

FIT Undergraduate Alumni Survey Results for 2016–17 Graduates

Summary Report

Office of Institutional Research

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**Fashion Institute
of Technology**

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About the FIT Alumni Survey

FIT administers an annual survey of alumni who graduated during the previous academic year with either an associate or bachelor’s degree. This one-year-out survey asks graduates about their current education and employment status, satisfaction with their overall FIT experience, and skills gained at FIT. A total of 3,661 graduates from the 2016-2017 academic year were surveyed and 779 responded, generating a 21% response rate (Table 1). Bachelor’s graduates were surveyed in May 2018, a year after graduation. Associate graduates were surveyed in January 2018. The earlier date for associate graduates is required for outcomes reporting related to FIT’s participation in the federal Perkins technical education grant program. Appendix A details the response rate by major.

Table 1. Response Rates by Degree Awarded

	Number Surveyed	Number Responding	Response Rate
All	3,661	779	21.3%
AAS	2,075	547	26.4%
BFA	519	92	17.7%
BS	1,067	140	13.1%

FIT conducts three large-scale student surveys, but the alumni survey is the only one administered annually. The other surveys, which are administered every three years, include the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), and the Student Opinion Survey (SOS). Taken together, these three surveys provide data that help shape and guide institutional policy. The NSSE and SOS surveys also produce comparative data that help institutions track their progress in relation to other institutions.

Survey	Next administration	Population	Content
National Survey of Student Engagement	Spring 2020	First-year students and seniors (First-year AAS and second-year bachelor)	Amount and type of academic and non-academic activities engaged in, campus environment, skills emphasized, and quality of advising
Alumni Survey	January 2019, Associate. May 2019, Bachelor's.	Alumni who graduated in the prior year	Job placement, satisfaction, skills gained at FIT
SUNY Student Opinion Survey	Spring 2021	Associate and bachelor students	Satisfaction with educational quality, specific services, facilities, programs, and advising. Amount and types of academic activities engaged in

Key Results

About the Survey

- Associate and bachelor's degree graduates from the 2016-2017 academic year were surveyed one year after graduation. A total of 3,661 graduates were surveyed and 779 responded, producing a 21% response rate. (Table 1, page 1)

Employment and School Attendance

- Eighty-one percent of associate degree graduates reported that they continued their education after graduating. Far fewer of the bachelor's graduates (2%) reported continuing on to further schooling. (Tables 2A and 3A, pages 4-6)
- Seventy-nine percent of associate degree graduates who were not attending school were employed, with 18% being unemployed (seeking employment but not working), and 3% were neither working nor seeking employment. (Table 2C, page 5)
- Eighty-six percent of bachelor's graduates were employed, with 68% reporting employment in a job related to their degree. Eleven percent were unemployed (seeking employment but not working) and two percent were neither working nor seeking employment. (Table 3B, page 6)
- A placement rate, which is used for federal Higher Education Act reporting requirements, is calculated for students who are employed or seeking employment. This placement rate equals the number of employed graduates as a percentage of the total of employed graduates and those who are seeking employment. The placement rate was 67% for all associate degree graduates, 81% for associate graduates who were not attending school, and 88% for bachelor's degree graduates. (Tables 2C and 3B, pages 5-6)

Earnings and Benefits

- Among working graduates, 87% of bachelor's graduates and 75% of associate graduates who were not attending school worked full-time. Among bachelor's graduates who worked full-time, 66% earned more than \$40,000 per year and 71% had jobs with health insurance. Forty-four percent of associate graduates not attending school earned more than \$40,000 per year and 57% had jobs with health insurance. (Tables 4A and 5, pages 7 and 8).

New York Employment

- Among working graduates, 86% stayed in New York State to work, 5% worked in New Jersey, and 3.6% worked outside the U.S. (Table 6, page 10)

Satisfaction with FIT Education

- Eighty-five percent of graduates reported that courses in their major made “some or a great deal” of contribution to their job, job search or continued education. Sixty-nine percent of graduates who had for-credit internships and seventy-four percent of graduates who had non-credit internships reported that those experiences made similar contributions to their post-graduation success. (Table 9a, page 14)
- Graduates reported high levels of satisfaction with their overall FIT experience: 80% would choose to attend FIT again, 70% would choose the same major, and 87% would recommend FIT to prospective students. (Table 10, page 15)

Employment and School Attendance

Respondents reported on their school attendance and employment outcomes. The employment outcomes included whether or not they were employed, employed in a related field, unemployed, or not seeking employment. A placement rate is calculated from the employment responses, which equals the number of employed graduates as a percentage of the total number of employed graduates and those who are seeking employment, but not working. Results are reported separately for associate and bachelor's degree graduates.

Table 2: Associate Degree Employment and School Attendance Outcomes by School

A. School Attendance

	All		Art and Design		Business and Technology	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Attending FIT	405	76.3%	163	73.4%	241	78.5%
Attending another school	23	4.3%	12	5.4%	10	3.3%
Not attending school	103	19.4%	47	21.2%	56	18.2%
Total	531	100.0%	222	100.0%	307	100.0%

B. Employment (All Associate Graduates)

	All		Art and Design		Business and Technology	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Employed Subtotal	282	54.5%	100	45.6%	181	61.1%
Employed, Not Related to Degree	128	24.7%	48	21.9%	79	26.6%
Employed, Related to Degree	154	29.7%	52	23.7%	102	34.4%
Not working, not seeking employment	97	18.7%	48	21.9%	49	16.5%
Unemployed, seeking employment	138	26.6%	71	32.4%	66	22.2%
All	517	100.0%	219	100.0%	296	100.0%
Placement Rate (All Associate Graduates)						
(A) Employed subtotal						
	282		100		181	
(B) Employed + Seeking Employment						
	420		171		247	
Placement Rate (A divided by B)	67.1%		58.5%		73.3%	

C. Employment (Associate Graduates not Attending School)

	All		Art and Design		Business and Technology	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Employed Subtotal	87	79.0%	37	74.0%	50	83.3%
Employed, Not Related to Degree	29	26.3%	14	28.0%	15	25.0%
Employed, Related to Degree	58	52.7%	23	46.0%	35	58.3%
Not working, not seeking employment	3	2.7%	2	4.0%	1	1.6%
Unemployed, seeking employment	20	18.1%	11	22.0%	9	15.0%
All	110	100.0%	50	100.0%	60	100.0%
Placement Rate (Associate Graduates not Attending School)						
(A) Employed subtotal	87		37		50	
(B) Employed + Seeking Employment	107		48		59	
Placement Rate (A divided by B)	81.3%		77.1%		84.7%	

Eighty-one percent of associate degree respondents continued their education after receiving their associate degree – 82% of Business and Technology graduates and 79% of Art and Design graduates. Fifty-five percent of all associate degree respondents were employed – 61% of Business and Technology graduates and 46% of Art and Design graduates. About half of the employed graduates had jobs related to their degree. Among all associate graduates, 30% worked in a related field, and 25% worked in an unrelated field. Related field employment was higher for Business and Technology graduates than Art and Design graduates, 34% compared to 24%.

However, employment rates for associate graduates are much higher for those graduates who are not continuing their education. Among school “leavers,” 79% were employed, with 53% being employed in a related field.

The placement rate, which includes only those graduates who are employed or seeking employment, was 67% for all associate graduates, 73% for Business and Technology graduates, and 59% for Art and Design graduates (Table 2B).

Table 3: Bachelor Degree Employment and School Attendance Outcomes by School
A. School Attendance

	All		Art and Design		Business and Technology	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Attending another school	5	2.2%	1	1.1%	3	2.2%
Not attending school	222	97.7%	86	98.8%	132	97.7%
Total	227	100.0%	87	100.0%	135	100.0%

B. Employment Outcomes

	All		Art and Design		Business and Technology	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Employed Subtotal	197	86.4%	72	80.8%	120	89.5%
Employed, Related to Degree	156	68.4%	59	66.2%	95	70.8%
Employed, Not Related to Degree	41	17.9%	13	14.6%	25	18.6%
Not working, not seeking employment	5	2.1%	3	3.3%	2	1.4%
Unemployed, seeking employment	26	11.4%	14	15.7%	12	8.9%
All	228	100.0%	89	100.0%	134	100.0%
Placement Rate						
(A) Employed subtotal	197		72		120	
(B) Employed + Seeking Employment	223		86		132	
Placement Rate (A divided by B)	88.3%		83.7%		90.9%	

Two percent of bachelor’s degree respondents continued their education after graduation. Eighty-six percent of all bachelor’s degree respondents were employed – 90% of Business and Technology graduates and 81% of Art and Design graduates. Most employed graduates had jobs related to their degree. Among all graduates (including Liberal Arts graduates), 68% worked in a related field and 18% worked in an unrelated field. Related field employment was 71% for Business and Technology graduates and 66% for Art and Design graduates (Table 3B). The placement rate, which is based on only those graduates who are employed or seeking employment, was 88% for all graduates, 91% for Business and Technology graduates, and 84% for Art and Design graduates (Table 3C).

Job Characteristics

Types of Employment

Graduates were asked how many hours they worked per week, whether they worked for an employer or for themselves, and the level of the positions that they held. Full-time work (35 or more hours per week) was the norm among bachelor’s graduates (87%) and associate graduates who were not attending school (75%). Associate graduates who were still in school were less likely to work full-time (21%).

Eighty-five percent of all graduates worked for an employer, with 10% doing freelance work and 4% being self-employed. Over half (61%) of all graduates had entry level positions, with 19% working beyond the entry level and 6% in supervisory roles. Fourteen percent were interns, but almost all interns (49 out of 61) were associate graduates who continued in school.

Table 4. Types of Employment

A. Full-Time/Part-Time Status

	All Respondents		Bachelors		Associate, not in school		Associate, in school	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Full-time	279	58.1%	173	87.3%	65	74.7%	41	21.0%
Part-time	201	41.8%	25	12.6%	22	25.2%	154	78.9%
All Respondents	480	100.0%	198	100.0%	87	100.0%	195	100.0%

B. Employment Arrangement

	All Respondents		Bachelors		Associate, not in school		Associate, in school	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Employee for a business, government agency, or non-profit organization	394	85.4%	173	88.7%	62	76.5%	159	85.9%
Freelancer	48	10.4%	18	9.2%	11	13.5%	19	10.2%
Self-employed in your own business	19	4.1%	4	2.0%	8	9.8%	7	3.7%
All Respondents	461	100.0%	195	100.0%	81	100.0%	185	100.0%

C. Level of Job

	All Respondents		Bachelors		Associate, not in school		Associate, in school	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Employee - Beyond entry level	83	18.9%	38	20.5%	19	25.3%	26	14.5%
Employee - Entry level	267	60.8%	131	70.8%	43	57.3%	93	51.9%
Intern	61	13.8%	5	2.7%	7	9.3%	49	27.3%
Supervisor/Manager	28	6.3%	11	5.9%	6	8.0%	11	6.1%
All Respondents	439	100.0%	185	100.0%	75	100.0%	179	100.0%

Earnings and Benefits

Graduates reported on their earnings ranges and whether or not they received job related benefits such as health insurance, retirement, and paid vacation. Results are shown here for full-time workers only.

Table 5. Earnings and Benefits for Graduates Employed Full-Time

	Bachelors		Associate, not in school		Associate, in school	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Annual Earnings						
\$20,000 or less	8	4.7%	8	12.6%	6	14.6%
More than \$20,000 to \$30,000	9	5.2%	12	19.0%	17	41.4%
More than \$30,000 to \$40,000	41	24.1%	15	23.8%	9	21.9%
More than \$40,000 to \$50,000	42	24.7%	14	22.2%	5	12.1%
More than \$50,000	70	41.1%	14	22.2%	4	9.7%
Health Insurance						
No	49	28.8%	27	42.8%	24	58.5%
Yes	121	71.1%	36	57.1%	17	41.4%
Retirement Benefits						
No	58	34.1%	36	57.1%	23	56.0%
Yes	112	65.8%	27	42.8%	18	43.9%
Paid Vacation						
No	35	20.5%	20	31.7%	21	51.2%
Yes	135	79.4%	43	68.2%	20	48.7%
Total	170	100.0%	63	100.0%	41	100.0%

Among bachelor's graduates, 90% of full-time workers earn over \$30,000 per year, with 24% in the \$30,000 to \$40,000 range, 25% in the \$40,000 to \$50,000 range, and 41% earning \$50,000 or more. The distribution of earnings for associate degree recipients who did not attend school is lower than that of the bachelor's graduates. At the low end, a larger proportion of associate graduates (32% compared to 10%) earned \$30,000 or less. Also, a lower percentage (22% compared to 25%) were in the \$40,000 to \$50,000 earnings range. Twenty-two percent earned more than \$50,000.

Most of the graduates who had full-time jobs had fringe benefits. Among bachelor's graduates, 71% received health insurance, 66% had retirement benefits, and 79% had paid vacation. The rates for associate graduates who were not in school were lower—57% had health insurance, 43% had retirement benefits, and 68% had paid vacation.

Local employment

Table 6. Location of Employment

	Bachelors		Associate, not in school		Associate, in school		All Respondents	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
New York	165	85.0%	59	73.7%	171	92.4%	395	86.0%
New Jersey	9	4.6%	6	7.5%	8	4.3%	23	5.0%
Outside the U.S.	9	4.6%	6	7.5%	2	1.0%	17	3.6%
California	3	1.5%	1	1.2%	.	.	4	0.8%
Connecticut	2	1.0%	1	1.2%	.	.	3	0.6%
Other States	6	3.0%	7	8.4%	4	2.0%	17	3.4%
All Respondents	194	100.0%	80	100.0%	185	100.0%	459	100.0%

Eighty-six percent of all working respondents worked in New York State following graduation. Five percent worked in New Jersey, 3.6% worked outside the U.S., .8% worked in California, .6% in Connecticut, and 3.4% in other states.

Job Search, Contributions of FIT Experiences, and Satisfaction with FIT Education

The preceding set of questions about employment and schooling outcomes was asked of all survey respondents, both those who left FIT after graduation and associate graduates who stayed at FIT to pursue their bachelor's degree. The following section presents results for questions about job search methods, the contributions of various FIT educational and extracurricular activities to post-graduation success, and graduates' overall satisfaction with their FIT education. This part of the survey was only completed by bachelor's graduates and associate graduates who were not enrolled at FIT in spring 2018.

Job Search

Graduates were asked about the methods that they used to look for jobs. The methods considered included FIT career services counseling, FIT career services job bank, instructors, job fairs, networking, and online job boards. Graduates were asked how much they used each method (responses ranged from "a great deal" to "not at all"). They were also asked about how helpful each method was, with responses ranging from "very helpful" to "not helpful," and "did not use."

Networking was used the most, with 71% reporting that they used it "some or a great deal." Public online job boards were used "some or a great deal" by 66% of graduates, compared to 41% for instructors and 37% for the FIT job bank. At the bottom in usage ranges were FIT Career services counseling (25%) and FIT job fairs (17%).

To a large extent, the job search methods that were used the most were also the most helpful. For example, networking had the highest usage rate at 71% and also had the highest proportion of users reporting that the method was somewhat or very helpful (87%).

Table 7. Use of Job Search Methods and Their Helpfulness

	Responses	Used Service Some or a Great Deal		Of those who used service some or a great deal, how many found it somewhat or very helpful?	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
		FIT Career Center	341	85	25%
FIT Instructors	342	141	41%	108	80%
FIT Job Fairs	342	59	17%	38	64%
Other Job Fairs	337	37	11%	18	49%
FIT Job Bank	342	126	37%	90	72%
Public Boards	341	226	66%	181	82%
Networking	341	242	71%	208	87%

Students were also asked if they had a for-credit internship and whether it led to a job or a job offer. Among all respondents reporting a for-credit internship, 29% said that the internship led to a job or an offer. The rate was 30% for bachelor’s graduates and 23% for associate graduates were not attending school.

Table 8.

A. Did you have a credit-bearing internship?

	All Respondents		Bachelors		Associate, not in school		Associate, in school	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
All	341	100.0%	221	100.0%	99	100.0%	21	100.0%
No	133	39.0%	54	24.4%	64	64.6%	15	71.4%
Yes	208	60.9%	167	75.5%	35	35.3%	6	28.5%

B. Did your credit-bearing internship lead directly to a job or job offer with the employer?

	All Respondents		Bachelors		Associate, not in school		Associate, in school	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Students with Internships	208	100.0%	167	100.0%	35	100.0%	6	100.0%
No	147	70.6%	117	70.0%	27	77.1%	3	50.0%
Yes	61	29.3%	50	29.9%	8	22.8%	3	50.0%

Contributions of FIT Experiences

Graduates were asked about the extent to which different types of educational experiences contributed to their success after graduation. The experiences included courses in their major, courses in their minor, internships (for credit and noncredit), general education courses, and “out of class experiences,” i.e., clubs or sports. Students could indicate whether they had the specific experiences or not, and, if they had the experience, they could indicate the degree to which the experience helped them.

There are two measures of interest. First, what percentage of students had the experience? Second, for those students who had the experience, what percentage indicated that the experience helped them “some or a great deal?”

By a wide margin, students reported that courses in their majors contributed to their post-graduation success. Eighty-five percent of all graduates, and 91% of Art and Design and 80% of Business and Technology graduates report that their major courses made “some or a great deal” of contribution to their success after graduation (Tables 9a and 9b, page 14).

Forty-four percent of all respondents reported that their general education courses contributed to the post-graduation success. Business and Technology graduates were more likely (46%) than Art and Design graduates (40%) to indicate a positive impact for general education courses. Seventy-five percent of respondents report having courses in a minor, with 50% of them indicating that the experience made a positive contribution.

Seventy-two percent of respondents had a for-credit internship, with 69% of them indicating that the experience made a positive contribution. Sixty percent of respondents had a non-credit internship, with 74% of them indicating that the experience made a positive contribution. Eighty-four percent had some kind of internship, either for-credit or non-credit. Ninety-one percent of students with any type of internship indicated that at least one of those experiences made a positive contribution.

Table 9a. Contributions of FIT Experiences

	Responses	Had the experience?		Experience Contributed Some or a Great Deal	
Courses in the major	209	207	99.0%	175	85.0%
Courses in the minor	208	157	75.0%	79	50.0%
General education courses	209	202	97.0%	89	44.0%
Credit internships	209	150	72.0%	103	69.0%
Non-Credit internships	209	126	60.0%	93	74.0%
Community service	208	86	41.0%	40	47.0%
Out of class experiences	209	83	40.0%	41	49.0%
Any internship	179	151	84.0%	138	91.0%

Table 9b. Contributions of FIT Experiences by School

	Art and Design			Business and Technology		
	N	Had the experience	Experience Contributed Some or a Great Deal	N	Had the experience	Experience Contributed Some or a Great Deal
		Percent	Percent		Percent	Percent
Courses in the major	82	99%	91%	123	99%	80%
Courses in the minor	82	74%	46%	122	75%	53%
Gen education courses	82	95%	40%	123	98%	46%
Credit internships	82	72%	68%	123	71%	69%
Non-Credit internships	82	59%	65%	123	63%	81%
Community service	82	32%	58%	122	47%	42%
Out of class experiences	82	34%	54%	123	43%	47%
Any internship	70	80%	88%	106	87%	93%

Satisfaction with FIT Education

Alumni answered a general set of questions about whether they would choose FIT again, whether they would choose the same major, and whether they would recommend FIT to someone they knew. Most alumni (80%) said they “probably” or “definitely” would attend FIT again. Fewer alumni (70%) said they would “probably” or “definitely” choose the same major again, and 87% said they would “probably” or “definitely” recommend FIT to someone else (Table 10).

Table 10. General feelings about FIT

	All Students		Art and Design		Business and Technology	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Would you attend FIT again?	326	80%	137	77%	184	83%
Would you choose the same major?	325	70%	136	68%	132	72%
Would you recommend FIT to others?	324	87%	136	85%	163	89%

Appendix A. Response Rates by School and Major

	Number Surveyed	Number Responding	Response Rate
All Schools and Programs	3661	779	21%
Art and Design	1399	322	23%
Accessories Design	39	9	23%
Accessories Design & Fabrication	33	5	15%
Advertising Design	33	5	15%
Communications Design	145	38	26%
Computer Animation & Interactive Media	23	6	26%
Fabric Styling	23	2	9%
Fashion Design	481	137	29%
Fine Arts	85	14	17%
Graphic Design	38	5	13%
Illustration	137	29	21%
Interior Design	114	21	18%
Jewelry Design	30	8	27%
Menswear	22	4	18%
Packaging Design	21	1	5%
Photography	48	9	19%
Photography and the Digital Image	32	8	25%
Textile/Surface Design	60	16	27%
Toy Design	12	2	17%
Visual Presentation and Exhibition Design	23	3	13%
Business and Technology	2229	449	20%
Advertising & Marketing Communications	623	123	20%
Cosmetics & Fragrance Marketing	35	6	17%
Direct and Interactive Marketing	28	2	7%
Entrepreneurship for Fashion/Design Industries	22	1	5%
Fashion Business Management	1201	254	21%
Home Products Development & Marketing	21	4	19%
International Trade & Marketing	139	19	14%
Production Management:Fashion & Related Industries	65	16	25%
Technical Design	41	8	20%
Textile Development and Marketing	54	16	30%
Liberal Arts	32	7	22%
Art History and Museum Professions	18	5	28%
Filmmaking	14	2	14%

Appendix B. Top Employers of FIT Graduates

	All Respondents	Art and Design	Business and Technology	Liberal Arts
All Respondents	239	95	138	6
Macy's	7	0	7	0
Ralph Lauren	5	0	5	0
Saks Fifth Avenue	4	0	4	0
Century 21 Department Stores	3	0	3	0
Gap, Inc	3	1	2	0
Banana Republic	2	1	1	0
Club Monaco	2	2	0	0
Estee Lauder Companies	2	1	1	0
Haddad Brands	2	0	2	0
Limited Brands	2	0	2	0
Lord & Taylor	2	1	1	0
Rag & Bone	2	0	2	0
Renaee Cohen Interiors	2	2	0	0
Tommy Hilfiger	2	0	2	0
Tory Burch	2	0	2	0