

**THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
PUBLIC OPINION PROGRAMME (POP)**

**Opinion Survey on the Public Ranking of
Universities in Hong Kong 2009**

Commissioned by Media Education Info-Tech Co. Ltd.
(Education 18.com)

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

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CONTACT INFORMATION

Date of survey : 25/5 - 15/6/2009 Sample size : 1,201 successful cases
Response rate : 65.2% Standard error : Less than 1.4%
Target population : Cantonese-speaking population of Hong Kong of age 18 or above
Survey method : Telephone survey with interviewers
Sampling method : Standard POP telephone sampling method was used. Telephone numbers were selected randomly from residential telephone directories and mixed with additional numbers generated by the computer. If more than one subject had been available, the one who had his/her birthday next was selected.
Weighting method : The data reported have been adjusted according to the provisional figures obtained from the Census and Statistics Department regarding the gender-age distributions of the Hong Kong population at the end of 2008.

Everything in this publication is the work of individual researchers, and does not represent the stand of the University of Hong Kong. CHUNG Ting-yiu Robert is responsible for the work of the Public Opinion Programme (POP) of the University of Hong Kong.

P r e a m b l e

The Public Opinion Programme (POP) at the University of Hong Kong was established in June 1991 to collect and study public opinion on topics which could be of interest to academics, journalists, policy-makers, and the general public. POP was at first under the Social Sciences Research Centre, a unit under the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Hong Kong, and was transferred to the Journalism and Media Studies Centre in the University of Hong Kong in May 2000. In January 2002, POP was transferred back to the Faculty of Social Sciences in the University of Hong Kong. POP provides quality survey services to a wide range of public and private organizations, provided that they allow the POP Team to design and conduct the research independently, and to bear the final responsibilities.

In May 2009, POP was commissioned, for the ninth time, by Media Education Info-tech Co. Ltd. (which owns “Education 18.com”) to repeat the annual survey on the public’s perceptions of the local institutions of higher education. The objective of this survey was basically the same as that of the previous years, i.e. to study the general public’s perception of the eight institutions of higher education funded through University Grants Committee (UGC), with the inclusion of Hong Kong Shue Yan University upon the client’s advice. According to our records, the very first study of this subject was designed and conducted in 2000 by the client using a different methodology. For this reason, any direct comparison between the results obtained from the first and subsequent surveys is not recommended.

The questionnaires used in this and previous years’ surveys except that of 2000 were designed independently by the POP Team after consulting the client. Fieldwork, data analysis and interpretation were also carried out independently by the POP Team. Knowing that the results of this survey might be controversial, POP proceeded to design and conduct the survey anyway, because we take it to be our responsibility to engage in any opinion survey which requires our professional support. POP is fully responsible for all the opinion survey results released, we welcome any discussion on the fairness of the results.

This year’s telephone survey was conducted during the period of 25 May to 15 June 2009. A total of 1,201 Hong Kong Cantonese-speaking residents of age 18 or above were successfully interviewed. The overall response rate was 65.2% and the standard error due to sampling was no more than 1.4 percentage points. That means at 95% confidence level, the sampling error of percentage figures was less than plus/minus 2.9 percentage points. However, some questions were only applicable to employers in the sample. Their valid sub-samples were much smaller, and the sampling errors for these questions became much bigger.

Research Design

The target population of this survey was Cantonese-speaking population of Hong Kong of age 18 or above. To minimize sampling bias, the following sampling technique was adopted:

Telephone numbers were first drawn randomly from the residential telephone directories as “seed numbers”, from which another set of numbers was generated using the “plus/minus one/two” method, in order to capture the unlisted numbers. Duplicated numbers were then filtered, and the remaining numbers were mixed in random order to produce the final telephone sample.

When telephone contact was successfully established with a target household, one person of age 18 or above was selected. If more than one qualified subject had been available, selection was made using the “next birthday rule” which selected the person who had his/her birthday next from all those present. Please refer to Appendix 1 for the demographic profile of the respondents.

Telephone interviews were carried out between 25 May and 15 June 2009. Data were collected by interviewers using a Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI) system under close supervision.

As shown from the detailed breakdown of the contact information, among the 15,402 telephone numbers sampled for the survey, 6,869 were confirmed ineligible, among them 666 were fax or data lines, 5,198 were invalid telephone numbers, 171 were call-forwarding numbers, while another 755 were non-residential numbers. Besides, 45 of them were invalidated due to special technological circumstances, while 34 cases were voided because no eligible respondents were available at the numbers provided.

Meanwhile, a total of 3,839 telephone numbers were invalidated since the research team could not confirm their eligibility. Among them 235 were busy lines, 2,651 were no-answer calls, 77 cases were diverted to answering devices while 54 were blocked. In addition, 222 cases were treated as ineligible because of language problems, 559 interviews were terminated before the screening question, while 41 cases were voided for other problems.

Of the remaining 4,694 eligible cases, 3,493 failed to complete the interview. Among them 25 rejected the interview immediately after their eligibility was confirmed, 3,225 were unfinished cases with appointment dates beyond the end of fieldwork period. Besides, 55 cases were incomplete due to unexpected termination of interviews, 186 were classified as miscellaneous due to other non-contact problems, and the remaining 1,201 were successful cases (Table 1).

Table 1 Breakdown of contact information of the survey

	Frequency	Percentage
Telephone numbers' ineligibility confirmed	6,869	44.6%
<i>Fax/data line</i>	666	4.3%
<i>Invalid number</i>	5,198	33.7%
<i>Call-forwarding/mobile/pager number</i>	171	1.1%
<i>Non-residential number</i>	755	4.9%
<i>Special technological circumstances</i>	45	0.3%
<i>No eligible respondents</i>	34	0.2%
Telephone numbers' or respondents' eligibility not confirmed	3,839	24.9%
<i>Line busy</i>	235	1.5%
<i>No answer</i>	2,651	17.2%
<i>Answering device</i>	77	0.5%
<i>Call-blocking</i>	54	0.4%
<i>Language problem</i>	222	1.4%
<i>Interview terminated before the screening question</i>	559	3.6%
<i>Others</i>	41	0.3%
Telephone numbers' eligibility confirmed, but failed to complete the interview	3,493	22.7%
<i>Household-level refusal</i>	5	0.0%
<i>Known respondent refusal</i>	20	0.1%
<i>Appointment date beyond the end of the fieldwork period</i>	3,225	20.9%
<i>Partial interview</i>	55	0.4%
<i>Miscellaneous</i>	186	1.2%
Successful cases	1,201	7.8%
Total	15,402	100.0%

To sum up, a total of 1,201 Hong Kong residents of age 18 or above were successfully interviewed in this survey. The overall response rate was 65.2% as shown in the following calculation. The standard error due to sampling was no more than 1.4 percentage points.

Table 2 Calculation of overall response rate

Overall response rate = [Successful cases / (Successful cases + Refusal cases + Incomplete cases)] 100% = [1,201 / (1,201 + 25 + 559 + 55)] 100% = 65.2%

The data collected have been adjusted according to provisional figures obtained from the Census and Statistics Department regarding the gender-age distribution of the Hong Kong population at the end of 2008. All analyses in this report are based on the weighted data.

Statistical tests of “difference-of-proportions” and “difference-of-means” have been employed whenever applicable, in order to check for significant changes. Figures marked with single asterisk (*) denoted statistical significance at p=0.05 level whereas those with double asterisks (**) indicated that the variation has been tested to be statistically significant at p=0.01 level.

The researcher is aware that the POP Team is part of the University of Hong Kong, which is one of the institutions rated by the respondents. As a precaution to eliminate any possible bias due to desirability effect, all respondents were explicitly told at the beginning of the interview that the POP Team was an independent research team, and the respondents should simply report honestly what they felt.

Summary of Findings

The aim of the first part of the survey was to study the general public's perception of the higher institutions funded through UGC, namely, City University of Hong Kong (CityU), Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU), Lingnan University (LU), the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd), the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU), the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) and the University of Hong Kong (HKU), plus Hong Kong Shue Yan University (HKSYU) which was included for the second time since last year. The order of these institutions was rotated randomly in different questionnaires in order to eliminate possible bias due to ordering. By means of a rating scale from 0-10, with 0 representing the worst, 10 representing the best and 5 being half-half, these institutions were assessed one by one with regard to their overall performance.

A. Overall Performance of Institutions

First of all, all respondents were asked to evaluate each of these institutions based on their perception of its overall performance using a scale of 0-10, with 0 representing the worst, 10 representing the best and 5 being half-half. Respondents were suggested to take into account the institution's local and international reputation, facilities, campus environment, qualification of its teaching staff, academic research performance, conduct and quality of its students, its learning atmosphere, as well as the diversification and degree of recognition for its courses. Survey results indicated that, in terms of public perception, HKU received the highest mean score of 8.07 as rated by 1,142 respondents, CUHK came second with an average score of 7.64 rated by 1,131 respondents, whereas HKUST ranked third with a mean score of 7.33 rated by 1,106 respondents. When compared to the findings obtained from the last survey, the mean score of all nine institutions surveyed dropped, but their respective rankings remained the same. For CityU and LU, their respective drop in rating was tested to be statistically significant at $p=0.05$ level (Table 3).

Table 3 - Overall Performance of Institutions

	2006 Survey		2007 Survey		2008 Survey		2009 Survey			
	Average	Standard error	Average	Standard error	Average	Standard error	Average	Standard error	No. of raters	Recognition (No. of raters/total sample)
1. HKU	7.94	0.04	7.93	0.04	8.11	0.04	8.07	0.04	1,142	95.1%
2. CUHK	7.56	0.04	7.25**	0.05	7.67	0.04	7.64	0.04	1,131	94.2%
3. HKUST	7.21	0.04	7.16	0.05	7.38	0.04	7.33	0.04	1,106	92.1%
4. PolyU	6.81	0.04	6.79	0.04	7.00	0.04	6.90	0.04	1,123	93.5%
5. HKBU	6.19	0.04	6.28	0.04	6.42	0.04	6.34	0.04	1,091	90.8%
6. CityU	6.04	0.04	6.09	0.04	6.26	0.04	6.12*	0.04	1,078	89.8%
7. HKIEd	5.55	0.05	5.60	0.05	5.77	0.05	5.66	0.05	1,005	83.7%
8. LU	5.41	0.04	5.57*	0.05	5.65	0.05	5.51*	0.05	1,039	86.5%
9. HKSYU#			N.A.		5.57	0.05	5.42	0.05	1,011	84.2%

Newly added in 2008.

Same as last year, our cross-tabulation analyses showed that, within each sub-group of the sample, the respective rankings of the universities were basically the same regardless of respondents' education attainment and occupation. Only some insignificant differences were observed which are enclosed in squares below. For actual ratings obtained by each institution as rated by each sub-group, please refer to the tables below (Tables 4-5).

Table 4 – Cross-tabulation Analyses: Institution Performance by Education Attainment of Respondents

	Primary or below			Secondary			Tertiary or above		
	Average	Standard error	No. of raters	Average	Standard error	No. of raters	Average	Standard error	No. of raters
1. HKU	8.02	0.15	161	8.05	0.06	549	8.11	0.05	426
2. CUHK [^]	7.44	0.14	159	7.57	0.06	543	7.78	0.06	424
3. HKUST [^]	7.34	0.15	147	7.11	0.06	533	7.61	0.06	420
4. PolyU	7.11	0.13	158	6.88	0.06	539	6.84	0.06	420
5. HKBU [^]	6.80	0.14	146	6.32	0.07	523	6.21	0.06	416
6. CityU	6.16	0.14	138	6.08	0.07	519	6.13	0.06	416
7. HKIEd [^]	6.14	0.18	119	5.73	0.07	482	5.44	0.07	399
8. LU [^]	5.91	0.17	131	5.54	0.07	504	5.34	0.07	399
9. HKSJU [^]	5.87	0.18	123	5.46	0.07	481	5.23	0.07	401

[^] Differences among sub-groups tested to be statistically significant at 95% confidence level.

Table 5a – Cross-tabulation Analyses: Institution Performance by Occupation of Respondents (I)

	Professionals and semi-professionals			Clerk and service workers			Production workers		
	Average	Standard error	No. of raters	Average	Standard error	No. of raters	Average	Standard error	No. of raters
1. HKU	8.07	0.06	345	7.98	0.09	215	8.11	0.15	99
2. CUHK	7.66	0.07	343	7.59	0.09	215	7.42	0.17	98
3. HKUST	7.46	0.07	340	7.22	0.09	212	7.08	0.17	94
4. PolyU [^]	6.82	0.07	342	6.89	0.09	215	6.78	0.16	95
5. HKBU	6.22	0.07	337	6.30	0.08	213	6.42	0.17	92
6. CityU	6.08	0.07	337	6.22	0.09	210	5.93	0.18	90
7. HKIEd [^]	5.38	0.09	319	5.79	0.10	201	5.51	0.16	86
8. LU [^]	5.34	0.08	322	5.55	0.09	206	5.51	0.18	85
9. HKSJU [^]	5.25	0.08	316	5.43	0.09	202	5.49	0.21	84

[^] Differences among sub-groups tested to be statistically significant at 95% confidence level.

Table 5b – Cross-tabulation Analyses: Institution Performance by Occupation of Respondents (II)

	Students			Housewives		
	Average	Standard error	No. of raters	Average	Standard error	No. of raters
1. HKU	8.02	0.10	85	8.07	0.12	155
2. CUHK	7.81	0.10	85	7.76	0.12	151
3. HKUST	7.41	0.11	84	7.24	0.13	143
4. PolyU [^]	6.81	0.11	85	7.28	0.11	150
5. HKBU	6.18	0.11	84	6.64	0.13	141
6. CityU	6.20	0.13	85	6.33	0.13	140
7. HKIEd [^]	5.63	0.14	83	6.12	0.15	121
8. LU [^]	5.32	0.15	83	5.90	0.14	132
9. HKSJU [^]	5.01	0.14	83	5.74	0.15	122

[^] Differences among sub-groups tested to be statistically significant at 95% confidence level.

B. Overall Performance of Vice-Chancellors/Presidents/Principal

With respect to the perceived overall performance of the Vice-Chancellors/Presidents/Principal of each institution, taking into consideration one's local and international reputation, approachability, leadership, vision, social credibility and public relations, Professor Paul C.W. Chu of HKUST this year had surpassed Professor Lap-chee Tsui of HKU to top the list with an average score of 7.64 as rated by 926 respondents by a small margin. Professor Lap-chee Tsui of HKU followed closely and had attained a mean score of 7.58 as rated by 882 respondents. Meanwhile, Professor Lawrence J. LAU of CUHK continued to rank third with 7.01 as rated by 831 respondents. The new President of PolyU, Professor Timothy W. Tong captured the fourth position with a mean score of 6.59 as rated by 598 respondents. The fifth to ninth ranks fell to the Presidents/Principal of HKSJU, HKBU, HKIEd, CityU and LU correspondingly, with their average scores ranging from 6.07 to 6.57. It is worth mentioning that six current Vice-Chancellors/Presidents/Principal had obtained recognition rates of over 50%. Professor Paul C.W. Chu of HKUST was recognized by 77% of the respondents while Professor Lap-chee Tsui of HKU had received a recognition rate of 73%. The recognition rates of Professor Lawrence J. Lau of CUHK, Professor Anthony B.L. Cheung of HKIEd, Professor Ching-fai Ng of HKBU and Professor Chi-yung Chung of HKSJU were 69%, 66%, 63% and 55% respectively (Table 6).

Table 6 - Overall Performance of Vice-Chancellors/Presidents/Principal

	2006 Survey		2007 Survey		2008 Survey		2009 Survey			
	Avg.	Std. error	Avg.	Std. error	Avg.	Std. error	Avg.	Std. error	No of raters	Recognition (No. of raters/total sample)
1. HKUST – Paul C.W. CHU	7.57**	0.04	7.51	0.05	7.67 [^]	0.05	7.64	0.05	926	77.1%
2. HKU – Lap-chee TSUI	7.37	0.05	7.46	0.05	7.67 [^]	0.05	7.58	0.05	882	73.4%
3. CUHK – Lawrence J. LAU	7.09*	0.04	6.82**	0.06	7.09	0.06	7.01	0.05	831	69.2%
4. PolyU – Timothy W. TONG#			-N.A.-				6.59	0.06	598	49.8%
5. HKSJU – Chi-yung CHUNG		-N.A.-			6.61	0.07	6.57	0.06	656	54.6%
6. HKBU – Ching-fai NG	6.35	0.05	6.54**	0.05	6.66	0.05	6.51	0.05	760	63.3%
7. HKIEd – Anthony B.L. CHEUNG		-N.A.-			6.25	0.06	6.28	0.05	788	65.6%
8. CityU – Way KUO		-N.A.-			6.23	0.07	6.21	0.06	580	48.3%
9. LU – Yuk-shee CHAN		-N.A.-			6.15	0.07	6.07	0.06	592	49.3%

No comparison made as the relevant post was taken up by another person then.

[^] Remark: Expressed in three-decimal places, the average rating of "HKU – Lap-chee TSUI" was 7.671, while that of "HKUST – Paul C.W. CHU" was 7.665. Thus, Lap-chee TSUI of HKU ranked first while Paul C.W. CHU of HKUST ranked second in 2008 survey.

When cross-tabulated by respondents' education attainment and occupation, slight variations were obtained in terms of the respective rankings of the VCs/Presidents/Principal within each sub-group, although differences of many scores fluctuated within error margins. They were enclosed in squares for easy reference. Actual ratings obtained by each VC/President/Principal as rated by each sub-group are shown in following tables (Tables 7-8).

Table 7 – Cross-tabulation Analyses: VC/President/Principal Performance by Education Attainment of Respondents

	Primary or below			Secondary			Tertiary or above		
	Average	Standard error	No. of raters	Average	Standard error	No. of raters	Average	Standard error	No. of raters
1. HKUST – Paul C.W. CHU [^]	7.59	0.17	115	7.43	0.07	448	7.91	0.07	358
2. HKU – Lap-chee TSUI	7.68	0.18	105	7.48	0.08	420	7.67	0.07	352
3. CUHK – Lawrence J. LAU	7.21	0.18	97	7.01	0.07	401	6.94	0.08	329
4. PolyU – Timothy W. TONG	6.82	0.19	78	6.62	0.08	281	6.47	0.08	235
5. HKSJU – Chi-yung CHUNG	6.86	0.21	76	6.59	0.09	308	6.44	0.09	267
6. HKBU – Ching-fai NG	6.74	0.19	95	6.46	0.08	366	6.49	0.07	294
7. HKIEd – Anthony B.L. CHEUNG [^]	6.54	0.18	96	6.34	0.08	384	6.12	0.07	303
8. CityU – Way KUO	6.35	0.23	70	6.24	0.09	271	6.13	0.08	236
9. LU – Yuk-shee CHAN	6.36	0.23	65	6.06	0.08	282	6.00	0.08	243

[^] Differences among sub-groups tested to be statistically significant at 95% confidence level.

Table 8a – Cross-tabulation Analyses: VC/President/Principal Performance by Occupation of Respondents (I)

	Professionals and semi-professionals			Clerk and service workers			Production workers		
	Average	Standard error	No. of raters	Average	Standard error	No. of raters	Average	Standard error	No. of raters
1. HKUST – Paul C.W. CHU [^]	7.86	0.07	303	7.32	0.11	174	7.46	0.20	73
2. HKU – Lap-chee TSUI	7.67	0.07	292	7.32	0.12	164	7.47	0.20	74
3. CUHK – Lawrence J. LAU	6.94	0.09	274	6.90	0.11	153	6.77	0.21	69
4. PolyU – Timothy W. TONG	6.51	0.09	187	6.53	0.12	118	6.56	0.23	50
5. HKSJU – Chi-yung CHUNG	6.42	0.10	207	6.59	0.12	130	6.37	0.28	52
6. HKBU – Ching-fai NG	6.53	0.08	245	6.46	0.11	148	6.65	0.21	62
7. HKIEd – Anthony B.L. CHEUNG [^]	6.09	0.09	257	6.18	0.12	149	6.33	0.18	73
8. CityU – Way KUO	6.18	0.08	197	6.26	0.13	112	5.89	0.27	47
9. LU – Yuk-shee CHAN	5.93	0.09	192	6.11	0.09	117	5.99	0.23	46

[^] Differences among sub-groups tested to be statistically significant at 95% confidence level.

Table 8b – Cross-tabulation Analyses: VC/President/Principal Performance by Occupation of Respondents (II)

	Students			Housewives		
	Average	Standard error	No. of raters	Average	Standard error	No. of raters
1. HKUST – Paul C.W. CHU [^]	7.37	0.14	71	7.48	0.14	114
2. HKU – Lap-chee TSUI	7.40	0.14	67	7.63	0.15	103
3. CUHK – Lawrence J. LAU	7.00	0.17	62	7.26	0.15	96
4. PolyU – Timothy W. TONG	6.44	0.15	51	6.89	0.19	66
5. HKSJU – Chi-yung CHUNG	6.41	0.18	53	6.83	0.18	78
6. HKBU – Ching-fai NG	6.39	0.13	51	6.65	0.16	93
7. HKIEd – Anthony B.L. CHEUNG [^]	6.31	0.15	53	6.61	0.15	87
8. CityU – Way KUO	6.23	0.15	45	6.44	0.21	61
9. LU – Yuk-shee CHAN	6.02	0.16	49	6.46	0.19	65

[^] Differences among sub-groups tested to be statistically significant at 95% confidence level.

C. Perceived Deficiencies among the University Students in Hong Kong

The next question was to gauge respondents' opinion on the qualities which most Hong Kong university students lack of. Latest results again showed that "work attitude" topped the list with 21% of all respondents citing it. "Proficiency in Chinese, English and Putonghua", "conduct, honesty" and "social/interpersonal skills" obtained the same second to fourth ranks as in last year's survey, and were mentioned by 13%, 13% and 12% of the total sample respectively. Other commonly-cited qualities included "global prospect / foresight", "academic and professional knowledge" and "critical thinking and problem-solving ability", accounting for a respective of 10%, 9% and 8% of the total sample. Nevertheless, 16% of the respondents could not give a definite answer (Table 9).

Table 9 – Perceived Deficiencies among the University Students in Hong Kong

	2007 Survey	2008 Survey	2009 Survey		
	% of total sample (Base = 1,210)	% of total sample (Base = 1,213)	Freq.	% of total responses (Base = 1,979 responses from 1,197 respondents)	% of total sample (Base = 1,201)
Work attitude (e.g. serious, enthusiastic, diligent, responsible, motivated)	16.6%	16.6%	251	12.7%	20.9%**
Proficiency in Chinese, English & Putonghua	14.1%	16.2%	161	8.2%	13.4%
Conduct, honesty	17.3%	13.4%**	150	7.6%	12.5%
Social/interpersonal skills	12.9%	12.4%	141	7.1%	11.7%
Global prospect / foresight	12.0%	9.8%	123	6.2%	10.2%
Academic and professional knowledge	10.2%	6.4%**	110	5.6%	9.2%**
Critical thinking and problem-solving ability	11.8%**	10.4%	97	4.9%	8.1%**
Social/work experience	8.1%	8.3%	88	4.5%	7.3%
Commitment to society	10.2%	7.7%*	85	4.3%	7.0%**
Independence	--	0.5%	80	4.0%	6.7%**
All-roundness	--	0.9%	56	2.9%	4.7%**
Communication skills	4.3%	3.7%	56	2.8%	4.6%
Self-confidence	5.8%*	3.5%**	55	2.8%	4.6%
Civil awareness	0.1%	0.4%	44	2.2%	3.7%**
Creativity	2.7%	2.8%	44	2.2%	3.6%
Alertness to risk / handling adverse conditions	--	0.7%	41	2.1%	3.4%**
Emotion stability	1.7%	1.9%	32	1.6%	2.7%
Job opportunity	1.1%	0.6%	28	1.4%	2.3%
Financial management	1.2%**	0.9%	23	1.2%	1.9%
Self-expectations / dreams	--	0.4%	20	1.0%	1.6%
Patriotism	--	2.3%	14	0.7%	1.1%
Utilitarian	0.6%	0.0%	11	0.5%	0.9%
Leadership skills	--	0.3%	6	0.3%	0.5%
Computer proficiency	0.0%	0.1%	2	0.1%	0.2%
Nothing	3.9%**	4.0%	44	2.2%	3.6%
Others	5.3%	2.8%**	29	1.5%	2.4%
Don't know / hard to say	20.3%	24.5%*	189	9.6%	15.8%**
Total			1,979		
Base	1,206	1,207	1,197		
Missing case(s)	4	6	4		

D. Preference for University Graduates

The survey went on to study employers' preference when selecting university graduates. To begin with, all respondents were asked if they were involved in any recruitment process of new staff in performing their office duties. Results showed that 18% of the total sample, i.e. 217 respondents had such authority in one way or another (Table 10).

Table 10 - Involvement in Recruitment of New Staff (Teachers included)

	2006 Survey	2007 Survey	2008 Survey	2009 Survey	
	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	14.9%	16.5%	16.0%	217	18.1%
No	85.1%	83.5%	84.0%	981	81.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	1,198	100.0%
Base	1,509	1,210	1,212	1,201	
Missing case(s)	1	0	1	3	

These respondents were further asked which institution's graduates would be preferred when they looked for a new employee. Graduates of HKU topped the list again this year, chosen by 24% of these employers. Meanwhile, graduates from PolyU, HKUST and CUHK were preferred by 16%, 13% and 10% of this sub-sample respectively. Another 14% of these respondents said they had no particular preference and 11% did not give a definite answer. No significant difference was observed between this and the last survey, but it has to be noted that because of the small sub-sample, the maximum sampling error has increased to plus/minus 6.8 percentage points at 95% confidence level (Table 11).

Table 11 - Most Preferred University Graduates

	2006 Survey	2007 Survey	2008 Survey	Freq.	2009 Survey	
	% of total sample (Base =1,509)	% of total sample (Base = 1,210)	% of total sample (Base = 1,213)		% of potential employers (Base = 216)	% of total sample (Base = 1,201)
HKU	3.4%	4.6%	3.8%	51	23.6%	4.3%
PolyU	1.9%	1.5%	2.5%	34	15.7%	2.8%
HKUST	1.9%	1.4%	1.1%	29	13.2%	2.4%
CUHK	2.5%	2.4%	1.4%	21	9.7%	1.8%
HKSYU		N.A.	0.1%	5	2.2%	0.4%
HKIEd [^]	0.0%	0.1%	0.3%	4	1.8%	0.3%
LU [^]	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	2	0.9%	0.2%
CityU [^]	0.4%	0.4%	0.0%	2	0.9%	0.2%
HKBU	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%	2	0.9%	0.2%
Other overseas universities	0.3%	0.6%	0.5%	4	1.7%	0.3%
Others	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	2	0.8%	0.1%
No preference	2.3%	2.9%	3.3%	30	13.9%	2.5%
Don't know / hard to say	0.9%	1.3%	1.8%	23	10.5%	1.9%
Won't employ graduates	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	9	4.3%	0.8%
Total				216	100.0%	
Valid Base	225	200	194	217		
Missing case(s)	1	0	0	1		

[^] No respondent opted for these categories in respective survey.

These respondents were then asked to provide some reasons for their specific choices. Same as in previous years, “good performance of previous graduates” was most frequently cited, by 39% of the sub-sample (i.e. 5% of the total sample). “Good knowledge in job-related areas” came second with 27% (i.e. 3% of the total sample) while the “reputation” of their university came third with 21% (i.e. 3% of the total sample). A respective of 9%, 8% and 8% (i.e. 1% of the total sample each) preferred certain graduates simply due to “being diligent/motivated”, “good language ability” and “good work attitude” of the graduates. Other than these, reasons like “alumni” and “good social relationship” were mentioned by some although quite fewer respondents (Table 12).

Table 12 - Reasons for Preferring Graduates of a Particular Institution

	2007 Survey	2008 Survey	2009 Survey			
	% of total sample (Base = 1,210)	% of total sample (Base = 1,213)	Freq.	% of total responses (Base = 211 responses from 154 respondents)	% of valid respondents (Base = 154)	% of total sample (Base = 1,201)
Good performance of previous graduates	4.2%	3.6%	60	28.5%	39.0%	5.0%
Good knowledge in job-related areas	2.6%	2.7%	41	19.6%	26.8%	3.4%
Reputation	2.4%	1.6%	32	15.0%	20.6%	2.6%
Diligent, motivated	1.2%	1.0%	13	6.4%	8.7%	1.1%
Good language ability	0.9%	1.3%	13	6.1%	8.4%	1.1%
Good work attitude	1.6%	1.0%	13	6.0%	8.2%	1.1%
Alumni	0.8%	0.6%	10	4.5%	6.2%	0.8%
Good social relationship	1.0%	0.3%	7	3.4%	4.7%	0.6%
Good connection with outside (e.g., a university's extensive connection with enterprises, companies, or industrial firms; large number of graduates)	0.1%	0.6%	4	2.0%	2.7%	0.3%
Good leadership	0.1%	0.2%	1	0.5%	0.7%	0.1%
Salary matched with abilities	0.1%	0.2%	1	0.4%	0.5%	0.1%
Others	2.0%	1.2%	12	5.5%	7.5%	1.0%
No specific reasons	0.2%	0.4%	4	2.0%	2.7%	0.3%
Total			211	100%		
Valid Base	140	129	154			
Missing case(s)	6	0	0			

Chart - Overall Performance Ratings of Institutions, 2001-2009

