

An Assessment of Career Prospects of Graduates from the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka.

D.T. de Alwis* and S. Kumar¹

Department of Agricultural Economics and Business Management
Faculty of Agriculture
University of Peradeniya
Sri Lanka

The study aimed to track year-over-year changes (2022-2023) in graduate employment and education, and understand the overall career profile of graduates of the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya. Data were collected via separate questionnaire surveys targeting two groups: 40 respondents to the previous tracer study, and 510 graduates from the two most recent batches. This allowed for a comparison with the previous year's tracer study, enabling the analysis of changes during the year. Descriptive statistics and mean comparisons were conducted for the analysis. The results revealed a noteworthy change in income fluctuations, with 59% reporting an increase and 15.4% a decrease. Employment changes were reported by 28.2%, predominantly to permanent positions, with graduates securing jobs in both public (46.9%) and private (40.6%) sectors. Additionally, 36.8% of respondents reported changes in educational qualifications. Overall job satisfaction was positive, though with some dissatisfaction with compensation and opportunities. Specifically, 83.7% of the recent graduates secured their first employment within an average of 20 weeks. A significant ($P < 0.05$) gender difference was found, with female graduates taking longer to secure the first job and male graduates securing higher salaries. Academic performance showed a positive impact on salary. Recommendations for improvement include enhancing research and industry exposure. The study also suggests conducting regular tracer studies to investigate areas such as first employment and employer perspectives on graduates.

Keywords: Career Development, Higher Education, Tracer Study, Undergraduates,

*Corresponding author: tharakadealwis@agri.pdn.ac.lk; ORCID: 0009-0004-5687-3940

¹Department of Agricultural Economics and Business Management, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka