

28th Report Occupational Condition of Graduates

2026 Summary Report

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Methodological note

Rounding

For ease of reading, the percentages and averages reported are rounded to one decimal place (average monthly net earnings is rounded to the nearest unit; index numbers are rounded to two decimal places). Sum (for example, across categories of the same indicator) and differences (for example, between the various populations analysed) are calculated using unrounded values and may therefore not correspond exactly to those derived from the reported values.

Data comparability

The population of graduates from universities that are members of the AlmaLaurea Consortium provides a representative picture of the entire university system, particularly when its main characteristics in terms of composition by field of study and gender are taken into account. However, despite the growing number of universities joining the Consortium each year, the graduates involved in AlmaLaurea surveys do not yet fully represent the entire population and there may be comparability issues over time between the populations analysed. To obtain estimates that are representative of all graduates from Italian universities and take these considerations into account, the results of the AlmaLaurea surveys on the Occupational Condition of Graduates were subjected to a calibration procedure.

For more information see the [Methodological Notes](#), p. 156 (in Italian).

As part of its efforts to combat gender stereotypes, AlmaLaurea has begun reviewing its texts to give greater linguistic visibility to differences. However, this summary often uses the generic masculine form to ensure that the data are easy to read and the presentation is clear. Masculine forms should therefore be understood as inclusively referring to all people of any gender involved in the surveys and represented in the data.

Complete documentation is available at:

www.almalaurea.it/en/our-data/almalaurea-surveys/graduates-employment-status.

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Summary of the 2026 AlmaLaurea Report on the Occupational Condition of Graduates (28th Survey)

1. The survey and its context

The 28th AlmaLaurea Survey on the Occupational Condition of Graduates, administered in 2025, in all involved almost 700,000 first- and second-level graduates (two-year and single-cycle master's graduates)¹ of 81 Italian Universities that belonged to AlmaLaurea.² More specifically, the survey involved 320,000 first- and second-level graduates from 2024, contacted one year after graduation; 129,000 second-level graduates from 2022, contacted three years after graduation; 125,000 second-level graduates from 2020, contacted five years after graduation; and 66,000 and 58,000 first-level graduates from 2022 and 2020, respectively, who had not continued their university education and were contacted three and five years after graduation.

The graduates involved in the survey (excluding first-level graduates surveyed three and five years after graduation) were contacted using two survey methods: CAWI (Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing) and CATI (Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing). Indeed, the necessity to contain survey costs and the wide availability of e-mail addresses suggested contacting graduates via e-mail, and inviting them to fill in an online questionnaire hosted on the AlmaLaurea website. The CAWI survey was complemented by a telephone survey to contact those who did not respond to the online questionnaire. This dual survey method (CAWI+CATI) produced an overall response rate, calculated among graduates contacted with their consent in accordance with the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation), of 64.7% among first- and second-level graduates one year after graduation, 62.6% among second-level graduates three years after graduation and 61.6% among second-level graduates five years after graduation. First-level graduates at three and five years were instead contacted via CAWI-only survey, achieving response rates based on the total number of emails sent of 20.2% at three years and 15.0% at five years. These are naturally lower rates given the survey method used and the population involved. The results were subject to a special statistical calibration procedure, so as to obtain estimates that were representative of all the graduates of the Italian Universities.³

This Summary highlights the most important empirical evidence of the employment performance of first- and second-level graduates.⁴ However, note that first-level graduates largely continue their studies by enrolling in a second-level course of study. In the 2024 cohort, 63.4% of respondents made this choice. This value decreased over the past year (-1.3 percentage points compared to 2024). This therefore confirms the decline already observed in 2024, following the increase during the years of the Covid-19 pandemic. In any case, the 2025 data show a strong increase (+8.2 percentage points)

¹ AlmaLaurea also conducts annual surveys on the Graduates' Profile and Occupational Condition of PhD and Academic Master graduates. The results of the most recent surveys are available at www.almalaurea.it/en/our-data/almalaurea-surveys.

² As at June 2026, 84 Universities are members of AlmaLaurea.

³ For details of the methodological aspects, see the Methodological Notes to the 27th Survey on the Occupational Condition of Graduates. 2025 Report. (AlmaLaurea, 2025)

⁴ Until the 2018 cohort, second-level graduates included two-year masters, single-cycle second-level graduates and graduates from the pre-reform course of study in Primary Education Sciences (before the reform of Italian Ministerial Decree no. 249/2010). Due to its peculiarity and small size this population was instead excluded from the survey starting with the graduates of 2019. All the documentation processed is available, also separately by degree type, at www.almalaurea.it/en/our-data/almalaurea-surveys/graduates-employment-status.

compared to 2014, the year in which the lowest continuation rate in the 2008-2025 observation period was recorded according to AlmaLaurea surveys. The percentage of graduates who enrolled in another first-level course of study after earning their degree is very low (2.4%) but increased by 1.5 percentage points compared to 2024. In light of these findings and to monitor graduates' employment outcomes more effectively, the analysis of first-level graduates was limited to those who did not enrol in another course of study after graduation. They accounted for 34.2% of 2024 graduates surveyed after one year. This percentage was stable compared to the previous survey.

Before examining the findings of the AlmaLaurea survey, it is useful to briefly recall a few contextual aspects. Although unemployment remains relatively low and several key sectors of the economy continue to be “hungry for labour”, both in Europe and in Italy, the global economy has suffered an extraordinary structural shock since the new US administration took office. This has led to growing economic uncertainty and volatility, which creates problems for young people's employment prospects and makes economic policy initiatives extremely complex at the various levels of government.(Antonelli, 2025, 2026)

It is also worth briefly describing some traits of the Italian labour markets, based on the latest Istat data. At the national level, in 2025 the employment rate for the 20-64 age group stood at 67.6%, up 0.5 percentage points compared to 2024. This confirms the recovery observed since 2021, following the outbreak of the pandemic. The 2025 data also represent the highest employment rate recorded since the early 2000s.(Istat, 2026a) However, this value is broadly in line with the target that Italy should have achieved by 2020 under the Europe 2020 Strategy and the related National Reform Programme (NRP), and remains far below the targets set for 2030 by the Action Plan for the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights. These envisage an employment rate of 73% in Italy among 20-64-year-olds (78% for the European average).

Moreover, Istat analyses show that the higher the educational qualification, the lower the risk of falling into unemployment, also because graduates are generally better able to respond to changes in the labour markets thanks to stronger cultural and professional tools. They therefore enjoy better employment opportunities than those who completed upper secondary school and those whose education stopped at the compulsory level.(Istat, 2026a) The employment advantage associated with a higher qualification is evident throughout the working life, but also in the early years after graduation. In the latter case, however, it is essential to compare individuals with the same length of time spent in the job markets. This avoids improper comparisons between university graduates and upper secondary school graduates of the same age group, without considering that their education ended at different points in time. The employment rate among university graduates aged 25-34 stands at 74.0%, and in addition to being higher than the rate for all 25-34-year-olds (+5.5 percentage points compared to 68.5%), it also exceeds the rate for 18-29-year-olds with an upper secondary school diploma (+31.5 points compared to 42.5%). Moreover, the data show that in the past year the employment rate of university graduates aged 25-34 has increased by 0.8 percentage points, while that of 18-29-year-old high school graduates has decreased by 0.9 points.

According to the most recent Istat surveys, the increase in employment recorded over the past three years mainly involved employees on permanent contracts, self-employed workers with employees and full-time positions. At the same time, the number of people employed on fixed-term contracts and in part-time forms of employment decreased. Despite these positive signs, the labour market appears

less able to convert temporary jobs into stable employment relationships, making it more difficult for workers to solidify their employment position. Istat also notes that, for the population as a whole, regardless of educational attainment, following the deterioration after the public health emergency, the matching of labour supply and demand partially improved in 2024, accompanied by decreases in both unemployment and job vacancies. However, this trend slowed in the second half of 2025. Vacancies began to increase again while the unemployment rate remained low, indicating that companies continued to have difficulty finding suitable staff. (Istat, 2026b)

In this context, the survey conducted by AlmaLaurea in 2025 presents a complex employment picture, with trends that are not always uniform across the various populations analysed. Specifically, the employment rate increased mainly among recent graduates and second-level graduates surveyed five years after graduation. The prevalence of employment contracts was broadly stable across the various populations analysed, while real earnings declined among recent graduates, partly due to inflation remaining high, and increased among those who had been in the labour market for longer. In 2025 around two out of three graduates again reported high levels of degree effectiveness.

Moreover, the results of the AlmaLaurea survey also confirm a different approach of graduates vis-à-vis job searches, noting their greater selectivity. Specifically with regard to earnings, university graduates are increasingly unwilling to accept low-income jobs. This is also confirmed by the latest AlmaLaurea Report on the Graduates' Profile (AlmaLaurea, 2026a) as well as by the survey on the Occupational Condition of Graduates. One year after graduation, around one in four first- and second-level graduates who were not employed and were seeking work would accept a salary of less than €1,250: 27.5% for first-level graduates and 23.1% for second-level graduates. These values have generally declined in recent years (compared to the corresponding survey last year, they decreased by 5.4 and 3.1 percentage points for first- and second-level graduates, respectively). Recall that among the recent graduates involved in the 2021 survey, over 50% of both first- and second-level graduates who were not employed and were seeking work stated that they were willing to accept a salary of less than €1,250 (60.2% and 50.2%, respectively).

In 2025 willingness to accept a job that was not consistent with the course of study increased slightly compared to the previous survey: 77.1% among first-level graduates (+0.6 percentage points) and 73.7% among second-level graduates (+0.5 points). However, this annual increase does not alter the pattern of gradual decline observed over the medium term. In 2021 the percentages were 84.0% and 77.6%, respectively. This pattern is consistent with the results of the 2025 Survey on the Graduates' Profile, which show that between 2016 and 2025 the percentage of graduates willing to accept a job on the eve of graduation that was not consistent with their course of study decreased by over 10 percentage points, from 87.2% to 76.4%. (AlmaLaurea, 2026a)

It will be important to continue monitoring these indicators in the future in light of the ongoing changes. (Antonelli, 2025, 2026) Indeed, the AlmaLaurea survey conducted in 2025 makes it possible to describe the starting conditions with which graduates in Italy face the current context marked by the structural shock to the global economy mentioned above. This situation further aggravates the simultaneous crises ("polycrisis"⁵) that have characterised recent years. Furthermore, data from

⁵ This term, which seeks to describe a complex situation in which multiple and interconnected crises converge and amplify each other, making them more difficult to tackle, was coined by French philosopher Edgar Morin in 1993. More recently, the concept was taken up by Adam Tooze (Professor of History at Columbia University), who used the expression "world of the polycrisis" in the *Financial Times* on 28/10/2022.

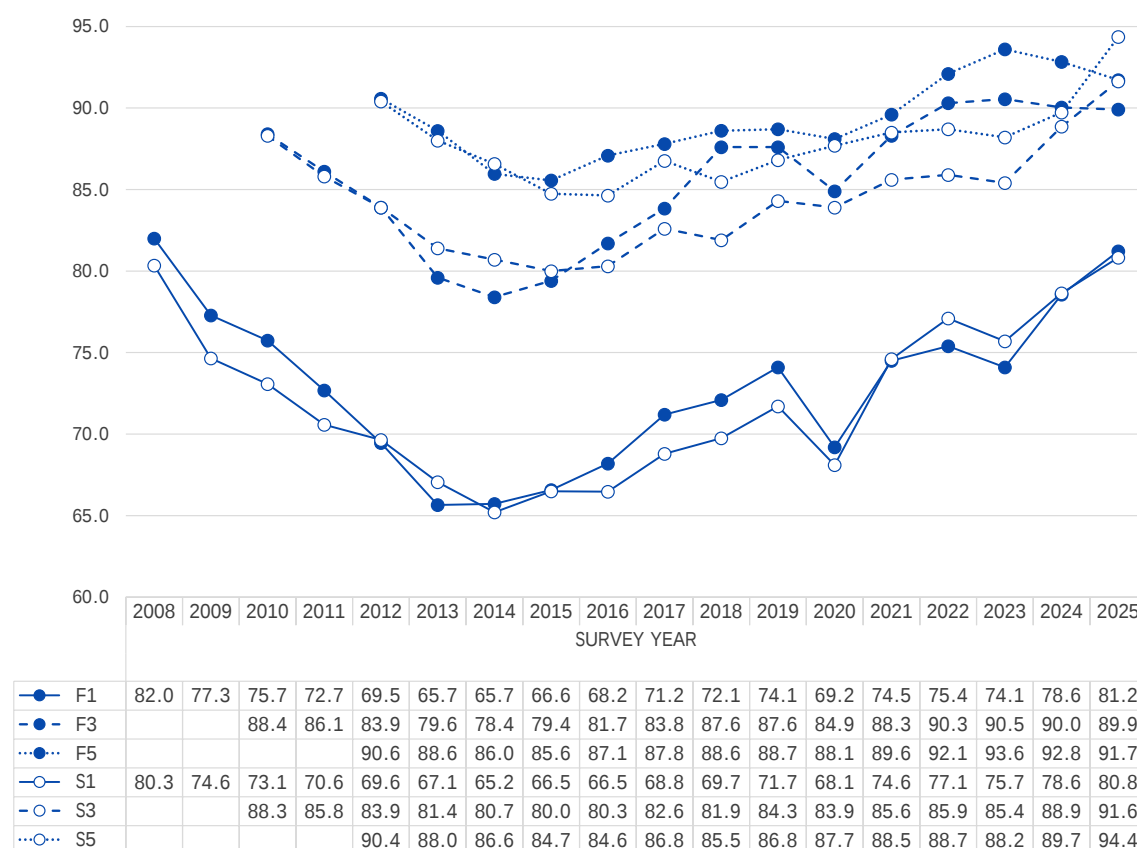
ministerial sources highlight further changes in the composition of the graduate population, with a slow but steady increase in those earning their degree later in life. (MUR-USTAT, 2026) AlmaLaurea data also make it possible to identify the distinctive characteristics of these graduates compared to those graduating at the traditional age. Indeed, they are often already in the labour market and have different job expectations at the time they graduate than their younger peers. AlmaLaurea data also show that work experience gained during university studies is significantly more common among first-level graduates surveyed after one year than among second-level graduates. It is therefore not surprising that these characteristics are associated with different post-graduation choices and employment outcomes, especially in the first year after graduation.

2. Employment rate and related explanatory factors

In 2025 the employment rate increased overall, in line with the trend observed in recent years. Moreover, the highest rates of the past decade were recorded in 2025, particularly among second-level graduates, both recent graduates and those who had earned their degree longer ago. Among first-level graduates, however, the increase in the employment rate was observed only one year after graduation, while at three and five years out the employment rate remained very high (around 90%) but saw only limited change.

More specifically, in 2025, one year after graduation, the employment rate was 81.2% among first-level graduates and 80.8% among second-level graduates from the 2024 cohort (Figure 1). These values were up on the previous year by 2.6 and 2.2 percentage points, respectively.

Figure 1 2007-2024 graduates surveyed one, three and five years after graduation: employment rate by degree type. Survey years 2008-2025 (percentage values)



Legend

F: first-level; S: second-level;

1: one year after graduation; 3: three years after graduation; 5: five years after graduation.

Note: as for the first-level, only graduates not enrolled in another degree course were considered. Until the 2018 cohort, second-level graduates also include graduates from the course of study in Primary Education Sciences before the reform of Italian Ministerial Decree no. 249/2010.

Source: AlmaLaurea, Survey on the Occupational Condition of Graduates.

The employment rate among graduates who were not working at the time of graduation was lower than among those who were already employed when they earned their university degree. The corresponding rates were 76% and 88%, respectively, among both first- and second-level graduates. The data confirm the trends that emerged in the previous survey, compared to which the employment rate increased regardless of employment status at graduation. The increase was more substantial among graduates who were not working at the time of graduation (+3.3 percentage points among first-level graduates and +2.4 points among second-level graduates) and smaller among those who were working (+0.6 and +0.9 points, respectively).

Graduates three and five years after graduation show high employment rates, around 90%. In detail, three years after graduation, the employment rate reached 89.9% among first-level graduates and 91.6% among second-level graduates. Five years after graduation, the values were 91.7% for first-level graduates and 94.4% for second-level graduates. The comparison with the previous survey confirms the improving trend in the employment rate of second-level graduates, which in 2025 reached the highest value observed in about 15 years of surveys (last year the increase was 2.7 percentage

points at three years and 4.7 points at five years). Among first-level graduates, however, despite some slight differences compared to the 2024 survey, this indicator remained very high, at no less than 90%.

The employment outcomes of graduates show strong differentiations that in general involve both first- and second-level graduates. In particular, these differences relate to gender, geographic area of residence as well as the completed course of study. In order to jointly analyse the characteristics associated with the probability of being employed, a logistic regression model was used. The analysis considered first- and second-level graduates from 2024 surveyed one year after graduation. Among first-level graduates, the analysis concerns those who did not continue their education by enrolling in another course of study.⁶ The analysis presented below considers socio-demographic variables (gender, parents' educational qualifications and geographic area of residence), high school/secondary school diploma mark and type, university qualification variables (degree type, field of study, geographic area of university, age at graduation, degree completion time, exam marks and mobility for study purposes) and experience and skills acquired during studies (study abroad or work experience and IT skills). Job guidance training initiatives were also considered,⁷ while emphasis was placed on the aspirations and inclinations reported by graduates on the eve of completing their studies (intent to pursue further studies, willingness to travel for work, willingness to accept a minimum net monthly salary for full-time employment, willingness to accept jobs that were not consistent with their degree, willingness to work full time and expectations regarding the job they intended to seek after graduation in terms of career prospects, the social utility of the job, relevance to their cultural interests and flexibility of working hours).⁸

As shown in Table 1, the course of study completed is associated with differences in recent graduates' employment prospects. All other things being equal, compared to graduates in politics, social sciences and communications, the most advantaged are graduates in health and pharmacy; engineering and engineering trades; information and communication technologies (ICTs); and architecture and construction. Graduates in education; natural sciences, mathematics, physics and statistics; agriculture, forestry and veterinary; and economics are also advantaged. Less favoured, on the other hand, are graduates from the psychology, arts and design and law subject groups.

Furthermore, it can be observed that, all other conditions being equal, second-level degrees seem to ensure greater employment opportunities one year after graduation. As a result, second-level graduates are 33.3% more likely to be employed than first-level graduates. However, this result has to be treated with extreme caution, since profoundly different populations are being compared, both in terms of the educational path undertaken and in terms of professional and study prospects. Indeed, among second-level graduates there is a significant share of those who engage in activities preparatory

⁶ The model does not consider those already working at the time of graduation and those living abroad.

⁷ Particular consideration was given to what was reported by graduates upon graduation with respect to the initiatives organised by the university, including for example help with preparing CVs and company presentations in the classroom.

⁸ Factors related to the socio-economic context of the family of origin were considered but were not significant. The same applied to completion of curricular internships recognised by the course of study, knowledge of foreign languages and expectations regarding the job sought in terms of earning prospects, job security, acquisition of professional skills, independence and autonomy, free time, prestige, involvement and participation in work and decision-making processes, opportunities for contacts abroad and the possibility of making the best use of the skills acquired during studies. The following were instead excluded from the model given the modest value of the information: graduation mark, the importance attributed to cultural and career-related reasons when choosing the course of study and expectations regarding the job sought in terms of coherence with the studies completed, relations with colleagues in the workplace, the workplace (i.e. its location and physical characteristics) and the possibility of continuing their education.

to work as freelance professionals, such as internships or specialisation schools, which if paid raise employment rates.

The gender analysis shows, again all else being equal, the advantage enjoyed by men (13.7% more likely to be employed than women). The traditional gender differences in terms of employment are thus confirmed as significant, with men once again having an advantage over women.(AlmaLaurea, 2026b)

The regional differences in terms of geographical breakdown of both residence and study are also significant. More specifically, residents of the North were 34.8% more likely to be employed than residents of the South. Similarly, with regard to the geographic area of university, graduates from universities in the North were 55.9% more likely to be employed than those from universities in the South. Moreover, graduates who earned their secondary school diploma in a province other than that of their university while remaining in the same region were 6.9% more likely to be employed than those who studied at university in the same province in which they earned their diploma.

Although the impact on the probability of being employed is small, graduates from families in which at least one parent has a degree show a lower probability of being employed (-6.8%) one year after graduation, compared to those who have parents with a non-university degree. One possible interpretation is that family background may be linked to strategies for entering the labour market at a later stage, for example while waiting for a position considered more suitable. This hypothesis forms part of a broader picture in which family background is associated with graduates' educational and employment choices. In this regard, specific studies compared graduates' university courses of study with those of their parents, showing that degree inheritance is particularly common among graduates from courses such as medicine and law, which provide access to professional practice.(AlmaLaurea, 2026a) Moreover, such courses of study require a further cycle of specialisation in order to enter into freelance work.

The analyses reveal interesting results on employment opportunities one year after graduation as a function of performance in studies. As calculated by taking into account their distribution by university, field of study and degree class, exam marks are positively associated with the probability of being employed. Indeed, one year after graduation this probability increases by 7.4% for those with scores above the median value of their reference group. Compliance with the deadlines for the completion of the course of study is associated with a higher probability of employment. Compared to those who graduate one or more years late, graduates who finish their studies on time are 14.1% more likely to be employed. Finally, all things being equal, as the age at graduation increases, the probability of being employed decreases (-3.0% for each additional year). This is probably because those entering the labour market at a younger age have characteristics or forms of availability, including contractual flexibility, that are in greater demand among employers. The type of high school/secondary school diploma and the diploma mark are also associated with differences in recent graduates' employment opportunities. All else being equal, graduates with a high school diploma or a technical secondary school diploma were respectively 13.0% and 20.2% more likely to be employed than those with a vocational secondary school diploma. High school/secondary school diploma marks are also positively associated with the probability of being employed (+0.6% for each additional point).

Some experiences gained during studies also increase the probability of employment: all else being equal, those who spent time studying abroad during the course of study (recognised by their programme

or undertaken independently)⁹ are 9.4% more likely to be employed one year after graduation than those who had no experience abroad.

Work experience gained during university studies, regardless of its nature or continuity, helps graduates find employment more easily one year after graduation. All else being equal, studying workers (i.e. those with continuous full-time work experience for at least half the duration of their studies) are twice as likely to be employed as students who graduate without any work experience. However, working students (i.e. those who have had other types of work experience) are 50.0% more likely to be employed than those who have no work experience. It is worth remembering that in this specific study only the probability of graduates being employed was examined, without taking into account the characteristics of the job they were hired to do. Therefore, the results just described suggest that work experience of any kind – even if not consistent with the course of study – helps graduates find employment more easily after graduation.

⁹ These include study experiences undertaken under a European Union programme, e.g. Erasmus, and other programmes recognised by the course of study, e.g. Overseas. They also include study abroad undertaken on the graduate's own initiative. This information reflects not only experiences undertaken in the course of study just completed, but also any study abroad experiences during previous course of study.

Table 1 2024 first- and second-level graduates surveyed one year after graduation: logistic regression model for assessing the probability of employment. Survey year 2025

	b	S.E.	Exp(b)
Gender (female=0)			
male	0,129	0,024	1,137
At least one parent with a university degree (no=0)			
yes	-0,071	0,023	0,932
Geographic area of residence (South=0)			
North	0,299	0,042	1,348
Centre	0,183	0,043	1,200
High school/secondary school diploma mark (average, out of 100)	0,006	0,001	1,006
Type of high school/secondary school diploma (vocational diploma=0)			
high school diploma	0,122	0,062	1,130 *
technical diploma	0,184	0,065	1,202
Degree type (First-level=0)			
Second-level	0,288	0,027	1,333
Field of study (Politics, social sciences and communication=0)			
Agriculture, forestry and veterinary	0,659	0,080	1,932
Architecture and construction	1,419	0,079	4,134
Arts and design	-0,276	0,060	0,759
Economics	0,597	0,044	1,817
Education	0,998	0,058	2,712
Law	-0,258	0,046	0,773
Information and communication technologies (ICTs)	1,580	0,115	4,855
Engineering and engineering trades	1,788	0,060	5,980
Humanities and literature	-0,113	0,056	0,894 *
Foreign languages	0,110	0,051	1,116 *
Health and pharmacy	1,881	0,049	6,561
Psychology	-0,485	0,056	0,616
Natural sciences, mathematics, physics and statistics	0,691	0,048	1,995
Sports sciences and physical education	0,513	0,079	1,670
Geographic area of university (South=0)			
North	0,444	0,045	1,559
Centre	0,298	0,042	1,347
Age at graduation	-0,030	0,003	0,970
Degree completion time (1 or more years late=0)			
on time	0,131	0,024	1,141
Exam mark (below the median value=0)			
mark above or equal to the median value	0,071	0,023	1,074
Work during studies (no=0)			
studying worker	0,821	0,068	2,272
working student	0,405	0,022	1,500
Studied abroad during the course of study (no experience=0)			
yes	0,090	0,031	1,094
Number of known IT tools (almost 2 IT tools=0)			
3 or 4 IT tools	0,085	0,033	1,088 *
5 or more IT tools	0,171	0,029	1,186
Comparison between province of high school/secondary school diploma and of study (same province=0)			
diploma obtained in a different province from the location of the studies, but within the same region	0,067	0,026	1,069 *
diploma obtained in a different region from the location of the studies, or abroad	-0,012	0,030	0,988 ***
Participation in job orientation training initiatives organised by the University (not participate=0)			
satisfied	0,096	0,025	1,101
not satisfied	0,018	0,028	1,018 ***
Plan to pursue postgraduate studies (yes=0)			
no	0,225	0,023	1,253
Willingness to travel for business (no=0)			
yes	0,124	0,050	1,132 *
Aspects important for job-seeking: career opportunities (no=0)			
yes	0,114	0,026	1,120
Aspects important for job-seeking: social utility of the job (no=0)			
yes	-0,096	0,025	0,908
Aspects important for job-seeking: relevance to cultural interests (no=0)			
yes	-0,082	0,025	0,921
Aspects important for job-seeking: flexibility of working hours (no=0)			
yes	-0,066	0,023	0,936
Willingness to work full-time (no=0)			
yes	0,275	0,028	1,317
Willingness to accept jobs not related to one's degree (yes=0)			
no	0,315	0,029	1,370
Willingness to accept a minimum net monthly salary for full-time employment (under €1,250=0)			
€1,251 - €1,500	0,069	0,033	1,072 *
€1,501 - €1,750	0,022	0,034	1,022 ***
€1,751 - €2,000	0,005	0,039	1,005 ***
€2,001 - €2,500	-0,082	0,045	0,921 **
over €2,500	-0,252	0,053	0,778
Costant	-0,946	0,163	0,388

Note: Correct classification rate of 68.5%; N=64,476; R2 Nagelkerke=0.202.

* Significance at 5% (p<0.05) - ** Significance at 10% (p<0.10) - *** Not significant.

Where not explicitly stated, parameters significant at 1% (p<0.01).

Source: AlmaLaurea, Survey on the Occupational Condition of Graduates.

Computer skills are also associated with a greater probability of employment within the first year after graduation. Those familiar with at least five computer tools were 18.6% more likely to be employed than those familiar with no more than two. A specific study carried out by AlmaLaurea investigated the effects of knowledge of IT tools separately for men and women, which highlighted the existence of differences in employment performance and job characteristics. (Girotti e Binassi, 2020)

There are also initiatives organised by universities to support the university-work transition that seem to increase the likelihood of employment one year after graduation. This in-depth study focused in particular on job orientation training initiatives organised by the university. Those who reported having participated in such initiatives at the time of graduation and being satisfied with them are more likely to be employed (+10.1%) one year after graduation than those who did not take advantage of them.

As might be expected, those who, at the time of obtaining their degree, declared that they did not intend to continue their studies are more likely to be employed than those who expressed the intention of continuing their studies (+25.3%).

According to the statements they made on the eve of finishing their studies, some aspects of the job that graduates intend to seek were also significant. All other things being equal, graduates who considered career opportunities very important (response “definitely yes”) when seeking work were 12.0% more likely to be employed one year after graduation. Willingness to travel for business (regardless of frequency) was associated with a higher probability of employment (+13.2%) compared to those who did not report such willingness. All other things being equal, those who stated on the eve of graduation that they were willing to work full time and were unwilling to accept jobs that were not consistent with their degree were respectively 31.7% and 37.0% more likely to be employed. Conversely, graduates who considered the social utility of the job performed (-9.2%), relevance to their cultural interests (-7.9%) and flexibility of working hours (-6.4%) important in the job sought were less likely to be employed. These aspects probably make graduates more selective when seeking work.

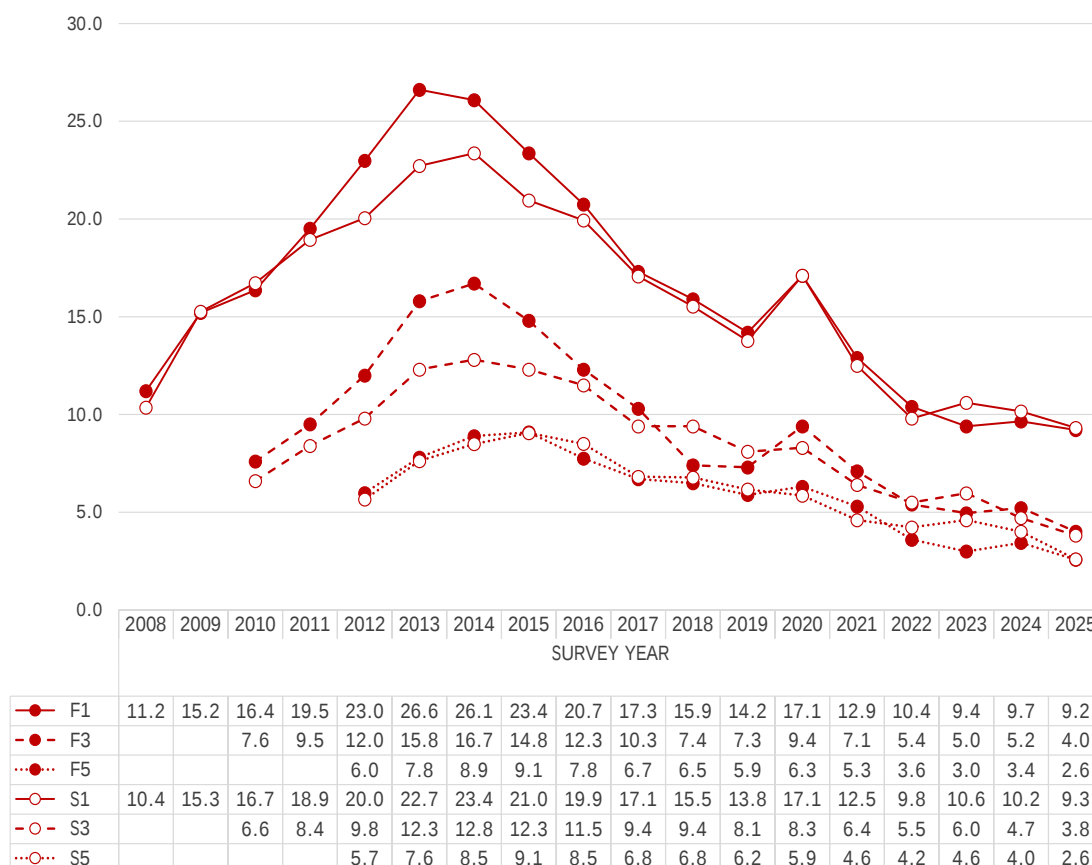
Similarly, graduates’ selectivity in terms of salary is associated with a lower probability of employment, confirming the importance placed on the financial return of their investment in education. Graduates who just before completing their studies stated that they were only willing to accept a job paying more than €2,500 net per month (full-time) are 22.2% less likely to be employed one year after graduation than those who were willing to accept a salary under €1,250.

Further analysis showed that the association between certain characteristics and employment opportunities one year after graduation has changed in recent years. Specifically, the effect of participating in curricular internships recognised by the course of study has progressively decreased, to the point of being negligible in recent years. At the same time, the previous survey had already recorded a statistically significant increase in the prevalence of work experience gained during university studies. It is worth recalling, however, that the most recent graduates experienced at least part of their university education during the pandemic years. It will therefore be interesting to monitor the impact of the various factors, including curricular internships, in the near future to verify whether these findings are also confirmed for more recent graduate cohorts.

3. Unemployment rate and labour force

In 2025, one year after graduation, the unemployment rate was 9.2% among first-level graduates and 9.3% among second-level graduates (-0.5 and -0.9 percentage points compared to 2024). These were the lowest rates recorded in the 2008-2025 period for all the populations examined (Figure 2).

Figure 2 2007-2024 graduates surveyed one, three and five years after graduation: unemployment rate by degree type. Survey years 2008-2025 (percentage values)



Legend

F: first-level; S: second-level;

1: one year after graduation; 3: three years after graduation; 5: five years after graduation.

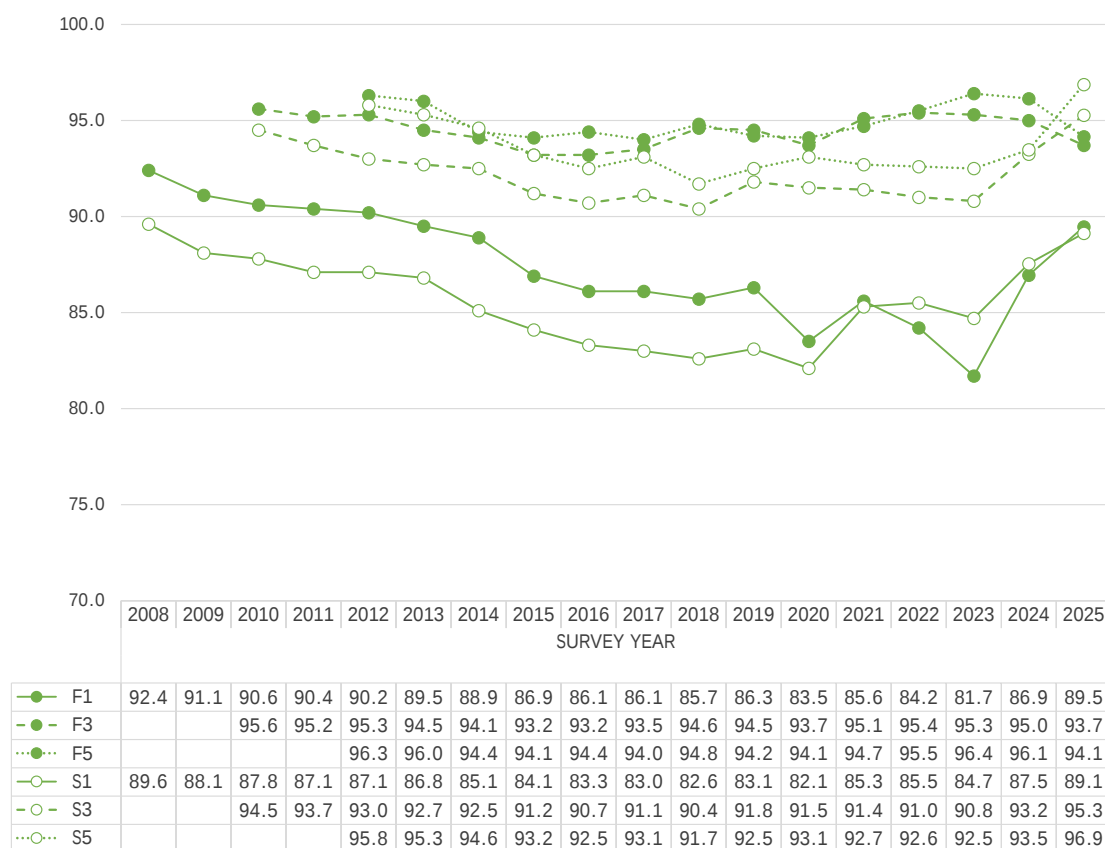
Note: as for the first-level, only graduates not enrolled in another degree course were considered. Until the 2018 cohort, second-level graduates also include graduates from the course of study in Primary Education Sciences before the reform of Italian Ministerial Decree no. 249/2010.

Source: AlmaLaurea, Survey on the Occupational Condition of Graduates.

Recall that the unemployment rate is calculated with reference to the labour force, i.e. all employed people and those who, although not employed, are available for work and actively seeking a job. For a comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon, it is therefore necessary to also take into account the size of the labour force (Figure 3).

In 2025 around 90% of graduates were in the labour force one year after graduation, with no differences between first-level graduates (89.5%) and second-level graduates (89.1%). Compared with the 2024 survey, the proportion of graduates in the labour force increased by 2.6 percentage points among first-level graduates and 1.6 percentage points among second-level graduates. Moreover, the values observed in 2025 were the highest both since the Covid-19 pandemic and over the past ten years.

Figure 3 2007-2024 graduates surveyed one, three and five years after graduation: labour force by degree type. Survey years 2008-2025 (percentage values)



Legend

F: first-level; S: second-level;

1: one year after graduation; 3: three years after graduation; 5: five years after graduation.

Note: as for the first-level, only graduates not enrolled in another degree course were considered. Until the 2018 cohort, second-level graduates also include graduates from the course of study in Primary Education Sciences before the reform of Italian Ministerial Decree no. 249/2010.

Source: AlmaLaurea, Survey on the Occupational Condition of Graduates.

Three years after graduation, the unemployment rate was lower than after one year, at 4.0% for first-level graduates and 3.8% for second-level graduates (-1.2 and -0.9 percentage points, respectively, compared to 2024). The proportion in the labour force exceeded 90% among both first-level graduates (93.7%, down 1.3 percentage points over the previous year) and second-level graduates (95.3%, up 2.1 percentage points compared with 2024). Moreover, the values observed in 2025 were the highest since the Covid-19 pandemic.

The unemployment rate five years after graduation stands at 2.6% both among first-level graduates (-0.8 percentage points compared to the 2024 survey) and among second-level graduates (-1.4 points). The analysis of the labour force five years after graduation found percentages of 94.1% for first-level graduates (-2.0 points compared to 2024) and as much as 96.9% for second-level graduates (+3.4 percentage points), with the latter being the highest value in the observation period.

4. Work characteristics: definition of the cohort under examination and availability of documentation

The following analysis covers the work characteristics of all graduates who reported performing paid work, including post-graduate training such as internships, professional traineeships, PhD and specialisation schools.¹⁰ This approach was adopted starting with the 2023 Report, after the necessary studies to assess its impact, as documented in previous reports. Depending on the degree type and the study programme completed, there are also significant differences in the size of the cohort being analysed, particularly accentuated in those subject groups where such training activities are widespread. However, it is true that the values of the individual indicators examined do not change appreciably.¹¹ In this regard, while this new approach was adopted starting with the 2023 Report, the survey questionnaire was modified in 2018 and therefore it is possible to analyse the documentation from the surveys providing eight years of data.

4.1 Type of work

In 2025 the most common forms of employment among graduates employed one year after graduation (Figure 4) remain permanent employment contracts (40.2% among employed first-level graduates and 28.7% among employed second-level graduates), fixed-term contracts (27.5% and 24.5%, respectively) and training contracts¹² (14.3% and 22.4%, respectively). Conversely, 10.4% of first-level and 7.8% of second-level employed graduates are self-employed. As might be expected, activities supported by a scholarship or research grant¹³ are most common among second-level graduates (9.3%), while they are residual among first-level graduates (0.3%). Work without a contract accounted for 0.9% of first-level graduates and 0.8% of second-level graduates. Finally, the other contractual forms¹⁴ concern 6.1% and 6.0% of first- and second-level employed graduates, respectively.

A comparison with the surveys of previous years shows trends that are not always linear, often differentiated between first- and second-level graduates and difficult to fully explain given the multiplicity of factors that affect the results. Here we simply note that the gradual upward trend in permanent contracts was confirmed among first-level graduates (+0.7 percentage points compared to

¹⁰ Until the 2022 Report these characteristics were only examined for those who declared to be in paid employment (excluding postgraduate studies). The change in the definition of the cohort under analysis is justified by the opportunity to align the AlmaLaurea survey with Istat's approach as far as possible in the most recent survey on graduates and in the labour force survey.

¹¹ The changes made to the survey questionnaire between 2018 and 2022 enabled the consistency of the indicators to be checked. For details on methodological aspects see the Methodological Notes published at: www.almaurea.it/sites/default/files/2023-11/almaurea_occupazione_rapporto2023.pdf (in Italian). (AlmaLaurea, 2023)

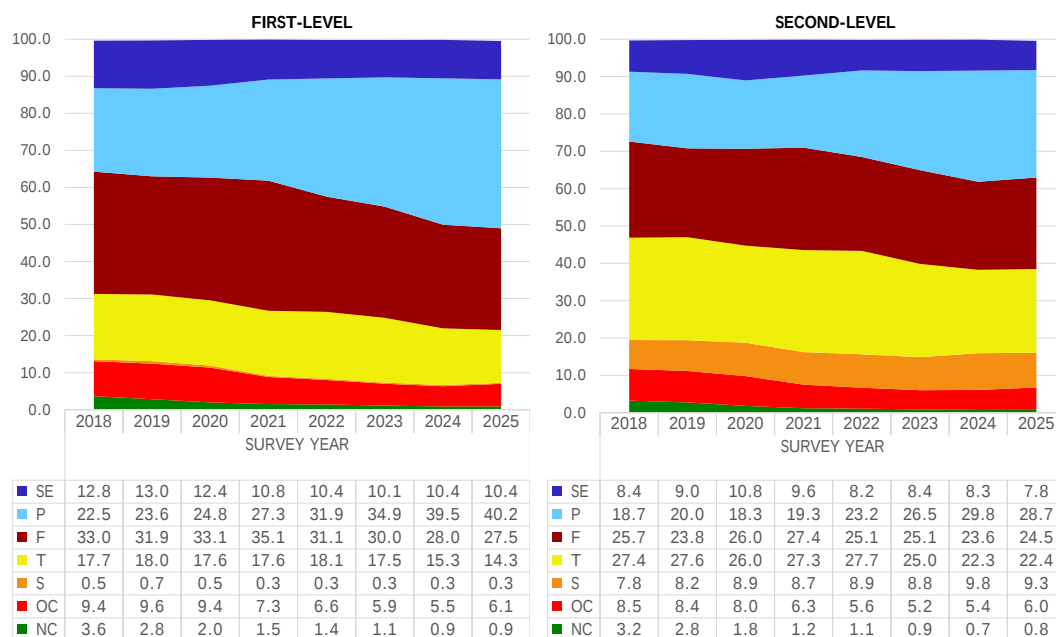
¹² These include apprenticeships, in-company internships and specialisation schools.

¹³ More specifically, scholarships or research grants, work grants and research fellowships.

¹⁴ These include coordinated and continuous collaborations, occasional collaborations and intermittent or on-call work.

the 2024 survey), reaching the highest value in the period examined in 2025. Both training contracts (-1.0 percentage points) and fixed-term employment contracts (-0.5 points) decreased over the past year, while self-employment remained stable. Among second-level graduates, however, permanent contracts were not only less prevalent but also decreased by 1.0 percentage point over the past year. Self-employment also declined slightly (-0.5 points). At the same time, fixed-term employment contracts increased (+0.9 points), while training contracts, which were considerably more common than among first-level graduates, were broadly stable compared to 2024.

Figure 4 2017-2024 graduates employed one year after graduation: type of work by degree type. Survey years 2018-2025 (percentage values)



Legend

SE: self-employment; P: permanent contract; F: fixed-term contract; T: training contracts; S: scholarship or research fellowship; OC: other contract; NC: no contract. The sum of the percentages may be less than 100 due to non-responses.

Note: as for the first-level, only graduates not enrolled in another degree course were considered. Until the 2018 cohort, second-level graduates also include graduates from the course of study in Primary Education Sciences before the reform of Italian Ministerial Decree no. 249/2010.

Source: AlmaLaurea, Survey on the Occupational Condition of Graduates.

Employment outcomes also differed according to work experience that began before graduation. Those who were working at the time of graduation generally had more favourable employment outcomes, probably because they had already gained the experience needed to secure a job, which also generally had better characteristics. Moreover, permanent contracts were more common among graduates who continued in the same job after graduation. More specifically, permanent contracts were more common among those who continued the job they had before graduation (61.8% among first-level graduates and 51.6% among second-level graduates) than among those who began working after earning their degree (30.9% and 20.3%, respectively). The latter group instead had higher percentages of fixed-term employment contracts (33.7% among first-level graduates and 24.8% among second-level graduates, 21.4 and 6.6 percentage points higher, respectively, than among those who

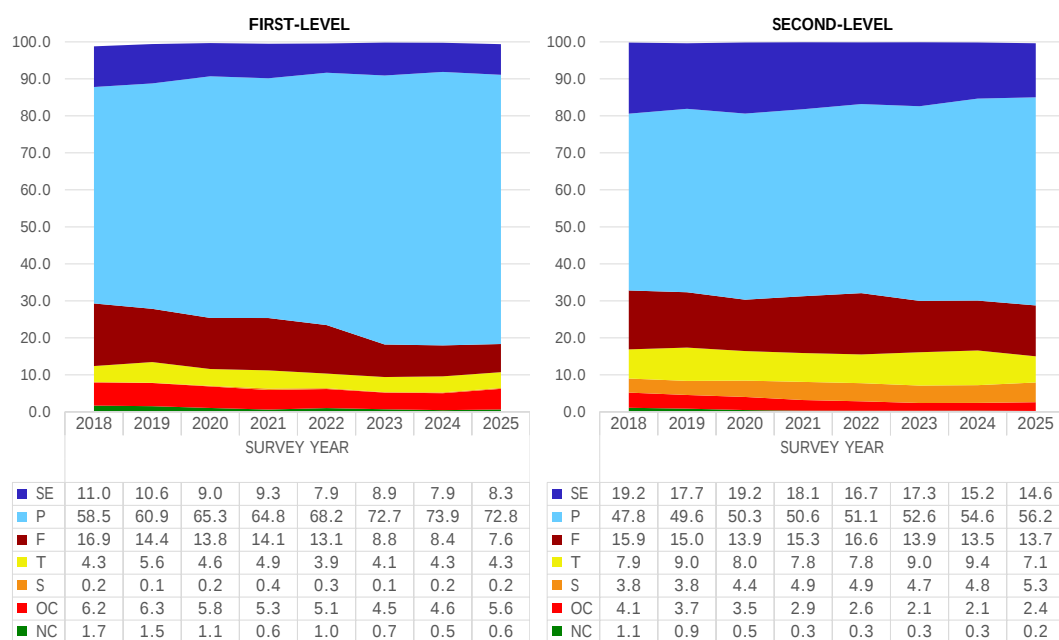
continued their job) and training contracts (18.4% and 28.6%, respectively, 12.1 and 19.0 points higher than among those who continued the job begun before graduation).

Extending the period of observation beyond the first year after graduation allows a more complete assessment of the characteristics of the type of work. Among 2022 graduates three years after graduation, permanent employment contracts had been given to 59.3% of first-level graduates and 46.3% of second-level graduates. Three years after graduation fixed-term employment contracts (13.3% among first-level graduates and 17.1% among second-level graduates) and training contracts (11.2% and 11.9%, respectively) remain widespread. Conversely, 8.3% of first-level graduates and 11.2% of second-level graduates are self-employed. Once again, the activities supported by a scholarship or research fellowship are more prevalent among second-level graduates (9.1%), being decidedly negligible among first-level graduates (0.4%).

Among 2020 graduates, five years after receiving their degree (Figure 5) the share of those employed with a permanent contract exceeds half of those in employment and even reaches 72.8% among first-level graduates and 56.2% among second-level graduates. 7.6% of first- and 13.7% of second-level graduates are employed with fixed-term contracts, while training contracts involve 4.3% and 7.1% of the employed respectively. On the other hand, self-employment concerns 8.3% of first-level and a good 14.6% of second-level employed graduates. Fewer than 1% of the employed were engaged in undocumented jobs (0.6% among first-level graduates and 0.2% among second-level graduates). All other contractual forms are rather limited, showing percentages of less than 6%.

Compared to the corresponding 2024 survey, five years after graduation permanent employment contracts decreased among first-level graduates (-1.1 percentage points) and increased among second-level graduates (+1.6 points). Conversely, self-employment increased slightly among first-level graduates (+0.4 percentage points) and decreased slightly among second-level graduates (-0.5 points). Fixed-term contracts also decreased among first-level graduates (-0.8 points), while other forms of contract increased (+1.0 points). Among second-level graduates, however, training contracts decreased (-2.3 percentage points) and work supported by scholarships or research fellowships increased (+0.5 points).

Figure 5 2013-2020 graduates employed five years after graduation: type of work by degree type. Survey years 2018-2025 (percentage values)



Legend

SE: self-employment; P: permanent contract; F: fixed-term contract; T: training contracts; S: scholarship or research fellowship; OC: other contract; NC: no contract. The sum of the percentages may be less than 100 due to non-responses.

Note: as for the first-level, only graduates not enrolled in another degree course were considered. Until the 2018 cohort, second-level graduates also include graduates from the course of study in Primary Education Sciences before the reform of Italian Ministerial Decree no. 249/2010.

Source: AlmaLaurea, Survey on the Occupational Condition of Graduates.

4.2. Smart working and other forms of remote work

Smart working, together with teleworking, represents a form of work that has existed in our country for some time,¹⁵ but before the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic had not been used much by Italian companies. In recent years, however, there has been a sharp increase in remote workers. In fact, the health emergency led to a sudden and strong recourse to this working method, the prevalence of which was subsequently reduced following the containment of the pandemic. However, today smart working remains widespread and is now a structured form of work within companies, albeit with a varying intensity in the public and private sectors. According to the Smart Working Observatory of Milan Polytechnic (2025), following a slight decline, the number of people working remotely increased slightly in 2025 compared to 2024 (+0.6%), with differences according to company size. The increase was greatest in the Public Administration (+11%) but was also recorded in large companies (+1.8%). By contrast, the number of people working remotely in small and medium-sized enterprises decreased.

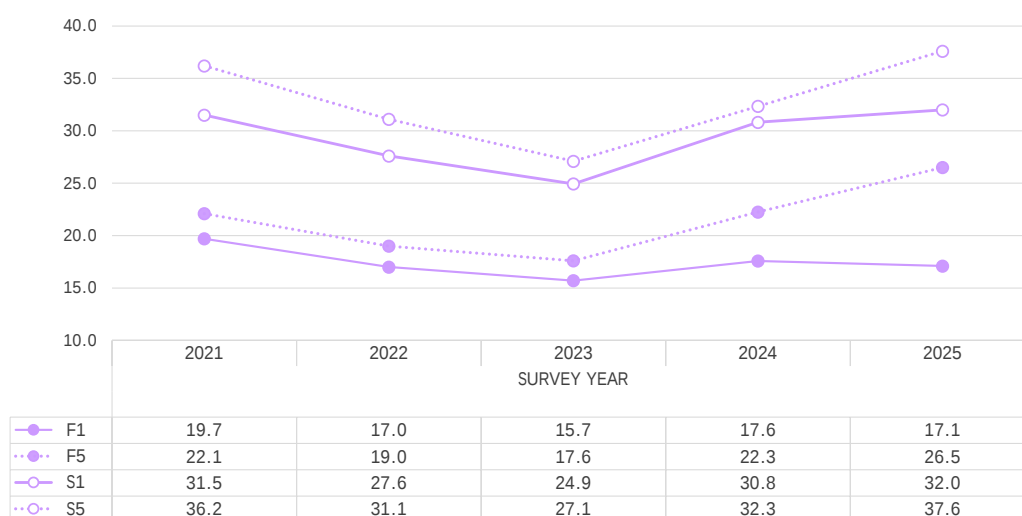
The 2025 AlmaLaurea survey shows that smart working and, more generally, remote work involve 17.1% of employed first-level graduates and 32.0% of employed second-level graduates one year after graduation (Figure 6). Remote working was more common among 2020 graduates employed five years

¹⁵ In Italian law, smart working is termed “lavoro agile” and was introduced by Italian Law no. 81/2017. On the other hand, the so called ‘telelavoro’ (remote working) has been active in our country for longer and has been differentially regulated between the public and private sectors.

after graduation, with percentages of 26.5% among first-level graduates and 37.6% among second-level graduates. Following the general decline in smart working observed up to 2023 as normality gradually returned after the end of the pandemic, the gradual increase was confirmed in 2025.¹⁶

For ease of reading, “smart working” is used below in the broad sense to include all remote work performed as an employee or on a self-employed basis. Here, note only that teleworking was considerably less common: one year after graduation it involved 0.5% of first-level graduates and 1.1% of second-level graduates overall. Smart working was more common (8.8% and 14.8%, respectively), as was remote work among the self-employed (7.7% and 16.1%, respectively).

Figure 6 2020-2024 graduates employed one and five years after graduation: prevalence of smart working by degree type. Survey years 2021-2025 (percentage values)



Legend

F: first-level; S: second-level;

1: one year after graduation; 5: five years after graduation.

Note: for the first level only graduates not enrolled in another course of study are considered.

Source: AlmaLaurea, Survey on the Occupational Condition of Graduates.

Smart workers more frequently pursue an intellectual and highly specialised profession. They work more often in the private sector, less so in the public sector. They are relatively more employed in the IT, professional consultancy, communications as well as credit and insurance branches. In contrast, they are relatively less employed in those areas where a physical presence in the workplace is usually required, i.e. in the health, trade and education and research branches, as well as in the social and personal services. In terms of type of employment, to a greater extent those who work remotely have a permanent employment contract, mostly full time, while fixed-term contracts are less frequent. These results are generally confirmed for both first- and second-level graduates one and five years after graduation.

¹⁶ For this indicator, the analysis over time covers the 2021-2025 survey period. For previous years, information is available only for those who reported that they were working, excluding post-graduate training (PhD, specialisation schools, internships, traineeships, etc.), even when paid. However, where feasible, specific analyses showed that the percentage of people working in this way varies considerably when moving from one definition of employed person to the other. For this population, extending the analysis to previous years shows a general sharp increase in the prevalence of smart working between 2019 and 2025. Among second-level graduates the increase was as much as around 30 percentage points, both one and five years after graduation.

4.3. Earnings and related explanatory factors

For all the populations analysed, the earnings recorded in 2025 increased slightly compared to the previous year. However, a more accurate analysis over time must take changes in purchasing power into account, particularly in a period characterised by changes in inflation levels. When real earnings are considered,¹⁷ the picture changes, showing stability or a slight decrease for all populations compared to the 2024 survey. Real earnings nevertheless remained broadly in line with those of 2021, when the highest earnings in the observation period were recorded.

More specifically, in 2025 the net monthly salary one year after graduation was on average equal to €1,491 for first-level graduates and €1,495 for second-level graduates (Figure 7). These values have decreased over the past year by 1.4% for first-level graduates and 0.9% for second-level graduates.

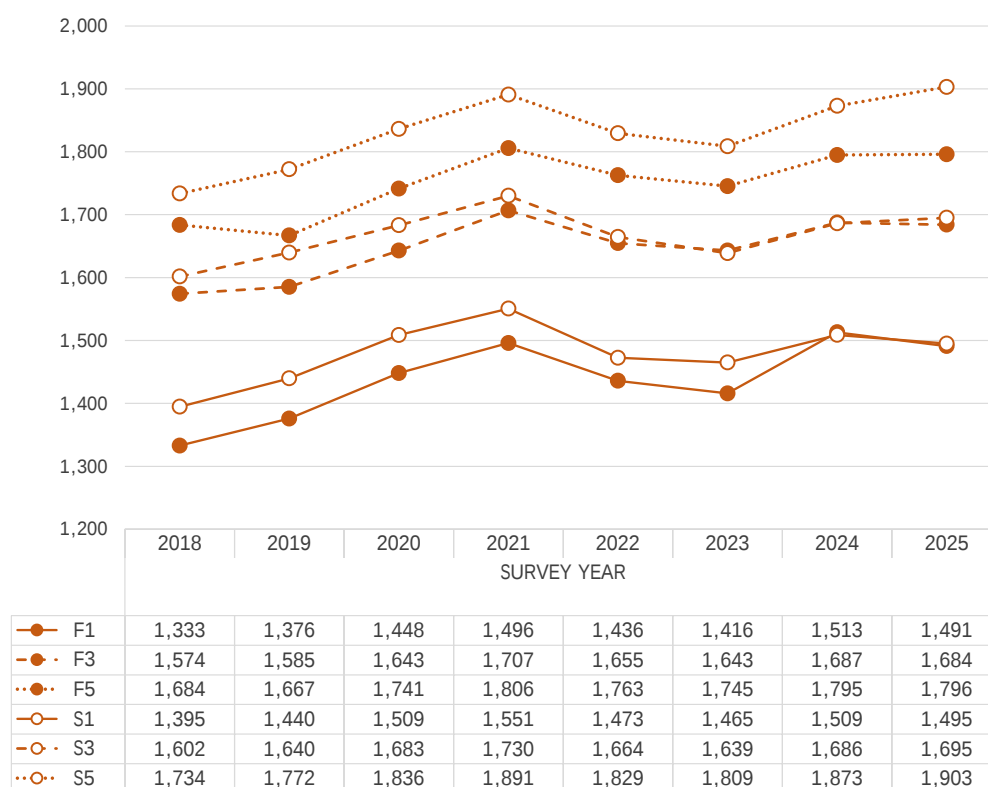
Compared to graduates who began working after earning their degree, those who continued in the same job begun before graduation earned more on average. Among first-level graduates, the earnings advantage was 12.4%. Monthly earnings were €1,615 compared to €1,436 for those who began working after graduation. This difference fell to 6.7% among second-level graduates, whose earnings were respectively €1,567 and €1,469. Both the trends identified and the size of the differences were confirmed compared to the previous survey.

The wage levels observed are also affected by the varying prevalence of part-time work, which in 2025 involved 18.3% of first-level graduates and 15.6% of second-level graduates (of these, 10.8% and 9.2%, respectively, were in involuntary part-time work, meaning they were working part-time because they could not find full-time employment). Compared to 2024, part-time work became more common among both first-level graduates (+1.0 percentage points) and second-level graduates (+1.6 points). In any case, these values do not affect the wage trends described. However, the varying prevalence of part-time work does influence wage differences between first- and second-level graduates: in 2025, although there were no differences in net monthly wages overall, when considering only full-time workers a wage gap of 1.2% in favour of first-level graduates emerged.

Three years after graduation, net monthly earnings reached €1,684 for first-level graduates and €1,695 for second-level graduates, values that were broadly stable compared to the 2024 survey (-0.2% and +0.5%, respectively).

¹⁷ The temporal analysis of graduate salaries takes into account the changed purchasing power. (Istat, 2026c)

Figure 7 2013-2024 graduates employed one, three and five years after graduation: net monthly earnings by degree type. Survey years 2018-2025 (values revalued according to ISTAT consumer price indices; average values in euros)



Legend

F: first-level; S: second-level;

1: one year after graduation; 3: three years after graduation; 5: five years after graduation.

Note: as for the first-level, only graduates not enrolled in another degree course were considered. Until the 2018 cohort, second-level graduates also include graduates from the course of study in Primary Education Sciences before the reform of Italian Ministerial Decree no. 249/2010.

Source: AlmaLaurea, Survey on the Occupational Condition of Graduates.

Five years after graduation, the net monthly salary is €1,796 for first-level graduates and €1,903 for second-level graduates. Five years after graduation, real earnings also increased among second-level graduates compared to the corresponding 2024 survey (+1.6%) and were broadly stable among first-level graduates. This again confirms the need to take account of the different prevalence of part-time work, which in 2025 involved 12.1% of first-level graduates (+0.9 percentage points compared to 2024) and 6.3% of second-level graduates (broadly stable compared to the previous survey). However, among graduates five years after graduation the phenomenon of involuntary part-time involves 6.1% of first-level graduates and 3.3% of second-level graduates. Also in this case the different proportion of part-time work does not impact the salary trends observed, but rather on the salary differentials between first- and second-level graduates. The latter receive a net monthly salary that is 6.0% higher than that of first-level graduates. However, if the comparison is restricted to those working full-time, the salary differential drops to 3.3%.

Despite the data showing a trending improvement on the wage front, it is interesting to note that over 30% of employed graduates consider their wages to be inadequate or completely inadequate in relation to their profession and role: one year after graduation, this share stands at 31.7% among first-

level graduates and 36.1% among second-level graduates. Five years after graduation, the trends already identified were broadly confirmed among second-level graduates, while over 50% of first-level graduates considered their earnings not very adequate or not at all adequate.

A linear regression model was used to analyse the multiple factors associated with graduates' net monthly earnings. The approach followed is similar to that described in section 2 for the assessment of the probability of employment, although with some peculiarities related to the different phenomenon under investigation. The analysis therefore considered 2024 first-level graduates who had not continued their education by enrolling in another course of study and 2024 second-level graduates, all contacted one year after graduation.¹⁸

The analysis considers factors related to gender, *geographical breakdown of residence*, *family of origin (parents' educational qualifications)*, *high school/secondary school diploma marks* and university degree (degree type, field of study). Experience gained during university studies (*work experience or study abroad*), *language skills*, the importance of *career-related reasons when choosing the course of study*, the *intention to seek work* and willingness to accept jobs that were not consistent with the degree, as reported on the eve of graduation, were also considered. Given its analytical purposes, the model also considers certain characteristics of the work performed that are closely linked to graduates' earnings (geographic area of work; full-time or part-time work, including whether voluntary or involuntary; average number of hours worked per week; type of work; the company's sector and branch of economic activity; profession; formal coordination of work performed by other people as well as informal coordination), together with *geographic mobility for work* and gender equality in the workplace. These are concomitant factors that were added purely for analytical purposes.¹⁹

The results of the model in Table 2 show differences²⁰ by degree type: all else being equal, compared to a first-level degree a second-level degree corresponds on average to an estimated increase in pay of €111 net per month.

All other things being equal, the field of study also has a decisive effect on the pay differentials of recent graduates. Compared to graduates in politics, social sciences and communications, average net monthly earnings were significantly higher among graduates in health and pharmacy (+€310); engineering and engineering trades (+€256); information and communication technologies (ICTs) (+€222); economics (+€128); natural sciences, mathematics, physics and statistics (+€105); education

¹⁸ As with the in-depth study of the probability of employment, the model does not include those who were already working at the time of graduation and those living abroad.

¹⁹ The variables in italics were included in the model but not shown in Table 2 for reasons of simplification given their modest contribution. Age at graduation, willingness to travel for work, the importance attributed to cultural reasons when choosing the course of study, expectations regarding the job sought in terms of acquisition of professional skills, independence and autonomy, free time, prestige, flexibility of working hours, relations with colleagues in the workplace, the workplace (i.e. its location and physical characteristics), the possibility of making the best use of the skills acquired during studies and having children were also considered but were not significant. Factors relating to the socio-economic background of the family of origin, aspects of the pre-university curriculum (type of upper secondary school diploma), the geographical area of the university, geographical mobility for study purposes, regular progress through the course of study, the average examination mark, internships undertaken during the course of study, IT skills, participation in career guidance initiatives organised by the university and expectations regarding the job sought in terms of earnings prospects, career opportunities, job security, consistency with the field of study, alignment with the individual's cultural interests, the social usefulness of the work, involvement in work activities and decision-making processes, opportunities for international contacts and possibilities for continuing education were excluded from the model, as their information contribution was entirely negligible. The time taken to enter the labour market and certain factors relating to the job performed (setting or participating in the setting of the company's objectives/strategies, use of remote working and the effectiveness of the qualification) were also excluded from the model for the same reason.

²⁰ It is worth noting that even wage differences estimated by the model which may seem negligible can be significant in a context of generally low wages.

(+€94); and sports sciences and physical education (+€69). On the other hand, graduates in the law subject group are at a pay disadvantage (-€117).

Traditional gender differences were confirmed as significant: all else being equal, the model estimates that men earned an average of €67 net more per month one year after graduation.

Willingness (declared prior to graduation) to accept jobs not related to one's degree is also associated with different wage levels. Indeed, on average those who declared they were unwilling to accept a job not consistent with their studies earn €48 more than those who had declared they were willing.

There are also significant wage differences by geographic location: compared to those employed in the South, on average graduates working in the North earn €68 more per month, while those working in the Centre earn €50 more. But it is above all among graduates working abroad that the pay advantage is considerably marked (€673 net per month more than those working in the South). However, it is worth remembering the differences in the cost of living that characterise different countries and regions within the same country, thus having an impact on wages, as also underscored in various studies on AlmaLaurea data. (Chiesi e Girotti, 2016)

Table 2 2024 first- and second-level graduates employed one year after graduation: linear regression model for assessing net monthly earnings. Survey year 2025

	b	S.E.
Gender (female=0)		
male	66.84	4.12
Degree type (First-level=0)		
Second-level	111.50	4.93
Field of study (Politics, social sciences and communication=0)		
Agriculture, forestry and veterinary	31.71	15.37 *
Architecture and construction	42.60	13.49
Arts and design	-2.78	14.66 ***
Economics	127.53	9.37
Education	93.53	12.36
Law	-117.23	11.28
Information and communication technologies (ICTs)	222.49	15.57
Engineering and engineering trades	256.34	9.95
Humanities and literature	26.48	13.38 *
Foreign languages	0.40	11.61 ***
Health and pharmacy	310.44	10.19
Psychology	-38.40	14.77
Natural sciences, mathematics, physics and statistics	105.13	9.91
Sports sciences and physical education	69.43	17.12
Willingness to accept jobs not related to one's degree (yes=0)		
no	47.64	4.47
Geographic area of work (South=0)		
North	67.63	9.01
Centre	50.00	8.95
Abroad	672.67	15.82
Full-time/part-time (involuntary part-time=0)		
full-time	307.51	8.48
part-time by choice	66.80	10.30
Hours worked per week	8.49	0.29
Type of work (fixed-term contract=0)		
self-employment	229.47	8.08
permanent contract	12.70	5.58 *
other	-328.87	5.07
Company sector (private=0)		
public	124.50	6.29
not-for-profit	-6.99	11.58 ***
Company branch (social and personal, recreational and cultural services=0)		
agriculture	90.17	24.41
engineering industries and precision engineering industries	217.42	13.34
building industry	122.28	15.29
chemical and energy industries	178.26	12.65
manufacturing industry	141.53	13.12
commerce	60.40	11.59
credit and insurance	286.81	14.06
transport, advertising and communications	83.27	13.40
consulting	46.37	10.97
computer science	183.85	13.49
other services for companies	88.94	14.75
public administration, armed forces	154.79	16.53
education and research	34.23	10.57
healthcare	187.09	10.61
Profession (other professions=0)		
entrepreneurs, executives or intellectual, scientific and highly spec. professions and technical professions	42.08	11.25
executive office workers	16.70	12.49 ***
Formal coordination of the work done by other people (no=0)		
yes	77.36	7.31
Coordination of the work done by other people, with no formal responsibility (no=0)		
yes	55.12	6.13
Gender equality in the workplace (score 1-6 on a 1-10 scale=0)		
score 7-8	7.95	6.29 ***
score 9-10	41.45	6.26
Costant	227.40	24.26

Note: R-squared = 0.454 (adjusted R-squared = 0.453), N = 50,893

* Significance at 5% (p<0.05) - ** Significance at 10% (p<0.10) - *** Not significant.

Where not explicitly stated, parameters significant at 1% (p<0.01).

Source: AlmaLaurea, Survey on the Occupational Condition of Graduates.

Turning to an analysis of specific job characteristics, it was found that all other things being equal there were differences in pay according to weekly working hours as well as the prevalence of full-time and part-time work. Among other things, this highlights a disadvantage particularly for those involuntarily in part-time jobs. In fact, the model estimates higher wage levels not only for those employed who work full-time (on average +€308 net per month) but also for those who work part-time by choice (+€67) compared to those who work part-time involuntarily (i.e. not having found a full-time job).

Contract type also affects wage differences: all else being equal, self-employment is associated with higher wages (+€229) than fixed-term employment contracts. Permanent employment contracts also appear to correspond to higher earnings, although to a lesser extent (+€13). Other types of work – including training contracts, study and research grants and activities not governed by any contract – are associated with lower wages (–€329). More generally, the findings of this analysis show that temporary contractual arrangements correspond to lower wage levels. In fact the lowest wages are observed among graduates engaged in internships and traineeships.

The sector and branch of economic activity determine significant differences in terms of wages. In fact, all other things being equal, compared to the private sector, public sector has an estimated wage advantage of €125. Compared to social and personal, recreational and cultural services, the branches of economic activity associated with the largest earnings differences were credit and insurance (+€287), engineering industries and precision engineering industries (+€217) and healthcare (+€187). The model also estimates an earnings advantage for graduates working in computer science (+€184), the chemicals and energy industry (+€178), public administration (+€155), manufacturing industry (+€142) and building industry (+€122).

All else being equal, graduates in high-level occupations, such as entrepreneurs, executives or highly specialised intellectual or scientific professions and technical professions,²¹ earn €42 more than those in lower-level occupations.²²

Moreover, the estimates show that formal or informal coordination of work performed by other people increases average earnings. All else being equal, compared to employed graduates who reported that they did not have a coordination role, average earnings were €77 higher for formal coordination and €55 higher for informal coordination.

Finally, higher earnings were associated with high levels of gender equality perceived by graduates in the workplace (scores of 9-10 on a scale of 1 to 10), with an increase of €41.

²¹ Occupations in the first and second major occupational groups (“Legislators, entrepreneurs and senior management” and “Intellectual, scientific and highly specialised professions”) were most common among second-level graduates, while occupations in the third major occupational group (“Technical professions”) were most common among first-level graduates.

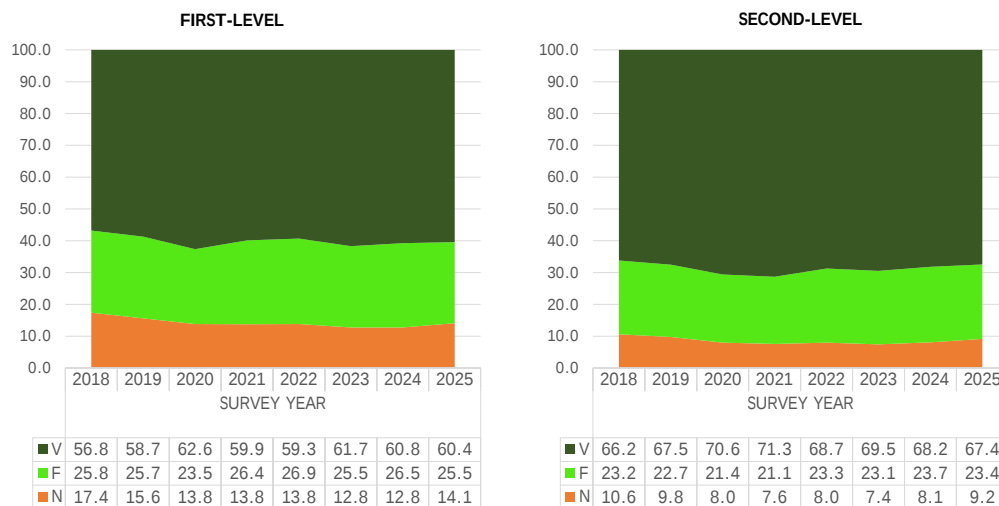
²² “Other occupations” include skilled commercial and service occupations, armed forces occupations and the remaining unskilled occupations under the ISTAT CP2021 classification of occupations. (Istat, 2023)

4.4. Effectiveness of the degree on the job

Graduation effectiveness is a subjective measure of coherence between studies completed and jobs performed, as it is based on evaluations expressed by employed graduates. Together with normative and statistical measures, it is a way of identifying and analysing situations of mismatch, whether horizontal or vertical. (Romanò et al., 2019) With regard to the use at work of skills acquired during studies and the formal or substantive requirement for the degree, one year after graduation the degree was “very effective or effective” for 60.4% of employed first-level graduates and 67.4% of employed second-level graduates (down 0.3 and 0.7 percentage points, respectively, compared with 2024; Figure 8). Degree effectiveness is closely linked to various factors, including the type of work performed and graduates’ employment status when they earned their degree. High levels of effectiveness, close to or above 70%, were observed among those who began working after earning their degree (the degree was at least effective for 69.9% and 74.4% of employed first- and second-level graduates, respectively). These values were broadly in line with those recorded in the previous survey. Effectiveness was considerably lower, at around 50%, among those who continued in the same job begun before graduation (44.4% and 51.8%, respectively). Over the past year these values decreased by 2.1 percentage points among first-level graduates and 1.3 points among second-level graduates.

As discussed before, as time passes after graduation the characteristics of the job performed improve, including the effectiveness of the degree. Considering 2022 graduates at three years, the degree is ‘very effective or effective’ for 61.5% of first-level graduates (-0.8 percentage points compared to the survey of 2024) and for 69.9% of second-level graduates (-1.0 points over the past year).

Figure 8 2017-2024 graduates employed one year after graduation: degree effectiveness by degree type. Survey years 2018-2025 (percentage values)



Legend

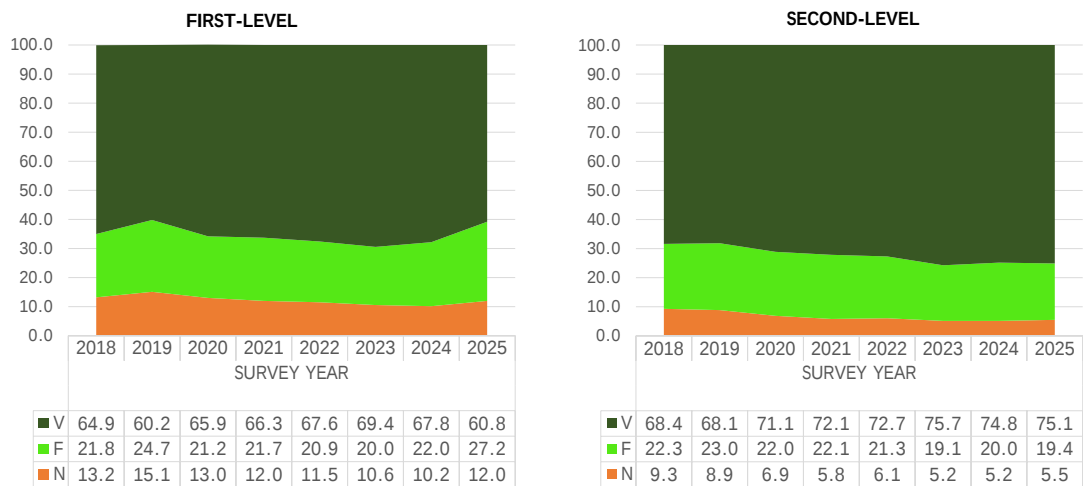
V: very effective/effective; F: fairly effective; N: not very/not at all effective.

Note: as for the first-level, only graduates not enrolled in another degree course were considered. Until the 2018 cohort, second-level graduates also include graduates from the course of study in Primary Education Sciences before the reform of Italian Ministerial Decree no. 249/2010.

Source: AlmaLaurea, Survey on the Occupational Condition of Graduates.

At five years from graduation the effectiveness levels respectively reach 60.8% and 75.1% of employed first- and second-level graduates (Figure 9). Compared to the corresponding 2024 survey, effectiveness levels decreased among employed first-level graduates (-7.0 percentage points), reaching values close to those recorded before the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Among second-level graduates, however, there were no noteworthy differences over the past year (+0.3 points). The picture outlined here is broadly confirmed when the two components of effectiveness are considered separately: use in the job of skills acquired at university and the formal or substantive requirement for a degree to perform the job.

Figure 9 2013-2020 graduates employed five years after graduation: degree effectiveness by degree type. Survey years 2018-2025 (percentage values)



Legend

V: very effective/effective; F: fairly effective; N: not very/not at all effective.

Note: as for the first-level, only graduates not enrolled in another degree course were considered. Until the 2018 cohort, second-level graduates also include graduates from the course of study in Primary Education Sciences before the reform of Italian Ministerial Decree no. 249/2010.

Source: AlmaLaurea, Survey on the Occupational Condition of Graduates.

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