



The Adult Learner Advantage: Drive Enrollment with Career-Aligned Programs

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Speakers



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**Risepoint helps universities grow
by expanding access to affordable,
workforce-focused programs that
deliver high ROI for students.**



About Risepoint

Since inception, we have supported over 750,000 students, worked alongside over 22K instructors, and launched over 25K programs. Currently, we:



Serve over **100 university partners**



support over **100,000 students**



will talk to over **1,000,000** prospective students this year



work alongside over **1,400 faculty members**



to support over **2,000 programs**

We have supported

750K+

students as they earned their
online degrees



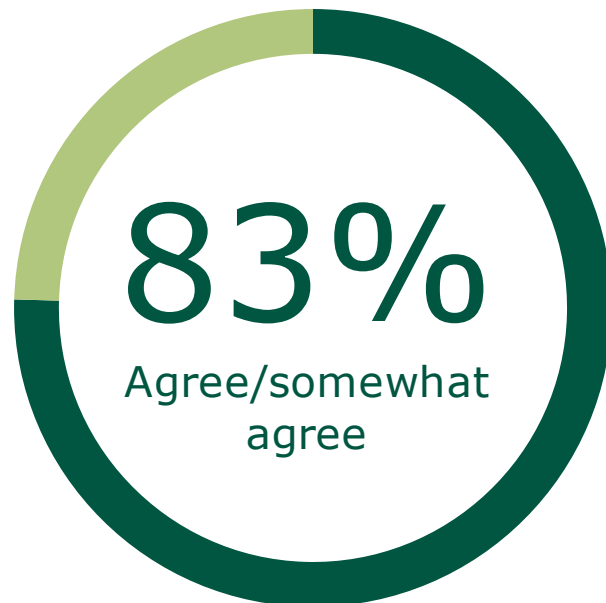
Graduate Programs and Workforce Needs

Key findings from joint research with
The Chronicle of Higher Education

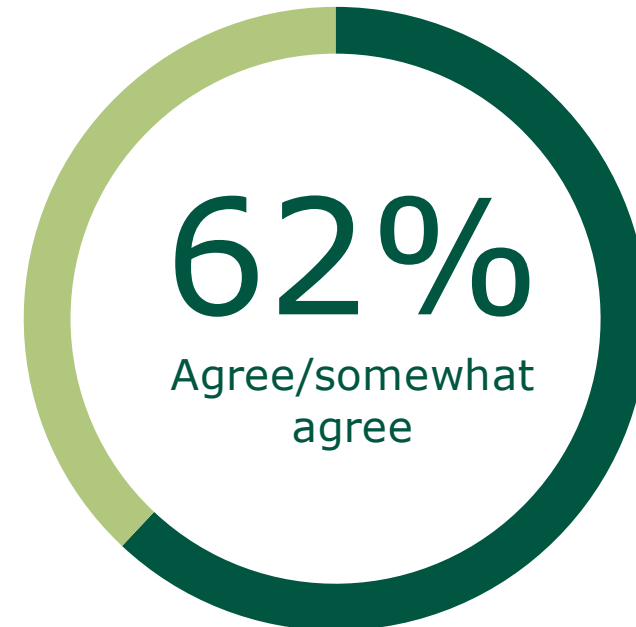


Gaps in preparing adult learners for the workforce

My institution's graduate programs do **a good job preparing students** for the work force.

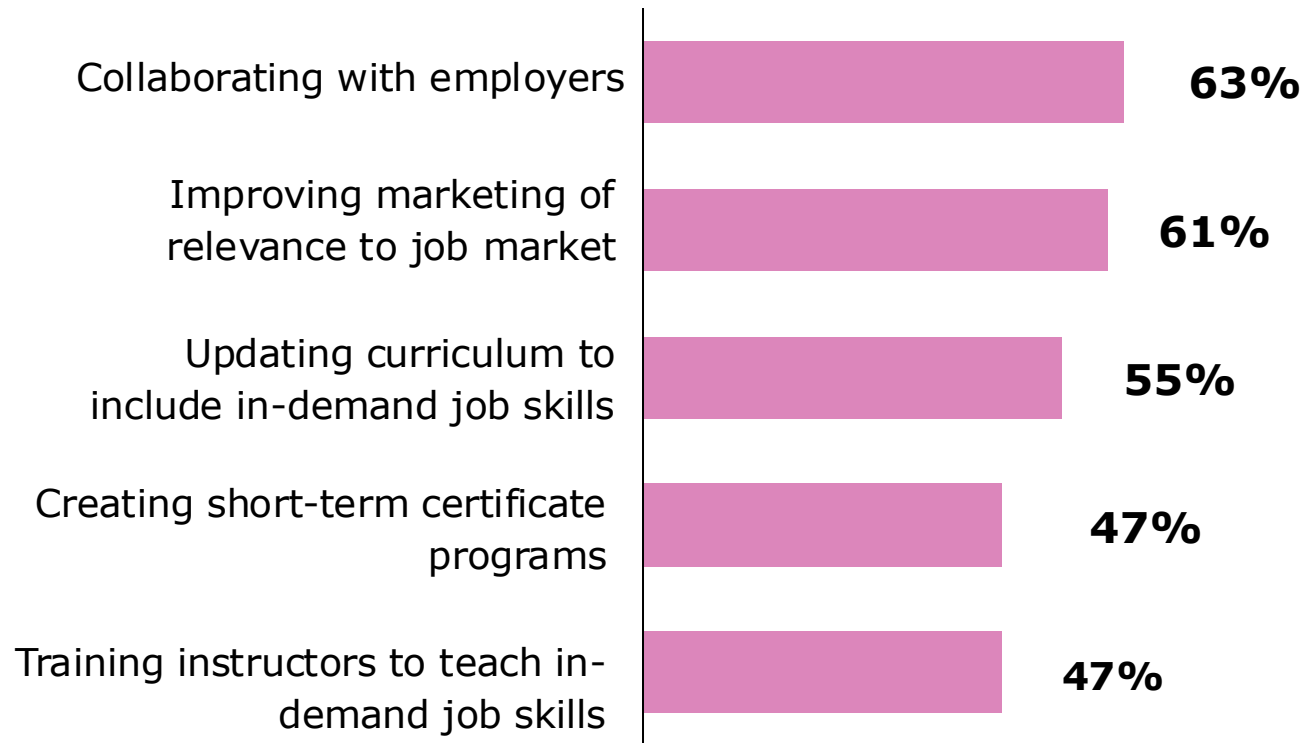


My institution does a good job helping adult learners **develop skills to advance their careers or start new ones.**



Gaps in preparing adult learners for the workforce

Top 5 areas to invest resources to better prepare graduates students

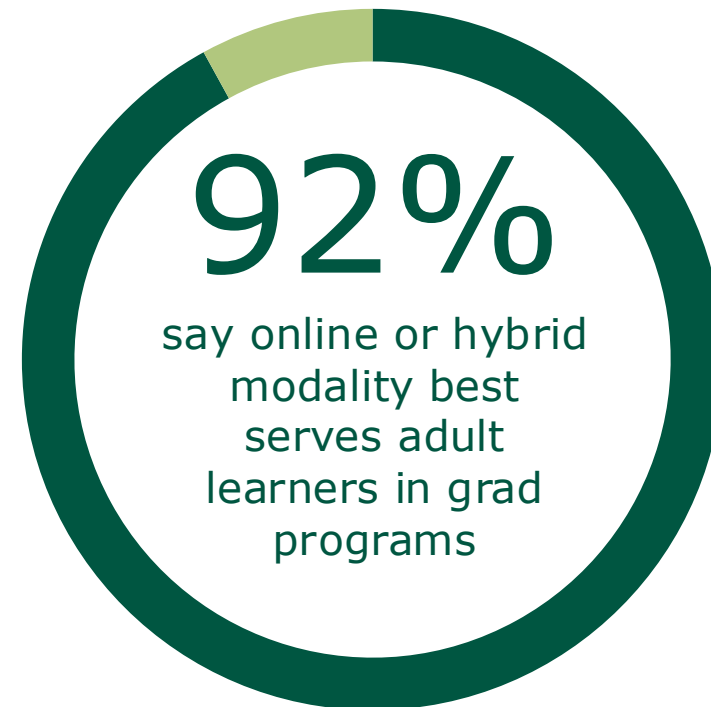
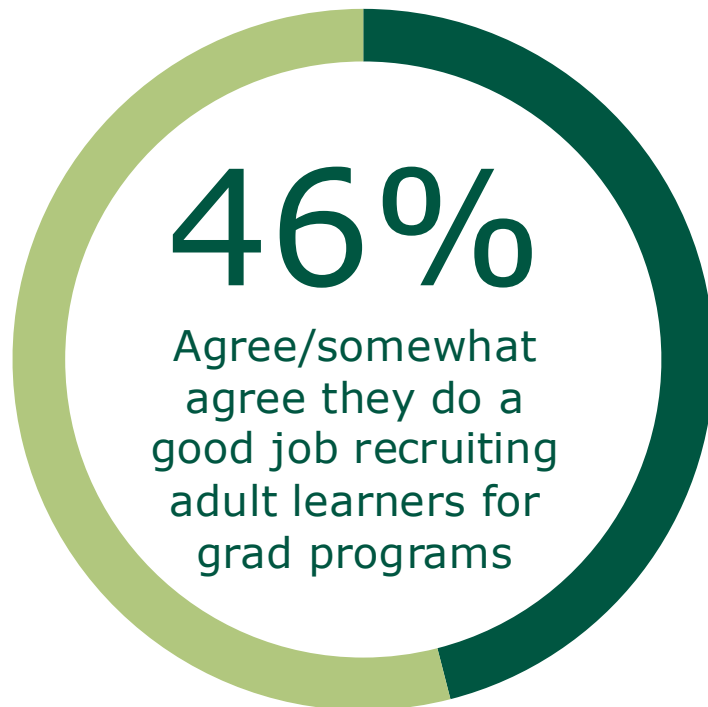


87%

Agree/somewhat agree their state and institution should invest more to prepare grad student for workforce



Meeting adult learners where they are

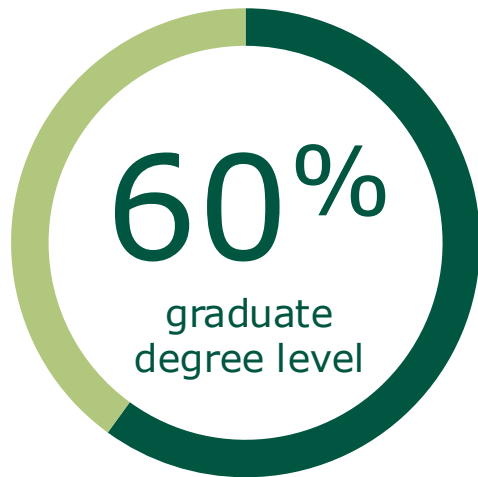


2025 Voice of the Online Graduate Learner

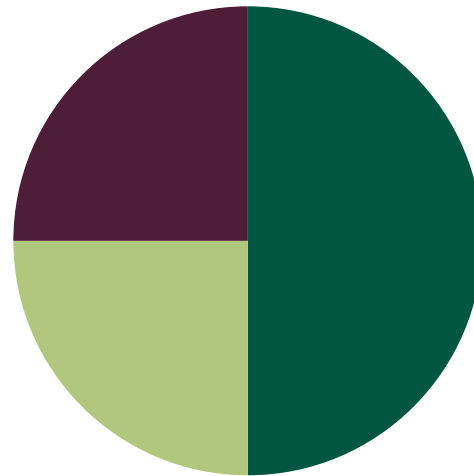


Methodology

**Surveyed 3,778
online learners**

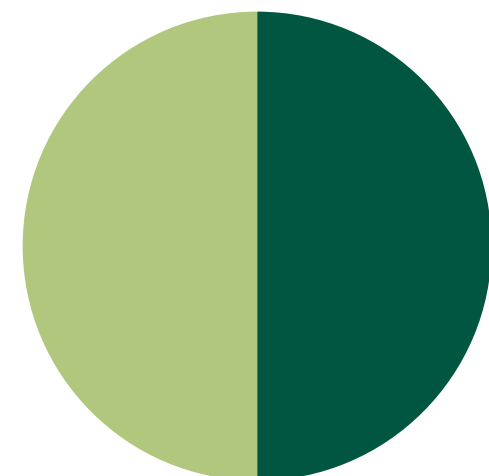


**Across the
student lifecycle**



- **50%** Enrolled students
- **25%** Graduates
- **25%** Prospective students

**Using two
different sources**



- **50%** External panel
- **50%** Risepoint partner schools

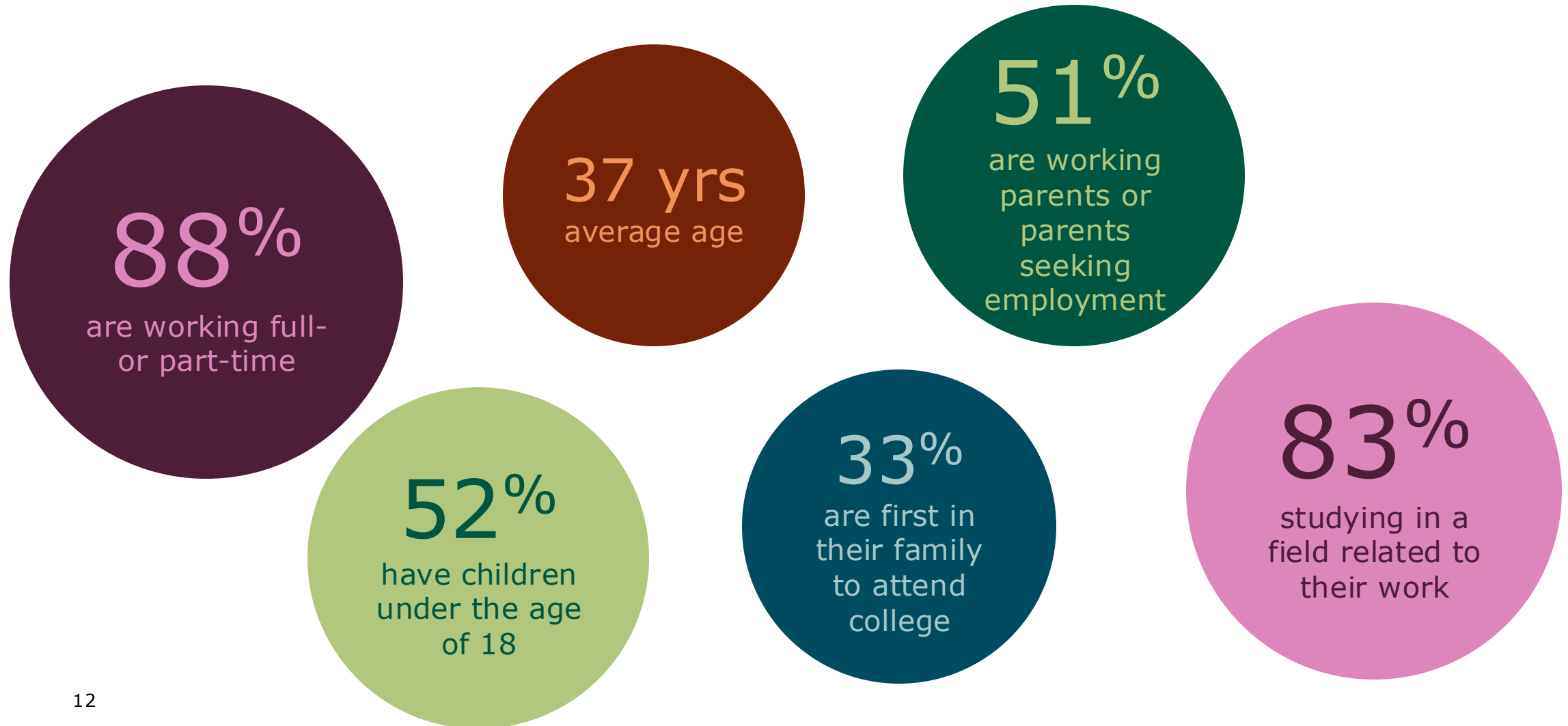




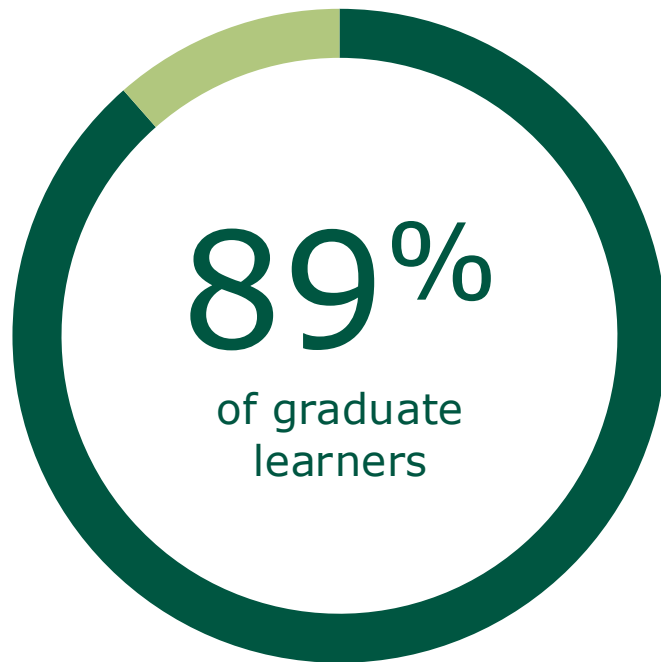
**These learners are
different by design**



Understanding the online Graduate student



They strongly believe in the quality and value of online degree programs



Believe **the quality of an online degree** is comparable to or better than an on-campus degree

Believe **employers value an online degree** from an accredited institution the same as or more than an on-campus degree



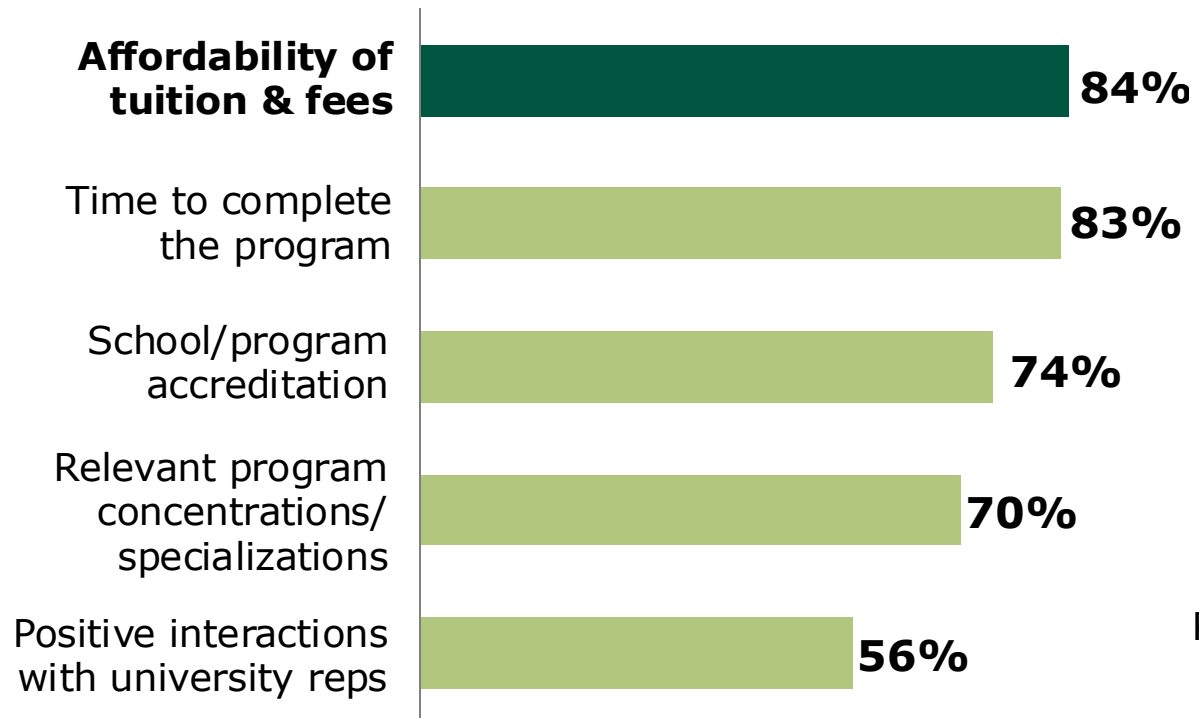


Consistent Graduate learner themes over the years

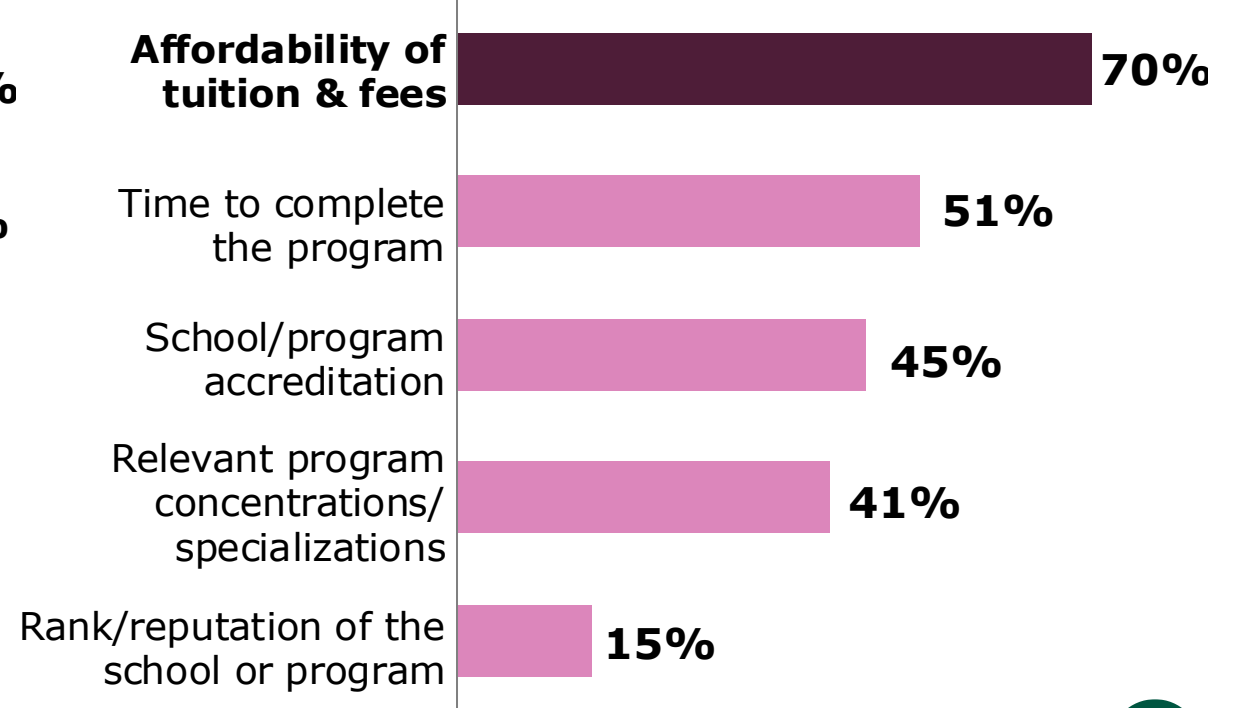


Affordability is the most important criteria across the student journey

Researching



Enrolling



Flexibility is essential for working adults

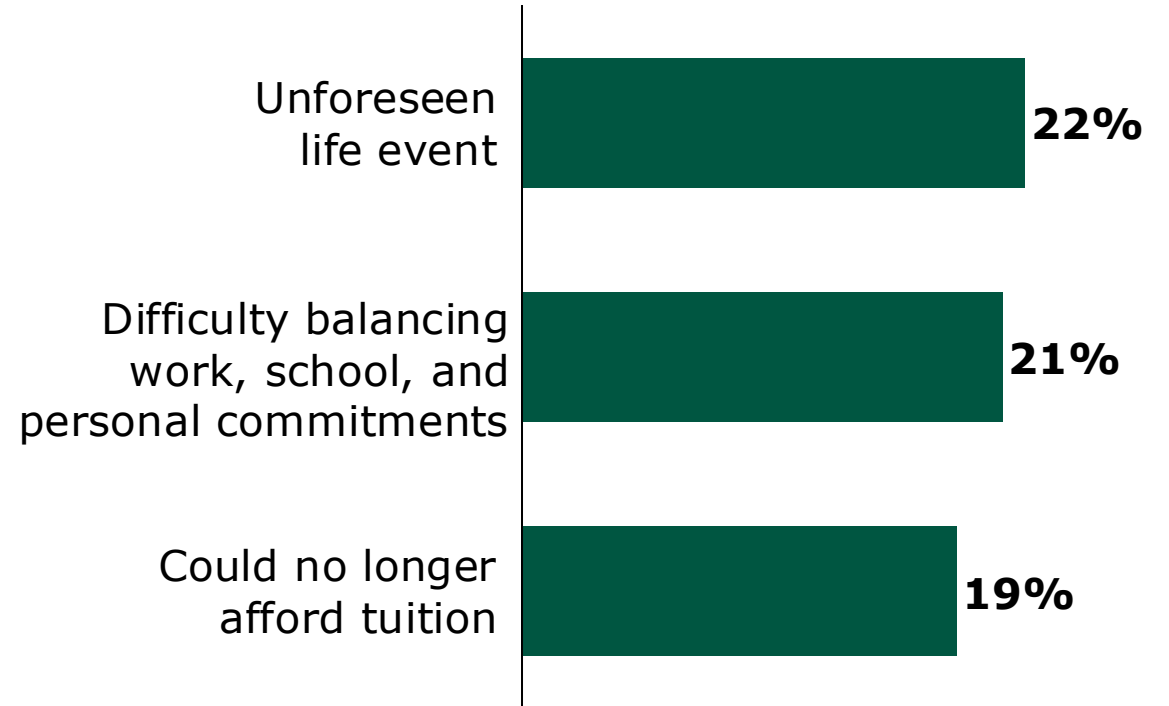
83%

of Graduate learners complete their program without interruption

43%

of those who stepped out, did so within the first 6 months

Top Reasons Graduate Learners Stepped Out

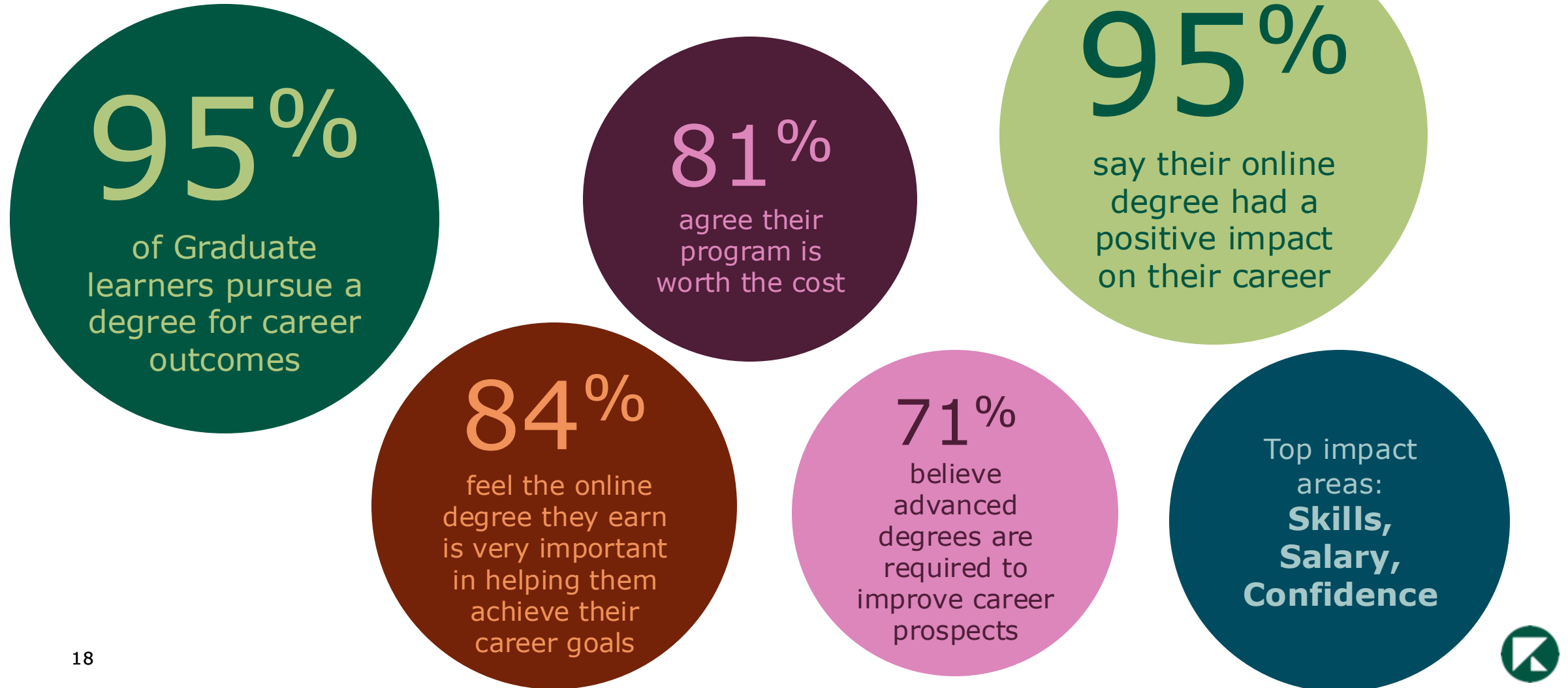


Graduate learners pick modality first

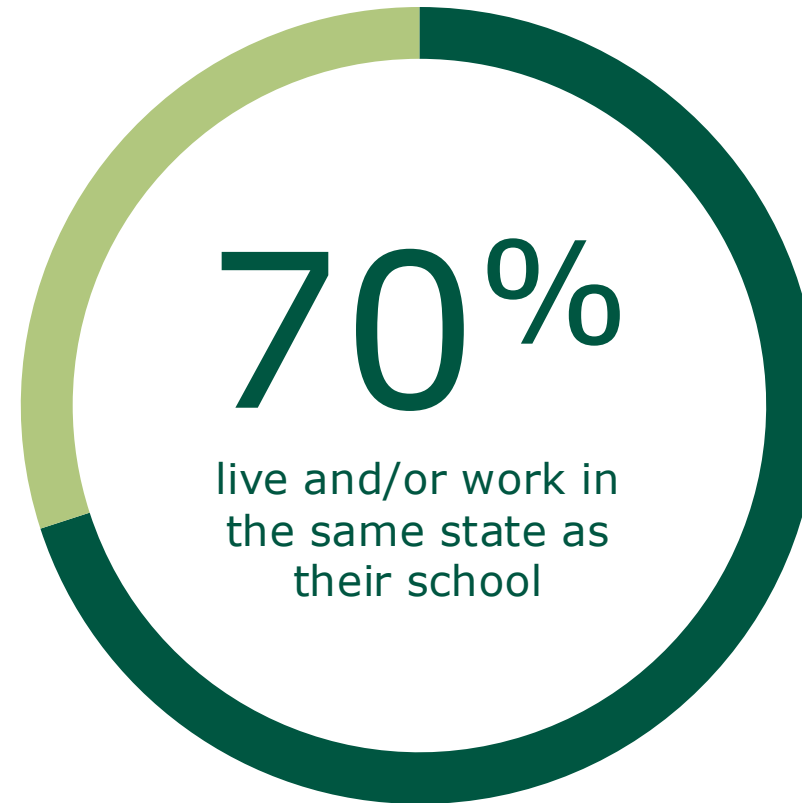
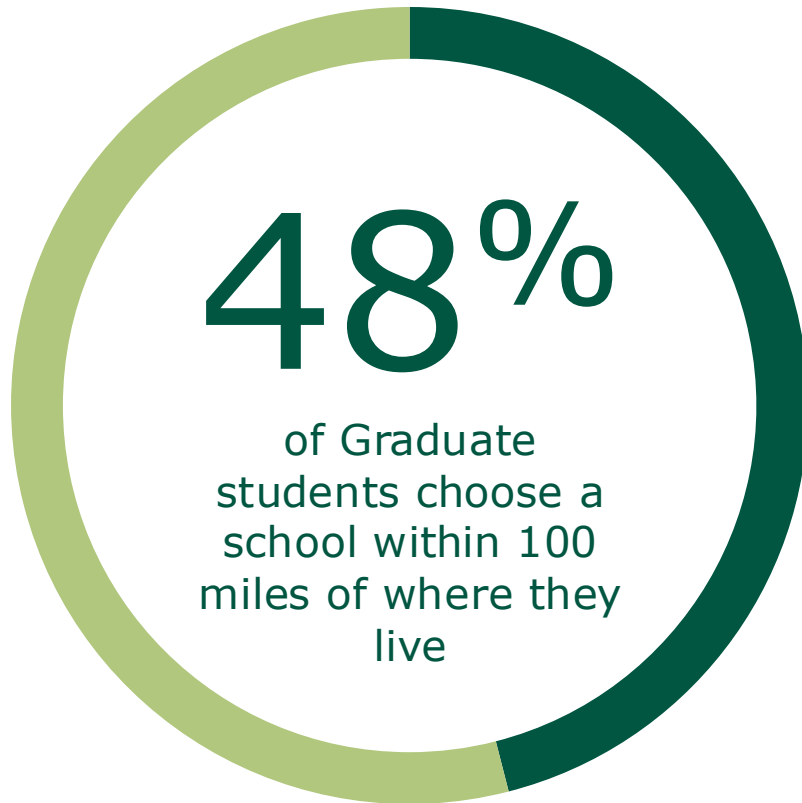
77% would not enroll in a school if desired program was not offered online



Career advancement is the primary motivator



The role of regional schools



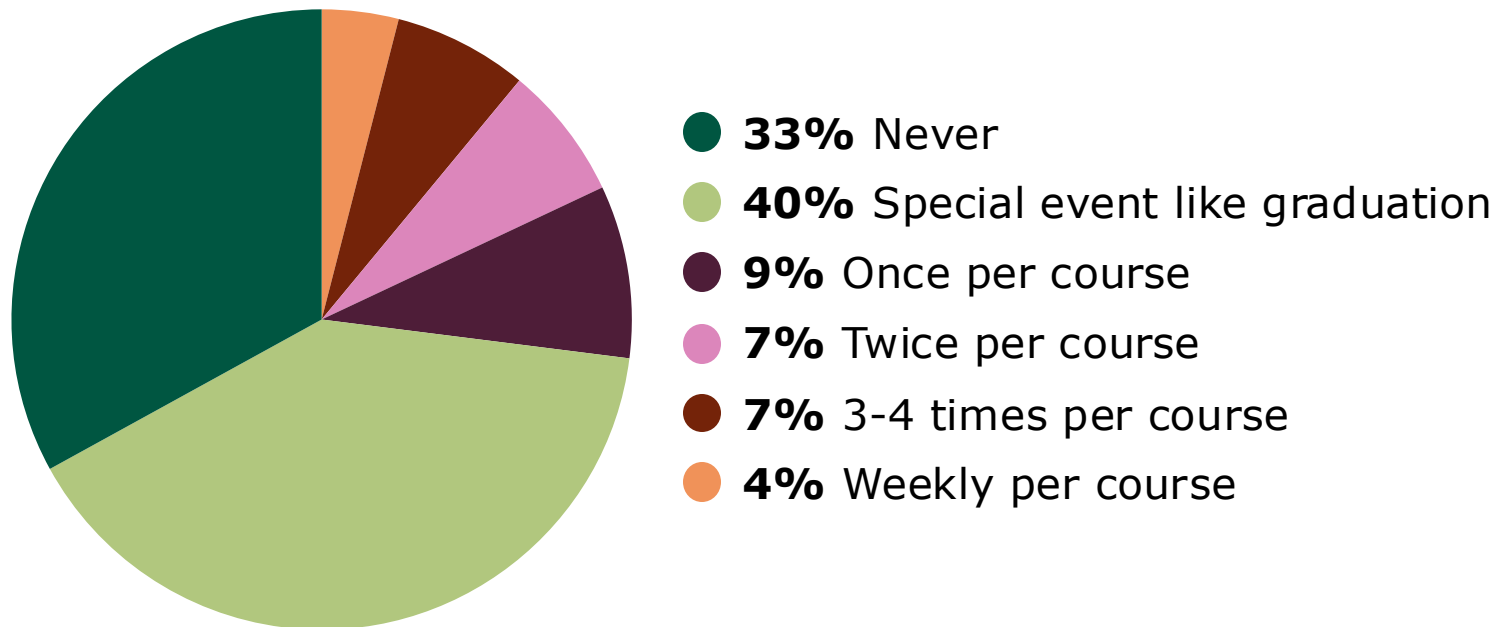


Emerging Graduate learner findings in 2025



Increased interest in connection and academic support

Frequency of campus visits



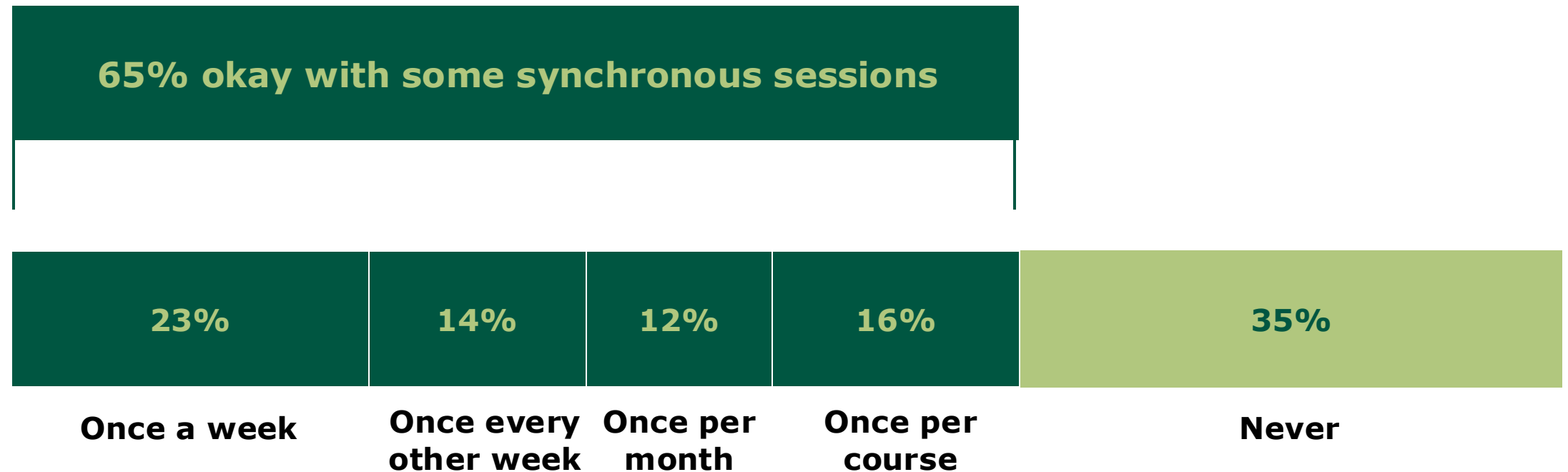
Top reasons to visit campus are academic/program-related:

1. Connect with professor
2. For a class session or other curriculum requirement
3. To use campus services or facilities for program-related activities



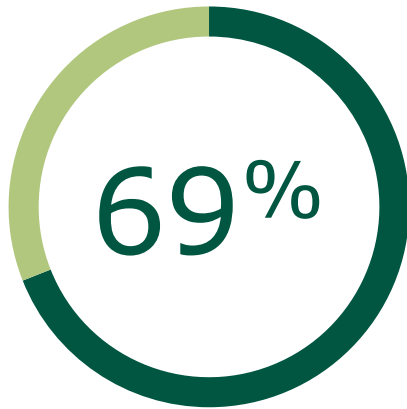
Increased interest in connection and academic support

How often would you be willing to log in at a specific time to join a required discussion or virtual lecture with your instructor and classmates?



Guidance is needed—and not being provided—on Gen AI

Graduate students agree Gen AI is important and believe it will play a role in their careers



Important to learn and understand to be successful in the workplace in the future

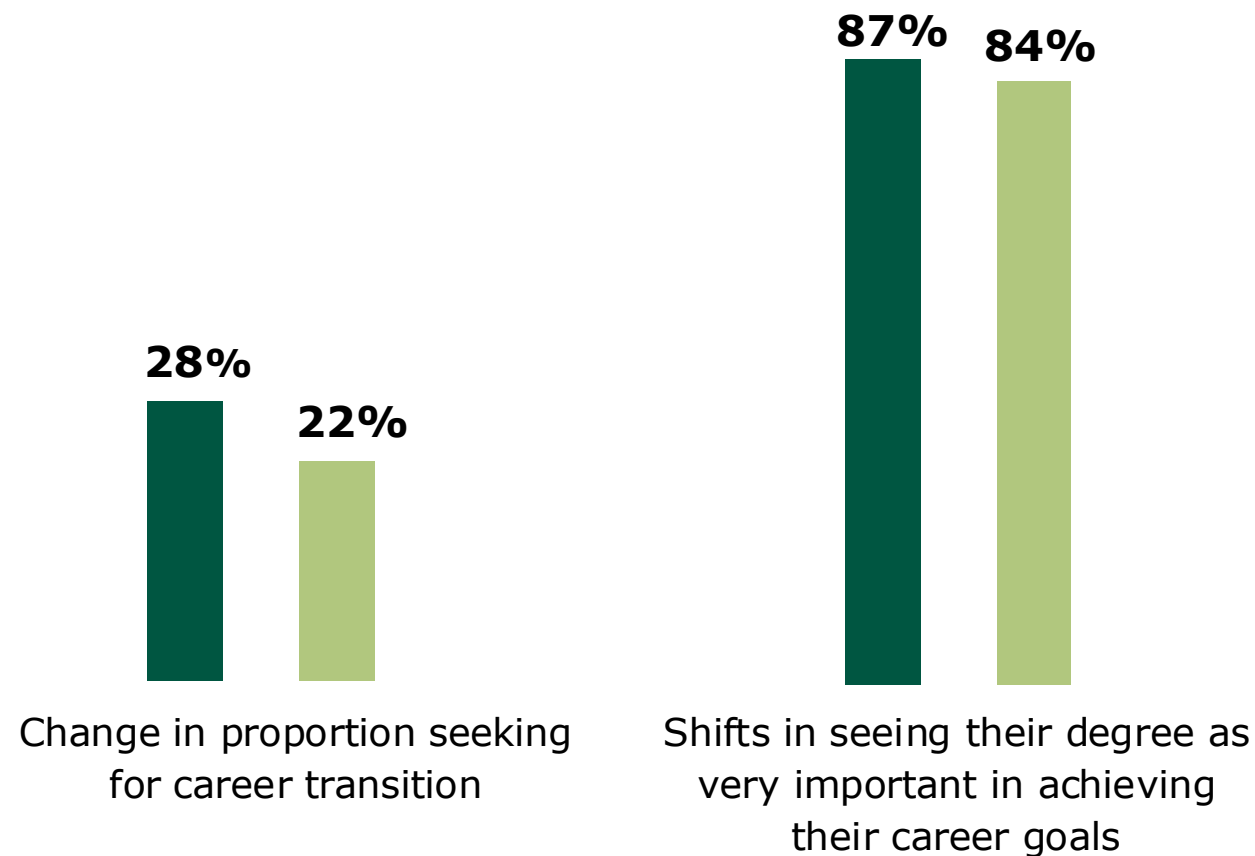
Most Graduate students do not feel Gen AI is integrated into their programs



My program always/most of the time teaches me how to use Gen AI as a tool in the workplace



Few job changes and more uncertainty



Graduate learners believe degrees are table stakes to drive career outcomes:

73%

a college degree is necessary for career advancement in today's world

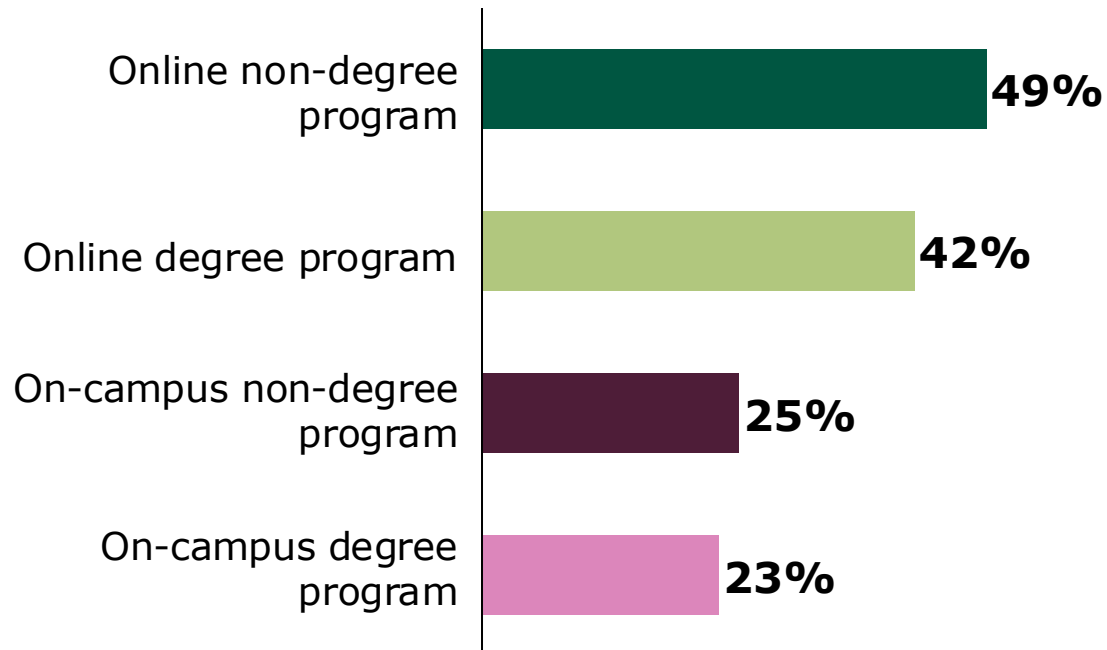
76%

a bachelor's degree is now expected by most employers, and an advanced degree is necessary to improve career prospects

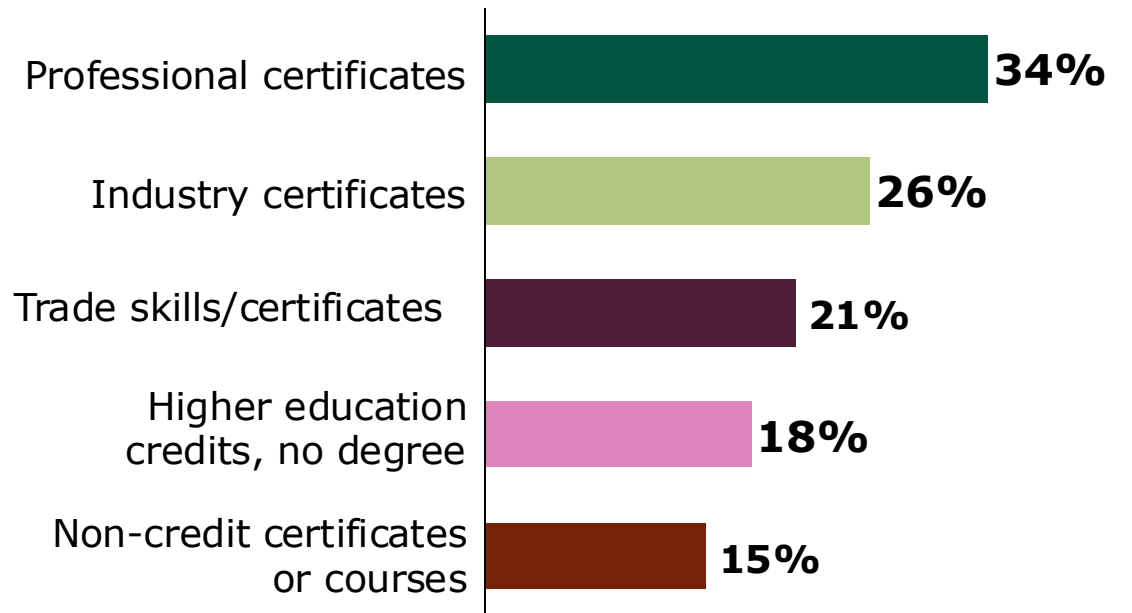


Graduate learners have interest but some uncertainty about non-degree programs

Future Learning

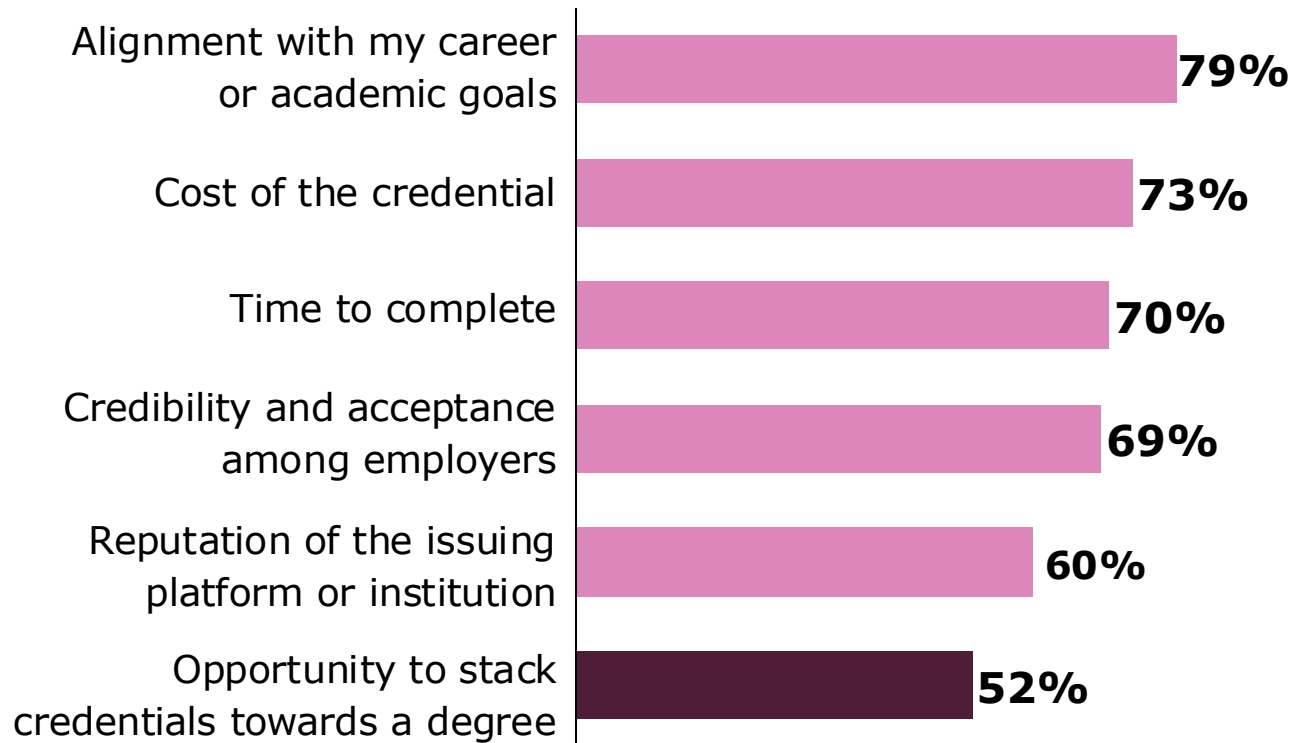


Highest demand alternative credentials



Stackable credentials largely misunderstood

Importance of factors in deciding to pursue alternative credentials



<10%

Say ability to stack credentials towards a degree is a top reason for their interest



Online Graduate Learners at Texas A&M International University



About TAMIU

Mission:

A member of the 12-campus Texas A&M University System, Texas A&M International University (TAMIU) nurtures its students' academic and social development through instruction, research and service to be responsible and productive members of our global society.

Location:

TAMIU is located in Laredo, TX, the nation's No.1 Port of Trade on the U.S.-México border.

Demographic Profile:

Fall 2025 enrollment is 9,141:

- 62% women
- 38% men
- 94% identified as minority; primarily Hispanic

Graduate Enrollment Highlights:

- 8% enrollment growth from fall 2024 to fall 2025
- 77% of students were fulltime
- Average age of 35 for graduate and 39 for doctoral students
- The top three graduate majors are currently Business Administration, Family Nurse Practitioner, and Curriculum and Instruction



Understanding the online graduate student

Voice of the Online Learner: TAMIU 2025

93%

Cited career advancement as a top enrollment driver

86%

Employed full- or part- time

91%

Live and / or work in Texas

76%

cited tuition as the top factor when deciding where to enroll

89%

believe the quality of an online degree is **comparable to or better than** an on-campus degree

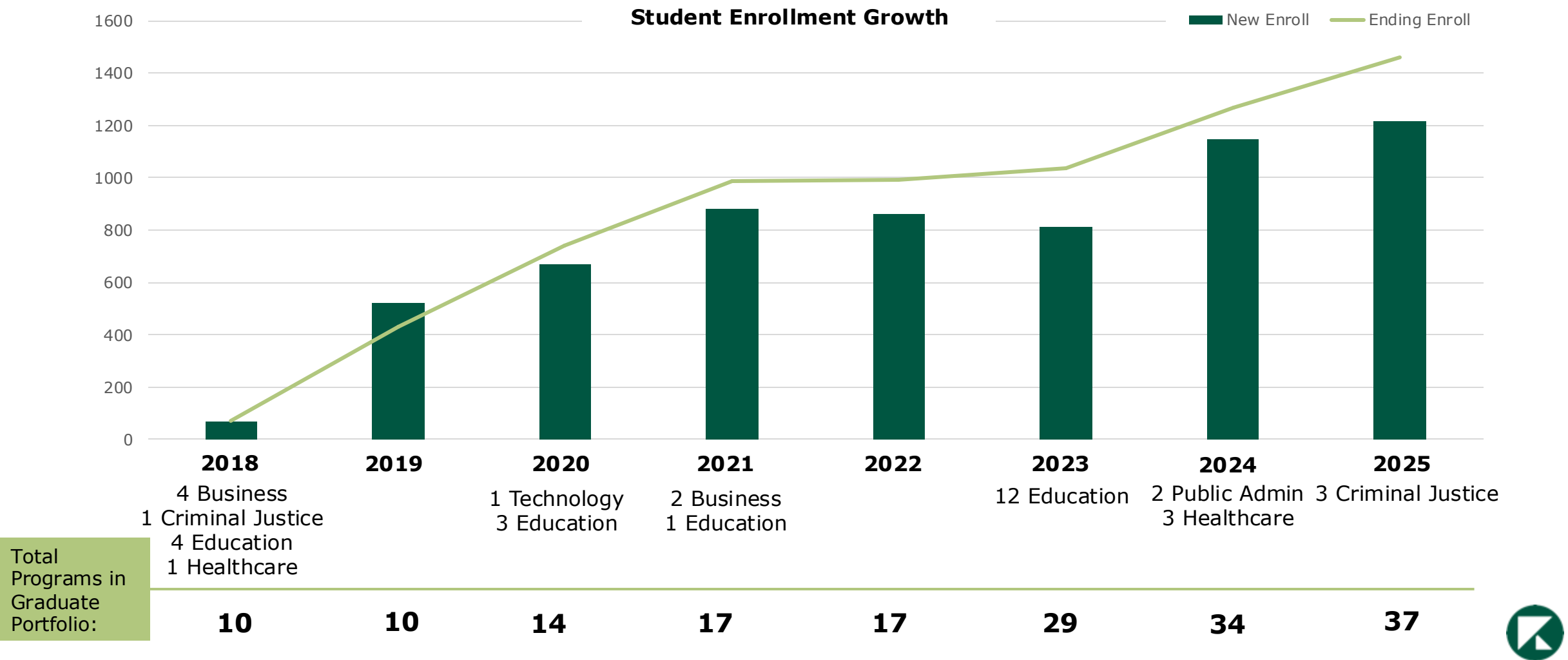
88%

believe employers value an online degree from an accredited institution the **same as or more than** an on-campus degree



TAMIU Graduate Program Roll Out

Strategic program roll out with a focus on regional, high-demand, career-aligned programs

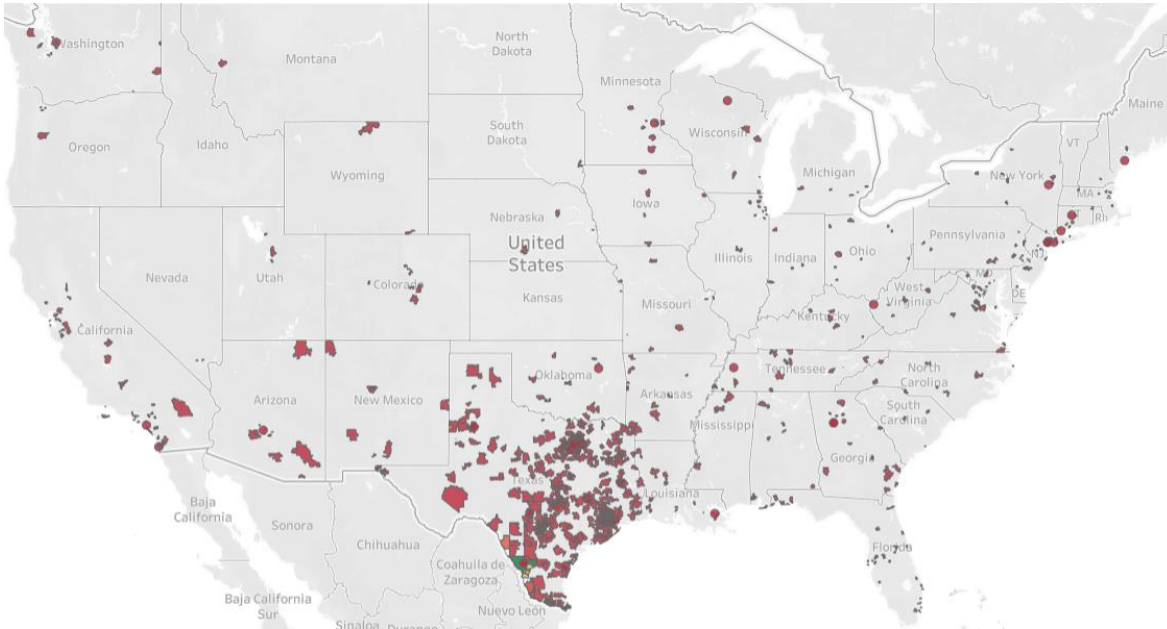


Growing Student Interest

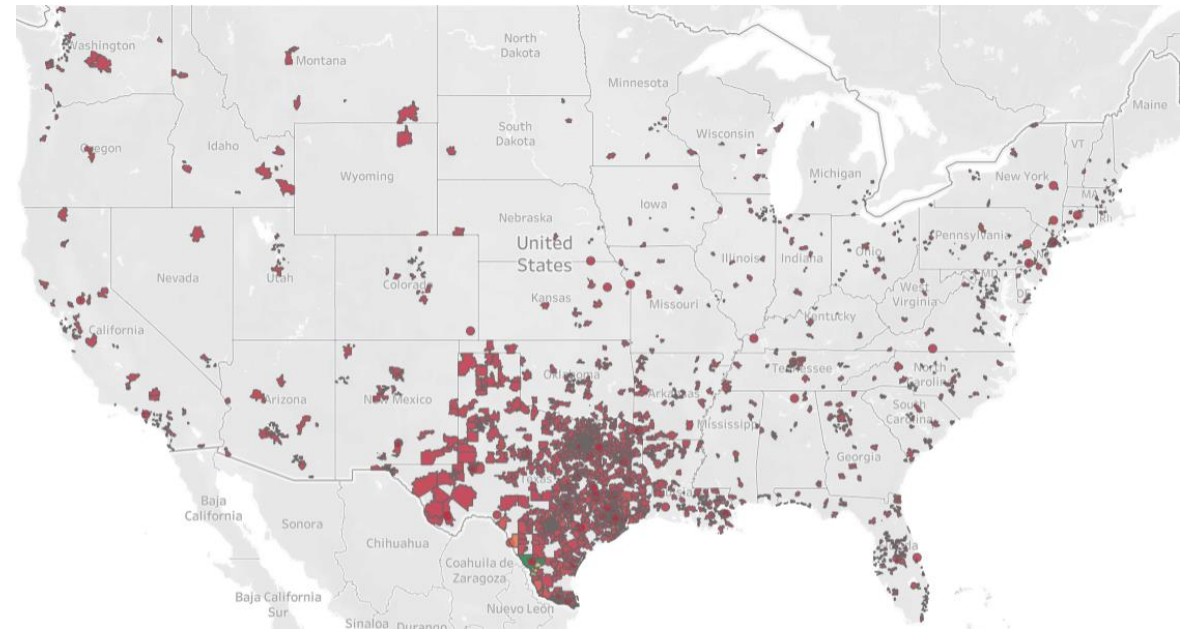
TAMIU has grown significant brand awareness and student interest over the last eight years, with leads coming from 49 states in 2025.

Leads

2018



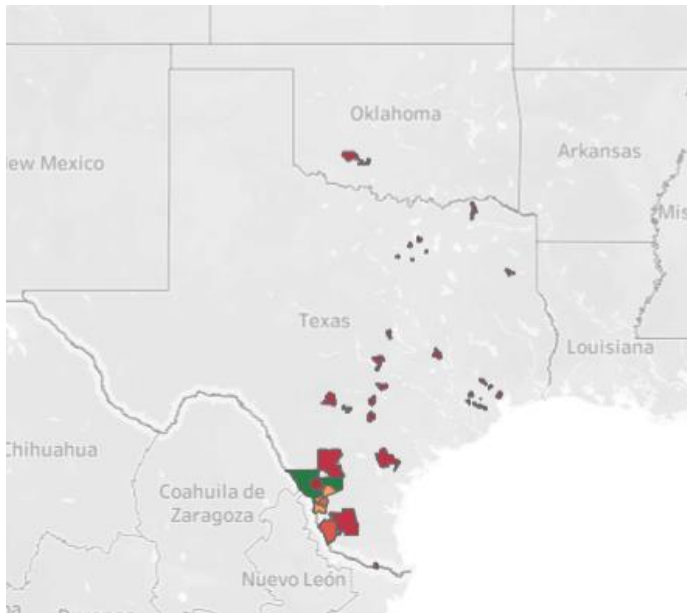
2025



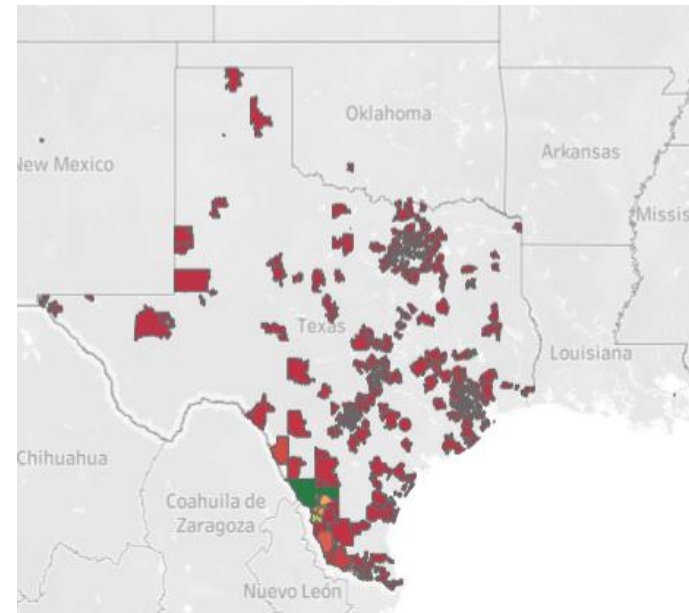
New Student Enrollment Growth

New Enrollments

2019



2025



High Student Satisfaction

Results from Spring 2025 Survey

Net Promoter Score

52

(Above 50 is excellent!)

How likely are you to recommend to a friend or colleague?

Overall Satisfaction

74%

Satisfied or Very Satisfied

How satisfied are you with the program overall?

Value

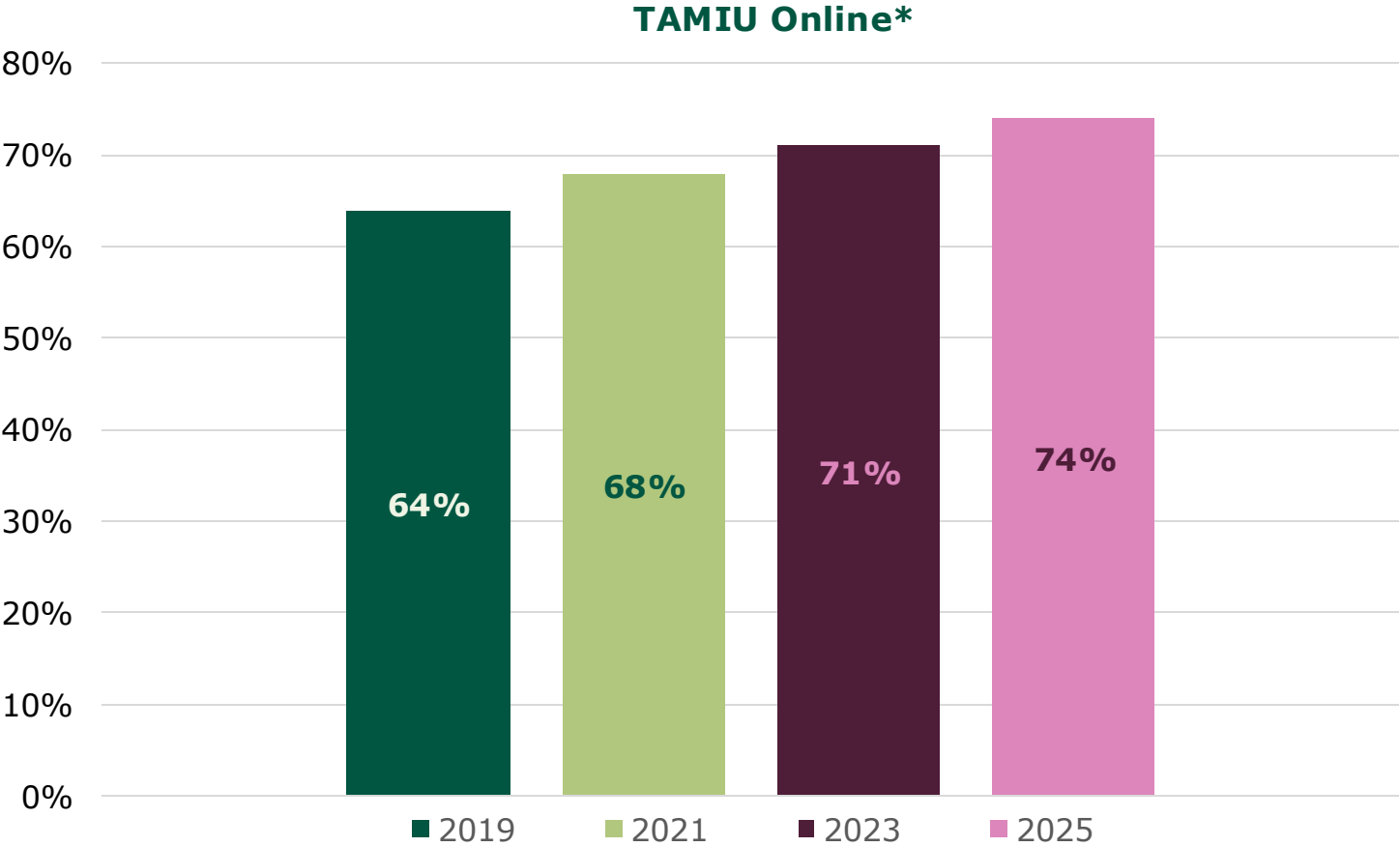
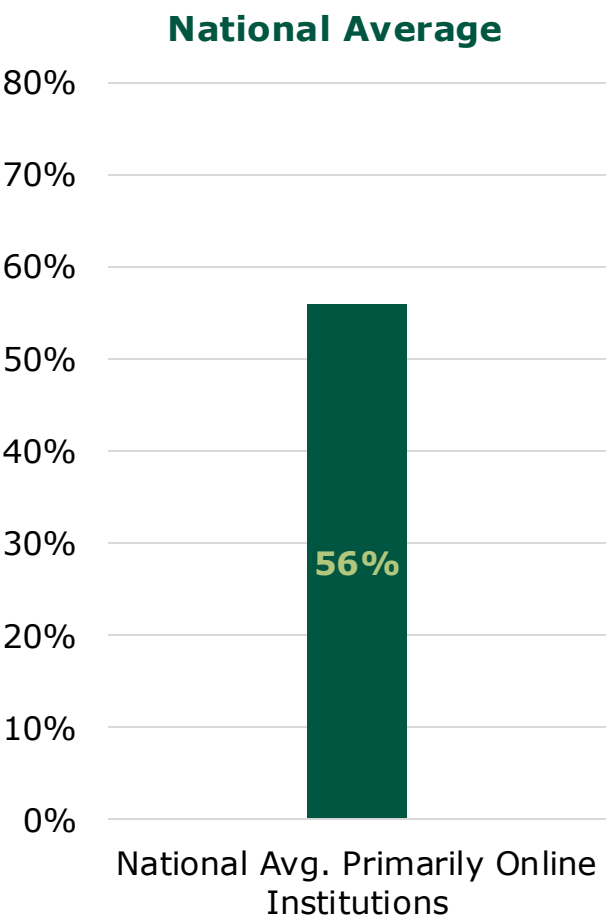
67%

Very Good or Excellent

How would you rate the value of your program at its current tuition level?



High Student Retention



*2025 third-term persistence



High Student ROI

TAMIU Results from Summer 2025 Survey

Well Worth It

81%

Agree or Strongly
Agree

My degree was worth
the investment.

Career Advancement

70%

Agree or Strongly
Agree

My degree helped
advance my career.

Able to Stay Local

88%

Agree or Strongly
Agree

I was able to
continue to live and
work in my local
community because
of my online degree.



High Student ROI

TAMIU Graduate Student Quotes from Summer 2025 Survey

*"**My student experience was incredibly rewarding**; I felt supported by knowledgeable faculty, challenged by a rigorous and relevant curriculum, and confident that the skills I gained have directly contributed to my professional growth and expanded career opportunities." - Nursing graduate*

*"Earning my degree provided me with a solid foundation in international trade and logistics, enhancing my understanding of key industry concepts. **It helped me gain the knowledge needed to pursue certifications like the Custom Broker License**, aligning with my long-term career goals." - Business graduate*

*"The information that I learned and gained was **instrumental in the promotion and salary that I received!**" - Information Technology graduate*

*"My degree allowed me to switch from classroom teaching to school counseling. **The new position was about an \$8,000 yearly pay increase** which will pay for my degree in a little over 2 school years. At the time, I had 17 years before retirement, so it more than pays for itself." - Education graduate*



Takeaways



Implications for serving online Graduate learners

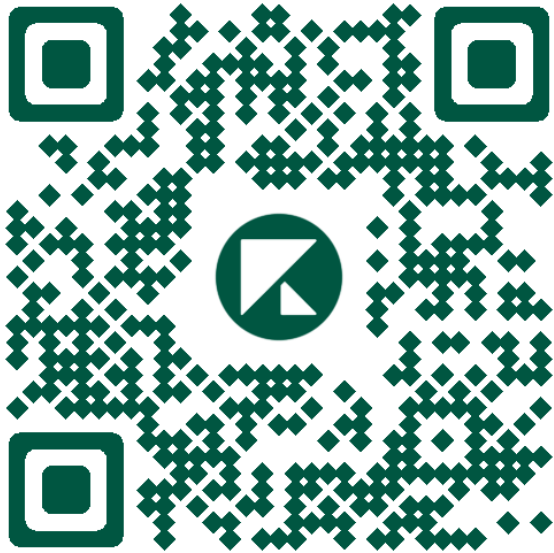
- **Affordability & flexibility** are key decision factors when Graduate students are evaluating online programs.
- **Online graduate learners pick modality first** and then choose their institution.
- **Employer connections** can help drive student interest and increase engagement.
- **Learner connection and support** tailored to Graduate students' motivations can address students' needs.
- **Generative AI** is rapidly evolving and students are seeking more guidance for career relevance.



Get the research

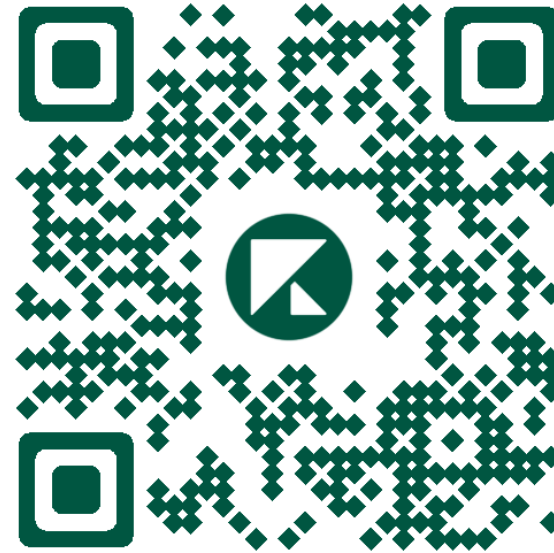
Chronicle Brief

Graduate Programs &
Workforce Needs



Risepoint Report

2025 Voice of the Online
Learner: Graduate Edition





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