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Consorzio Interuniversitario

ALMALAUREA

XI Survey

Graduates' Profile 2008

Survey 2009

Methodological Notes

Con il sostegno del:

MINISTERO DELL'ISTRUZIONE DELL'UNIVERSITA' E DELLA RICERCA

Methodological Notes

The **2008 Graduate Profile** is based on the combination of the following sets of data:
- administrative records of the 49 universities which became members of the AlmaLaurea before 2008;
- replies to the questionnaires AlmaLaurea administered.

Graduates from the following universities were surveyed: Bari; Basilicata; Bologna; Bolzano; Cagliari; Calabria; Camerino; Cassino; Catania; Catanzaro; Chieti and Pescara; Ferrara; Florence; Foggia; Genoa; L'Aquila; LIUC Castellanza; Messina; Milan, IULM; Milan, San Raffaele; Modena and Reggio Emilia; Molise; Naples Seconda Università; Padua; Parma; Perugia; Perugia Foreigners; Eastern Piedmont; Reggio Calabria Mediterranea; Rome, Campus Bio-Medico; Rome, Foro Italico; Rome, La Sapienza; Rome, LUMSA; Rome Tre; Salento; Salerno; Sannio; Sassari; Siena; Turin; Turin, Polytechnic; Trento; Trieste; Udine; Valle d'Aosta; Venice, Ca' Foscari; Venice, IUAV; Verona and Viterbo Tuscia.

The Report analyses degree holders of post-reform university programmes (that were implemented by the Ministerial Decrees 509/99 and 270/04) and pre-reform degree holders.

Type of Degree Programme	Number of graduates surveyed in *2008 Profile*
FIRST LEVEL OR THREE YEAR DEGREES (post-reform)	109,140
SINGLE-CYCLE SPECIALIST (OR MASTER'S) DEGREES (post-reform)	10,476
MASTER'S (OR SECOND LEVEL) DEGREE (post-reform)	40,391
NON-REFORMED DEGREE PROGRAMME (SCIENCES OF PRIMARY EDUCATION)	2.490
PRE-REFORM DEGREES	24,862
TOTAL	**187,359**

Some categories of graduates were excluded from the population analysed in the 2008 Profile since they gained their university qualification as a result of special arrangements. They amount to 4,500 graduates: they are healthcare workers, whose professional experience was accredited by the University to the purpose of a three-year degree in the healthcare subject area or members of the Law Enforcement Agencies and Armed Forces, public officials, and other categories of students who completed one of the programmes that had been specifically designed for them. More than half of all graduates excluded from the Profile for this reason earned their degrees at the universities of Chieti and Pescara; another 1,500 come from L'Aquila, Florence, Catania or Turin.

Sources and reference populations

The documentation analysed here takes into account the following groups:

- **all** degree holders (187,359), in terms of ***Personal Details, Secondary School Performances, Academic Performances at University*** (with the exception of *previous university experiences* and *motivations for choosing a degree programme*). The sources for this information are universities' administrative records, except for information concerning *place of residence* and *high-school leaving certificate* (administrative records were integrated with data collected through AlmaLaurea questionnaires, when available), and for *high-school grades* (when grades were missing in the university records they were retrieved through the questionnaire);

- all degree holders **who filled and returned the questionnaire** (169,558, that is 90.5% of the target population), as regards the sections ***Study Situation, Working Activities during University Studies, Assessment of University Experience, Foreign Languages and IT skills, Further Education Prospects, Employment Prospects*** **and for** ***previous university experiences*** **and** ***motivations for choosing a degree programme*** (***Academic Performances at University*** section).

The 2008 Graduate Profile Report

The 2008 Graduate Profile Report is available in digital format and also on paper (download the printed volume from the website www.almalaurea.it/universita/profilo/profilo2008/ under PDF Documentation).

The on-line version can be viewed at the Internet address www.almalaurea.it/universita/profilo. It includes relevant documents for all graduate groups, which can be identified by **degree programme type**, **university**, **faculty**, **degree subject grouping**, **degree-programme grouping** (for post-reform graduates) and **programme type** (both for pre-reform and post-reform graduates). It is also possible to view the profiles of the post-reform graduates on line, by making a distinction between "pure" and "hybrid" graduates (see next paragraph).

The *Graduate Profile* shows data for groups including at least five graduates.

Post-reform "pure" and "hybrid" graduates

The distinction is kept between "pure"/"hybrid" post-reform graduates (first level or three year degrees, single-cycle specialist degrees, master's or second level degrees). The "pure" graduates directly enrolled at a post-reform degree programme, while the "hybrid" graduates completed a post-reform degree programme with the credits earned during pre-reform study programmes.

The distinction between "pure" and "hybrid" graduates is based on the following information.

First level graduates

Enrolment year, secondary-school leaving year and the replies of the graduates to the following questions of the questionnaire are taken into account.

- *Did you change over from one system to another, or from a degree programme to another? If so, did you enrol at a pre-reform or post-reform degree programme?*
- *Did you already have a degree qualification, earned during a previous university experience (bachelor's degree, graduation…)? If so, what type of programme was it?*
- *Did you start and not complete university programmes different than the one you are currently completing? If so, what type of programme was it?*

Single-cycle specialist degree holders

Year of enrolment.

Master's degree holders

Year of graduation and replies given to the following questions of the questionnaire.

- *What type of university programme did you complete before enrolling at the master's degree programme you are currently attending?*
- *Did you have previous university experiences besides the current one? If so, what type of programme did you attend?*
- *You gained overall 300 credits to complete your master's degree. Did you earn part of those credits with a pre-reform (old system) university degree programme?*

Return rate of questionnaires

The overall number of graduates and the number of those who filled the questionnaire are reported in each table and can be viewed in the Profile. The overall return rate was 90.5% in 2008. Whenever the graduates who filled the questionnaire are less than 60% of the overall number, a note will appear inviting users to be especially careful in the interpretation of the documentation gathered from the questionnaires.

The "not specified" category, percentage values and absolute values

The *Graduate Profile* includes the percentage distribution of graduate groups for each variables. For the sake of clarity, the percentage related to the "not specified" (or "not available") category which are usually quite low, are not been reported in the tables. Consequently, the sum of visible percentages may be less than 100.

In the printable version of the 2008 Profile (the actual book or a PDF version of the Profile to be downloaded from the Internet at www.almalaurea.it/universita/profilo/profilo2008/), you find that percentages lower than 3% or relating to the "not-specified"/"not-available" type of reply have not been reported in the charts.

Empty cells

Empty cells in the tables, which are identified by the symbol "-",mean that the corresponding number of graduates is zero (in terms of percentage) or that the phenomenon has not valid cases (if the cell is supposed to show average values). Consequently, the percentage value "0.0" indicates that they are valid cases, but with a

percentage that is lower than 0.05. All values are represented with only one decimal figure.

Reference to the notes

For the definition of the following variables, the tables refer to the methodological notes.

- The **average age at graduation** is calculated not only on the basis of the actual age in whole years but also by taking into account specific birth and graduation dates. For the percentage distributions by age at graduation, the age is to be intended as fully achieved.

- The figure indicating **foreign citizens** does not include graduates from the Republic of San Marino.

- As for the graduates' **social background**, we have followed the framework proposed by A. Cobalti and A. Schizzerotto in their book *(La mobilità sociale in Italia*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1994). Social class is defined by the socio-economic status of the graduate's father and motherand corresponds to the highest of the two (principle of 'dominance'). Socio-economic status can be defined as *upper-class, employed middle class, petty bourgeoisie* and *working class***.** The upper class is dominant over the other three, the working class is at the lowest level, while employed middle class and petty bourgeoisie are substantially balanced. If a graduate's parent belongs to the petty bourgeoisie and the other to the employed middle class, the social class of the degree holder is that of the father (in a situation like the above described one, it would not be possible to choose between the two social classes on the basis of the principle of dominance).

- Socio-economic status of each parent is a function of the most recent job position, as illustrated in the following table.

last job position	socio-economic status
• liberal professionals * • high level managers • entrepreneurs with at least 15 employees	upper-class
• employees with coordinating duties • white collar employees • middle managers	employed middle class
• self-employed • assistants in family business • members of cooperatives • entrepreneurs with less than 15 employees	petty bourgeoisie
• manual workers, subordinates, etc. • low-level office workers	working class

* Liberal professionals with a lower educational qualification than the secondary school-leaving certificate have been included in the *self-employed people* category.

Graduates whose mother (or father) is a house-keeper belong to the social class of the working parent (either father or mother).

- The **high-school graduation grade** (tables report average values) is calculated for qualifications earned in Italy and graded on a scale from 1 to 100, even for students who finished school before 1999 and were graded on a scale from 1 to 60.

- In the question about **previous university experiences**, master's degree holders are asked to identify the educational credential that gave them access to the master's degree programme.
- The variable **major motivations for choosing the type of degree programme** is a summary of the replies given to the two following questions.

When you decided to enrol at the university degree programme you are about to complete now, which of the following motivations influenced you more?

Interest in the programme curriculum (mainly cultural factors)

- Definitely yes
- More yes than no
- More no than yes
- Definitely not

Interest in the job opportunities the programme provides for (mainly employment factors)

- Definitely yes
- More yes than no
- More no than yes
- Definitely not

Degree holders who chose their programme being driven by both cultural and employment factors replied "Definitely yes" to both questions. The graduates who were motivated mainly by cultural factors replied "Definitely yes" only to the question about their interest in the programme curricular teachings. Similarly, the graduates who were motivated mainly by employment factors replied "Definitely yes" only to the question about their interest in the job opportunities provided for by the programme. Finally, the type of reply "neither these nor those" includes students who replied other than "Definitely yes" to both questions.

- Degree holders with **standard enrolment age** are defined as those who entered the university when they were 19. For instance, a student who was born in 1985 (or later) and enrolled in a first-level or a single-cycle degree programme in 2004/05 is to be considered having the standard enrolment age. For **master's degree programmes**, the standard age at enrolment has been set at 22 (on the assumption of totally regular educational careers both in secondary school and at university).

- As for the **individual examination grades**, both 30/30 and 30/30 with distinction have the same value (30).

- The **degree grade** is expressed on a scale from 1 to 110 even for pre-reform graduates of the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Bologna (where grades were expressed on a scale from 1 to 100). The highest grade, 110 with distinction, has been set equal to 113 for the purposes of calculating averages.

- **Time-to-graduation** is to be referred to programmes completed in 2008; for master's degrees only the two years pertaining to the master's programme alone are taken into consideration.

- The **duration of university studies** of each degree holder is given by the time interval between the conventional date of November 5th of the enrolment year and the graduation year. For master's degree programmes, the time interval is calculated between November 5th of the enrolment year for the two-year final programme and the graduation date.

- **Delay in graduation** of a degree holder is the extra time necessary to complete the programme beyond its prescribed duration (for master's degree programmes, it is the extra time needed beyond two years), and it takes into account the number of months and days passed between the completion of the university year (April 30th) and the graduation date.
- The **delay in graduation index** is the ratio between graduation delay time and prescribed duration of the degree programme.

- **Student-workers** are degree holders who state they had a full time job for at least half of their university career, regardless of their overlap with classes. **Working students** are degree holders who had some work experiences during their university studies.

- The possible answers to the question "**Would you enrol on the university again?"** depend on the type of programme that has been completed.

First-level degree holders, single-cycle and pre-reform specialist degree holders

If you could go back in time, would you enrol on university again?

- *yes, in the same degree programme at the same university*
- *yes, in a different degree programme at the same university*
- *yes, in the same degree programme at another university*
- *yes, but in a different degree programme of another university*
- *no, I would not enrol again at any university.*

Master's degree holders

If you could go back in time, would you enrol on university again?

- *yes, in the same degree programme at the same university*
- *yes, in a different degree programme at the same university*
- *yes, in the same degree programme at another university*
- *yes, but in a different degree programme at another university*
- *no, I would not enrol again at any university.*

Other special classification patterns

Place of residence is broken down into the following categories:

- Same province of the attended university;
- Other province of the same region;
- Different region;
- Abroad.

This classification takes into account the province in which teaching activities are based, regardless of the

province in which the university has its main headquarters.

- As for the variable **educational qualification of degree holders' parents,** the parent with the higher qualification was taken into account and a distinction was made between situations where both parents, or only one, is a university graduate.

- Degree holders who have at least a "good" **knowledge of foreign languages** "native speakers", or claim to have a "very good" or "good" level of knowledge within a range of entries including also "fairly good", "limited" and "no knowledge at all" (both in writing and speaking).

- Among degree holders who have at least a "good" **IT skills**, many of them replied that they have a "very good" or "good" skills within a range of entries including also "fairly good", "limited" and "no skills at all".