Gaining a degree can work to your advantage throughout your working life. Cara Jenkin reports

UNIVERSITY graduates are starting their first full-time job on the highest salaries on record while most have their position within four months of finishing their degree.

Graduate Careers Australia figures show 68.8 per cent of all new bachelor degree graduates who were available for full-time employment after their degree had work, up from 68.1 per cent the year before. The median starting salary for those aged less than 25 in their first full-time job was $54,000, $550 more than those who graduated the year before.

Initial career progression also looks good, as GCA figures show 89.2 per cent of the class of 2010 had a full-time job within three years of graduating, up from the 76 per cent who initially got work. Salaries also increased by almost 33 per cent in the same period.

Policy and strategy adviser Bruce Guthrie says graduates need to think of all the benefits their degree can bring, however, rather than short-term gain. “Getting a degree is not just about the first job after university,” he says. “It’s about a lifetime of advantage in the labour market as well as the potential for huge personal growth.”

Australian Bureau of Statistics figures show at May, 2015, just 3.4 per cent of all workers who hold a bachelor degree were unemployed. Of them, 11.3 per cent were new graduates who had not yet found work.

It compares with an unemployment rate of 5.9 per cent of the total workforce at the time, and 8.7 per cent for those with no qualifications beyond high school.

GCA’s statistics reveal that while fewer bachelor degree graduates had an immediate full-time position compared to five years ago, almost double the proportion had a part-time job (19.9 per cent in 2015 compared with 10.7 per cent in 2010).

BY THE NUMBERS

Key statistics for graduates four months after finishing their degree:

- In full-time work:
  - 68.4 per cent male
  - 69.1 per cent female

- In part-time work: 12.7 per cent

- Had secured their full-time job before graduating: 16.8 per cent

First found out about their job through a job ad: 28.7 per cent

Median starting salary: $54,000

In further full-time study: 19.7 per cent

Unemployed and looking for full-time work: 11.3 per cent

Unemployed and looking for part-time work: 0.9 per cent

A QUALIFICATION that comes with a good chance of employment on completion is what many students seek in a training provider. Australian Child Care Career Options (ACCCO) graduates are so sought-after by employers and schools that they have partnered with the registered training organisation as a training provider of choice.

It offers several courses across a range of levels, including certificates III and IV, diplomas, advanced diploma and first aid for graduates to work in early childhood education and care, outside school hours education and care, and education support. Students can have the flexibility to choose how they study, with the nationally recognised and accredited courses delivered full time on two days a week, as well as part time and externally. “ACCCO has received praise for its internal and external practical-based courses which includes first aid,” a spokeswoman says. “Students have found it is a great way to learn – those who started with little confidence have developed into confident professionals.”

Government funding may be available to help students cover the cost of course fees. Enrolments are still being taken for 2016 courses.

VISIT WWW.ACCCO.COM.AU OR CALL 1300 139 406.