. I would like to work with university history departments in communicating this well and engaging various industries to help them understand how much they need history graduates.
I am now working as a History teacher, but before that my History degree allowed me to work in the university sector and government sector (unrelated to history) because of the rigorous research, critical analysis and written communication skills it required
My career is based entirely on my having a degree in history. I began with Hons and gained employment in a junior research role in a heritage firm. They encouraged further study for a Master's in Applied History, and I have more recently completed a PhD. Each stage and degree level opened more opportunities, better networks and new work for me.
History provided a background and direction for my current career in policy, in heritage and environment at the state government level.
My history degree has been fundamental to my career. It has enabled me to situate my work in a broader context while taking technical skills to application in writing, speaking, analysing, lateral thinking, contextual application and more. My specific

<p>area of knowledge has also been directly useful in working in large organisations and understanding influence and power, diplomacy and politics, gender and class. Without history, I do not think I would be in the roles I have had or what I do now.</p>
<p>It has allowed me to have a broad understanding of the human condition and how societies have changed and evolved over time. The ability to critically analyse materials has continued to be useful. Studying history developed my ability to empathise with the viewpoints of different groups and their experiences, which continues to be of daily benefit in the secondary school history classroom. Having a knowledge of past events, especially conflicts, has also helped me to work with students from different backgrounds in a manner which is sensitive to the past experience they or family members have encountered, which is particularly helpful when teaching about certain periods of history. A history degree greatly developed my ability to clearly communicate, structure an argument and synthesise information from various sources - these skills have been helpful throughout my career.</p>
<p>My degree gave me a foot in the door to become a research assistant in heritage management. It has allowed me to work on in areas of cultural heritage management and research.</p>
<p>Apart from having a historical understanding of time (not to be underestimated!), I learnt a lot about archives, collections and libraries and ended up working with these in different roles for about a decade (archivist, librarian, curator, researcher, writer). I then became interested in digital collections and the impact of digitisation on research so I now work in the eResearch sector as a HASS advocate in technology, skills & training and development. My passion is now for helping HASS scholars gain the technological skills to harness computational approaches to their work, and being able to participate in the digital economy not only as consumers but as producers, influencers, critics and humanists to ensure that the technology is equitable and avoids perpetuating bias, blindspots and traditional power structures.</p>
<p>History has been present in all my careers - teaching, university, museums, heritage, events. This survey doesn't reflect the years of underpaid roles in various sectors in order to get to where I am today. Everyone I know who studied History is flexible and adept at navigating employment. There is a creative flair that comes from a historical background and a nuanced understanding of human motivation, combined with robust written abilities. If there is one failing of historical study, it is that its rigour is not apparent and reflected monetarily in the workplace today. It requires a certain level of intelligence to understand the context of the world in which we live and a finesse of articulation to match. Unfortunately such adroitness does not transfer into money-making enterprises.</p>

Has helped with working in education. I recently discovered that consulting historian and private historian was a job and am now pursuing that while working towards my cultural materials conservation masters to work directly with treatment of heritage.
Before retirement I worked across a range of organisations, public and private. I had a Master's degree and this was taken as evidence I could make a contribution to these organisations. The pre-eminent skills I gave to my employers were: writing skills, analysis, critical thinking, good presentation skills. But I also think it helped that I was prepared to look at a lot of different organisations. I started as a base-grade clerk in the Department of Customs and Excises (Aust) and ended my working life as the CEO of a major exhibition and convention centre (state). But in the meantime I worked for a management consultancy, a plastics manufacturer, and in university admin. Flexibility was key.
History has been one of the loves of my life. Law is deeply entwined with and influenced by history. Tertiary study in history was one of the best things I ever did.
My BA (Hons) and MA in History provided me with a strong foundation in research, analytical thinking, planning and project management. While completing my MA part-time I took a full time job as a professional member of staff at the University I was studying at. I fell into "relationship management" which over a few jobs turned into university advancement or fundraising. Fifteen years and three universities later, I am a senior fundraiser recently responsible for delivering a Giving Day raising \$1.4M in funds.
My history honours degree has shaped my career in its various phases, both as a lawyer and now as a full-time legal academic. It fuelled my interest in research, improved my writing and advocacy skills, honed my interest in theory and a critical approach to life. It also gave me life-long interests, friendships and mentors. I am grateful for the practical career skills, but also for the schooling in ideas, politics, cultural difference and so much more.
I use the generic skills I learned every day, in my government day job. But my history degree also led to me being a published author, when (in my spare time!) I wrote a biography of an historical figure.
It gave me the ability to think and an abiding love of history
It is my life! (Dramatic I know). I am a historian, work as a consulting/professional historian, and volunteer within the sector, alongside my fellow historians.
A history degree provided a way to see the linkages and patterns - intended or otherwise - particularly given my focus on Australian social history and the Pacific. Working for government, later consulting to government, and now studying for my doctorate in design, being able to think critically about (1) how and why things

happened (or didn't happen), (2) the importance of nuance and perspectives and (3) the way that narratives are constructed and deployed are all things from my history studies that have served me well.

Without an in-depth appreciation of the skills I developed as a result of my degrees, I would not have the same motivation to incorporate source analysis development, research skills, and interdisciplinary practices in the classroom. As an expert in these areas I feel confident in scaffolding student learning. I did not become a teacher because of my love of history, but it does strengthen my ability to teach it.

I completed a B Arts / B Ed with honours in History with the aim of becoming a secondary history teacher. I worked for 6 years as a secondary teacher in the private school sector, mostly teaching English, with some Humanities. I never taught History and was unsuccessful in applying for History teaching jobs. I left teaching to undertake a PhD in History. I expect that once I have completed my PhD I will return to teaching, and hopefully have a better chance of securing a History position. Having an undergrad history degree has been very helpful in many ways, but it has not necessarily led to paid work.

Studying history is like marathon training for your mind - it builds a base of critical thinking and writing skills that can be transferred across to any field.