

2020 Graduating Senior Survey Design and Methods

Every year the Office of Academic Planning and Assessment (OAPA) administers a survey asking seniors about their satisfaction with their educational experiences and their plans for after graduation.

Changes Due to COVID-19 Transition

Due to the abrupt transition to remote instruction and postponement of in-person commencement, the 2020 survey could not be administered to students attending the Undergraduate Commencement Fair or picking up caps and gowns in the Campus Center. Instead, OAPA administered the survey entirely online to February graduates and seniors expected to graduate in May or September of 2020.

Survey Design

The survey currently contains the following sections:

1. Ratings of satisfaction: Students rate various aspects of their major as well as with their overall experience at UMass.
2. Open-ended feedback: Students respond to the following open-ended item, "Please provide specific feedback to your department about how your experience in your major could have been improved."
3. Participation in high-impact practices: Students indicate whether they participated in practicum/internship, community service/volunteer work, faculty research outside of program/course requirements, study abroad, and culminating senior experience.
4. Student learning outcomes: Students rate the extent to which UMass Amherst contributed to their knowledge, skills, or personal development in 12 areas related to student learning outcomes.
5. Post-graduation employment and educational plans: Students describe their post-graduation employment status and their plans for graduate school. In addition, students who accepted a paid job were asked the title and salary of their position and the name and location of the company or organization. Students attending graduate school this fall were asked to provide the name of the institution they are attending, their field of study, and the degree they will be seeking.
6. New items for 2020: Students answered two additional open-ended questions - one pertaining to the impact of COVID-19 on their post-graduation plans and a final question asking if there was anything else they wished to share about their experiences at UMass Amherst.

Population

OAPA identified UMass seniors who graduated in February or who were expected to graduate in May or September based on information contained in student records available in April 2020.

Students were asked to complete the online survey in an email invitation from Chancellor Subbaswamy and in subsequent reminder emails from OAPA. In addition, IT installed a Moodle pop-up notification to encourage response. The survey was available from April 22-May 11.

We matched the survey population with degree records (once they became available in October 2020) to identify seniors who received a degree in the 2020 calendar year. Of the 6,071 seniors who graduated in calendar year 2020, 5,831 were included in the survey population. Of these, 2,728 seniors answered at least one Senior Survey item for a participation rate of 46.8%. (*Note: this is lower than response rates for the largely in-person administrations in prior years, which averaged around 70%.*)

We also asked students to list their major or, if they had more than one major, to list the major they wished to rate. Seniors who listed more than one major or whose reported major did not match their degree file major were dropped from major satisfaction analyses (n=66).

Analysis and Reporting

In addition to a campus summary, we report survey results by school/college and by department. Campus-wide, college, and departmental results are posted on the [OAPA website](#). If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Martha Stassen at mstassen@umass.edu.