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Understanding the International Pool of Recent Geoscience Graduates



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The American Geosciences Institute's (AGI) Workforce Program has successfully established AGI's Geoscience Student Exit Survey in the United States with annual reports revealing the motivations of students for majoring in the geosciences, their experiences while working towards the degree, their future plans immediately after finishing their terminal degree, and their early career experiences. Some concerns that have been revealed through this survey include the lack of higher level quantitative skills and knowledge, such as Linear Algebra or Differential Equations, among recent graduates and the very low percentages of graduates that participate in internships before graduating. In 2015, among the recent graduates that had secured a job, industries such as the non-profit industry and the educational services industry were hiring geoscientists at graduation highlighting the interest among some graduates for jobs that may not be traditional geoscience jobs. The reports from 2013, 2014, and 2015 can be found at <http://www.americangeosciences.org/workforce/reports>. This information has provided important benchmark data to begin investigating the early-career geoscience workforce.

With the increasing success of this project, discussions shifted towards a more global understanding of geoscience graduates. Collaborations were established in 2014 with the Council of Chairs of Canadian Earth Science Departments and the Geological Society of London. AGI's Geoscience Student Exit Survey was translated to be relevant to graduates in each of these countries resulting in slightly different but very comparable results between the three countries. The surveys were distributed to the U.K. and Canada in the spring and summer of 2015 and 2016. Discussions have commenced with the Geological Society of South Africa and through contacts in Australia and New Zealand to translate the survey for graduating geoscience students in those countries as well.

This presentation will discuss some of the issues and surprises encountered during the survey translation process and the initial comparisons and trends seen between the recent graduates from the four different countries. For example, Canada, the U.K., and the U.S. all have different definitions and interests related to field experiences and field skills development. The U.S. tends to focus on participation rates of the summer field camp to indicate employable skills development. However, the U.K. focuses on the required mapping project for field skills development. Canada was more concerned with the credit-bearing field courses for field skills development of their graduates. This presentation will also discuss how other countries can get involved in this project as AGI moves forward.

