

2025 ROI STUDY

Research among Recent
Graduates of Risepoint-
Supported Programs

Report of Findings

October 2025



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Methodology

Risepoint is an education technology company that partners with regional universities to develop, launch, and grow their online programs in nursing, teaching, business, and other high-demand sectors. Amidst the important national conversation about the cost and value of higher education, the company commissioned Ipsos to measure the experience and return on investment for graduates of Risepoint-supported programs.

*A total of 4,903 interviews were completed as part of the research. This report is focused on the 4,470 respondents who were working both before the program and after the program (at the time of the survey). This accounts for 91% of the overall sample and enables a direct comparison of salary outcomes.

Note: Demographics of the sample were 73% female/ 26% male/ 1% prefer not answer (split reflects high nursing and education program concentrations); 21% under age 30/ 36% age 30-39/ 28% age 40-49/ 15% age 50+ (splits reflects high concentration of working adults in programs); and 62% White (non-Hispanic)/ 12% Black (non-Hispanic)/ 12% Hispanic/ 4% Asian (non-Hispanic)/ 2% Native American (non-Hispanic)/ 2% Multi-racial (non-Hispanic).

31 Field period

May 9 - June 2, 2025



Sample & Mode

The survey was conducted online, leveraging a sample of graduates from Risepoint supported partner institutions



Qualifications

Sample of n=4,470 survey responses among respondents who were working full- or part-time before starting their degree program and are currently working full- or part-time, including those in key programs:

- Business (n=1487)
- Education (n=1406)
- Nursing (n=832)

Note, the sample consists of those who were employed before starting their program and are employed now, though not necessarily continuously.

Executive Summary

Graduates of RisePoint-supported programs average a first-year salary increase of nearly 20%, allowing them to pay back tuition in 1.5 years, on average.

Recent graduates (last 9-23 months) show a 19% increase in salary one year after degree completion. This works out to just over \$13,000 and the ability to payback tuition in 1.5 years, on average. Those who graduated three years ago (between 33 and 47 months ago) see an even bigger jump in salary - 34% on average.

A majority fund their degrees without loans.

More than half (53%) of graduates of RisePoint-supported programs did not take on any student debt.

Loans make up less than half of degree program funding (40%).

Graduates largely see their degree as worth the investment and would recommend their program.

Overwhelmingly (86%), graduates see their investment as being worthwhile. Nine in 10 (91%) view their university as a trusted institution, and eight in 10 (80%) would recommend their program to a friend or colleague.

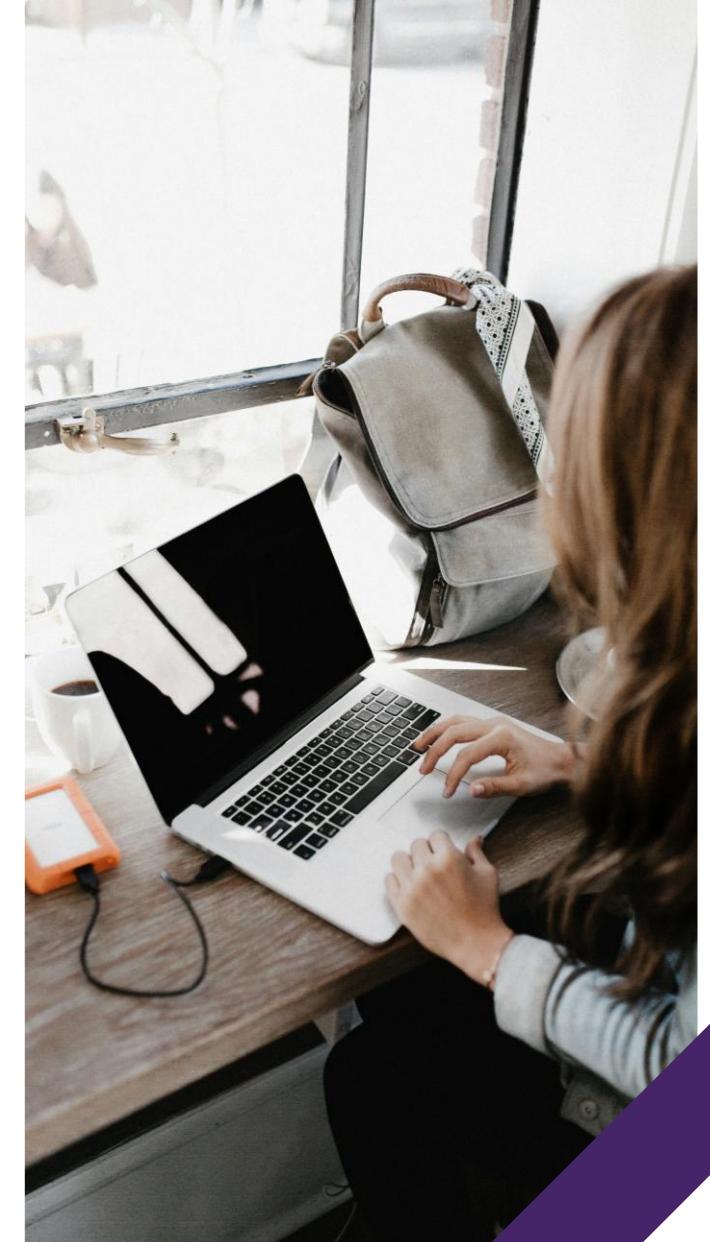
Seven in 10 report professional growth.

Most (72%) graduates of RisePoint-supported programs feel their degree delivered on the promise of career advancement – crucially important, as this was graduates'

top motivator to pursue their degree program (58%).

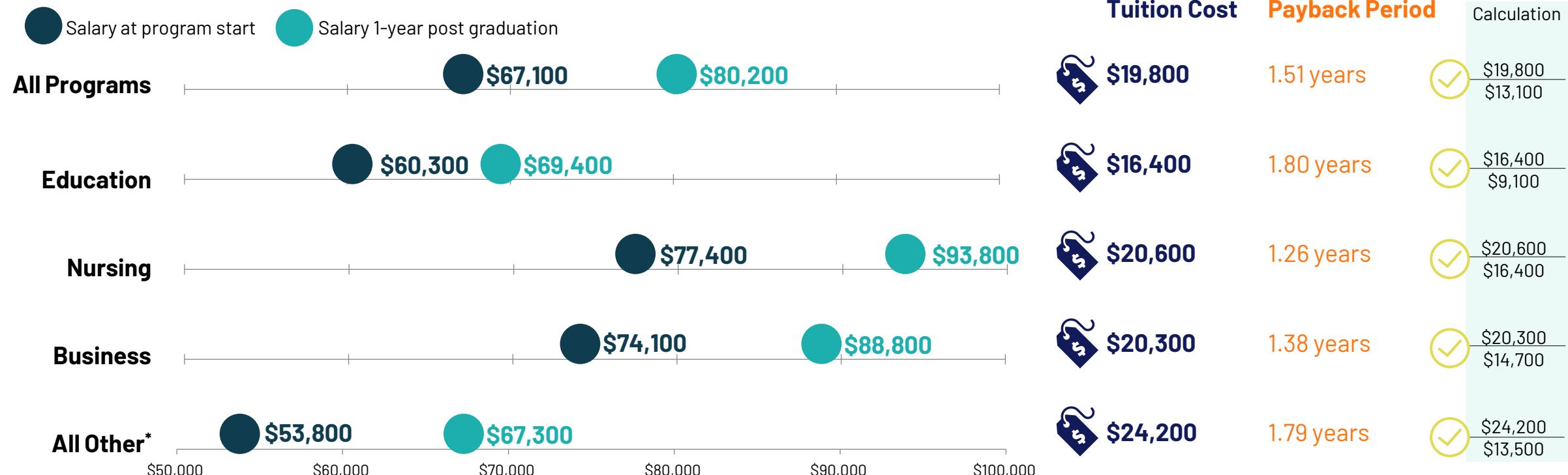
Nine in 10 credit their online degree with allowing them to stay local, minimizing disruptions to life.

A majority (56%) of graduates needed an online program that would allow them to work while earning their degree. Another 65% said it was "extremely important" to remain living and/or working in their community while pursuing their degree. Fully, 9 in 10 (92%) say they were able to continue living and working in their local community because of their online degree.



Affordability keeps average payback period <2 years

Payback period summary



The 2025 Student ROI Survey confirms that the average payback period remains consistent with previous years, with graduates recouping their educational investment in under two years on average

Q10/Q10a/b What was your annual salary (before taxes) prior to starting the degree program? Q12/Q12a/b. What is your current annual salary (before taxes)? Q7. How much did the total tuition (including fees) cost for all courses in your online degree program to be completed? Base: Graduates who were working full/part-time before and after their program; reflects graduates who have completed their program in the last 9-23 months. Total (n=1339), Education (n=407), Nursing (n=189), Business (n=530), All other (n=213)
 *Other includes fields of study such as Undergrad, Social Work, Healthcare (non-nursing), Criminal Justice, Cybersecurity, Technology, etc.

Graduates saw a 19% salary increase one year after degree completion, 34% after three years



Average salary gains are consistent with 2024 ROI study:

	1 Year	3 Year
Total	19%	30%
Education	16%	25%
Nursing	19%	27%
Business	20%	32%



Q10/Q10a/b What was your annual salary (before taxes) prior to starting the degree program? Q12/Q12a/b. What is your current annual salary (before taxes)?

Base: Graduates who were working full/part-time before and after their program

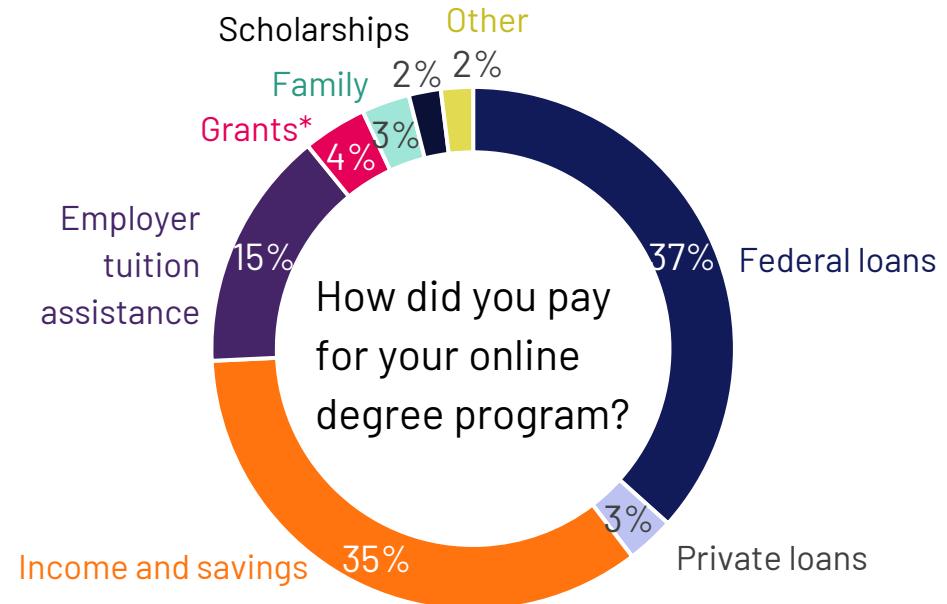
1 year: graduates who have completed their program in the last 9-23 months: Total (n=1339), Education (n=407), Nursing (n=189), Business (n=530)

3 years: graduates who have completed their program between 33 and 47 months ago: Total (n=426), Education (n=140), Nursing (n=73, small base), Business (n=165)

More than half of graduates took out no loans



Total program funding breakdown across all learners surveyed



*Federal grants (3%), Private grants (1%)

Q6. How did you pay for your online degree program?

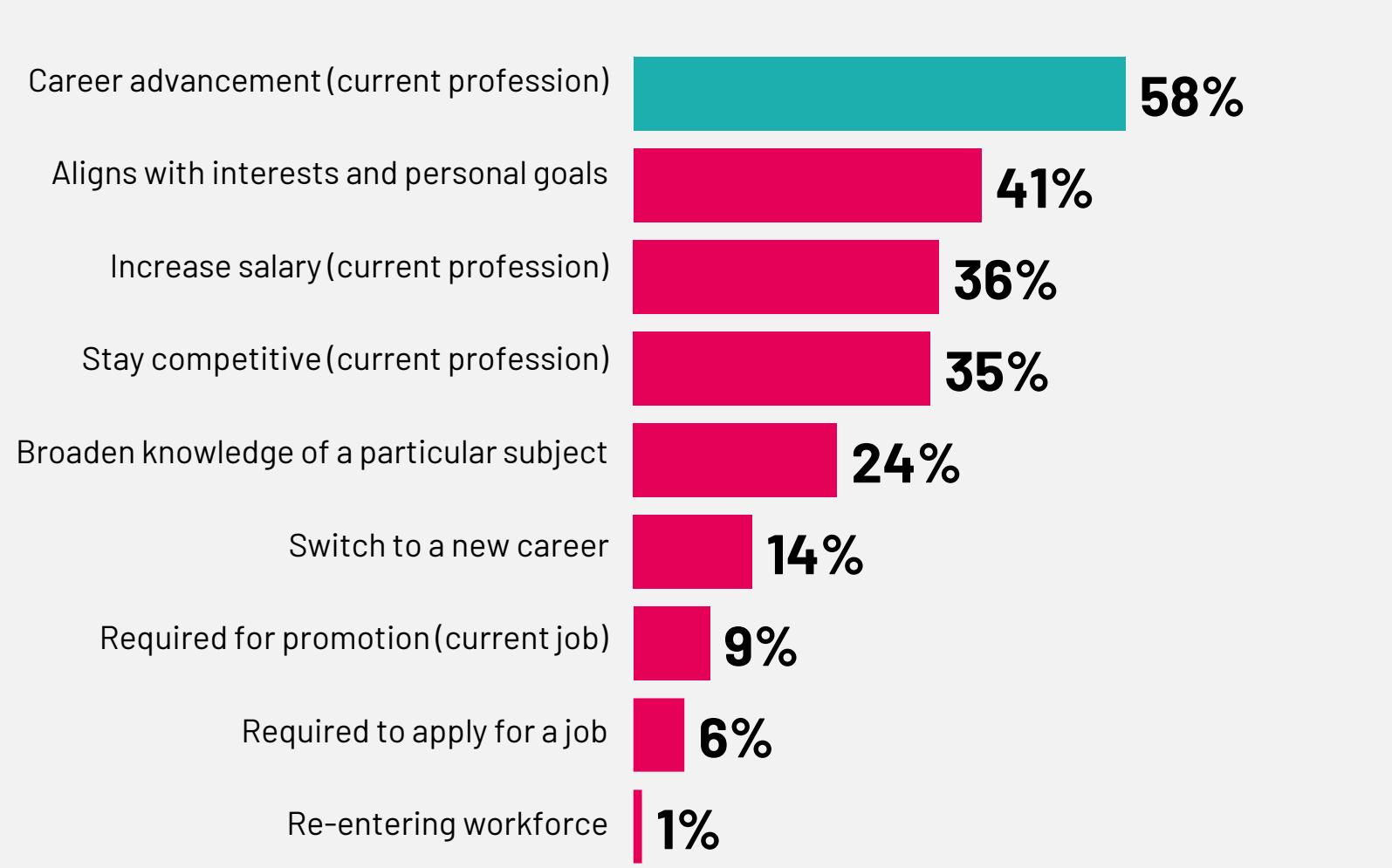
Q7. How much did the total tuition (including fees) cost for all courses in your online degree program to be completed?

Base: Graduates who were working full/part-time before and after their program. All programs (n=4,470), Education (n=1406), Nursing (n=832), Business (n=1487),

Note, graph does not sum to 100% due to rounding

Nearly 60% of graduates pursued their degree for career advancement

Why did you choose to pursue your online degree program?
Select top-3

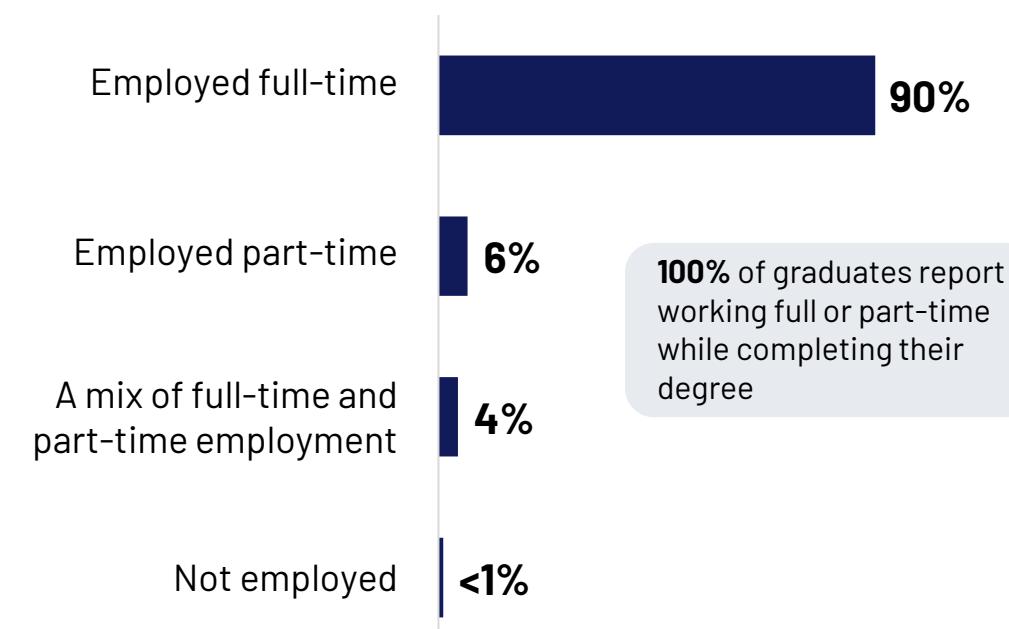


Q3. Why did you choose to pursue your online degree program?
Base: Graduates who were working full/part-time before and after their program n=4,470

The ability to continue working was the top reason for choosing online over on-campus

And 100% stayed employed during their program

What was your employment status while attending your online degree program?

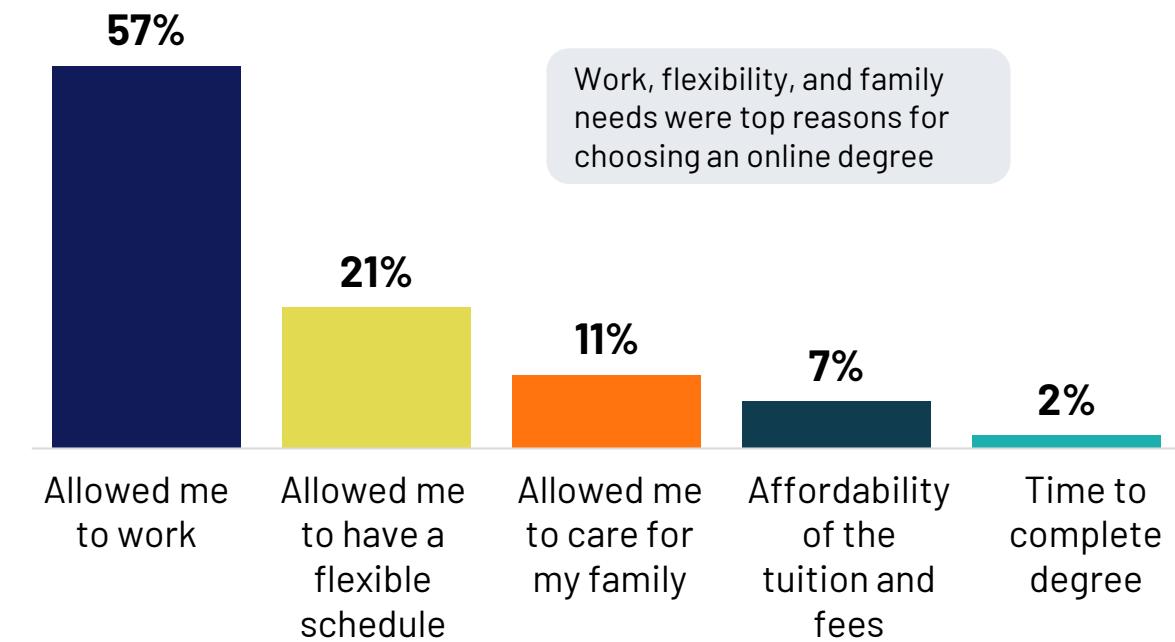


Q10j. Which of the following best describes your status while you were attending your online degree program?

Base: Graduates who were working full/part-time before and after their program n=4,470

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Why did you choose an online degree program?



Q4. What is the main reason you chose an online degree program vs. an on-campus or hybrid (has both online and on-campus courses) program?

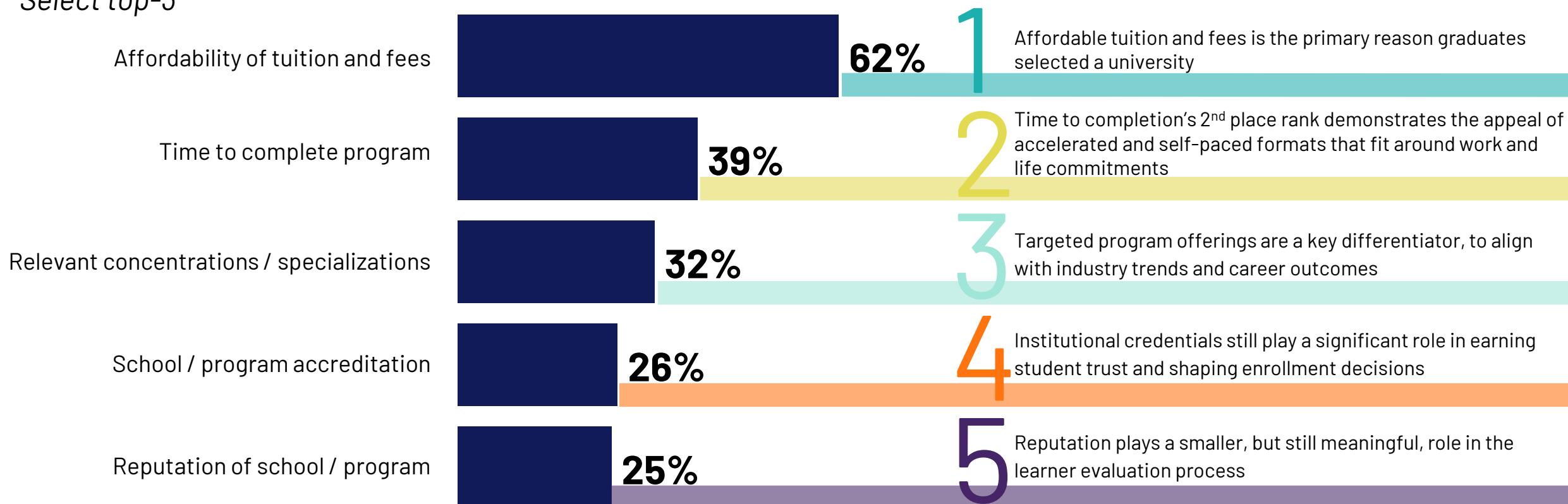
Base: Graduates who were working full/part-time before and after their program n=4,470



Affordability was the top decision factor in selecting a university

Why did you choose your university?

Select top-3



Q5. Why did you choose the university you earned your online degree from? (Select top 3 reasons.)
Base: Graduates who were working full/part-time before and after their program n=4,470

80%

**Would recommend
their program**

56% are "extremely" likely to recommend



Q16. How likely are you to recommend your online degree program to a friend or colleague? Ratings on a 0-10 point scale, where 0 = not at all likely and 10 = extremely likely. Note: Promoters considered those who gave 8-10 rating, Passives a 5-7 rating, and Detractors 0-4 rating. Extremely likely to recommend gave a 10. Base: Graduates who were working full/part-time before and after their program n=4,470



Reasons learners recommend online degree program



One of the things I loved most about my online degree program was that it was accelerated. The **flexible schedule allowed me to work full-time while taking classes**, which was essential for balancing my professional and personal responsibilities. [...] I'm grateful that the program supported my ability to honor those commitments while still advancing my education."

*Education,
Eastern Washington University*



Arkansas State University's online graduate degree program was **an excellent experience from initial application to graduation**. The school's administrative staff were easily accessible, the professors were challenging yet fair and understanding, and overall, [the] program was enjoyable to work through."

*Business,
Arkansas State University*



I recommend this program to anyone who asks. I truly believe in the processes UWA has in place for the success of their online students."

*Education,
University of West Alabama*



If I had not been given the opportunity to complete my degree online and pay a reasonable amount for tuition, fees, etc., I am not certain I would have been able to complete my degree when I did. **Lamar University came highly recommended, and it lived up to the recommendation.**"

Undergrad, Lamar University

Graduates overwhelmingly see their degree as “worth the investment”



I feel like my degree was worth the investment because it allowed me to be a candidate for more **job positions with higher pay.**
Social Work, Aurora University

Earning my BSN was absolutely worth it. I was able to receive a promotion into nursing administration and **increased my earning potential.**

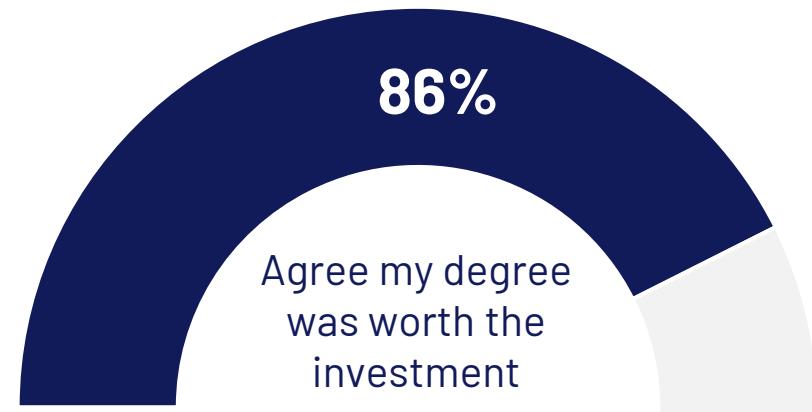
Nursing, Benedictine University

With it, I navigated my way into **a lucrative and rewarding next chapter of my career.** Not entirely because of the degree, but it's a strong contributor to the story of who I am now.”

Business, Southern Oregon University

My degree allowed me to gain valuable knowledge about the field. It was almost 20 years between **my degrees and things change.**
Working on my degree allowed me to become more relevant in my field.

Education, University of West Alabama



Roughly half (49%) “strongly” agree with this statement



Consistent with last year, when 84% felt their degree was worth the investment

Q15. Please rate your level of agreement with the statement below.

Answer choices: Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree, NA/Don't know

Base: Graduates who were working full/part-time before and after their program n=4,470

Most feel their degree delivered on the goal of career advancement



Social work is a diverse field, and because of my recent education,
I qualify for better paying jobs."

Social Work, Arkansas State University

I became a certified nursing development specialist and was **promoted to a position of higher responsibility** within the organization."

Nursing, University of North Carolina Wilmington

Earning my degree gave me the skills to be **promoted from a coordinator to a project manager** within 4 months."

Education, Saint Mary's University of Minnesota

Six months after graduating with my advanced degree, an MBA with a focus on Accounting, I was **promoted to a higher position** within my company, receiving a 25% salary increase."

Business, Pittsburg State University

With my endorsement from Aurora University, I **secured a new position** as a special education teacher."

Undergrad, Aurora University



4 in 10 (39%) "strongly" agree with this statement



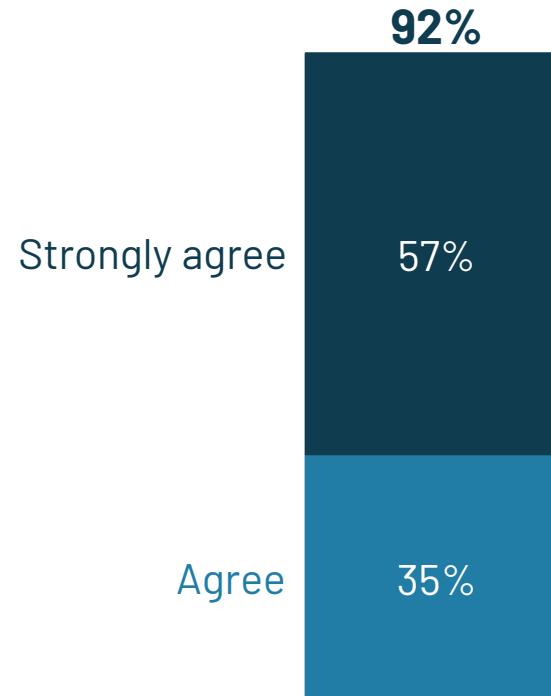
Consistent with last year, when 69% said their degree helped with career advancement

Q14. Please rate your level of agreement with the statement below.
Answer choices: Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree, NA/Don't know
Base: Graduates who were working full/part-time before and after their program n=4,470

Graduates report a high degree of trust in their chosen institution



The university where I earned my online degree is an **institution I trust**



I do believe **it is an institution that I can trust**, and that is trusted in the educational field."
Business, Benedictine University

I felt the program was supportive of my needs. It was much **more personal than I would expect from an online program**. I had resources and **faculty that I knew I could trust** and would guide me toward success."
Business, Aurora University

Q16c. Please rate your level of agreement with the statement below.

Answer choices: Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree, NA/Don't know

Base: Graduates who were working full/part-time before and after their program n=4,470

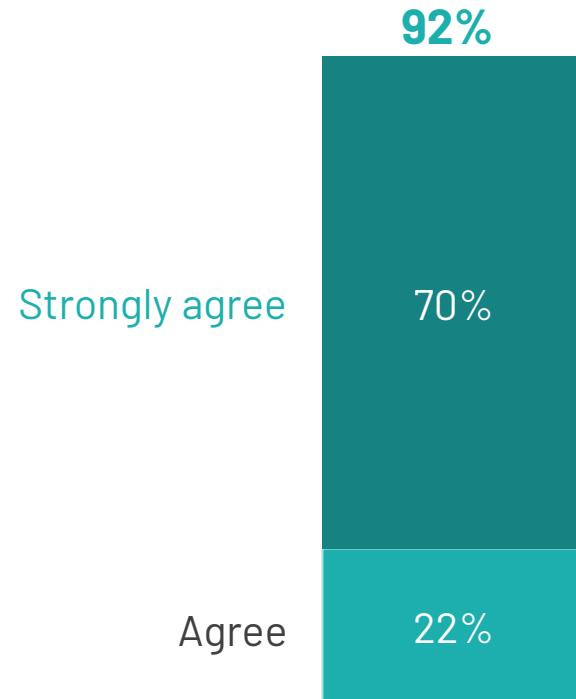
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Graduates credit their online degree with allowing them to stay local

Something rated as “extremely important” by 65% of graduates – and “very important” to another 25%



Because of my online degree, I was able to continue living and working in **my local community**



Extremely pleasant experience. Online program **allowed me to work full-time and take care of my family**. After graduating, I obtained my LCSW. Now I am in leadership for a large health corporation and **get to serve my community** in many ways.”

Social Work, Widener University

Q16a. How important was it for you to remain living and/or working in your community while completing your degree?

Q16c. Please rate your level of agreement with the statement below.

Answer choices: Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree, NA/Don't know

Base: Graduates who were working full/part-time before and after their program n=4,470