

UW-Stout: Employment among recent graduates rises to 98.4%

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Menomonie, Wis. — A new report by University of Wisconsin-Stout's [Career Services](#) found that despite economic impacts from COVID-19 the school's graduates remained in very high demand.

The [First Destination Report](#) revealed that 98.4% of graduates from August 2020 through May 2021 advanced their career within six months of earning their diploma, the vast majority with full-time jobs.

That's up sixth-tenths of a percent from the previous year and only slightly below the university's prepandemic figures.

The 98.4% includes 5.6% of graduates who are continuing their education, serving full time in the military or working in a service field.

"Our first destination outcomes, including the early recruitments of many students and increased number of employers hiring multiple graduates, are evidence that despite the pandemic students are possessing skills earned through applied learning and are essential to the employers' success," said Bryan Barts, director of Career Services, which produces the report.

Of UW-Stout's [46 undergraduate programs](#), 35 had first destination rates of 100%.

Graduates were hired in 36 states and five foreign countries. More than half, 56%, are working or advancing their careers in Wisconsin while another 32% are in Minnesota.

The average starting salary of graduates was \$52,000, up from \$49,000. Six years ago it was \$42,500.

More than 30 companies hired three or more UW-Stout graduates.

Good 'Fortune'

Graduates from 2020-21 found work at 50 companies that are ranked in the Fortune 500.

Jessica Christiansen, [business administration](#), graduated in 2021 and was hired at Target as an executive team lead at a store in Illinois. She had an internship at the store, and it led to the job offer.

"My education and experiences here at Stout have meant the world to me," she said. "I had high expectations for what my college experience would look like, and Stout exceeded all of them."

Of the more than 1,700 graduates surveyed in the report, 57% were hired up to six months before they received their diplomas. Christiansen was among that group of nearly 1,000.

Student success is the leading goal of UW-Stout's [FOCUS2030](#) strategic plan.

One reason for UW-Stout's strong hired-before-graduation tradition is the [Cooperative Education and Internship Program](#). It continues to connect students, especially juniors and seniors, to business and industry as they prepare to start their careers. In 2020-21, 1,031 students had a co-op or internship.

All of UW-Stout's undergraduate programs require at least one experiential learning activity before graduation. This includes co-ops, internships, practicums and field experiences.

Many students, including 226 from the recent graduate group, have more than one such experience while at UW-Stout.

Of the surveyed graduates, one-third, such as Christiansen at Target, who had co-ops or internships accepted full-time positions with the same company.

"Our collaboration with industry and hands-on curriculum help prepare students to make immediate impacts," Barts said.

UW-Stout is [Wisconsin's Polytechnic University](#), with a focus on applied learning, collaboration with business and industry, and career outcomes.