

# Recruitment of Top Graduates in the UAE

2016



# Introduction

While much of the **recruitment in the UAE** is focused on experienced hires, employers who seek to develop long-term roots in the country recognise the need for maintaining an active programme of recruiting **fresh graduates**, both local and expatriate, from the country's universities.

Attracting, retaining and developing top graduate talent is therefore a key objective for many employers in the UAE.

The research was conducted by **GulfTalent**, the Middle East's leading online recruitment firm for professionals, in collaboration with the **American University of Sharjah**. It summarises the employment preferences of UAE graduates and their top employers of choice.

It is hoped that the survey findings will help employers evaluate and improve their approach to recruiting graduates in the UAE.

# Acknowledgements



GulfTalent would like to thank the students and administration of the American University of Sharjah (AUS) for their support and enthusiastic participation in this research initiative.

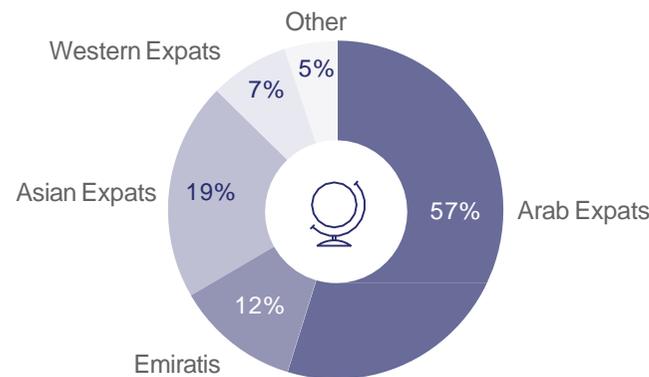
# Research Methodology

This research report is based on GulfTalent's survey of 303 recent graduates and final-year students of the American University of Sharjah (AUS).

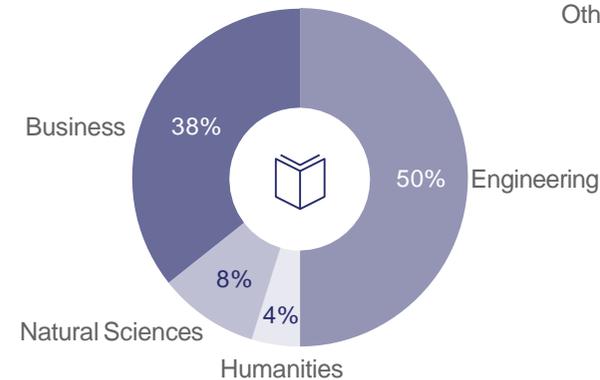
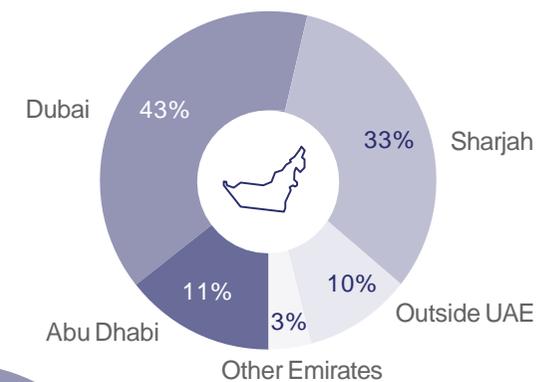
AUS is one of leading universities in the UAE, with a diverse pool of students from across Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah and other emirates – including UAE nationals as well as expatriates. AUS graduates are among the most sought after by employers in the country.

The survey was conducted during June 2016.

### Survey Population by Nationality



### By Location of Graduate's Family



### By Subject of Study

# Most Popular Employers



Note: No pre-compiled list of employers was presented to survey participants and they were asked to name their preferred employers themselves without prompting. For full details of ranking methodology, see note on methodology – page 18.

# Popular Employers by Sector



## Construction

1. AECOM
2. Emaar
3. Atkins
4. CCC\*
5. Parsons
6. Gensler
7. Foster + Partners



## Finance

1. PwC
2. Deloitte
3. Mubadala
4. HSBC
5. ADIA
6. ADIB
7. DIB



## Consumer Goods

1. Unilever
2. Chalhoub Group
3. Nestlé
4. Procter & Gamble
5. L'Oreal
6. Kellogg's



## Technology

1. IBM
2. Apple
3. Google
4. SAP



## Oil & Gas

1. ADNOC
2. Petrofac
3. Schlumberger
4. Baker Hughes



## Telecom

1. Etisalat
2. Viola Comm.\*\*
3. TRA



## Media

1. Leo Burnett
2. MBC Group
3. Mematic Ogilvy



## Aviation

1. Emirates
2. Etihad
3. Airbus

\* Consolidated Contractors Company

\*\* Viola Communications

# Popular Employers by Graduates' Subject of Study

Graduates' subject of study is a significant factor affecting their choice of employer.

Engineering firms dominate the list of preferred employers for engineering graduates. Business graduates, on the other hand, are more likely to be drawn to firms in audit & finance, media or consumer goods.

Emirates Group and Unilever appear to cut across the divide and appeal to a diverse range of graduates, irrespective of their subject of study.



## Business Graduates



## Engineering Graduates

Emirates Group	1	GE
PwC	2	Petrofac
Unilever	3	Unilever
Chalhoub Group	4	Emirates Group
Leo Burnett	5	ADNOC
MBC Group	6	Bee`ah
Procter & Gamble	7	Schlumberger
Emaar	8	DEWA
L`Oreal	9	Etihad
Deloitte	10	Nestlé

# Popular Employers by Graduates' Gender

The popularity of employers among graduates varies sharply along gender lines.

Male graduates are more attracted by multinationals and technical firms.

Female graduates by contrast are more likely to choose government organisations and consumer goods firms.

Once again, Emirates Group and Unilever are the only employers with universal appeal, appearing in the top 10 choices of both male and female graduates.



## Male Graduates

## Female Graduates

Emirates Group	1	Chalhoub Group
GE	2	Unilever
Unilever	3	Emirates Group
Etihad	4	Leo Burnett
Nestlé	5	MBC Group
IBM	6	L`Oreal
AECOM	7	Bee`ah
PwC	8	Emaar
CCC*	9	DEWA
Atkins	10	ADNOC

\* Consolidated Contractors Company

# Popular Employers by Graduates' Nationality

Popular employers among expatriate graduates are sharply different to those of local Emirati graduates.

While multinationals dominate the top choices of expatriates, virtually all of the most popular employers among Emiratis are either government entities or companies majority-owned by the government.

Emirates Group is a notable exception, being more popular with expatriates than UAE nationals, despite being owned by the government of Dubai.



## Expat Graduates



## Emirati Graduates

Unilever	1	ADNOC
Emirates Group	2	Mubadala
Chalhoub Group	3	Etisalat
GE	4	DEWA
Nestlé	5	ADIA
Leo Burnett	6	TRA*
Petrofac	7	Emaar
L'Oreal	8	ENEC
Bee`ah	9	United Nations
Procter & Gamble	10	Masdar

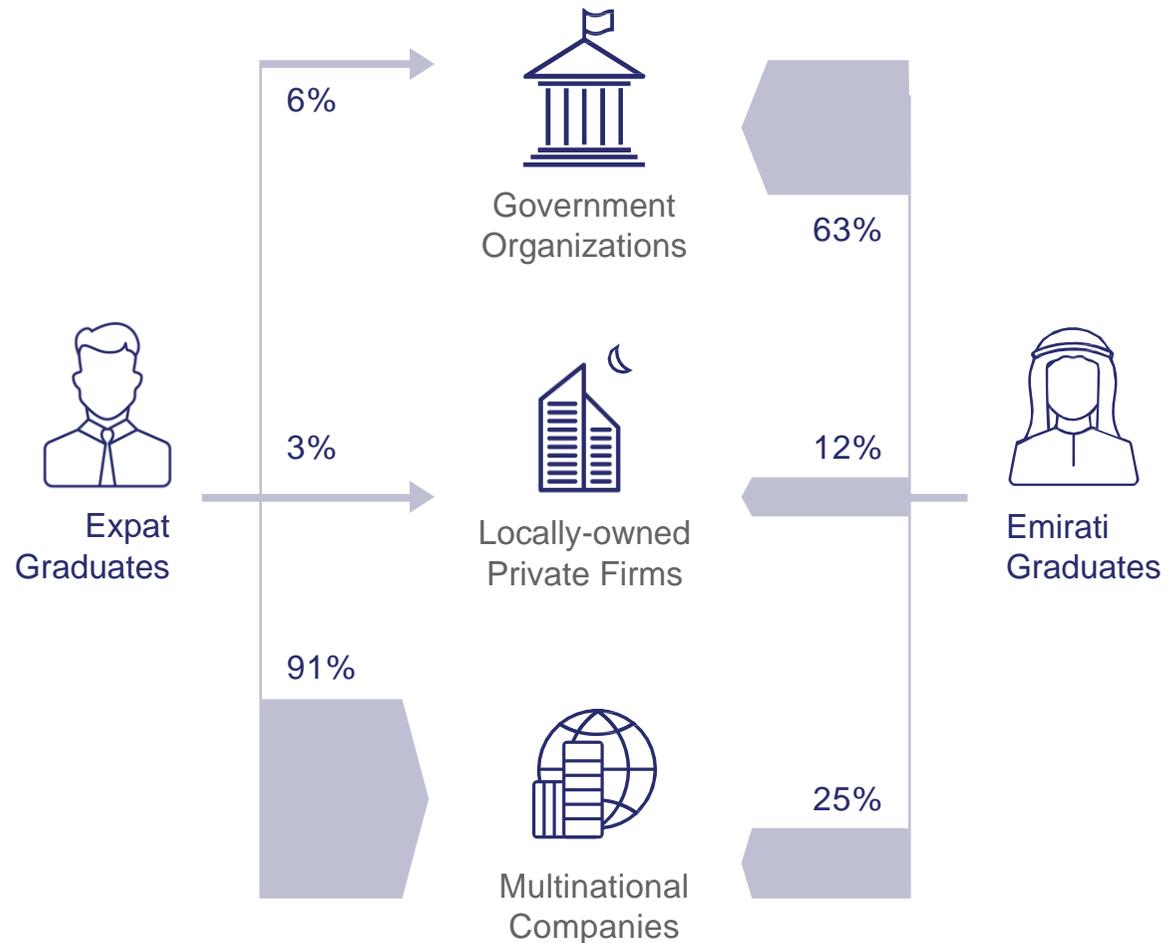
\* Telecommunications Regulatory Authority

# Popularity by Company Type

When explicitly asked which types of organisations they would most like to work for, an overwhelming 91% of expatriate graduates mention multinationals.

By contrast, a 63% majority of Emirati graduates choose government organisations.

Locally owned private firms appear to be the least desirable, favoured by only 3% of expatriates and 12% of Emiratis.



## Popular Employers by Location of Graduates' Residence

Graduates' choice of employer is influenced by their (or their family's) place of residence within the UAE.

ADNOC, headquartered in Abu Dhabi, is the top choice of graduates from that Emirate. This is likely due to higher brand awareness locally, and the fact that many graduates return to live close to their family after graduation.

Unliever is the number one choice among graduates from Dubai, while Emirates Group, with its operations in Dubai close to the Sharjah border, is the most popular among Sharjah residents.



# Key Attractions of Popular Employers

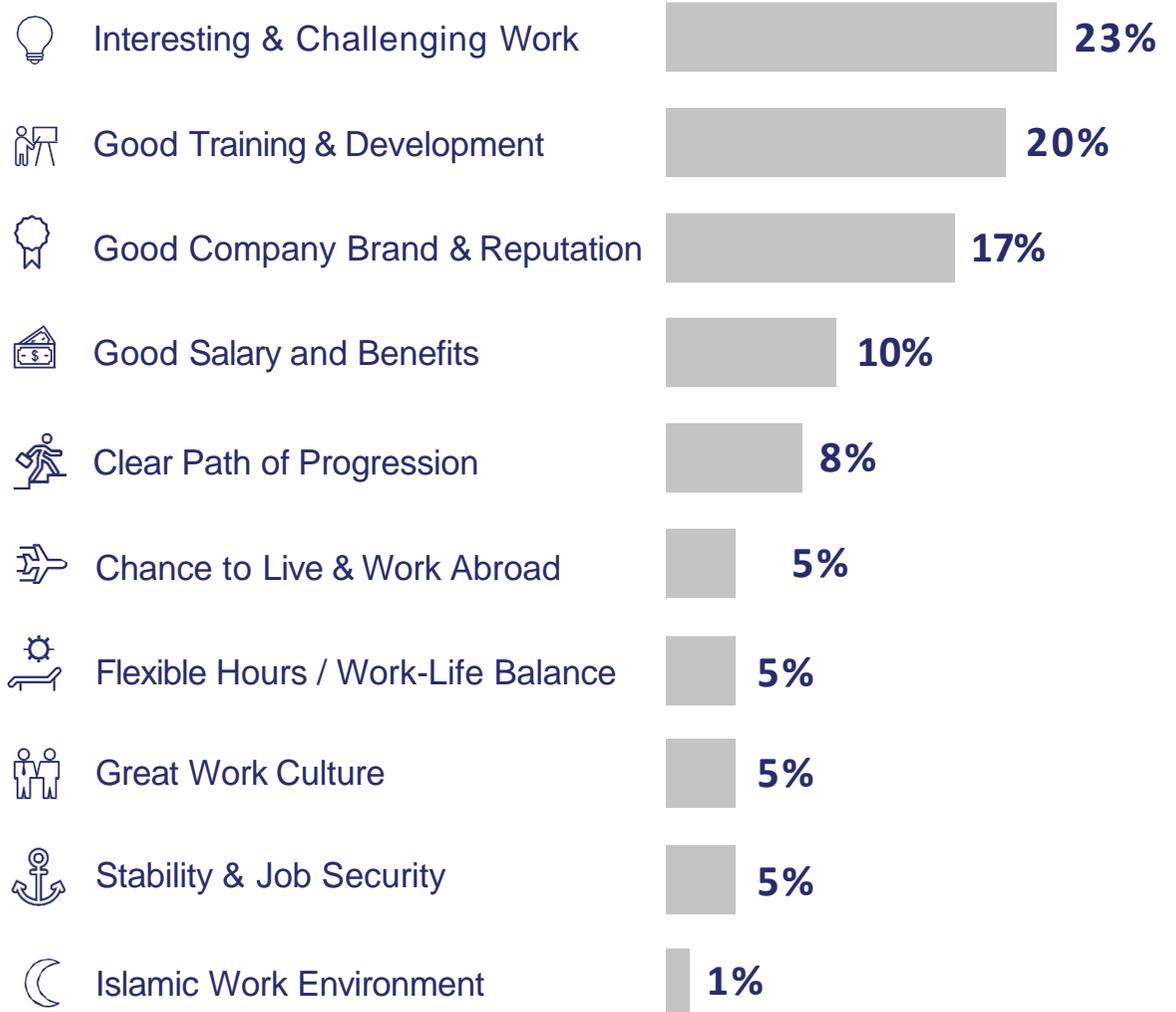
The survey asked graduates to indicate the main reasons behind their choice of employer.

Motivations appear to vary widely, covering 10 different factors.

The dominant factors cited by the most number of graduates are: Interesting work, good training and reputable company brand.

Interestingly, pay level does not feature among the top three factors for graduates.

## What Graduates Look for in their Chosen Employers



# Key Attractions of Multinationals vs Government

While overall attraction factors are similar across employer types, their relative contribution to the graduates' career decisions vary between multinationals and government entities.

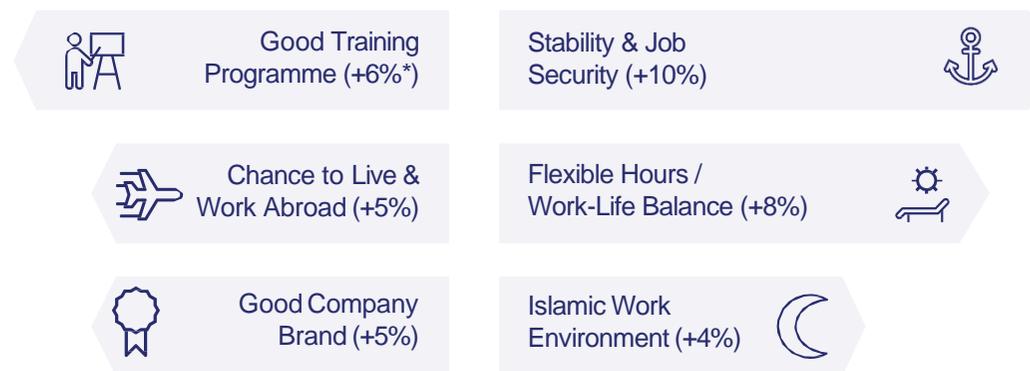
Graduates choosing multinationals place an even higher value on training, international exposure and brand reputation, compared to the average graduate population.

By contrast, those mentioning government as their favored work destination place a comparatively higher value on job security, work-life balance and working in an Islamic environment.



Top attraction factors relative to government

Top attraction factors relative to multinationals



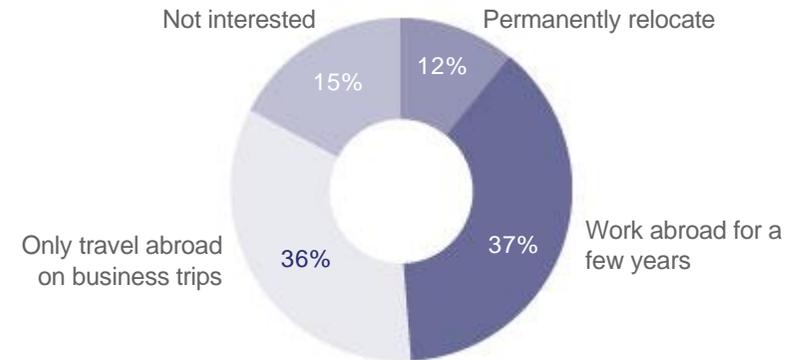
\*'+6%\*' indicates that 6% more of graduates choosing multinationals cite this factor as a key attraction, compared with graduates who choose government organisations

## Interest in Working Overseas

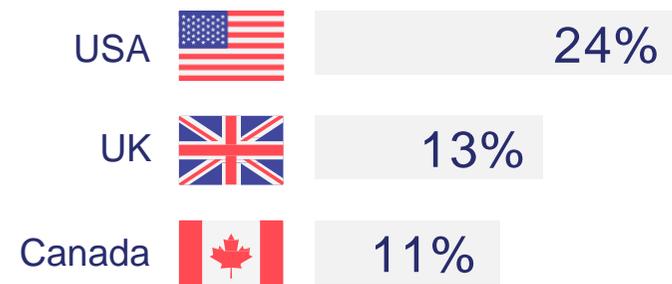
Most graduates report a strong desire for international exposure, with roughly half indicating they would ideally like to live and work outside the UAE, at least for a few years.

This has contributed to the popularity of companies such as Unilever and GE, which are perceived to offer overseas opportunities.

Among both expatriate and Emirati graduates, the US is by far the most popular work destination, followed by the UK and Canada.



## Most Popular Destinations

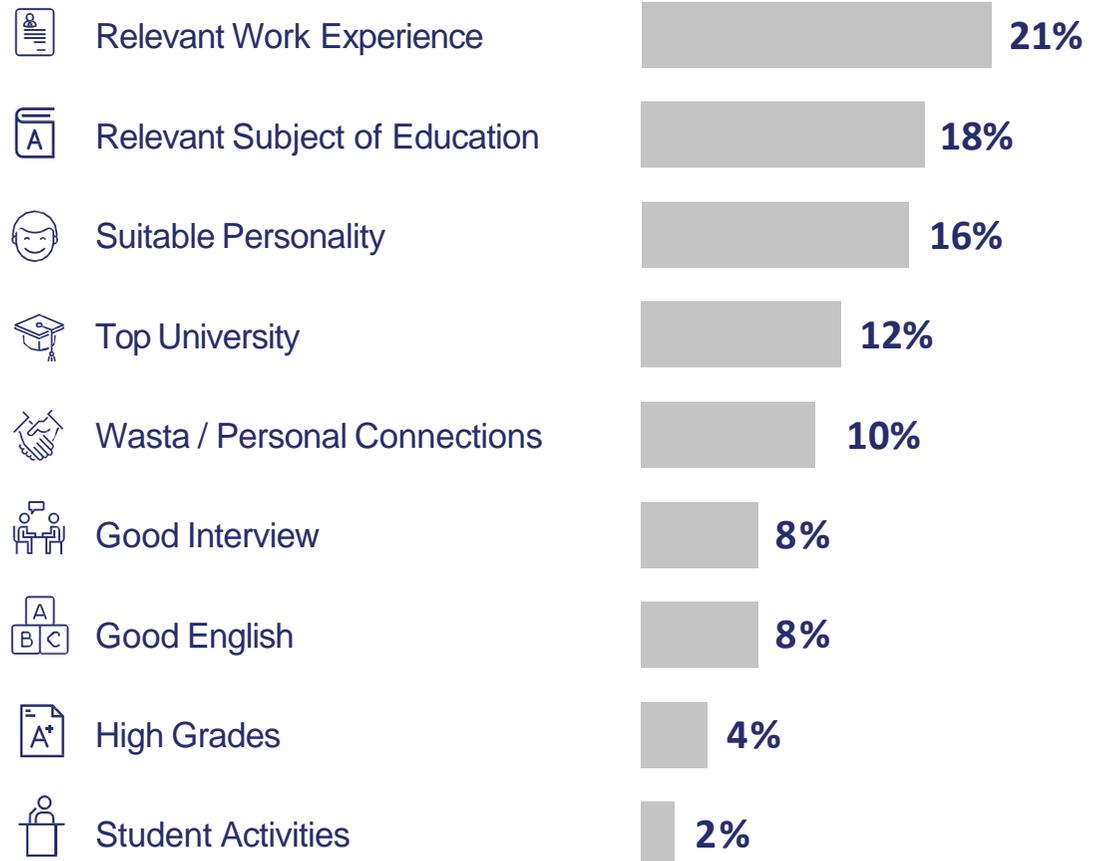


# Perceptions of Employability Factors

The survey explored what factors graduates perceive to contribute the most to their success in securing employment.

Perceptions appear to vary widely. Having relevant work experience is viewed by many graduates as the most important factor, with some voicing frustration at not being able to secure an entry-level job due to lack of previous employment.

Having personal connections ('Wasta') is viewed as a key factor by a significant number of graduates.



# Employability Factors by Nationality

In relative terms, perceptions of employability vary significantly between Emirati graduates and expatriates.

Expatriate graduates are more likely than their Emirati peers to believe that employers choose them based on their work experience, subject of education and personal connections within the firm.

Emirati graduates, on the other hand, are much more likely than expatriates to consider their command of English their top selling point with employers, followed by their university's prestige and their academic grades.



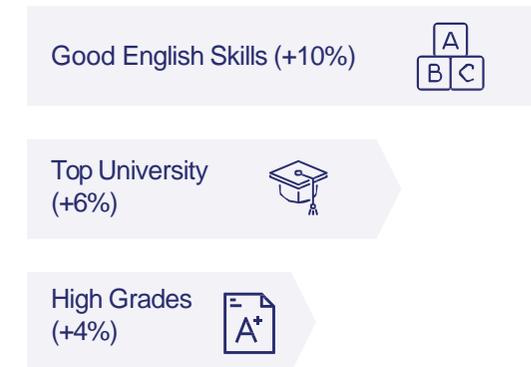
## Expatriate Graduates

Perceptions of employers' hiring criteria (relative to view of Emiratis)



## Emirati Graduates

Perceptions of employers' hiring criteria (relative to view of Expats)



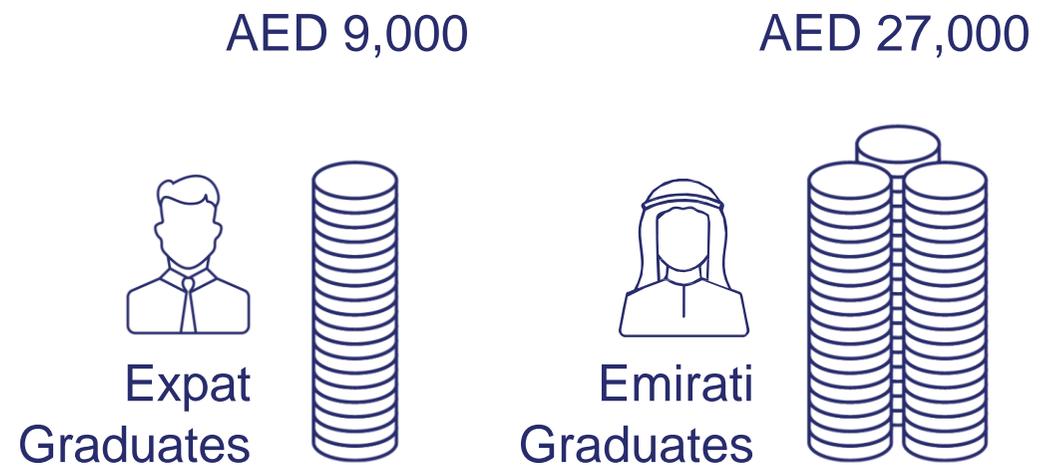
\*'+9%' means that 9% more of expatriate graduates believe this factor is a key criteria for employers, compared with Emirati graduates

# Graduate Salary Expectations

The survey asked graduates what is the minimum starting salary they would expect in their first job after graduation.

The salary expectations vary dramatically based on graduate's nationality. Expatriate graduates on average expect a salary of AED 9,000 per month. By contrast, the average starting salary expectation of Emirati graduates is AED 27,000, or three times their expatriate classmates.

Considering the graduate's subject of study, Engineering graduates expect an average salary of AED 8,000, compared with Business graduates at AED 10,000 per month.

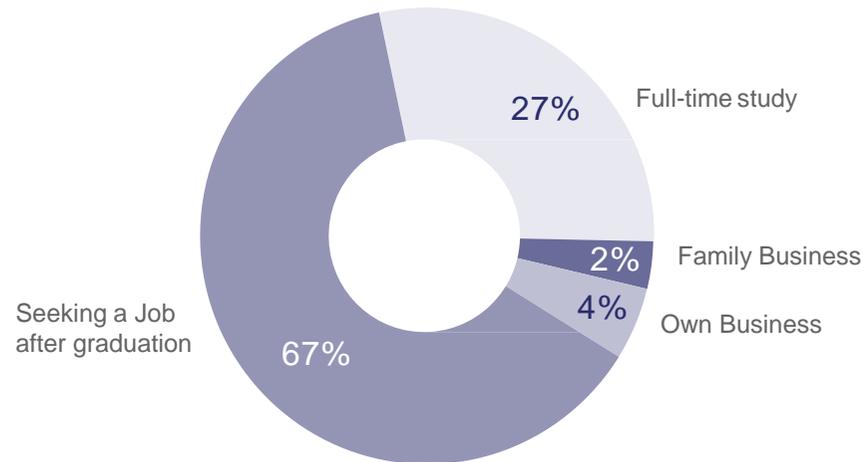


# Graduate Career Plans and Success Rates

Of the students surveyed, two-thirds plan to start working after graduation, followed by a quarter who wish to continue full-time study.

Around 2% plan to join their family business, while 4% aim to start up on their own.

Among those who seek employment, the level of success varies. One in three Emiratis have already secured a job offer by the time of graduation, compared to around one in five expats.



## Research Methodology: Additional Comments

Each participant was asked to name the top 3 employers they would most like to work for after graduation.

No pre-compiled list of employers was presented to survey participants and they were asked to name their preferred employers themselves without prompting.

Subsidiaries that received mentions separately from their parent ( e.g. Masdar which is a subsidiary of Mubadala) were listed separately.

When two different names of the same organization were mentioned, they were added together to determine the overall votes of the organization (e.g. 'ADIA' and 'Abu Dhabi Investment Authority')

While best efforts have been made to provide an independent, representative picture, the survey results ultimately reflect the opinion of those who participated and may not be representative of all graduates in the UAE.

If you wish to share your comments or feedback on this report, feel free to write to [research@gulftalent.com](mailto:research@gulftalent.com)

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