

FROM COLLEGE TO WORK

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*Job experiences of
women college graduates,
classes of '55, '56, '57*

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FROM COLLEGE TO WORK

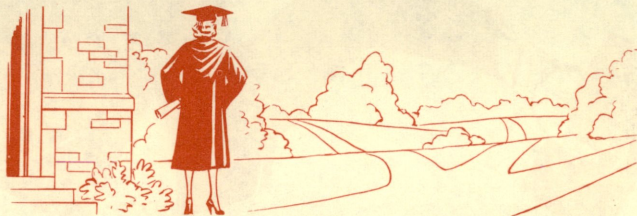
Job experiences of women college graduates, classes of 1955, 1956, and 1957

After graduation, do college women go to work, continue in school, or become housewives?

If they go to work, what kinds of jobs do they get?

Are their jobs related to their college majors?

What are their starting salaries?



Questions like these are in the minds of most women students as they wonder about future job opportunities and consider the college courses they should take.

Some answers have been obtained in three questionnaire surveys conducted by the Women's Section of the National Vocational Guidance Association and the Women's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor.

The full report of the 1957 survey, including detailed tables comparing the three classes, may be purchased from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D.C. (Women's Bureau Bull. 268, *First Jobs of College Women, Report on Women Graduates, Class of 1957*)

Who were the graduates surveyed?

For 3 successive years, women college graduates were surveyed about 6 months after graduation. The survey sample represented all the women who received a bachelor's degree from a women's or coeducational college or university during the month of June in each of the survey years. The number of women graduates represented was 81,000 in 1955; 87,000 in 1956; and 88,000 in 1957.

The typical woman graduate in each class surveyed was 22 years old. Almost 1 out of every 10 was 30 years of age or over. The proportion of married graduates increased from 34 percent of the 1955 class to 37 percent of 1956 and 38 percent of 1957, reflecting the trend toward earlier marriage.

Education was the undergraduate major of about one-third of the women in each class. Also popular were English, home economics, nursing, business and commerce, and the social sciences.

The extent to which the women graduates of 6 months were employed or in school was about the same for all three classes, as shown in the following:

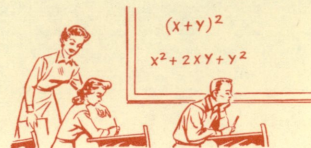
	<i>Percent of June graduates</i>		
	<i>1957</i>	<i>1956</i>	<i>1955</i>
Employed only.....	69	70	71
Employed and attending school.....	13	11	9
Attending school only.....	8	8	8
Seeking work.....	3	3	4
Not seeking work.....	7	8	8

What kinds of jobs did the graduates obtain?

The majority of employed women graduates obtained professional positions after graduation. In fact, the percentage doing professional work increased somewhat from 1955 to 1957, while those doing clerical work and miscellaneous work declined, as shown below:

	<i>Percent of employed graduates</i>		
	<i>1957</i>	<i>1956</i>	<i>1955</i>
Professional work.....	83	81	80
Clerical work.....	14	16	16
Miscellaneous work.....	3	3	4

Teaching continues to be the favorite profession of college-educated women. Three out of five of the employed graduates in each class became teachers.



Nurses were the second-largest occupational group among the 1957 graduates—exceeding secretaries and stenographers, who had been more numerous among women graduates in the 1956 and 1955 classes. Intensified efforts to prepare more nurses for positions of leadership may account for the higher number of degree nurses.

Other women graduates were employed in a wide variety of occupations—with relatively large numbers of biological technicians, social and welfare workers, home economists, dietitians, mathematicians, therapists, recreation workers, chemists, editors, copywriters, and reporters.

Were the graduates' first jobs related to their college majors?

Most of the graduates in each of the three classes obtained jobs in the same field as their undergraduate major. About nine-tenths of the large group with education majors were teaching 6 months after graduation, as well as at least half of those who had majored in physical education, English, music, history, and home economics.

Similarly, at least 75 percent of the women graduates with teaching certificates were employed as teachers in the winter following graduation. Additional graduates might be teaching in the near future, as 4 percent were attending school and 3 percent were seeking work. Presumably 18 percent were not at present



interested in teaching: 11 percent had nonteaching jobs and 7 percent were not in the labor market.

Among other employed graduates whose college education was closely related to their subsequent employment were those with majors in:

Nursing—over nine-tenths of whom were nurses.

Physical sciences—over half of whom were chemists or biological technicians.

Biological sciences—almost half of whom were biological technicians.

Journalism—over two-fifths of whom were editors, copywriters, or reporters.

Business and commerce—almost two-fifths of whom were secretaries and stenographers.

How much did the recent women graduates earn?

June 1957 graduates employed full time in the winter of 1957-58 were receiving an average annual salary of \$3,739. This was about \$300 more than the average starting salary received by the 1956 women graduates and about \$600 more than that of the 1955 women graduates.

The 1957 women graduates who obtained the best paying jobs were those who had majored in the physical sciences (\$4,509), mathematics (\$4,244), specialized health fields other than nursing (\$4,106), and nursing (\$3,820). These were all fields with shortages of qualified workers. The average starting salary of graduates who had majored in education (\$3,796) was below these but compared favorably with others.

In selected occupations, women graduates received average starting salaries of:

	<i>Class of June—</i>		
	<i>1957</i>	<i>1956</i>	<i>1955</i>
Employed women graduates	\$3, 739	\$3, 446	\$3, 141
Chemists	\$4, 847	\$4, 453	\$3, 900
Mathematicians	4, 675	4, 382	3, 763
Home economists	4, 040	3, 803	3, 341
Nurses	3, 875	3, 647	3, 438
Biological technicians	3, 854	3, 492	3, 038
Teachers	3, 799	3, 492	3, 197
Secretaries	3, 295	3, 148	2, 895
Typists	3, 104	2, 912	2, 704

How many graduates were continuing their education?



Nine percent of the women graduates in each of the three classes surveyed attended school full time during the winter following their graduation from college. Part-time students (most of whom were also employed) increased from 8 percent of the 1955 class to 12 percent of the 1957 class.

About three-fifths of the full-time students in each class surveyed were candidates for a master's degree; a few for a doctorate; and most of the others, for a certificate in health services or teaching.

Education was the leading field of graduate study for both full-time and part-time students. Also popular among full-time students were the specialized health fields (except nursing), home economics, and social work. When the 1957 graduates were questioned about their plans for future employment, the responses showed that among every 100 graduates:

18 wanted a career.

10 expected to work indefinitely but were not planning a career.

6 expected to work only as necessary.

66 planned not to work after marriage, except briefly.

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