

AMBA & BGA Graduate Survey 2024

Reflecting on learnings







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Introduction

AMBA & BGA business school graduates reflect on their courses

How do graduates feel about their business schools when they have had some time to reflect on their courses? Do they think their hard work was worth it? Do they believe that their business course enabled them to get the job they wanted when they finished their course?

This report aims to answer these questions.

It is the second of four reports drawn from one survey that categorised AMBA & BGA's members into students, graduates and employers to produce a dedicated analysis for each of these three groups. The fourth and final report will then review our findings and draw comparisons between these groups in relation to the metaverse. Part one of the report can be read on the AMBA & BGA website.

We extend our gratitude to the 1,120 students and graduates who participated in this survey and congratulate the three respondents who were randomly selected to receive a \$100 voucher for their valuable contributions.

Special thanks go to Colette Doyle, Head of Editorial, at AMBA & BGA, for her work on the final report, as well as to Veronica Kallenbach for her impressive design work.

We hope you find the insights in this report both interesting and useful.

Ellen Buchan
Insight, Content and PR Manager
AMBA & BGA



Executive summary

Part 1: Current working conditions

- Employment status: 86% of graduates are working full time
- Sector distribution: The most common sectors for graduates include consultancy (10%), banking/ financial services (8%) and education (7%)
- Management roles: 40% of respondents are in middle management, 17% in senior management and 10% are business owners
- Work environment: 48% work in a hybrid mode (office and remote), 30% work full time in an office and 18% work fully remotely

Part 2: Reflecting on the business course

- Reasons for course completion: Top motivations for completing the business programme include acquiring skills and knowledge (69%), expanding expertise (66%) and enhancing job market competitiveness (48%)
- Job attainment post-graduation: 26% had obtained their desired role before starting the programme, while 17% haven't secured it yet
- Satisfaction with programme impact: 73% of graduates are either very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the impact of their courses on their careers
- Skills gained and perceived impact: Graduates felt more confident (63%), better prepared for competitive environments (50%) and improved at problem-solving (49%) and professional interaction (45%) as a result of their courses
- Interest in further courses: Graduates expressed interest in additional management programmes, with data analytics for managers (42%) being the most sought-after subject



Methodologies:

Between April and June 2023, AMBA & BGA conducted its most extensive online survey to date, reaching out to its diverse membership of 76,600 AMBA (Association of MBAs) and BGA (Business Graduates Association) student and graduate members across more than 150 countries. The survey received responses from a total of 1,120 students and graduates affiliated with AMBA & BGA institutions, with 576 identifying as graduates; this group will be the survey respondents on which this report focuses.

Regarding gender distribution, 69 per cent of the participants were male, 30 per cent were female and one per cent preferred not to disclose their gender.

The students and graduates who participated in the survey represented an impressive 94 different countries. The United Kingdom constituted the largest proportion at 22 per cent, followed by South Africa with six per cent, the United States at four per cent and Germany at three per cent.

Please note that in cases where figures do not sum to 100 per cent, or combine to a whole number, this discrepancy is attributed to rounding.

In terms of the graduates, fewer than one per cent graduated in the 1970s, one per cent graduated in the 1980s, five per cent graduated in the 1990s, 14 per cent graduated between 2000 and 2009, 46 per cent graduated between 2010 and 2019 and 34 per cent graduated between 2020 and 2023.

Of the more recent graduates, 13 per cent graduated in 2022, eight per cent graduated in 2021, eight per cent graduated in 2019 and seven per cent graduated in 2020.

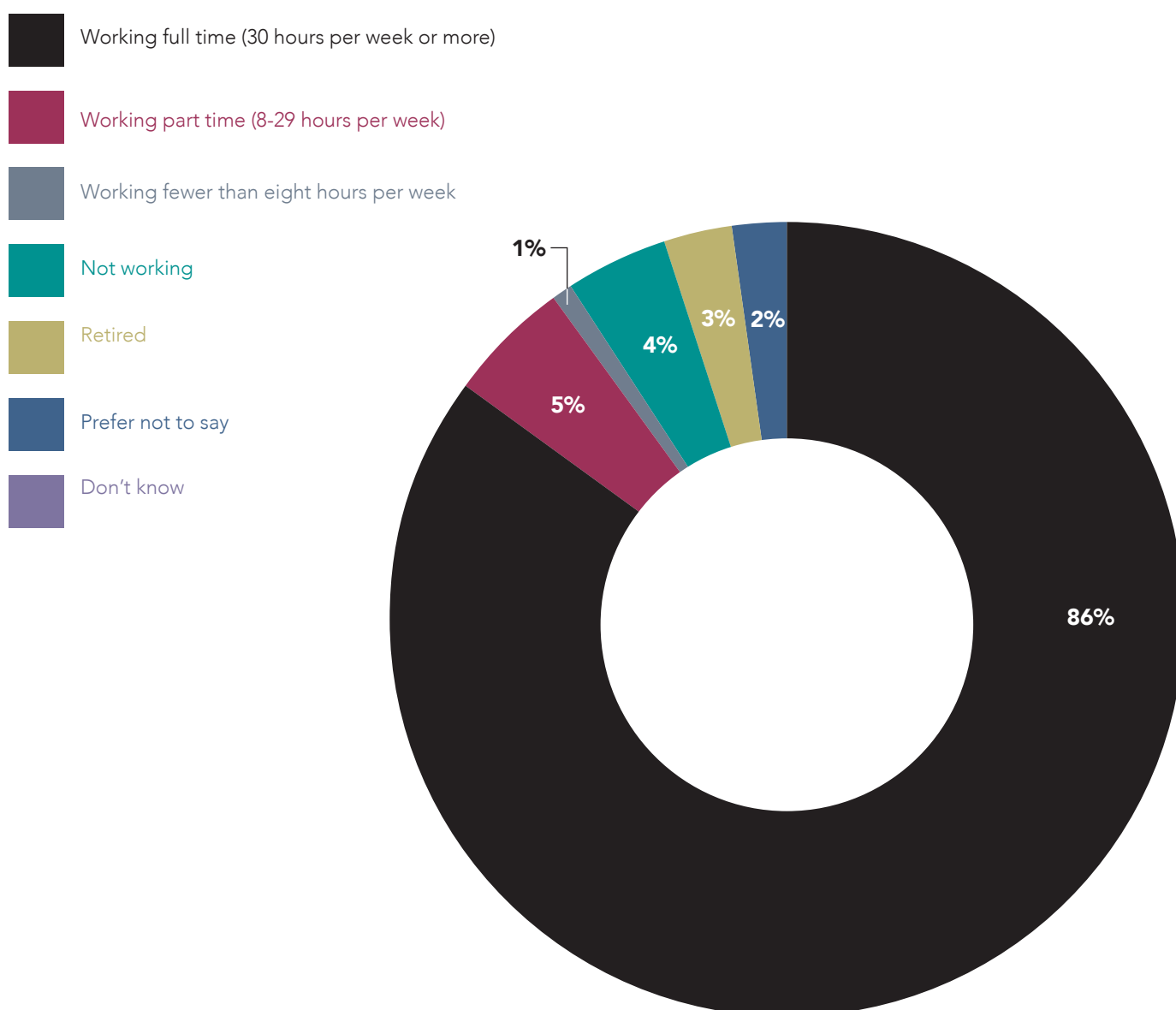


Part 1:

Current working conditions

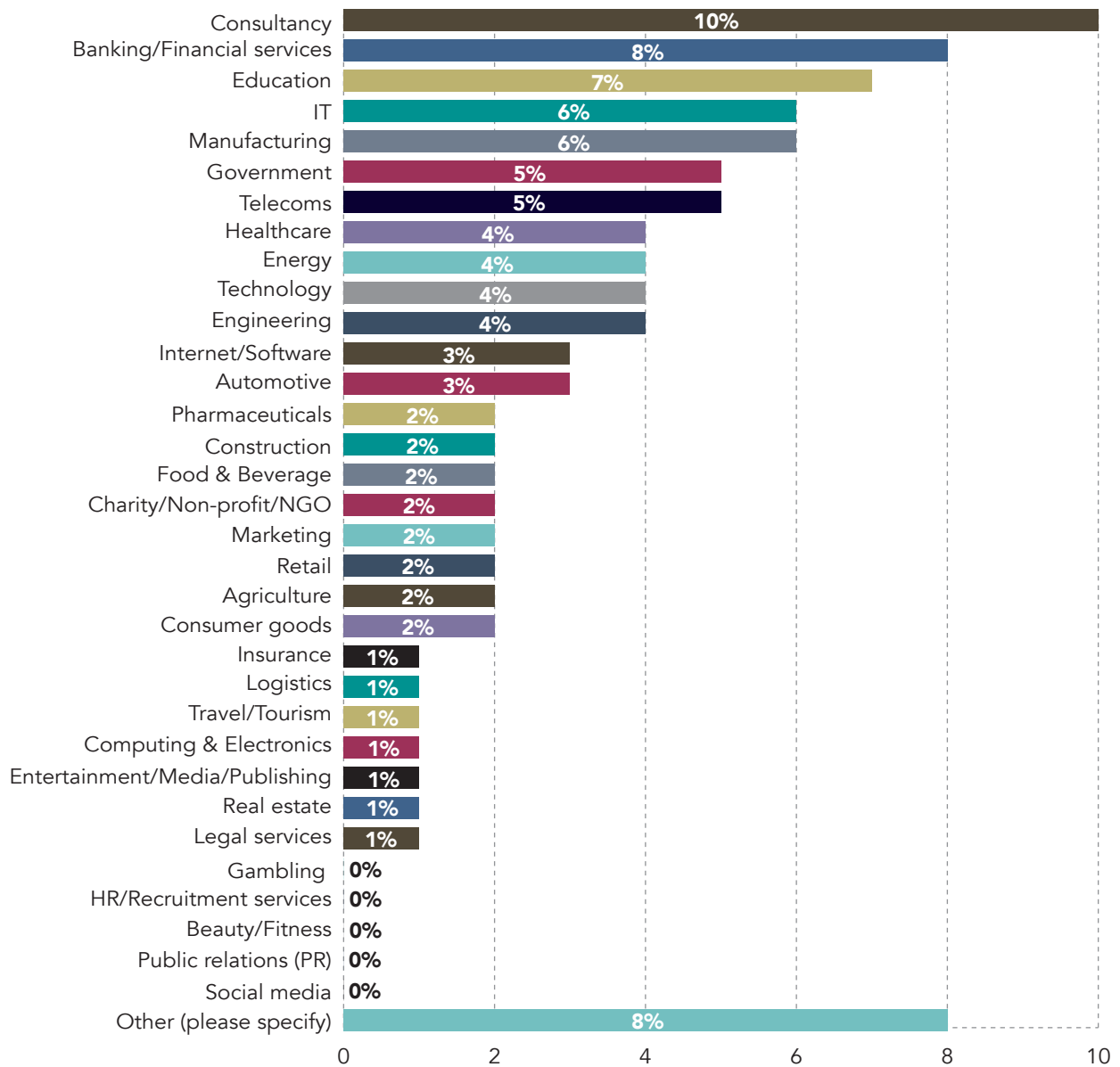
Firstly, graduates were asked if and how they were currently working. The majority (86 per cent) were working full time (30 hours per week) and five per cent were working part time, defined at eight to 29 hours per week. A further four per cent were not working and three per cent were retired. A further four per cent were not working and three per cent were retired.

FIGURE 1: WHICH OF THESE APPLIES TO YOU?



The survey went then went on to ask in which sectors of the economy the graduates worked.

FIGURE 2: IN WHICH SECTOR OF THE ECONOMY DO YOU WORK?



A tenth of all graduates work in consultancy, closely followed by banking/financial services (eight per cent) and education (seven per cent).

For those who chose to give other answers, alternative responses included:

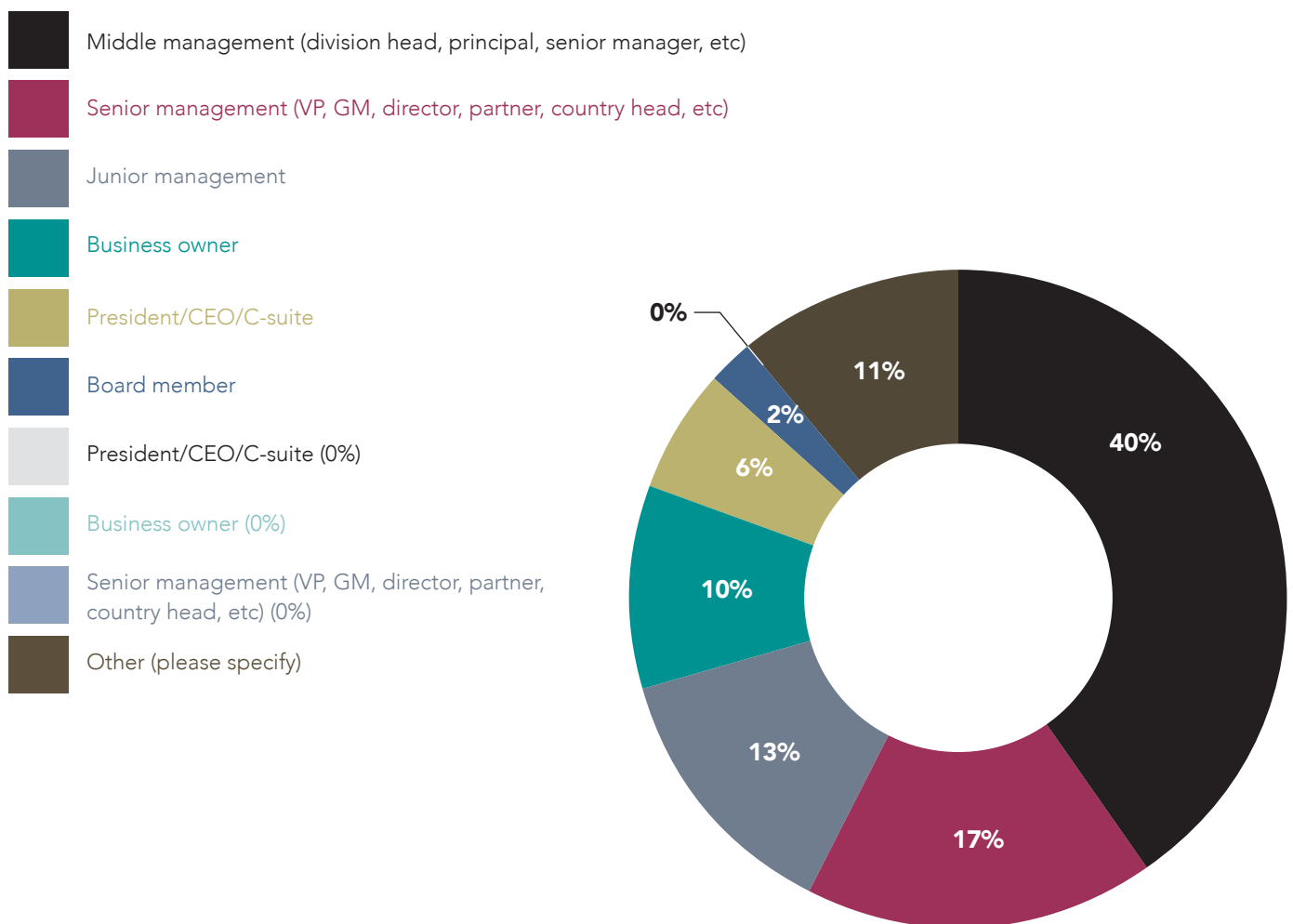
- Biotechnology
- Third sector
- Luxury goods
- New space economy
- Defence
- Aviation

In part one of this survey, we asked current students at AMBA & BGA-accredited institutions what sectors they wanted to work in post-graduation, with students being allowed to give multiple answers.

The top results of the students mirrored the industries that graduates worked in currently, perhaps suggesting

that the business school courses completed may impact the sectors in which graduates get their jobs. The top sectors where students wanted to work post-graduation were consultancy, banking/financial services, technology, IT and marketing.

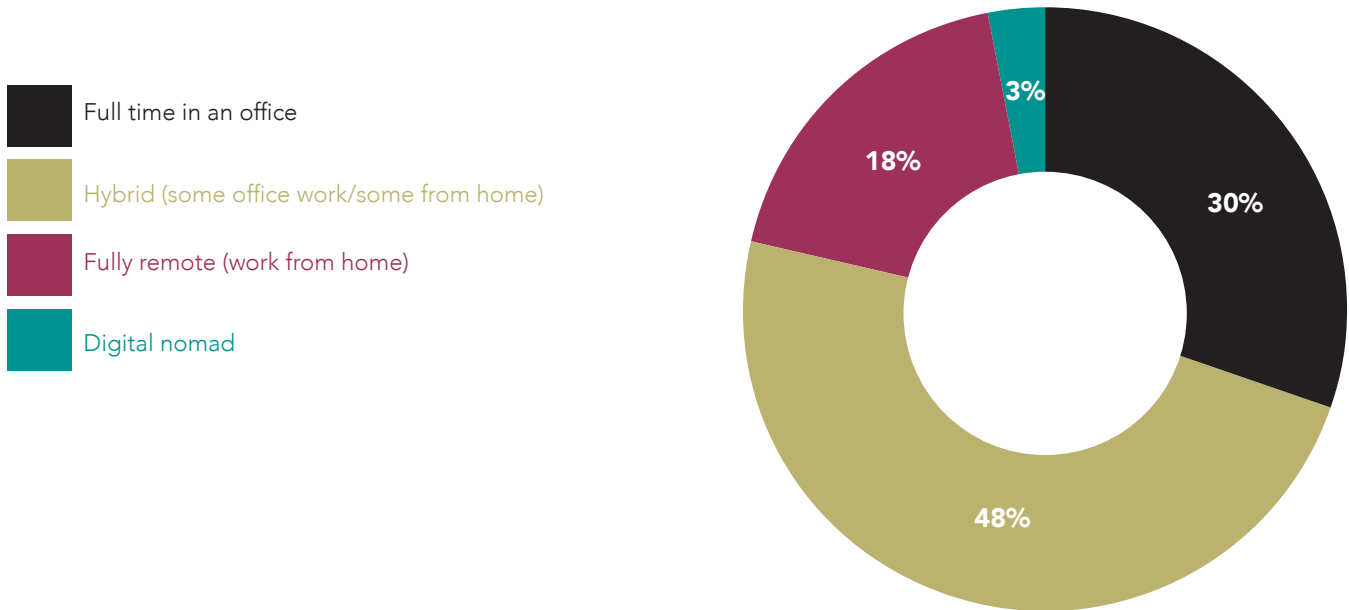
FIGURE 3: WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES THE CURRENT POSITION YOU HOLD WITHIN YOUR ORGANISATION?



The questionnaire went on to ask about the current position respondents hold in their organisation. More than a third (40 per cent) classed themselves as middle management (division heads, principals and senior managers). A further 17 per cent classed themselves as senior management, categorised by being either VP level, or a director, partner or country head.

A further 13 per cent classified themselves as junior managers and 10 per cent said they were business owners.

FIGURE 4: HOW DO YOU CURRENTLY WORK?



Graduates were asked how they currently work in the circumstances of the post-pandemic world.

Nearly half (48 per cent) work in a hybrid mode, meaning they do some office work and also work from home. Just under a third (30 per cent) work full time in an office and one fifth (18 per cent) work fully remotely, working from home. A small number (three per cent) work as digital nomads, defined as working remotely while traveling and living in various locations around the world. Again, in part one of this report, we asked students how they wanted to work after they graduated.

Most, some 65 per cent, wanted to work in a hybrid mode, suggesting that working this way is a more popular option than the alternative modes of work currently available.

Double the number of graduates worked fully remotely, compared to the number of students who wanted to work this way. This suggests that working fully remotely may not be a popular choice in the future, as current students are more likely to want to work in a hybrid set-up.



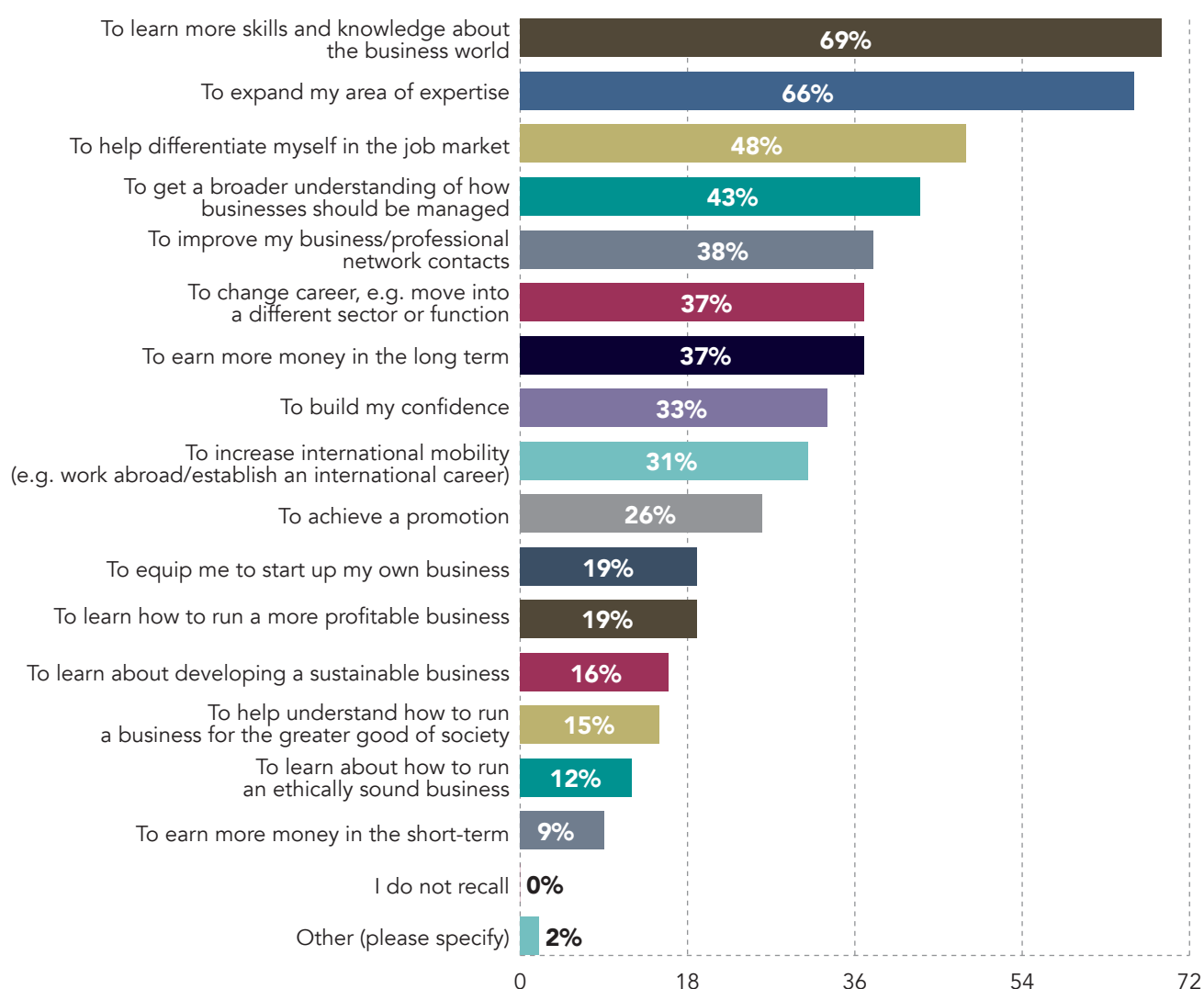
Part 2:

Reflecting on the business course

The survey went on to ask graduates about how they feel about their business course after having completed it.

Graduates were asked the reasons why they chose to complete their programme, how satisfied they were with it and the skills they had gained from it.

FIGURE 5: CAN YOU RECALL THE MAIN REASONS WHY YOU CHOSE TO UNDERTAKE A BUSINESS PROGRAMME?
PLEASE SELECT EACH THAT APPLY TO YOU.



In this section, the survey first asked graduates if they remembered why they decided to undertake their business course. The most popular answer to this was to learn more skills and knowledge about the business world, cited by 69 per cent.

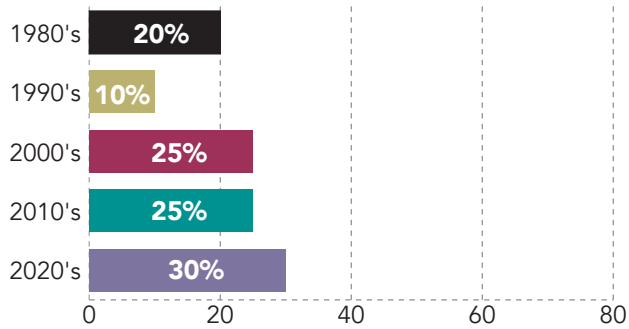
Other popular reasons for completing programmes included to expand their areas of expertise (66 per cent), to help differentiate themselves in the job market

(48 per cent) and to get a broader understanding of how businesses should be managed (43 per cent).

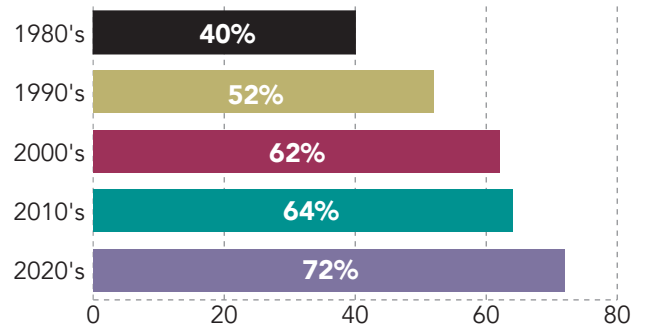
Less popular reasons included to help understand how to run a business for the greater good of society (15 per cent), to learn about how to run an ethically sound business (12%) and to earn more money in the short term (nine per cent).

FIGURE 6: CAN YOU RECALL THE MAIN REASON WHY YOU CHOSE TO UNDERTAKE A BUSINESS PROGRAMME?

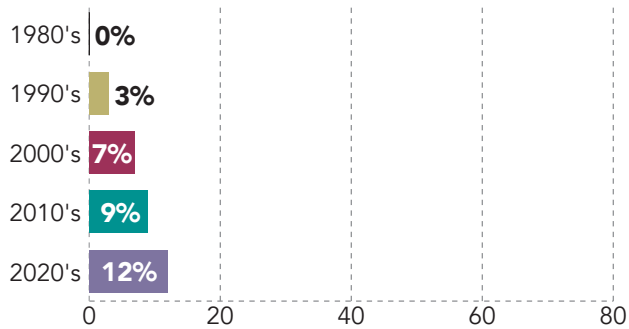
To achieve a promotion



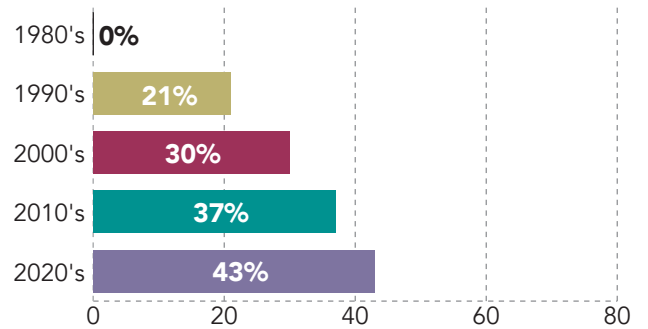
To expand my area of expertise



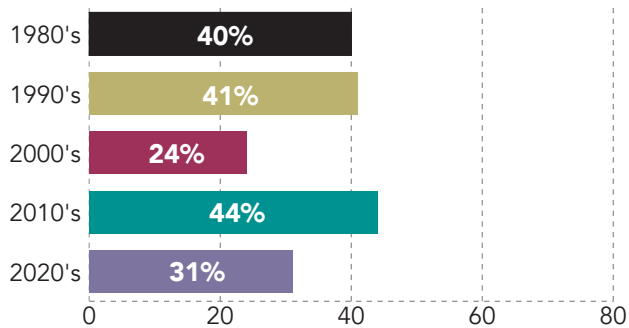
To earn more money in the short-term



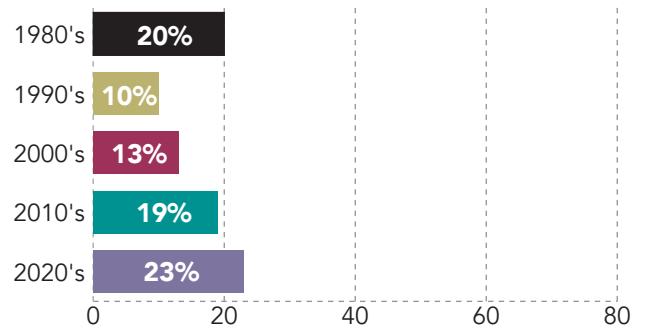
To earn more money in the long-term



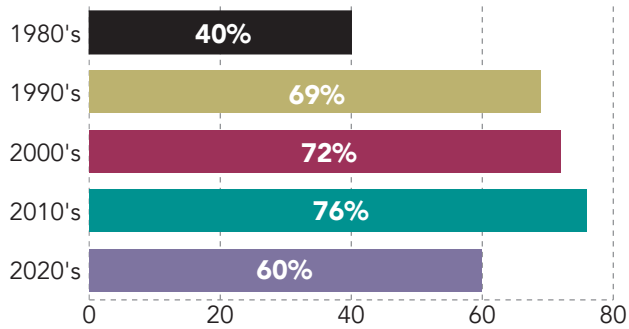
To change career e.g. move into a different sector or function



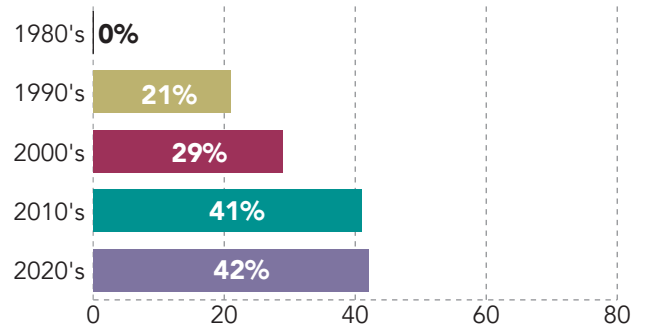
To equip me to start up my own business



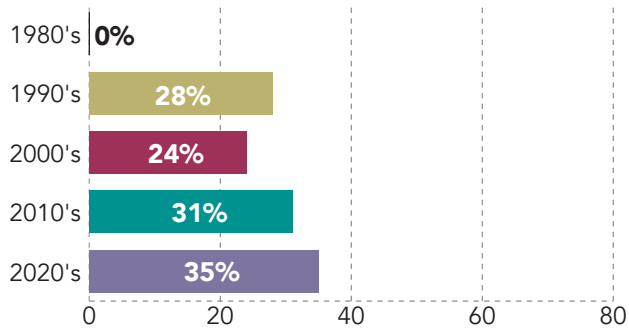
To learn more skills and knowledge about the business world



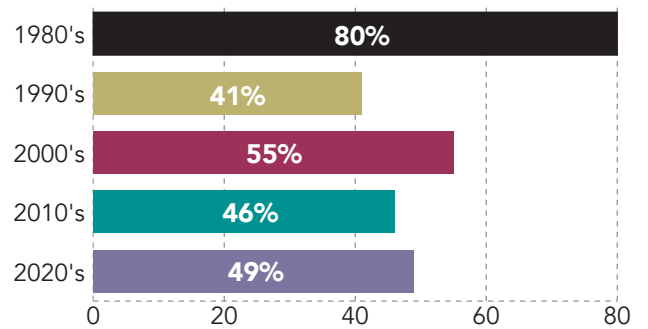
To improve my business / professional network contacts



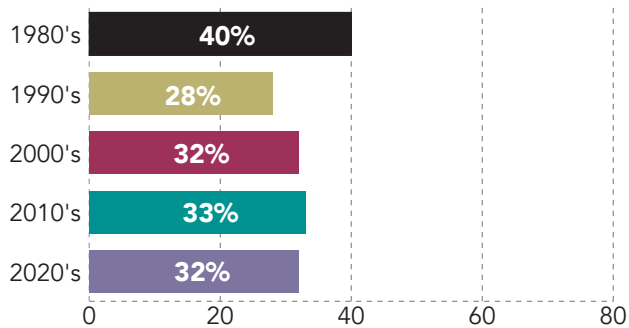
To increase my international mobility (e.g. work abroad / establish an international career)



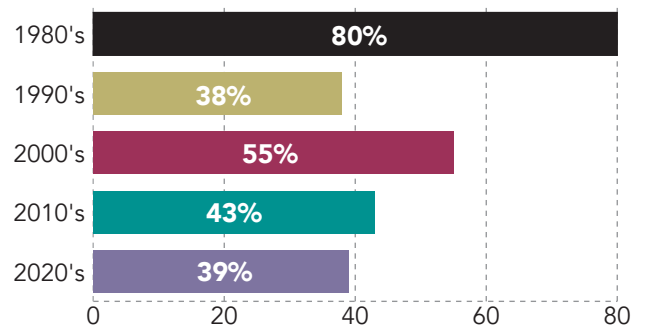
To help differentiate myself in the job market



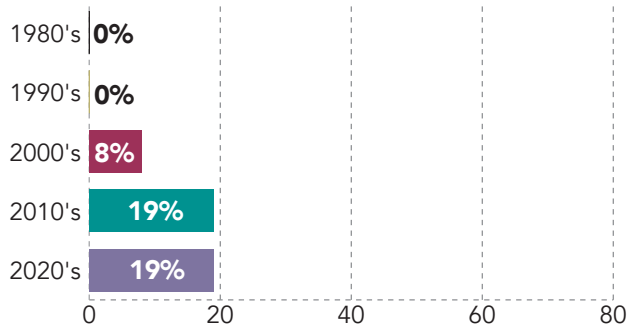
To build my confidence



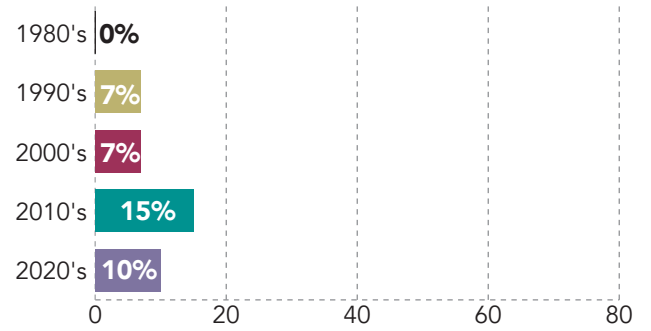
To get a broader understanding of how businesses should be managed



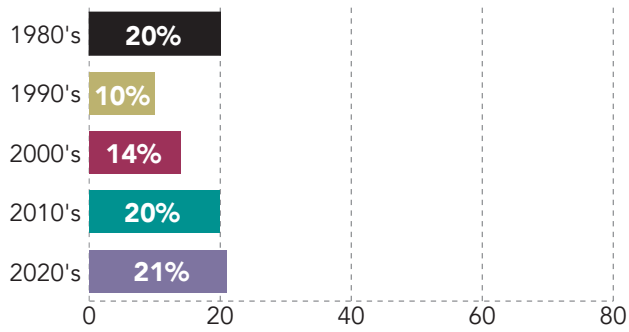
To learn about developing a sustainable business



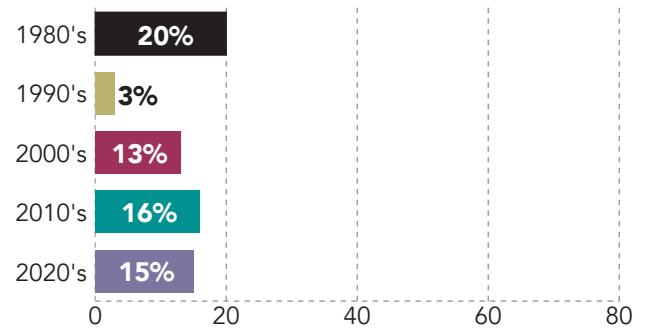
To learn about how to run an ethically sound business



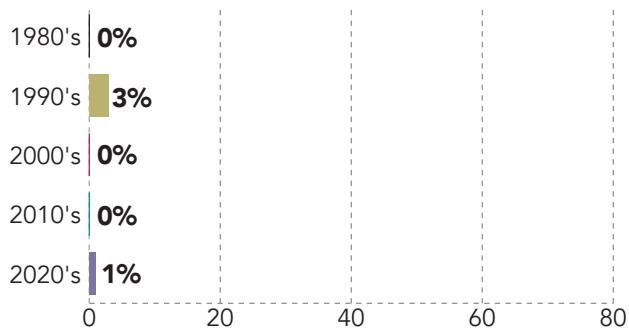
To learn how to run a more profitable business



To help understand how to run a business for the greater good of society



I do not recall



In figure 6, the reasons why the respondents chose to embark on their course were compared against the year in which they graduated. This was to see if there was a difference in the reason for students deciding to do a business course depending on the timeframe.

From the results, it is clear that those who graduated in the 2020s, were more likely to choose a number of options than those who graduated in the 1980s – suggesting a greater variety of reasons for doing a business course.

For those who graduated in the 2020s, the most popular reason was to expand their area of expertise (72%). For those who graduated prior to the 2020s their primary reason was to learn more skills and gain greater knowledge of the business world.

Earning potential has become an increasingly important reason for students to embark on a business course. For those who graduated in the 1990s, only 21 per cent cited earning more money in the long term as a reason for completing their course, however this rose to 43 per cent for those who graduated after 2020.

Another motivation for taking a business course that has become increasingly popular is to improve business and professional network contacts. For those who graduated

in the 1990's, only a fifth picked this as an important reason for completing their course, compared to those who graduated more recently, 42 per cent of whom picked this as a reason.

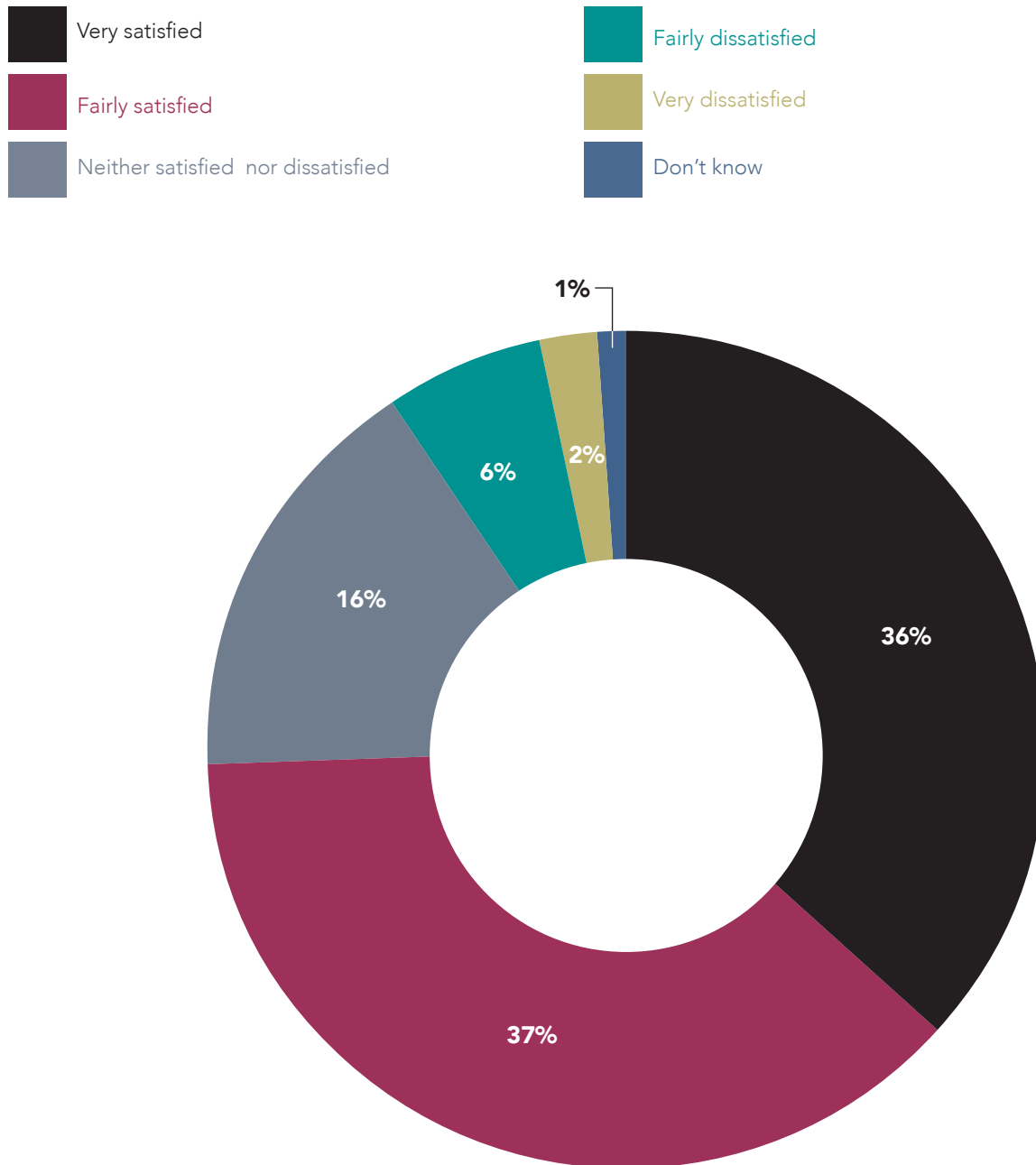
Graduates were then asked how long it took them to find a job they wanted post-graduation. Just over a quarter of respondents (26 per cent), already had the job they wanted before starting their programme; 17 per cent of graduates, meanwhile, still don't have the job they want.

A further 16 per cent of graduates found the job they wanted while they were studying for their programme and 13 per cent found the job they wanted within the relatively short time of six months to one year after they graduated.

For eight per cent of the graduates it took them between a year to two years, for seven per cent it took them between six months to a year and for four per cent it took them between three to four years. For three percent of the graduates it took them over four years while for four per cent this question did not apply.

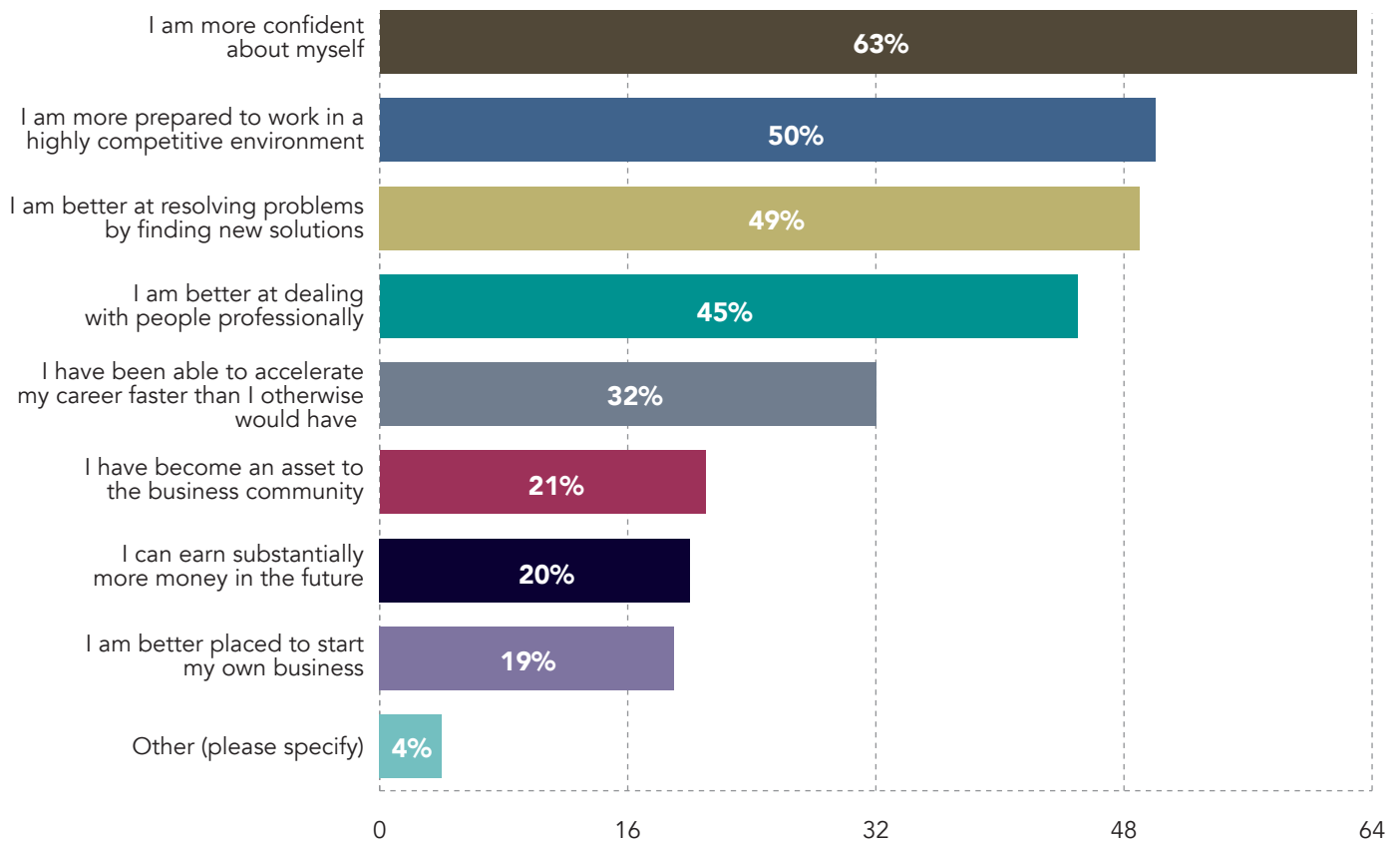


FIGURE 7: HOW SATISFIED OR DISSATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE IMPACT THAT THE PROGRAMME HAS HAD ON YOUR CAREER TO DATE?



On the whole, graduates were very positive about the impact that their course has had on their careers. Nearly three quarters of graduates (73 per cent) reported feeling either “very satisfied” or “fairly satisfied”. Only eight per cent of graduates reported being dissatisfied.

FIGURE 8: WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING APPLIES TO YOU HAVING COMPLETED YOUR BUSINESS PROGRAMME?
PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY



Students were asked what specifically they felt they had gained from their business course.

By far the most popular option graduates picked was the fact that their business programme made them feel more confident about themselves (63 per cent). The next most popular option was that graduates felt as if they were more prepared to work in a highly competitive environment (50 per cent) and a similar number felt they became better at resolving problems by finding new solutions (49 per cent).

Respondents also felt they had been able to improve their soft skills. Nearly half (45 per cent) of graduates said that after their business course, they were able to deal with people better in a professional context.

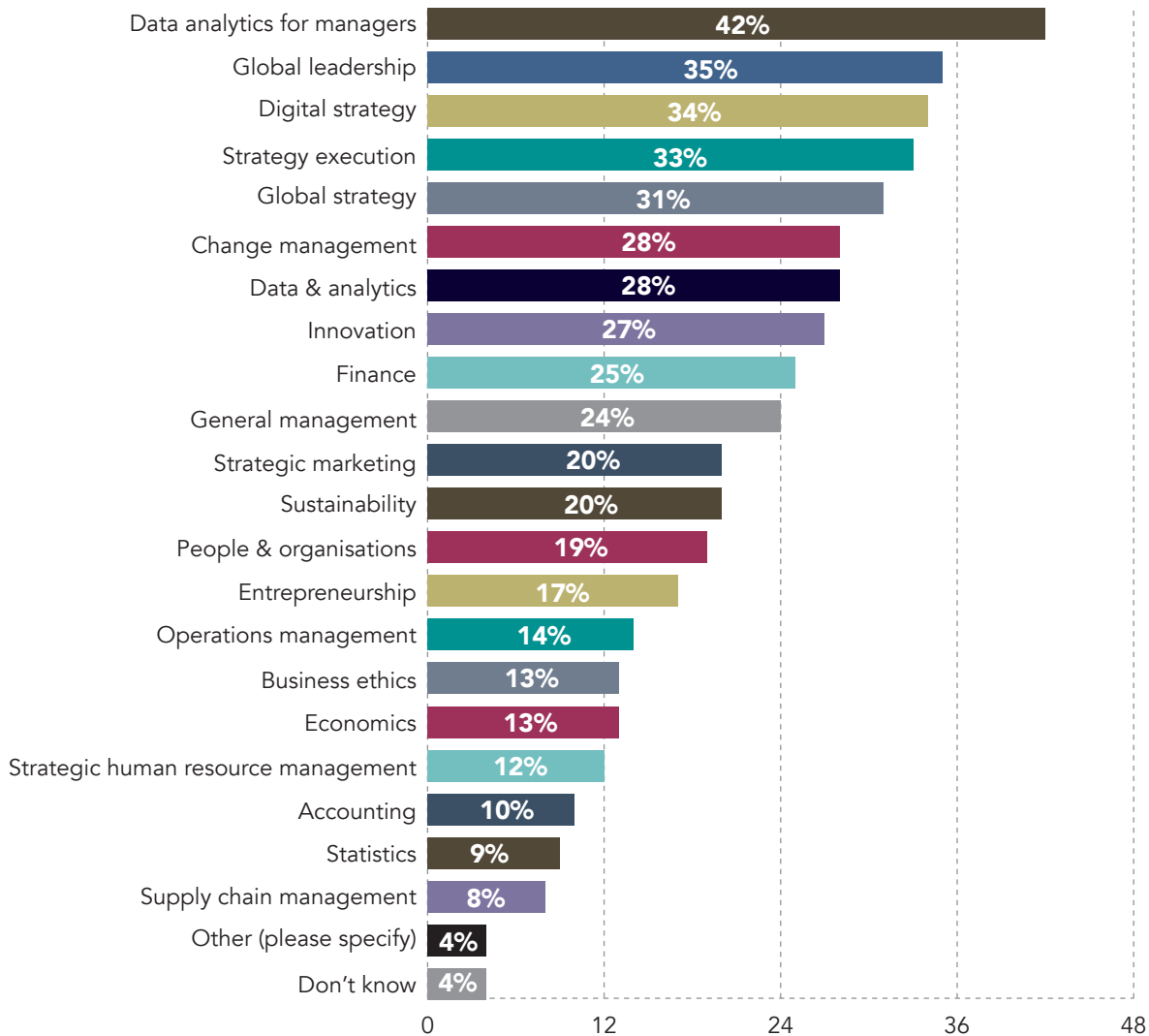
At the other end of the scale, one fifth of graduates (19 per cent) said they were in a better position to start their own business after completing their course.

Those who selected 'other', gave answers such as the following:

- Being able to change career and industry
- A better understanding of organisations and the roles within them
- They are more humble
- They learnt the business jargon required

As the majority of graduates were happy with the impact the course had on their careers, the survey went on to ask if the graduates would be interested in doing further courses at their business school and specifically what subject they would be interested in learning about.

FIGURE 9: IF YOUR BUSINESS SCHOOL OFFERED ADDITIONAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAMMES TO ITS ALUMNI, WHICH SUBJECTS WOULD INTEREST YOU MOST? PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY



Graduates declared that they would most like to go back to learn about data analytics for managers (42 per cent). Other popular subjects included global leadership (35 per cent), digital strategy (34 per cent), strategy execution (33 per cent) and global strategy (31 per cent).

Less popular subjects were accounting (10 per cent), statistics (nine per cent) and supply chain management (four per cent).

For those who selected 'other', they were asked to give a response. These included:

- Industrial focus management, e.g. healthcare management
- Working with artificial intelligence
- Environmental sustainability
- Compliance & risk management
- Blockchain
- Project management

Conclusion

This survey reveals that, in general, graduates reflected on their business school experience in a positive way. The majority were satisfied with their programme and the impact it has had on their career.

From comparing the results of part one of this report (which focused on current students) to the graduates' answers, we can see that there is a general alignment between students' desired industry/sector in which they want to work and the sectors of the economy where graduates have actually ended up working.

Additionally, students' preference for hybrid work was mirrored in the fact that 48 per cent of graduates already use this format, indicating evolving work preferences in the post-pandemic environment.

The alignment between students' desired sectors of employment and graduates' actual work circumstances suggest that business school education has a positive impact on one's career path. Business schools should feel pleased that they are actively satisfying their students and creating contented graduates who would be happy to continue learning.





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