










## Factors that influence university graduates' choice of postgraduate study

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### ABSTRACT

Enrolments in university certificate and postgraduate programmes have grown considerably during recent decades. This study assesses the relationship between socio-demographic characteristics, characteristics of the university trajectory and the salary received after graduation and the decision to pursue postgraduate studies. Data for the analysis were obtained from a survey of graduates of 11 Chilean universities during 2021. Multinomial logistic regression was applied to estimate the effect of the various characteristics. The decision to enrol in a certificate or graduate programme was associated primarily with the field of the undergraduate degree programme, family income and current salary. The decision to enrol in a postgraduate degree programme was associated with parents' education level, field of undergraduate study and academic performance, and current wage level. First-generation university graduates and those from low-income families were less likely to continue postgraduate studies. Overall social inequality among university graduates was reproduced in postgraduate education and increased in Education and Social Sciences programmes.

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## Introduction

Worldwide, the demand for postgraduate higher education has increased significantly (Britton et al. 2020; Litalien, Guay, and Morin 2015). Many new postgraduate programmes have emerged, and enrolments have soared (Wakeling 2010). Consequently, by 2019 more than 14% of university graduates in OECD countries had either a Master or Doctorate degree (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development 2019).

The rising importance of postgraduate programmes stems from two reasons supported by credentialism theory (Collins 1978). The massive growth of university enrolment and consequent graduation saturated several labour markets in various fields (Olo, Correia, and Rego 2022; Pholpirul 2017; Tomlinson 2017). Fourth-level studies

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