



# AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF IRAQ SULAIMANI

## Undergraduate Alumni Survey Report 2016

Office of Student Services

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## I. Introduction

This survey, conducted in October through December 2016 by the Student Services Department, aimed to assess the current employment, education, and life status of AUIS graduates from the undergraduate program. The data from this survey indicates that our new graduates are entering a substantially more difficult job market. However, AUIS alumni continue to outperform the national trends in employment and average income.

### Key Findings

- The unemployment rate for alumni has dropped substantially to 13.8 percent in spite of the ongoing economic recession
- Average salaries for alumni continue to rise. However, the gender wage gap has expanded for the first time since Student Services began surveying alumni in 2013.
- Use of Career Center and its value for students who find employment remain an important tool in helping students find a job after graduating.

### Scope Note

The survey had a total of 268 respondents out of a total undergraduate alumni body of 485 (55 percent response rate.) In comparison, the 2015 Alumni Survey had a total of 208 respondents from an undergraduate alumni body of 385 (66 percent response rate). The survey was constructed with Survey Monkey and distributed using the AUIS Undergraduate Alumni email listserver. In addition, the AUIS Alumni Facebook page was used to update and remind AUIS alumni about this survey. Further, alumni were called, sent individual emails, and messaged directly on Facebook and LinkedIn. The survey period was October 16, 2016 until December 12, 2016. As with previous years, the target for this survey was the graduates of our four year undergraduate program.

### Demographics

81 percent of respondents were Kurdish, 13 percent were Arab, 3 percent were Turkmen, and 4 percent were Yezidi. 78 percent of respondents said that they were currently living in Sulaimani, 18 percent live in Erbil, and 5 percent live in Baghdad. Other cities where students currently live are Bologna, Istanbul, Lund, Berlin, Dohuk, London, Prague, Dublin, Warsaw, Nice, and New York. 57 percent of respondents are male and 42 percent are female. These data approximately match the demographics of the AUIS student body.

In terms of marital status, 68 percent are single, 22 percent are married, and 10 percent of are engaged. Of those married, 25 percent either married or were engaged before graduation. 75 percent were married after graduation.

## II. Employment

69% percent of respondents are employed full-time; 3 percent are employed part-time; 13.8 percent are unemployed, but looking for work; 10 percent are enrolled in graduate school; and 4.2 percent are unemployed and not looking for work (i.e. they have left the labor force). Of those who are unemployed and looking for work, 29 percent of respondents have received at least one job

offer with an average of 5.2 job offers. Only 8.7 percent of total respondents are unemployed, looking for work, and have not received any job offers.

**Table 1. Employment Rates by Year of Graduation (268 respondents).**

Year of Graduation	Employed Full-time	Employed Part-time	Enrolled in Graduate School	Unemployed and looking for work	Left the Labor Force
2016	60%	2%	5%	25%	8%
2015	71%	5%	8%	15%	1%
2014	75%	1%	13%	7%	4%
2013	63%	5%	12%	15%	5%
2012	79%	0%	16%	0%	5%

As with earlier surveys, the most recent graduates were most likely to be currently unemployed and looking for work. Given the fact that this survey is conducted five months after graduation, this statistic is not surprising and should not cause concern about the employability of AUIS graduates.

Further, respondents are reporting a substantially higher rate of employment this year (62 percent) over last year (57.7 percent). This statistic is particularly surprising because it runs counter to a continuing worsening trend in the Kurdish and Iraqi economy. However, contrary to this positive trend is a substantial increase in the percentage of alumni who are reporting that they have left the labor force. There is an overall uptick to 4 percent from 1.9 percent in 2015. It appears that those who continue to look for a job in the region and internationally are finding more opportunities in the face of a continuing economic depression. Yet an increasing number of alumni are deciding not to look for employment in the middle of an economic depression.

**Table 2. 2016 Employment by Major (2016 survey, 268 respondents).**

Major	Employed Full-time	Employed Part-time	Enrolled in Graduate School	Unemployed and looking for work	Left the Labor Force
BADM	82%	4%	3%	6%	5%
IT	73%	0%	14%	11%	2%
IS	52%	7%	18%	20%	3%
ENGR	58%	0%	13%	23%	6%
English	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%

**Table 2.1. 2015 Employment by Major (2015 survey, 208 respondents).**

Major	Employed Full-time	Employed Part-time	Enrolled in Graduate School	Unemployed and looking for work	Left the Labor Force
BADM	68.8%	0%	0%	31.3%	0%
IT	58.3%	0%	0%	41.7%	1%
IS	7.7%	30.8%	30.8%	30.8%	0%
ENGR	39.5%	2.3%	7%	51%	0%

## Tables 3.1 - 3.5: Employment by Major and Year of Graduation as Reported by Alumni in 2016

**Table 3.1. Business Administration Majors.**

Respondents' Year of Graduation	Employed Full-time	Employed Part-time	Enrolled in Graduate School	Unemployed and looking for work	Left the Labor Force
2016 (20 persons)	74%	5%	0%	16%	5%
2015 (23 persons)	95%	5%	0%	0%	0%
2014 (38 persons)	85%	0%	5%	5%	5%
2013 (17 persons)	65%	12%	6%	11%	6%
2012 (8 persons)	88%	0%	0%	0%	12%

**Table 3.2. Information Technology Majors.**

Respondents' Year of Graduation	Employed Full-time	Employed Part-time	Enrolled in Graduate School	Unemployed and looking for work	Left the Labor Force
2016 (6 persons)	50%	0%	33%	0%	17%
2015 (9 persons)	78%	0%	0%	22%	0%
2014 (13 persons)	77%	0%	0%	23%	0%
2013 (10 persons)	80%	0%	20%	0%	0%
2012 (6 persons)	67%	0%	33%	0%	0%

**Table 3.3. International Studies Majors.**

Respondents' Year of Graduation	Employed Full-time	Employed Part-time	Enrolled in Graduate School	Unemployed and looking for work	Left the Labor Force
2016 (10 persons)	50%	0%	10%	40%	0%
2015 (13 persons)	46%	23%	0%	31%	0%
2014 (20 persons)	55%	5%	35%	0%	5%
2013 (13 Persons)	46%	0%	15%	31%	8%
2012 (4 persons)	75%	0%	25%	0%	0%

**Table 3.4. Engineering Majors.**

Respondents' Year of Graduation	Employed Full-time	Employed Part-time	Enrolled in Graduate School	Unemployed and looking for work	Left the Labor Force
2016 (13 persons)	38%	0%	0%	62%	0%
2015 (34 persons)	65%	0%	18%	15%	2%

**Table 3.5. English Majors.**

Respondents Year of Graduation	Employed Full-time	Employed Part-time	Enrolled in Graduate School	Unemployed and looking for work	Left the Labor Force
2014 (4 persons)	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%

The survey results suggest that Engineering majors have begun to find work in the Iraqi private sector. However, Engineering is once again the major whose graduates are having the hardest time finding work. The employment rate for 2015 Engineering graduates has improved significantly over the last year, but those who graduated in May 2016 are facing similar levels of unemployment to those 2015 graduates encountered in their first year in the workforce.

International Studies majors are also reporting some difficulty this year in finding employment. While they continue to lead other majors in pursuing graduate degrees, IS majors are reporting higher levels of unemployment compared to either Business Administration or Information Technology graduates.

When contrasting reported 2016 employment rates with those reported in 2015, there are several positive developments. IT majors reported an increase of 15 percent in full time employment and a 14 percent increase in enrollment in graduate school. IS employment rose from 7 percent in 2015 to 52 percent in 2016. Further, Engineering majors' full time employment rose from 39 percent to 58 percent. BADM majors reported their employment rose to 82 percent in 2016 from 68 percent in 2015.

**Table 4. Historical Employment Data from Previous AUIS Alumni Surveys.**

Alumni Surveys	Employed Full-time	Employed Part-time	Enrolled in Graduate School	Unemployed and looking for work	Left the Labor Force
2016 Survey	69 %	3%	10%	13.8%	4.2%
2015 Survey	57.7%	3.8 %	10.6%	23%	1.9%
2014 Survey	60%	2%	8%	25%	4%
2013 Survey	80%	7%	13%	0%	0%

The data show a sharp decline in unemployment for AUIS graduates in 2016 relative to 2014 and 2015. While the economy and our graduates still face significant obstacles in finding a job, they are doing significantly better than in the past two years. The current unemployment rate (13.8 percent) is smaller than the national youth unemployment rate listed by the UN (18 percent). Further, it runs

counter to the current trend of higher rates of unemployment among youth with a university degree. AUIS’s graduates continue to outperform their peers in finding employment.

### III. Salary

The average monthly salary for respondents is \$1,771, ranging from \$242 per month for a graduate student stipend to \$7,000 per month for an oil executive. This is a 5 percent increase from the average salary reported in 2015 (\$1,676.8). The average monthly salary for Business majors is \$1,726, \$2,257 for International Studies majors, \$1,917 for Information Technology majors, and \$1,300 for General Engineering majors.

**Table 5. Average Salaries Reported in 2016.**

Respondents’ Major	Average Salary in 2016
BADM (106)	\$1,726
IT (44)	\$1,917
IS (60)	\$2,257
ENGR (47)	\$1,300
English (4)	\$967

The gap between male and female pay has widened. The average salary for male alumni is \$2,059 per month. The average salary for female alumnae is \$1,370, a 33 percent difference. This is far larger than the 24 percent difference reported in the 2015 survey, bringing the pay gap between male and female graduates back to the level reported in the 2014 survey. This wider gap between gender incomes may be a result of underreporting by male alumni, or it could reflect a decision by employers to hire female graduates at a lower salary rate than their male counterparts.

### IV. Where our Alumni Work

Respondents reported working for 97 different companies, twice as many as reported in 2015. The companies employing the most students are AsiaCell (6), and Lafarge (6), the Norwegian Refugee Council (4) and Qaiwan Group (4). Our students are employed in a broad range of industries: Manufacturing and Professional Services (20 percent), Banking/Finance (18 percent), Retail/General Trading (15 percent), Non-profit (13 percent), Education (9 percent), IT and telecommunications (9 percent), Energy Sector (6 percent), Accounting (4 percent) Media (3 percent), and the Government (3 percent).

### V. Graduate Studies

25 respondents (10 percent of total respondents) are enrolled in graduate school. Schools where alumni reported they are attending include AUIS, Brunel University of London, City University of New York, Coventry University, Czech Technical University of Prague, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Free University of Berlin, Geneva School of Diplomacy and International Relations, Harvard University, John Hopkins University, University of Kurdistan, Hawler (UKH), London School of Economics (LSE), Lund University, Ryerson University, Sakarya University, University of

South Wales, University of Sussex, Texas A&M University, Tufts University, and Virginia International University.

## VI. Job Satisfaction and Preparation

68.1 percent of respondents stated that they were either very satisfied (28.1 percent) or generally satisfied (40 percent) with their future career path. 20.5 percent of respondents stated that they were ambivalent with their future career path, and 11.4 percent of respondents were either generally or very dissatisfied/confused about their future career path. More than two-thirds of respondents stated that AUIS prepared them very well (48.1 percent) or more than adequately (20.6 percent) for their current career. 25.7 percent of respondents stated that they felt that AUIS had prepared them adequately for their current career, with only 3.8 percent of respondents stating that they felt AUIS prepared them less than adequately and 1.4 percent that AUIS did a poor job preparing them for the job market.

**Tables 6.1-6.5: How well AUIS Prepared Alumni by Major and Year of Graduation as reported in the 2016 Alumni Survey**

**Table 6.1. BADM.**

Year of Graduation	Very Well	More than Adequately	Adequately	Less than Adequately	Very Poorly
2016 (20 persons)	37.5%	18.8%	31.3%	12.5%	0%
2015 (23 persons)	60%	25%	10%	5%	0%
2014 (38 persons)	72.4%	17.2%	6.9%	3.4%	0%
2013 (17 persons)	42.9%	21.4%	35.7%	0%	0%
2012 (8 persons)	16.7%	16.7%	33.3%	33.3%	0%

**Table 6.2. IT.**

Year of Graduation	Very Well	More than Adequately	Adequately	Less than Adequately	Very Poorly
2016 (6 persons)	33.3%	66.6%	0%	0%	0%
2015 (9 persons)	50%	25%	12.5%	12.5%	0%
2014 (13 persons)	58.3%	8.3%	25%	0%	8.3%
2013 (10 persons)	77.8%	0%	22.8%	0%	0%
2012 (6 persons)	80%	0%	20%	0%	0%

**Table 6.3. International Studies.**

Year of Graduation	Very Well	More than Adequately	Adequately	Less than Adequately	Very Poorly
2016 (20 persons)	37.5%	12.5%	50%	0%	0%
2015 (23 persons)	55.6%	11.1%	33.3%	0%	0%
2014 (38 persons)	50%	31.3%	18.8%	0%	0%
2013 (17 persons)	37.5%	12.5%	50%	0%	0%
2012 (8 persons)	0%	33.3%	66.7%	0%	0%

**Table 6.4. Engineering.**

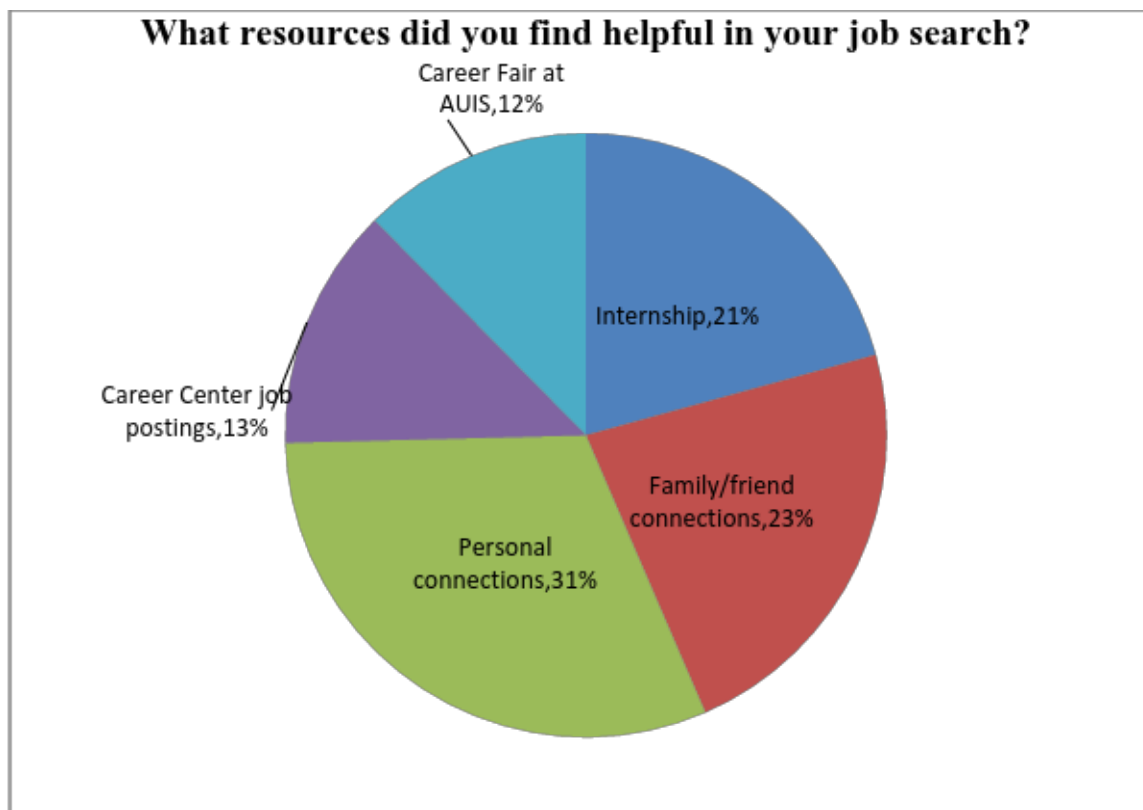
Year of Graduation	Very Well	More than Adequately	Adequately	Less than Adequately	Very Poorly
2016 (13 persons)	22.2%	44.4%	22.2%	11.1%	0%
2015 (34 persons)	34.5%	24.1%	34.5%	6.9%	0%

**Table 6.5. English.**

Year of Graduation	Very Well	More than Adequately	Adequately	Less than Adequately	Very Poorly
2016 (4 persons)	25%	25%	50%	0%	0%

More than 53 percent of respondents interned while at AUIS. This is a larger percentage than the percentage of all students who intern. Perhaps both internship participation and responding to surveys are correlated with a higher level of motivation. In terms of finding employment after graduation, respondents stated that personal connections (31 percent), family/friends connections (23 percent) and internships (21 percent) were most helpful. Twelve percent of respondents reported that the Career Fair was most helpful in finding a job after graduation.





Using AUIS Career Services during their time at AUIS was a characteristic of students who found employment after graduation. Of those alumni who are employed full time or enrolled in graduate school, 52 percent of respondents visited the Career Center at least several times during their time at AUIS. 48 percent of respondents who are either employed full-time or enrolled in graduate school only visited once or twice (27 percent) or never (21 percent).

70 percent of all respondents used the AUIS Career Center website and jobs board that were set up in 2014. 37 percent of all respondents participated in one of the Career Services workshops that were offered regularly when AUIS offered a full-time staff member for the Career Center. 34 percent of respondents visited the Career Services Office through individual appointments, as well as 44 percent who participated in one of AUIS’s annual career fairs.

## VII. Areas for Improvement

- Increase sample size: While the response rate offers a significant enough sample size, which corresponded with our student demographics, a larger sample size would give us an even more accurate picture of how our alumni are doing. Further, increasing the response rate for this survey would allow Student Services to more effectively target our alumni by major and geographic location.

- Increase traffic in the Career Center: Our survey suggests that the Career Services office has a substantial impact on improving the employment outcomes for our alumni. Increasing the number of students who regularly use the office should be a priority for our students prior to graduation.
- Improve outreach to our graduate students: There continue to be a growing number of alumni who are pursuing their education at a graduate level. Student Services can do a better job of reaching out to these students to identify any academic gaps in their current undergraduate education to help improve their preparation for Masters and PhD level coursework.
- Include MBA Alumni: MBA alumni represent an ever expanding share of the total number of AUIS alumni. However, their exclusion from the Alumni Questionnaire has meant that the university has very little information about their satisfaction with the program, their current location, demographics, and employment rates. Student Services and AUIS should consider including MBA alumni in future surveys for additional data.