



What the data reveals about early talent in Aotearoa New Zealand. Based on responses from 42 employers, 736 graduates and 419 interns across New Zealand. The 2025 surveys represent the largest and most comprehensive early talent dataset to date.

More applicants. More choice. More competition



- 60% of employers experienced an increase in graduate applications in 2025, with 13% seeing application volumes rise by more than 50%.

- 41% of graduates received two or more job offers, confirming continued competition for top graduate talent.



- 30% of interns submitted eight or more internship applications, reflecting intensified competition at intern level.

Internship programmes continue to power successful graduate programmes

- 77% of employers filled some or all graduate roles with candidates who had already undertaken work experience with them.

- 86% of graduates gained industry relevant work experience during their studies, and 63% had worked for their current employer before starting their graduate role.

- 83% of interns want a permanent role with their internship employer.



The channels that matter most



- Employer websites, word of mouth, careers expos and LinkedIn are the most common and effective ways graduates hear about opportunities.

- For interns, word of mouth, employer websites and careers expos dominate, with LinkedIn the preferred social media platform for employer engagement.



- Friends and family influence job decisions for over two thirds of graduates and 65% of interns.



What attracts graduates



• Reputation of employer, company culture and training and development remain the top reasons graduates accept roles.

• Salary is a key differentiator when graduates are given the choice of multiple offers.



• Security of employment has increased in importance when graduates assess roles.

Early pre-start engagement and communication can help to shape a positive onboarding experience

- 81% of interns experienced contact from their employer between offer acceptance and start date
- 19% of interns and 14% of graduates reported no contact from their employer before starting their role.
- Poor communication is the number one reason interns withdraw from application or selection processes.



Graduate programmes are well resourced and retention is up



- 92% of employers have a formal graduate development programme.
- 46% of employers spend more than \$30,000 on graduate training and development.
- Median retention remains strong, with 91% of graduates who started in 2024 still employed.

The desire of Kiwis to spread their wings remains a defining feature of early careers

- Graduates, on average, intend to stay in their organisation up to 3 years with salary, promotion and overseas opportunities the top three retention factors.
- 35% of graduates plan to work overseas before the end of 2027, while 24% have no overseas plans.



Why your participation matters in the NZAGE surveys

The more employers who participate in the NZAGE surveys, the richer the insights we can deliver to our members. For members who have 10 or more interns or graduates completing the survey they will also gain a bespoke report which offers incredible insights designed to support the strategic development of your early talent programmes.

"The NZAGE surveys are one of the most important sources of data that help me benchmark our programme, learn from others in the industry and continue to refine our programme so we remain competitive."

– Naomi Houston, Emerging Talent Programme Manager, Watercare

