



## NSU 2013: National nursing student survey

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## Summary:

816 nursing students (whether NZNO members or not) from all schools around New Zealand responded to the 2013 NSU on line survey of nursing students.

The main themes this year related to anticipated debt, work patterns, and future intentions.

The burden of student debt has climbed inexorably since the nineteen nineties, as reported in the first systematic examination of the issue published in 2003. “The impact of student debt on nurses: an investigation, 2003” available from <http://www.nzno.org.nz/services/publications>

In 1992, fees per year were \$1250. By the year 2000 this had risen to around \$4000, and the average debt on graduation was \$19,294. In 2013, the average fees per year are \$5900, and 71% of student nurses emerge with debts of between \$30000 and \$40000.

Student debt is a significant factor in the current nursing workforce shortage. Debt affects both the recruitment and retention of nurses. Student debt also affect nurses’ decisions if and when to have children, move overseas (and make decisions about returning to New Zealand) acquire extra qualifications, undertake further training and many other financial decisions.

This is the 5<sup>th</sup> consecutive year that this survey has been run on line, and there is considerable consistency, particularly the trends related to anticipated total debt.

## Method

The NZNO NSU student survey is slightly amended each year in response to previous years' results, and particular topical issues. The Survey is reviewed by the NSU delegate working group.

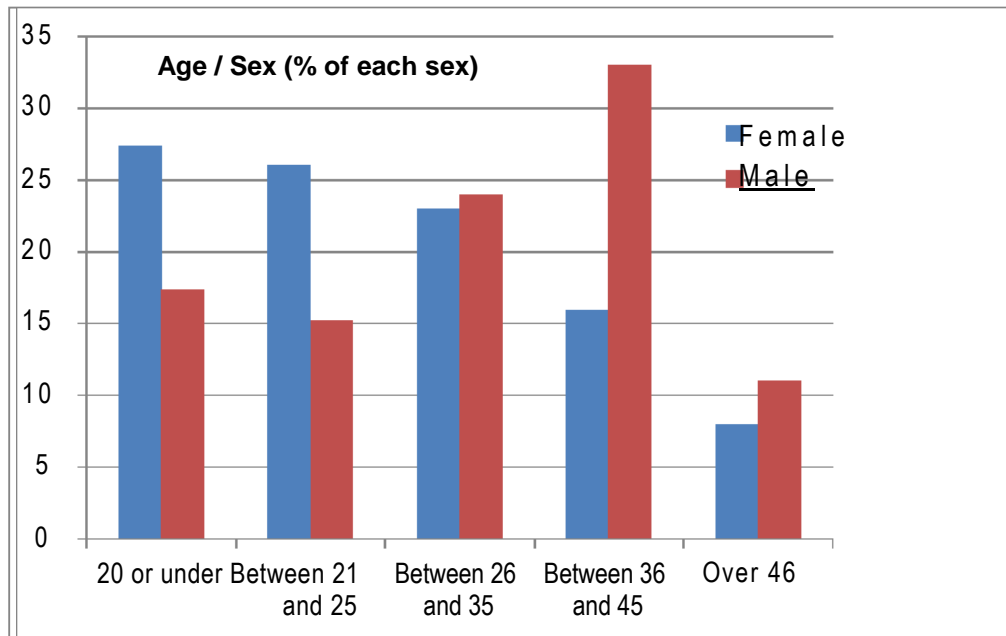
All NZNO student members were invited to participate via e-mail. Posters were also put up in all nursing schools, and on some nursing school electronic blackboards, inviting both NZNO and non NZNO nursing students to participate. Random prizes were available, drawn from e-mail addresses provided on completion of the survey, but with addresses permanently separated from the survey on first access of the data. 816 valid responses were received by the end of the survey. This represents around 20% of those eligible to participate, though an accurate response rate is not possible to assess due to the multiple routes and the opening up of the survey to non-NZNO student members. Throughout, any identifiers such as placements, names and school identifiers have been replaced by \*\*\*

## Results

### Demographics

72% were NZNO members. Of those who were not, 85 provided contact details and requested joining packs. Their details were also separated from the results at that point 708, or 93.9 % of respondents were female, and 46 or 6.1% male.

The age and sex distribution is as shown below:

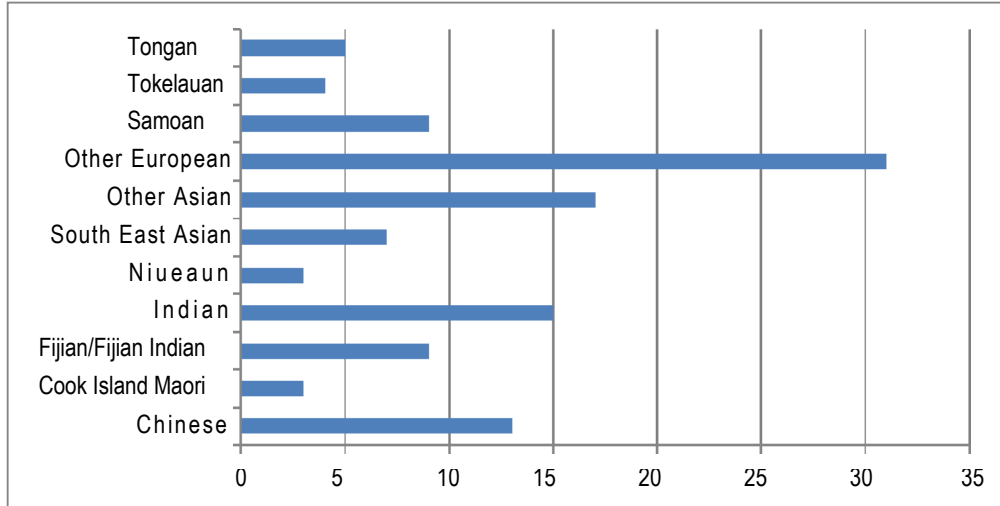


### Ethnicity

134 / 816 (16.4%) identified as Māori  
565 / 816 ( 69%) identified as NZ European

Many gave multiple ethnic affiliations: These figures are available on request.

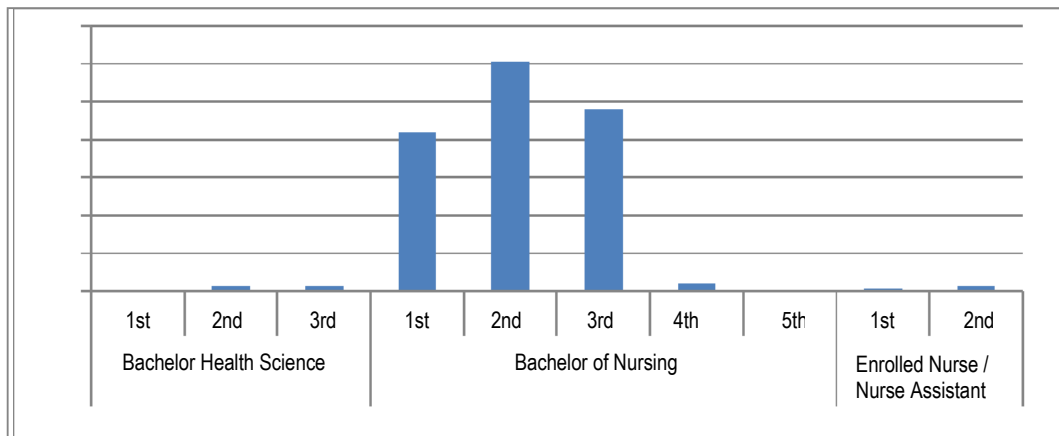
Other ethnicities / origins (numbers) are shown below



Programme (major categories only shown below)

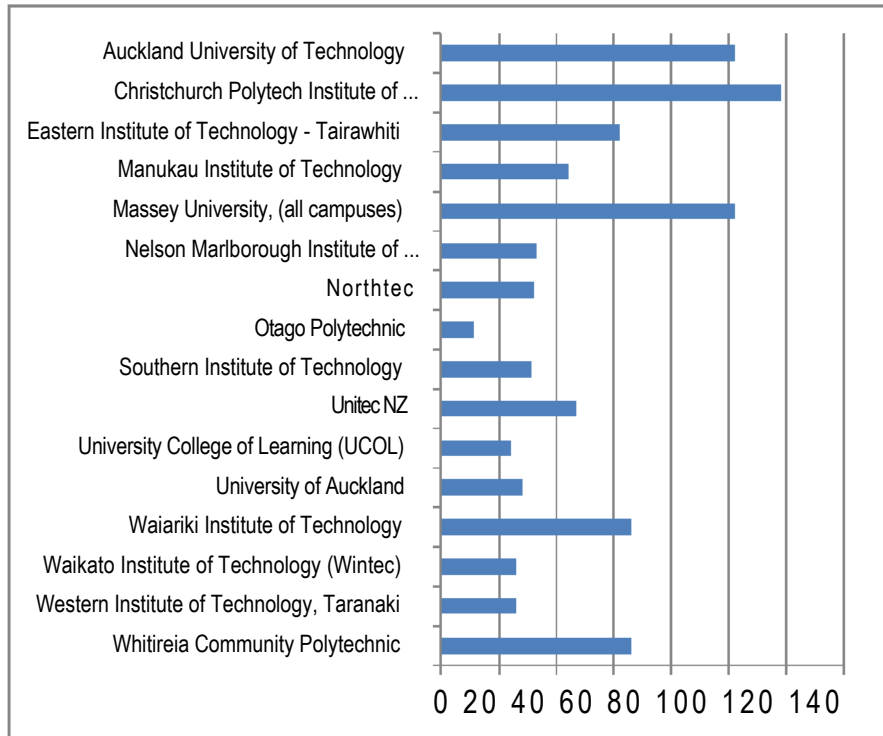
Programme	counts	Percent
Bachelor of Nursing	775	95.5%
Bachelor Health Science	15	1.8%
Enrolled Nurse / Nurse Assistant	10	1.2%
Return to Nursing / CAP	3	0.2%

Course and Year of study



A good spread of respondents from each year group was obtained

## School

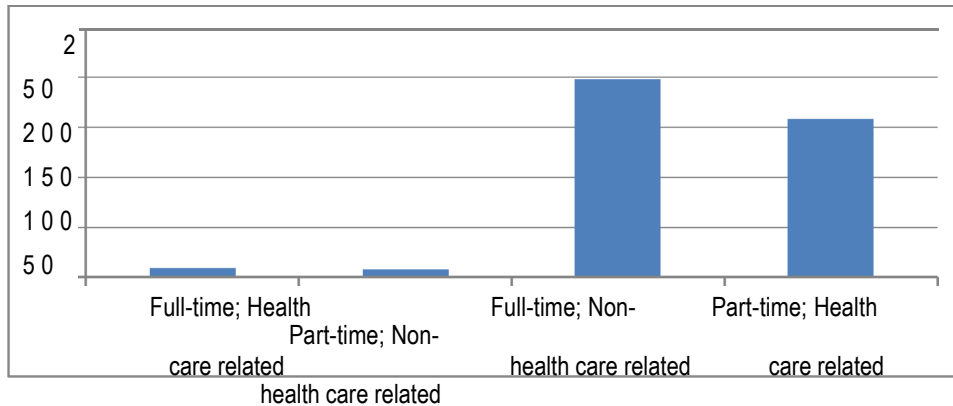


## Mode of study

Ninety five and a half percent studied full time, and 3.5 % part time.

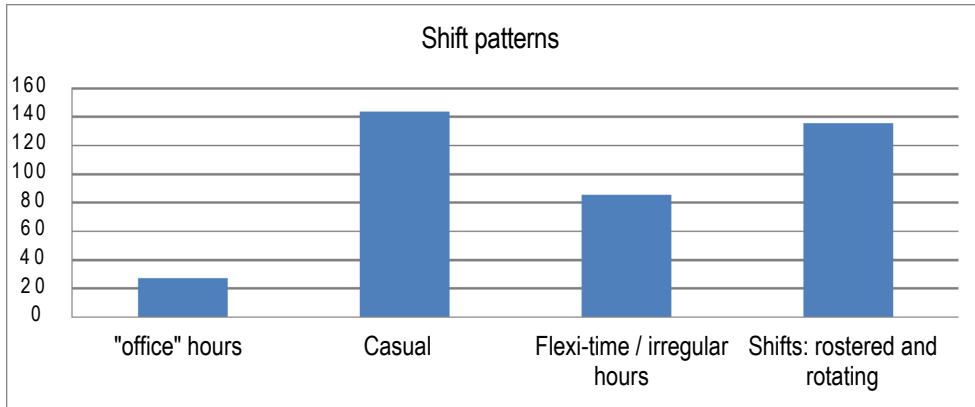
## Paid employment

**47.9 % of students have paid employment. Of this, the biggest grouping was part time and health care related.**



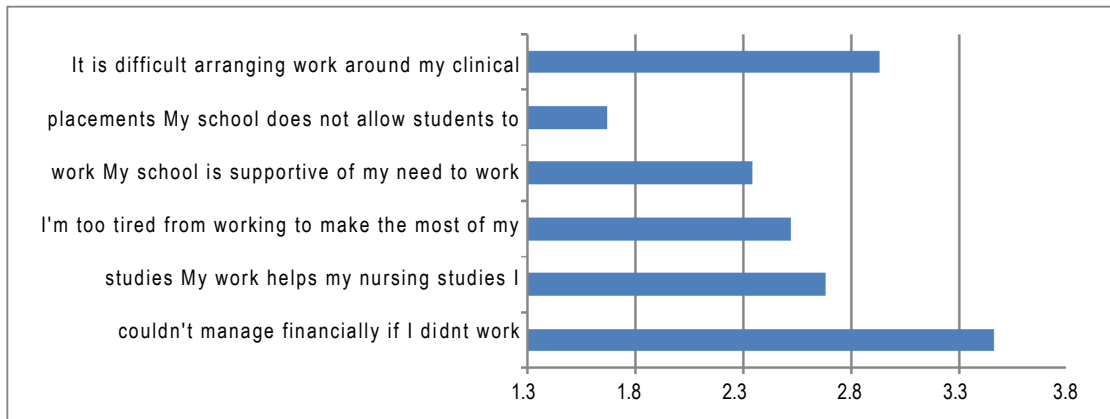


**Work patterns (showing numbers: all respondents)**



**Combining work and study**

(Weighted score, where 4= Strongly agree, and 1 = strongly disagree)



**Annual student fees**

- ~ Median fees per year - 5.9K
- ~ Range 1.3 - 10K
- ~ Large variety in allowances

Fees for nursing education have continued to rise since the 1990's. Southern Institute of Technology does not charge base fees.

Year	1992	1996	2000	2013
Mean fees per year All sectors	1300	2631	4040	5900

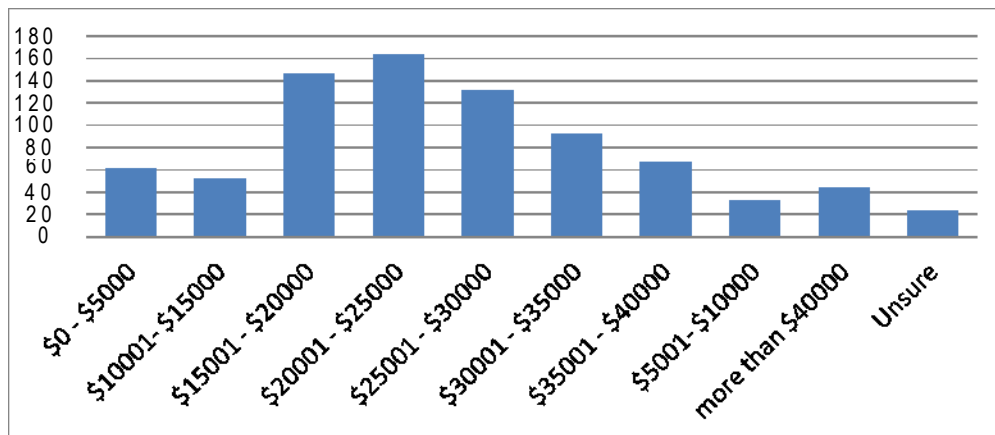
\* Source of data years 1992-2000: "The impact of student debt on nurses: an investigation, 2003" available from NZNO

### Additional costs

In response to a question about understanding of additional costs prior to starting their nursing courses, a few felt they were fully informed of, and had prepared for all additional costs. The vast majority however had a sketchy understanding of the costs, especially those related to the number of textbooks required, or the costs of additional travel and accommodation required for placements. The costs of vaccinations, home IT access, photocopying, indemnity insurance, and state exam fees also appeared to be unknown.

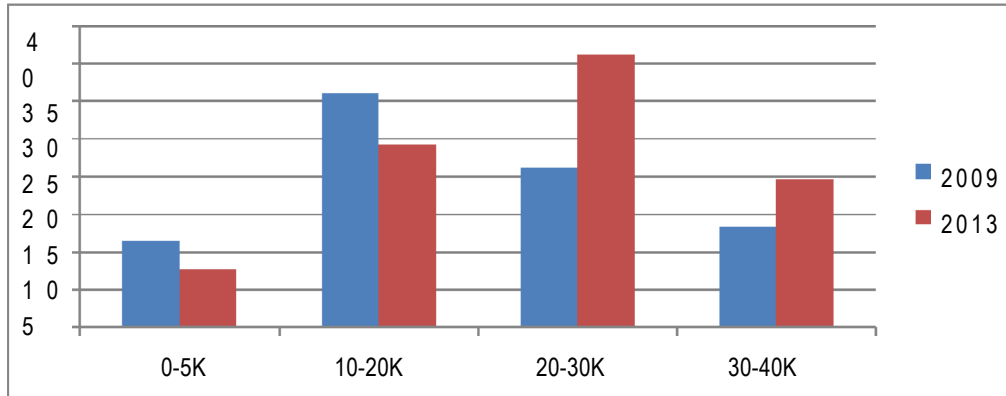
- ~ While some were FULLY aware before accepting a place, of these additional costs, very many were not
- ~ Additional costs averaged about \$1-2 K per year
- ~ Biggest unanticipated cost was travel, parking (& accommodation) for placements
- ~ Costs not available from studylink for all
- ~ Studylink did not cover costs fully even when eligible

Anticipated student debt– this continues to be considerable.



This figure has changed fairly consistently between 2009 and the present, with the median debt creeping from 10-20K to 20-30K.



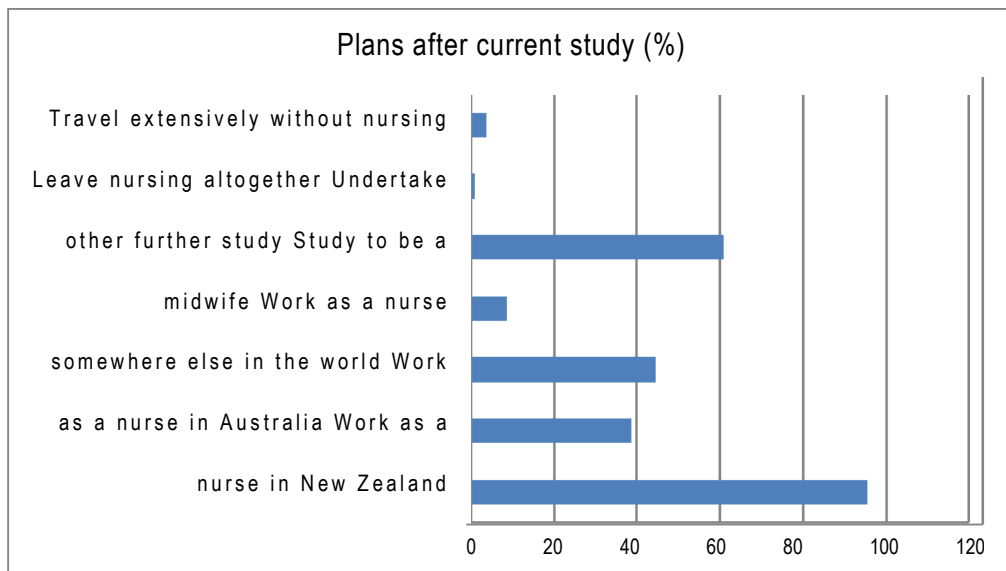


### NZNO or NERF scholarships

- 75, or 9.3% had ever obtained an NZNO or NERF scholarship to help with the costs of the nursing study
- These were mostly Hamblin Trust book grants for \$2-300
- One person had received \$1000 towards Enrolled nursing education costs
- A few had received Florence Nightingale grants for around \$750
- A couple had received emergency grants.

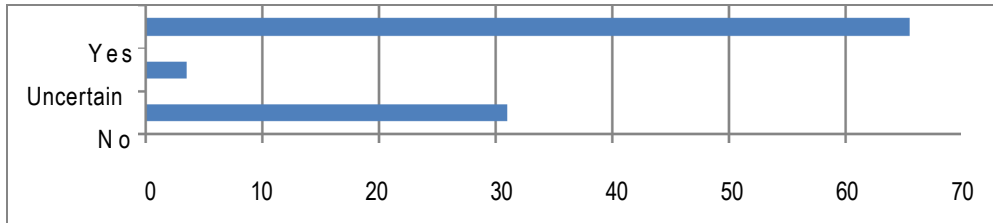
### Plans after study

These answers were very similar to 2012.



### NEtP

Awareness of NEtP was higher than for the NSU 2012 survey, and was lowest among first years, and highest among third years, as might be expected

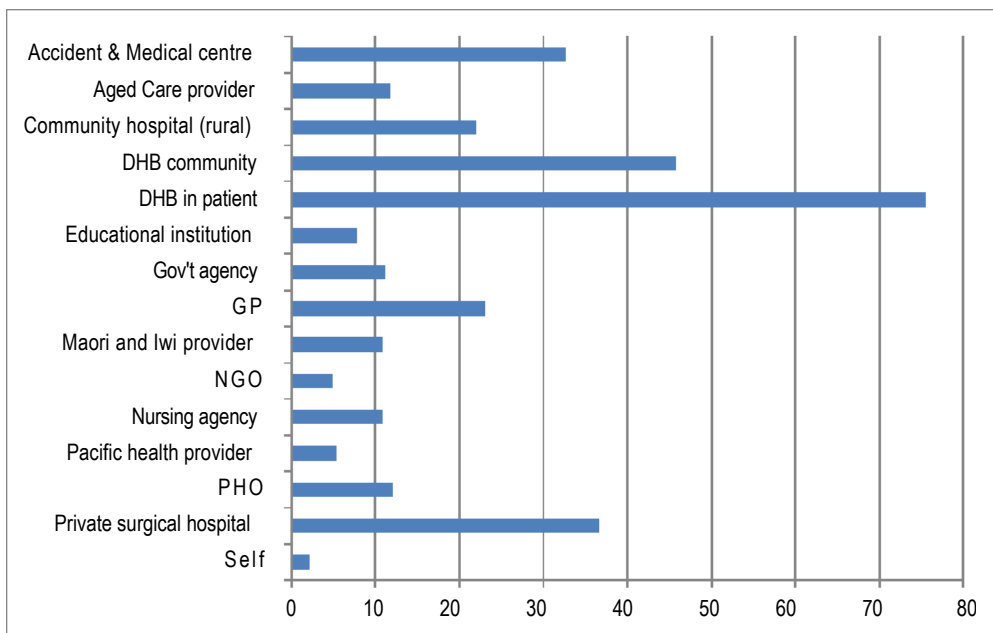


**60.9% hoped to enrol in NEtP**  
**28.4% thought a NEtP place would be available where they could consider working**  
**37% would travel to another DHB area to enrol**  
**48.5% would consider the government bonding scheme**

There was awareness of, and concern about, a shortage of places (also a shortage of jobs) post qualification, and links were made to increased nursing student numbers, especially overseas students.

**Preferred Prospective Employer**

**DHB (inpatient) remains the employment of choice.**



**Preferred DHB area of employer**

These roughly mirrored the distribution of the numbers of respondents by their school.

**Preferred / least preferred area of clinical practice**

The main choices are shown in a following table –

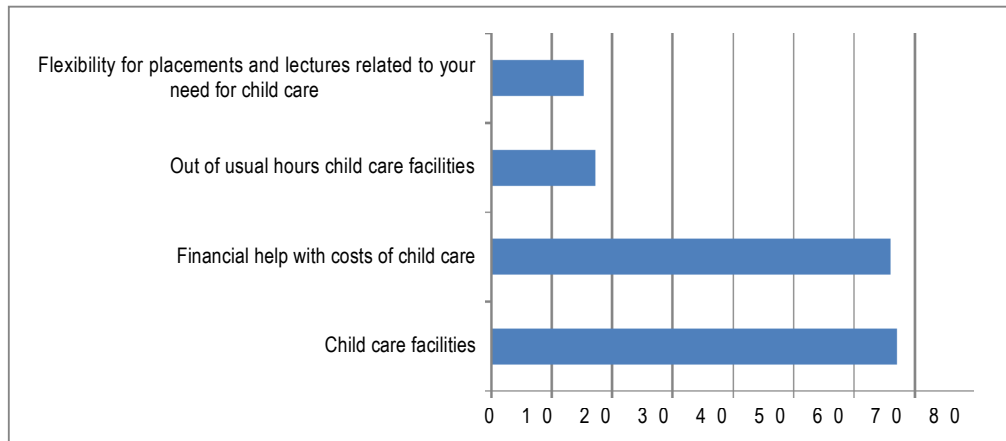
Most attractive	Least attractive
Emergency & trauma	Assessment & rehab
Child health /neonatology	Aged care
Surgical	Family planning /sexual health
Primary health /practice nursing	Cancer nursing
Mental health addictions	Obstetrics/ maternity

### Childcare responsibilities

33.4 % reported responsibility for school aged or younger children – a small increase on last year

7.4% had responsibility for care of adults

Those with responsibilities for school age or younger children were asked which of the facilities below were available to them. ( Results show % of respondents)

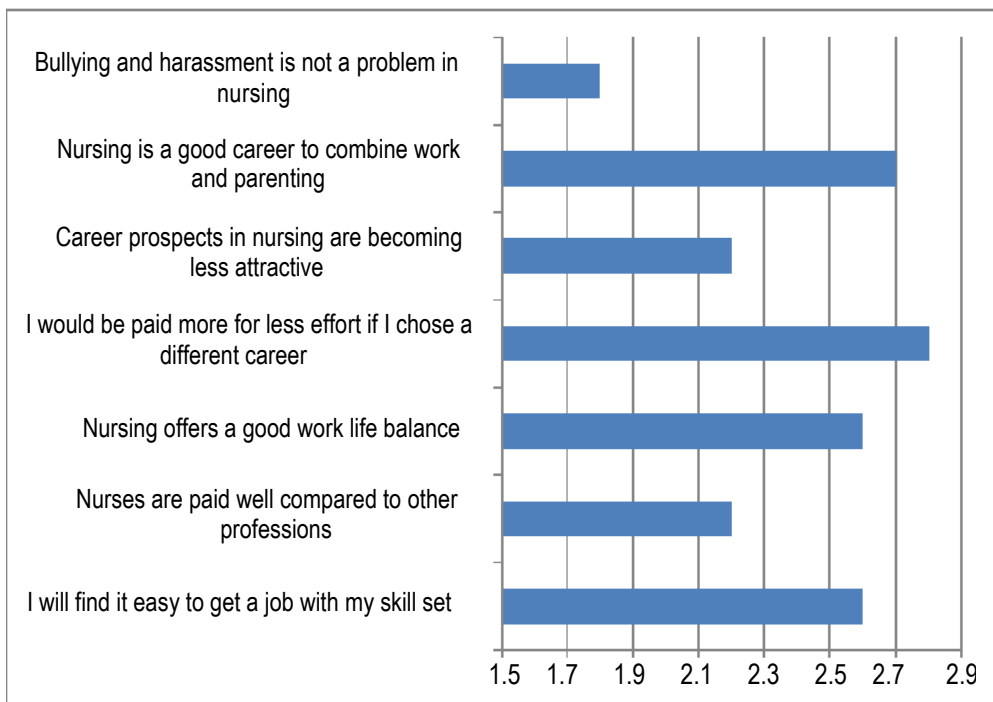
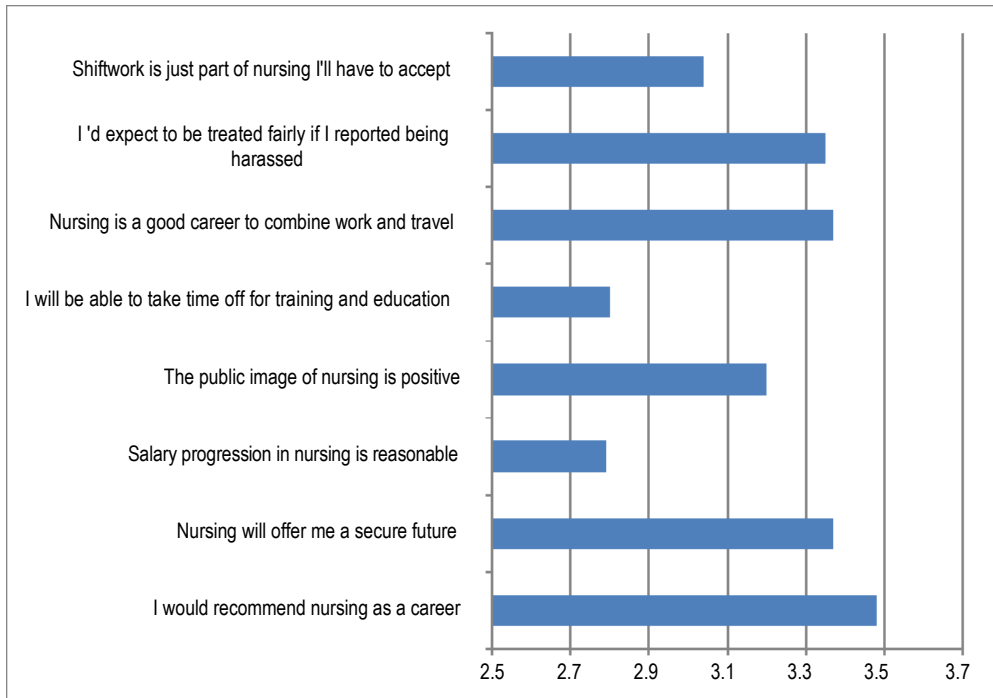


- ~ The costs and organisational complexity of being a parent and a student are significant
- ~ Most felt there was little flexibility, and insufficient notice of timetables and placements
- ~ Particular difficulties with school holidays, out of town placements and night shifts ~ Single mothers especially struggle combining study and parenting

### Morale / Views of nursing

This question set is part of the RCN / NZ Employment Survey attitudinal block and comparisons with student responses from previous years and with qualified nurses this year can be made.

(A score of 4 indicates strong agreement, and a score of 1 indicates strong disagreement)



**Finally,**

**Asked for any other comments related to their experience of studying nursing, 196 additional free text responses were received.**

- ~ There is considerable insecurity about the mismatch between new graduates and available jobs, especially regarding overseas students**
- ~ Some tensions too for overseas students: non-availability of NETP and associated career options despite paying large fees**
- ~ Most HAVE to work to be able to afford to study – and placements make this very hard**
- ~ Also really hard is juggling of studying, working and raising children**
- ~ There is a range of (dis)satisfaction with the quality of the educational experience**
- ~ The overall and additional costs must be better communicated PRE enrolment**
- ~ Blended (on-line / campus / placement) learning courses in particular got mixed reviews**

**Limitations:**

**Surveys are prone to margins of error related to who chooses to respond, and the subjectivity of respondents, necessitating, as with all surveys, some caution with interpretation.**