

2017 PhD Career Pathways Alumni Survey

The 2017 PhD Career Pathways Alumni Survey was administered to over 7,000 PhD alumni from all ten UC campuses that graduated during the 2001-02, 2008-09 or the 2013-14 academic year between October 20th, 2017 and December 8th, 2017. This report provides information on completion rates and sample representativeness. This survey was developed by the Council of Graduate Schools and administered by Institutional Research & Academic Planning.

STUDY POPULATION

This was a census survey, as such, all alumni with a valid email address were asked to participate.

RESPONSE RATE

Response rate refers to the percentage of students in the survey population who responded to the survey. This includes students who completed all questions and submitted the survey (completes), those who completed all questions but did not submit the survey and those who completed part of the survey (partials). As Qualtrics cannot make a distinction between items in the consent form and the actual survey items, the response rates reported in Qualtrics included all students who “started” the survey by at least endorsing the consent form.

Respondents: 2,309. The final cleaned data file contains 2,309 respondents, excluding duplicated cases, students below 18 years of age, testing cases, and respondents who did not answer any survey questions. This contributes to an overall response rate of 33%. Table 2 summarizes the response rate for the system and by campus.

Completes: 1,981. The final cleaned data file contains 1,981 completed respondents, who responded to at least one survey item and clicked the “submit” button at the conclusion of the survey. This translates into a completion rate of 28%.

Partial completes: 328. Partial complete means that at least one item was answered, but the “submit” button was not clicked. These participants may also be considered dropouts. These surveys were closed

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out at the end of the administration period, capturing all information provided by the respondent up to the day of survey closure.

Table 1. Response and Completion Rate by Campus

Campus	Total Invites	Total Respondents	Response Rate	Total Completes	Completion Rate
Berkeley	1,424	441	31%	378	27%
Davis	1,133	323	29%	286	25%
Irvine	677	952	28%	151	22%
Los Angeles	1,667	576	35%	490	29%
Merced	28	12	43%	10	36%
Riverside	332	86	26%	76	23%
San Diego	805	305	38%	274	34%
San Francisco	292	94	32%	76	26%
Santa Barbara	486	193	40%	165	34%
Santa Cruz	256	91	36%	75	29%
Systemwide	7,100	2,309	33%	1,981	28%

SAMPLE REPRESENTATIVENESS

Sample representativeness, defined as the degree to which the sample resembles the study population, often indicates whether systematic differences exist in the responses between survey respondents and non-respondents. A representative sample is one in which the characteristics or key variables in the sample parallel those of the target population. Examples of key variables include gender, race/ethnicity, student level, and so on. A representative sample ensures that the sample estimate of a mean or proportion is unbiased so that results or conclusions drawn from the sample can be generalized to the entire population.

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Comparing individual characteristics or key variables between the sample and the population is a method commonly used to check whether a sample is representative of the study population. For categorical variables, a multivariate frequency table (or crosstab) is often used to examine the distribution of the sample and compare it to the population. IRAP compared the proportions of individuals across different categories of the variable in the sample versus the population. A significant difference in the proportions implies that the sample is not representative of the population.

Overall, respondents were fairly representative by race/ethnicity and discipline. However, differences between the population and respondents were found by campus and exit cohort (see table 2). Survey weights were constructed using two logistic regression models. The first logistic regression model was used to determine the predicted probability that a respondent would have been included in the study. Independent variables included campus and survey year. This model was conducted as some of the campuses provided more emails than others, which affected the overall composition of the sample. The second logistic regression model was used to determine the predicted probability that an individual would respond to the survey request. See UC's survey weights document for additional methodological details.

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Table 2. 2017 PhD Career Pathways Alumni Survey Sample Representativeness

Campus	Academic Year	Population	Respondent
Berkeley	2001	31%	25%
Berkeley	2008	33%	36%
Berkeley	2013	36%	39%
Davis	2001	27%	16%
Davis	2008	36%	43%
Davis	2013	37%	41%
Irvine	2001	17%	8%
Irvine	2008	40%	42%
Irvine	2013	43%	50%
Los Angeles	2001	28%	19%
Los Angeles	2008	35%	38%
Los Angeles	2013	37%	43%
Merced	2013	100%	100%
Riverside	2001	26%	16%
Riverside	2008	28%	32%
Riverside	2013	46%	52%
San Diego	2001	24%	20%
San Diego	2008	34%	39%
San Diego	2013	42%	42%
San Francisco	2001	23%	30%
San Francisco	2008	36%	40%
San Francisco	2013	41%	31%
Santa Barbara	2001	23%	27%
Santa Barbara	2008	28%	34%
Santa Barbara	2013	39%	39%
Santa Cruz	2001	48%	33%
Santa Cruz	2008	6%	11%
Santa Cruz	2013	46%	56%