

University System of Georgia Georgia Labor Market Participation of USG Nursing Graduates

Introduction

Because the state's economy is improved by keeping graduates with higher levels of education working in the state, it is important for the University System of Georgia (USG) to track graduates into the labor market. However, it is expected that some graduates will leave the state following graduation. Whether a student from a USG institution works in Georgia following graduation is a function of two primary sets of factors: whether and where the graduate receives job offers and whether the graduate seeks and chooses to accept a job offer in Georgia. A number of demographic, psychological, academic, economic, and societal factors likely affect both the offer of a job and the decision about where to work following college.

This paper asks to what extent Georgia retains USG nursing graduates in the Georgia work force.

Tracking Graduates into the Labor Market

In the last decade, several state systems of higher education have begun tracking their graduates into the labor market using existing information collected from employers by each state's department of labor as part of the processing of Unemployment Insurance (UI).¹ Through a contract between the USG System Office and the Georgia Department of Labor (DOL), the UI data (also called ES202 files) have been merged with student-level USG data.²

The USG System Office provided a file containing the identification numbers of all graduates from FY2005 to the Georgia DOL. DOL matched these records against their UI data base, and they returned employment and wage data for all four quarters of the 2006 calendar year for the students who were employed in Georgia. The lag of a minimum of six months following graduation allows for a period of time for the graduate to find a job. Students may take temporary jobs in the summer following graduation while they seek permanent employment. Students were counted as employed in Georgia if they were found in the UI data during any fiscal quarter of the calendar year (thus, students employed for one quarter are combined with students employed for four quarters).

¹ *Unemployment Insurance: The Employer's Handbook*, Georgia Department of Labor, DOL-224 (R-7/98), <http://www.dol.state.ga.us/pdf/forms/dol224.pdf>.

² The agreement specifies the conditions for matching of BOR student-level data on graduates with DOL UI data by social security number for the purposes of research to improve education in Georgia. The provisions of the agreement protect the confidentiality of both student and labor department data, and they meet the requirements of the federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, DOL, and USG policies on confidentiality. The first data were exchanged in 1998, and a preliminary study of placement and wages was completed by the Board of Regents Office of Research and Policy Analysis.

The attached tables, and similar reports completed by other systems, oversimplify the work lives of students, assuming that the first transition into the labor market occurs after graduation. Some students work part-time or even full-time while enrolled in college, and the job in the year following graduation may represent a continuation of a job held in college. For most students, however, the job held after college likely represents the first permanent job. To fully study the effects of college on labor market participation, one would need data on college major, employment during college, degree conferred, employment in the labor force in any state following college, occupation, and wages over time.

Understanding the UI Data: What Can We Know About USG Graduates?

The Georgia DOL UI data contain individual information for those graduates who were employed in the labor market in Georgia, with the name and address of the company where the person was employed, quarterly wage, and the Standard Industrial Classification code for the employer. Merging DOL and USG data creates a significant source of information about the labor market experiences of USG graduates, the richest information that Georgia has ever had, and the process is cost-effective.

In analyzing these data, it is important to understand what the data can and cannot tell us about employment outcomes. First, the Georgia Department of Labor has data only on those employees who work in Georgia. Thus, USG graduates who have left the state cannot be differentiated from those who are not employed (out of the labor market or unemployed) or in the military. Job title, hours worked, and full or part-time status are not reported. Most importantly, the DOL data do not contain the occupation of the worker, and there are no available data in Georgia or nationally on the occupations of individual workers.³ An additional caveat is that some of the business addresses reported in the UI data reflect either the home office location or the location of the reporting proxy for the company, regardless of geographic place of employment.⁴

Although most employers must report UI data, not all are required to do so. Included in the UI data are private businesses that have at least one worker for 20 calendar weeks or who have a payroll of at least \$1,500 in a quarter, non-profit organizations with at least 4 employees in 20 weeks, and agricultural employers with 10 or more workers on any day during 20 weeks or with at least \$20,000 in a quarter's payroll.⁵ Excluded are workers who are self-employed (and their family members), certain elected officials, members of the National Guard or Air National Guard, casual laborers, insurance agents or solicitors and real estate sales agents whose wages are based on commission, student workers, employees of a church or religious order, employees of church-related schools, inmates in prisons or state correctional institutions, and federal workers.

Since the DOL data rely on social security numbers to identify employees, only those graduates with valid social security numbers were matched to USG data. Many international students do not have social security numbers upon enrollment at USG institutions. In these cases, a student tax identification number is assigned to the student upon matriculation. Since there is no way to match these graduate records with DOL files, information on international graduates' employment will be understated.

³ Oklahoma uses state income tax data as a source of information on occupation.

⁴ For example, the only address listed for an employee of Publix Supermarkets is Lakeland, FL; the only address listed for the investment firm A.G. Edwards is St. Louis, MO.

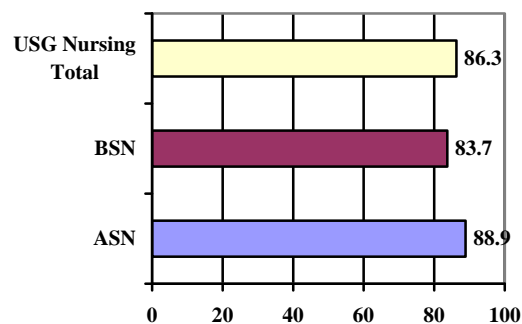
⁵ See *Unemployment Insurance: The Employers Handbook*, or a shorter version "Information About Unemployment Insurance for Employers: Tax Report and Liability," Georgia Department of Labor, DOL-4E (R-05/04), 2004. The regulations are more complex than presented here.

Labor Force Participation Rates of USG Nursing Graduates Working in Georgia

Figure 1 below presents the 2006 Georgia labor force participation rates of FY2005 USG nursing graduates. The rate is the number of “matches” between social security numbers in the USG Graduate File and the DOL UI file divided by the number of graduates. A student was counted as a nursing graduate if the CIP code attached to the graduation record was 51.16. There is no way to further differentiate nursing graduates into those who are pre-licensure nursing graduates and those who have already been licensed as RNs.

For the USG as a whole, 86.3 percent of the FY2005 nursing graduates were employed in Georgia in 2006; 83.7 percent of the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) graduates were employed; 88.9 percent of the Associate of Science in Nursing graduates were employed.

Figure 1
Percentage of USG FY2005 Nursing Graduates in the Georgia Labor Market in 2006



Labor force participation rates for each USG institution with a nursing program are presented in Appendices 1 and 2.

Where are the USG nursing graduates who are not in the Georgia labor force? As described above, some of these students, likely a small percentage, are self-employed or employed in businesses that are not part of the UI system. Some students may be unemployed (still seeking a job) or out of the labor market (not seeking a job). Others may be in federal employment. Bachelor’s degree graduates may be enrolled in graduate school in the USG, private Georgia institutions, or out-of-state institutions; associate degree graduates may be enrolled in a four-year degree program. Finally, although there are currently no data to support this, we assume that many of the graduates not in the Georgia labor market are employed in other states. Because there are no national data on labor market placement, it is difficult to put the rates into context for accountability purposes, and it is not possible to determine whether these rates are high or low compared to other states.

Appendix 1.
University System of Georgia
Number of USG Nursing Graduates in FY2005, Number in Georgia Labor Market,
and Employment Rates in 2006
Bachelor of Science in Nursing Degrees

Institution	Bachelor's Degree Graduates (BSN)		
	# FY2005 Graduates	Labor Market 2006	
		#	%
Georgia State University	101	80	79.2
Medical College of Georgia	185	154	83.2
<i>Research Universities</i>	286	234	81.8
Georgia Southern University	87	62	71.3
Valdosta State University	78	61	78.2
<i>Regional Universities</i>	165	123	74.5
Albany State University	19	19	100
Armstrong Atlantic State University	99	89	89.9
Clayton State University	73	55	75.3
Columbus State University	45	42	93.3
Georgia College & State University	71	67	94.4
Georgia Southwestern State University	19	18	94.7
Kennesaw State University	139	118	84.9
North Georgia College & State University	27	26	96.3
University of West Georgia	65	53	81.5
<i>State Universities</i>	557	487	87.4
System Total BSN	1,008	844	83.7

Nursing graduates are defined as those with a CIP code of 51.16. The total number of USG graduates above includes all degrees awarded, counting any instance of multiple degrees awarded to the same student during one graduation year. Thus, a student who earns a degree from two institutions is counted twice above, and, similarly, labor market participation is counted twice for that student. (This is very rare.) Within an institution, labor market totals are distinct counts, i.e., each student is counted only once, even if the person appears in more than one job during the year. This count includes students who graduated with a BSN degree in nursing, including RN-BSN completion programs.

Appendix 2.
University System of Georgia
Number of USG Nursing Graduates in FY2005, Number in Georgia Labor Market,
and Employment Rates in 2006
Associate of Science in Nursing Degrees

Institution	Associate Degree Graduates (ASN)		
	# FY2005 Graduates	Labor Market	
		#	%
Augusta State University	59	45	76.3
North Georgia College & State University	117	103	88
<i>State Universities</i>	<i>176</i>	<i>148</i>	<i>84.1</i>
Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College	126	115	91.3
Dalton State College	51	37	72.5
Gordon College	66	60	90.9
Macon State College	54	51	94.4
Middle Georgia College	86	77	89.5
<i>State Colleges</i>	<i>383</i>	<i>340</i>	<i>88.8</i>
Coastal Georgia Community College ¹	57	48	84.2
Darton College	134	119	88.8
Georgia Highlands College	76	73	96.1
Georgia Perimeter College	74	67	90.5
South Georgia College	56	55	98.2
<i>Two-Year Colleges</i>	<i>397</i>	<i>362</i>	<i>91.2</i>
System Total ASN	956	850	88.9

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¹Now *College of Coastal Georgia*

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