



Serving the Underrepresented

Understanding the Needs and Decision Making Priorities of Underrepresented Graduate Students

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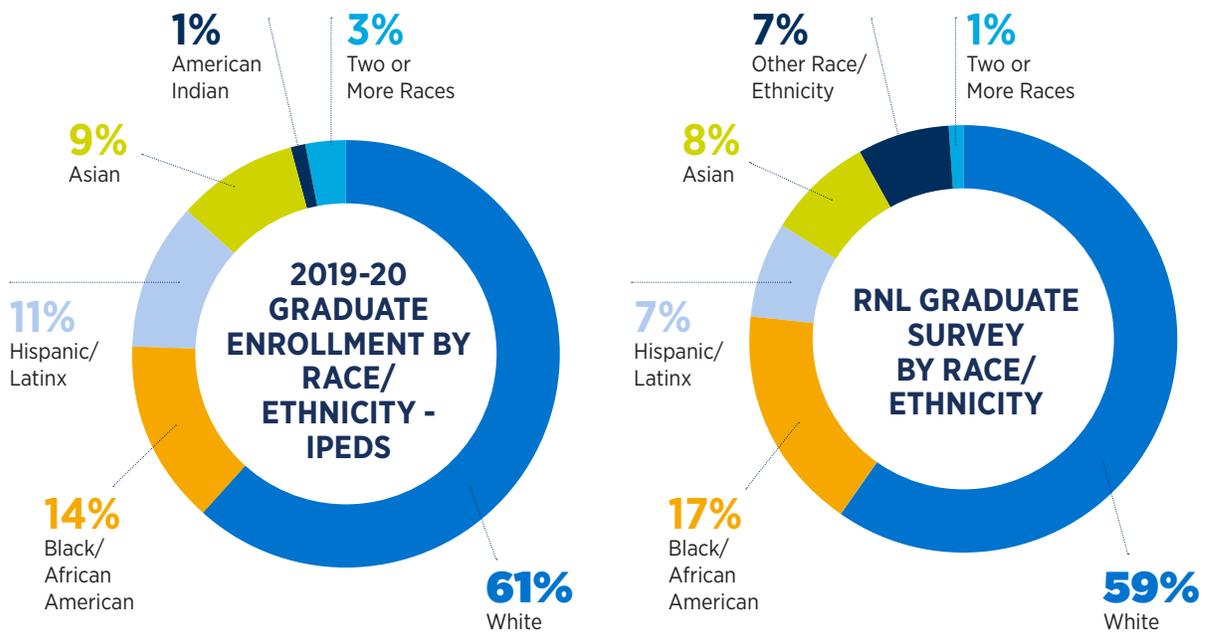


OVERVIEW

Understanding the needs and decision making priorities of underrepresented graduate students

In fall 2021, RNL published its first *Graduate Student Recruitment Report*, a survey of 1,500 prospective graduate students that explored their program demands and preferences, search processes, enrollment decision making priorities, and key expectations of the institutions to which they inquire, apply, and enroll. In this summary report, we present that survey data organized by the self-reported race and ethnicity of respondents. All respondents were permanent residents of the United States and therefore these data provide a template of demand for understanding how to grow domestic graduate student enrollment.

In the survey, 59 percent of respondents identified themselves as White, 17 percent as Black/African American, 8 percent as Asian, and 7 percent as Hispanic/Latinx. This distribution is similar to the most recent IPEDS data (from 2019-2020) which indicate the following composition of the American graduate education market.



Although we had survey participants representing other ethnic and racial identities, there were not sufficient numbers to provide reliable data.

Underrepresented graduate enrollment is growing, but there is work to be done

The last decade has seen advancement in the enrollment of graduate students from historically underrepresented backgrounds. In an analysis of IPEDS data from 2009–2010, Black/African American enrollment has grown in real number by more than 14,000 students nationally but remains at 14 percent of total enrollment. Hispanic/Latinx enrollment has grown by almost 110,000, rising from 8 percent to 11 percent of total enrollment. Asian enrollment has grown by more than 36,000, and risen from 7 percent to 9 percent of total enrollment.

While this growth is an excellent start, we know from our conversations with campus leadership across the nation that more needs to be done. The tables included below will help institutional leaders better understand where the demands, preferences, and priorities of students from these historically underrepresented groups compare to the entire graduate market (as represented by the “All Respondents” column on the right side of each table).



12 key findings for engaging underrepresented students in graduate enrollment

Among the most important findings in our analysis of these data is that prospective graduate students—regardless of their background—are far more alike than they are different in how they search for a program, the type of program in which they are most likely to enroll, their priorities in making their enrollment decision, and their expectations from the institutions to which they inquire or apply. As we reviewed the data to find unique areas of divergence among students of a specific background, we looked for instances in which there was at least a 10 percent difference from the average of all respondents. While we encourage the reader to work through all the summary data included in this report, the following represent some of the most important findings:

1 Like the graduate market as a whole, graduate students from underrepresented backgrounds are predominantly female, and even more so among Asian and Hispanic/Latinx students.

Asian and Hispanic/Latinx students are nearly 10 percent more likely to be female than the average for all graduate students (60 percent). Black/African American students align more closely with the overall gender trend for all respondents.

GENDER

	ASIAN	BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE	ALL RESPONDENTS
Female	67%	58%	68%	68%	59%
Male	31%	39%	25%	30%	29%
Transgender female	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Transgender male	0%	1%	2%	1%	1%
Non-binary/third gender/ Non-conforming	1%	2%	4%	1%	2%
Prefer to self describe	1%	0%	0%	0%	5%
Prefer not to respond	0%	0%	1%	0%	2%

2 Underrepresented students are even more interested in enrolling in master’s programs than the graduate market in the aggregate—particularly among Asian and Hispanic/Latinx students.

Asian and Hispanic/Latinx students are almost 10 percent more likely to pursue a master’s degree rather than some other credential. Black/African American students align more closely with the overall trend for all students. These populations are also less likely to be the “consumers” of the non-degree credentials that appear to be on the rise at the graduate level.

IN WHAT TYPE OF GRADUATE PROGRAM ARE YOU PLANNING TO ENROLL?

PROGRAM TYPE	ASIAN	BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE	ALL RESPONDENTS
Post baccalaureate certificate	3%	9%	8%	8%	8%
Post baccalaureate certification prep/licensure	7%	7%	6%	6%	7%
Master’s degree	51%	43%	58%	52%	43%
Graduate certificate	13%	23%	9%	13%	19%
Graduate certification prep/licensure	3%	5%	1%	5%	4%
Doctorate degree	13%	7%	8%	10%	11%
Professional doctorate (JD, MD, DO, etc.)	9%	4%	6%	5%	5%
Other	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%

3 Demand for accelerated (shorter) courses and programs is every bit as prevalent among underrepresented groups.

Prospective students from all backgrounds are more likely to prefer accelerated courses and programs over traditional semesters, although with slightly less demand for the most accelerated.

WHICH IS CLOSEST TO YOUR PREFERRED LENGTH OF COURSES?

COURSE LENGTH	ASIAN	BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE	ALL RESPONDENTS
5-weeks or less	8%	6%	7%	6%	11%
6-9 weeks	18%	15%	19%	21%	16%
10-12 weeks	23%	32%	24%	28%	28%
13 or more weeks (typical semesters)	51%	47%	50%	45%	45%

4 Demand for hybrid/blended and online programs—and the lack of interest in face-to-face programs—is every bit as strong among students from underrepresented populations.

Black/African American students are considerably less likely than student from other underrepresented backgrounds to prefer fully classroom-based programs, and are more likely to enroll in hybrid/blended programs. Graduate students of all backgrounds have the strongest preference for hybrid/blended programs, followed by online programs, and then classroom programs (the preference of only 20 percent of all respondents).

WHICH IS CLOSEST TO YOUR PREFERRED PROGRAM FORMAT/MODALITY?

MODALITY	ASIAN	BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE	ALL RESPONDENTS
Classroom	31%	15%	28%	21%	20%
Partially classroom/ partially online (hybrid)	48%	56%	45%	45%	48%
100% online	22%	29%	27%	35%	32%

5 Graduate students, regardless of their race or ethnicity, most frequently enroll in the same program areas—those in which there are ample and well-paying jobs.

Prospective graduate students from all backgrounds demonstrate consistent interest in all fields of study—with not more than 5 percent divergence across students from each background. Here are the top programs preferred by nearly half of all prospective graduate students:



WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BROAD DISCIPLINES IS CLOSEST TO YOUR INTENDED AREA OF STUDY?

DISCIPLINE	ASIAN	BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE	ALL RESPONDENTS
Business	21%	14%	17%	15%	17%
Health Professions	24%	15%	11%	13%	16%
Computer/Information Science	14%	12%	5%	12%	11%
Education	4%	10%	11%	10%	9%
Counseling/Psychology	5%	7%	14%	9%	9%
Arts and Humanities	7%	8%	9%	9%	8%
Social Sciences	4%	10%	10%	7%	8%
Social Services, Public Administration, Criminal Justice	3%	7%	11%	8%	7%
Engineering	8%	7%	6%	5%	7%
Biological/Physical/ Earth Science	8%	5%	3%	5%	5%
Communications	2%	4%	1%	6%	3%

6 Students of all backgrounds indicate that key digital marketing methods are most influential and effective in advancing their search for a program.

Respondents of all background were consistent in their strong endorsement of the use of digital marketing channels as highly effective ways to advance a program search. Black/African American students are considerably more likely to find videos, online chat, ads on websites, and ads in magazines, on television, or on the radio influential in advancing their search for a program in comparison to Asian and Hispanic/Latinx respondents.

HOW INFLUENTIAL ARE/WILL BE EACH OF THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION SOURCES IN YOUR SEARCH FOR A GRADUATE PROGRAM?

INFORMATION SOURCE	ASIAN	BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE	ALL RESPONDENTS
Search engines (Google, Bing, etc.)	86%	87%	86%	85%	86%
Institutional websites	87%	87%	80%	88%	85%
College search sites	80%	86%	82%	85%	83%
Program ranking websites	83%	81%	76%	84%	81%
Printed rankings guides, etc.	68%	76%	69%	73%	72%
Social media platforms	73%	78%	66%	67%	71%
Printed view books, program brochures, etc.	65%	79%	67%	71%	71%
Videos on YouTube or elsewhere	69%	79%	64%	65%	69%
Online chat	59%	75%	52%	63%	62%
Ads on websites	52%	67%	54%	56%	57%
Ads in magazines, newspapers, etc.	40%	65%	45%	48%	50%
Ads on television	39%	67%	39%	50%	49%
Ads on the radio	29%	56%	38%	44%	42%

7 Social media sites have gained significant influence among students of all backgrounds as an effective source of graduate program information and are particularly strong influencers for Black/African American students.

In comparison with a similar 2018 study, graduate student use of social media in their search has grown from approximately 25 percent to over 70 percent—one of the most profound developments in graduate marketing. While Black/African American students were only somewhat more likely to rate social media sites as influential sources in their search than the average, they were considerably more likely to have used each of the various social media platforms in their search than any other prospective graduate student population.

WHICH SOCIAL MEDIA SITES DID/WILL YOU USE TO LEARN ABOUT GRADUATE PROGRAMS?

SITE	ASIAN	BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE	ALL RESPONDENTS
Facebook	46%	58%	54%	57%	49%
YouTube	38%	55%	42%	41%	44%
LinkedIn	44%	50%	40%	40%	41%
Instagram	36%	30%	28%	29%	31%
None	15%	10%	16%	16%	20%
Twitter	23%	28%	23%	25%	18%
Pinterest	8%	21%	9%	12%	13%
Snapchat	6%	7%	9%	7%	8%
Tik Tok	8%	8%	6%	5%	5%

8 Students of all backgrounds have high expectations of the institutions in which they enroll regarding timely response. Black/African American students are the most likely to expect immediate responses, while Hispanic/Latinx students are most willing to wait longer for a response.

There is little difference amongst students in their preferred forms of contact from the institutions and programs to which they inquire or apply. For all groups, personalized email led, followed by text messages. However, student expectations for the timing of response varies in important ways, most importantly for the timing of personalized email:

- Hispanic/Latinx students** are less likely to expect a personal email within minutes or hours, but they do expect an email within a day of their communication.
- Black/African American students** are more likely than the average to expect a personalized email within minutes or hours than any other student groups.
- Asian prospective graduate students** are most accepting of response times that go beyond a day, but 68 percent still expect a response within one business day.

AFTER AN INQUIRY, HOW QUICKLY DO YOU EXPECT TO BE RESPONDED TO ON EACH OF THE FOLLOWING CHANNEL?

	RESPONSE TIME	ASIAN	BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC / LATINX	WHITE	ALL RESPONDENTS
Personalized email	Within minutes	20%	25%	14%	17%	20%
	Within hours	18%	31%	19%	25%	22%
	Within a day	30%	23%	45%	31%	37%
	Within 3 days	24%	13%	15%	19%	13%
	Within a week	8%	8%	6%	7%	5%
	I do not want this type of contact	3%	2%	3%	1%	2%
Text message	Within minutes	26%	41%	26%	27%	28%
	Within hours	31%	30%	31%	36%	33%
	Within a day	24%	18%	26%	27%	22%
	Within 3 days	13%	7%	12%	8%	7%
	Within a week	6%	5%	6%	2%	4%
	I do not want this type of contact	14%	10%	11%	14%	12%
Phone call	Within minutes	27%	35%	28%	25%	37%
	Within hours	23%	27%	16%	26%	18%
	Within a day	22%	21%	28%	27%	23%
	Within 3 days	17%	9%	19%	14%	10%
	Within a week	10%	7%	10%	8%	5%
	I do not want this type of contact	17%	9%	13%	13%	13%
Mail to home	Within minutes	7%	12%	7%	8%	7%
	Within hours	13%	15%	14%	15%	16%
	Within a day	16%	15%	19%	17%	18%
	Within 3 days	19%	25%	13%	18%	25%
	Within a week	45%	34%	47%	42%	31%
	I do not want this type of contact	12%	8%	11%	9%	10%
Non-personal email	Within minutes	19%	16%	13%	20%	14%
	Within hours	22%	31%	27%	25%	27%
	Within a day	25%	26%	36%	27%	31%
	Within 3 days	14%	19%	17%	17%	15%
	Within a week	19%	8%	7%	11%	8%
	I do not want this type of contact	14%	11%	13%	9%	12%

9 Institutions and programs are being compared most broadly by Asian students, but few students from of any background are applying to just one program during their search.

Prospective Asian graduate students are far more likely to apply to three or more graduate programs than other underrepresented groups. Similar to overall trends, both Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx students are most likely to apply to two programs.

AT HOW MANY INSTITUTIONS DID YOU/ARE YOU MOST LIKELY TO APPLY?

NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS APPLIED TO	ASIAN	BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE	ALL RESPONDENTS
One	17%	17%	18%	23%	23%
Two	27%	47%	42%	42%	42%
Three or more	57%	35%	40%	34%	35%

10 Students of all backgrounds expect a quick turnaround time regarding notification of acceptance.

Nearly half of all students expect notification within one week. Black/African American students are least likely to be satisfied with having to wait 21 day or longer with just 9 percent indicating that will meet their expectations.

HOW SOON AFTER SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION DO YOU EXPECT TO BE NOTIFIED IF YOU ARE ADMITTED?

ADMISSION NOTIFICATION TIME	ASIAN	BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE	ALL RESPONDENTS
Less than 1 week	43%	49%	41%	47%	43%
7-14 days	18%	22%	24%	20%	16%
14-21 days	16%	20%	15%	16%	18%
Longer than 21 days	24%	9%	21%	17%	22%

11 The vast majority of students from underrepresented groups are highly likely to enroll in the first program that offers them admission.

Black/African American student are the most likely prospective graduate student population to enroll in the first program that offers admission (88 percent). While Asian students are least likely to indicate that they will enroll in the first program to offer them admission, 79 percent of these students indicate that they are at least likely to do so.

WILL YOU ENROLL AT THE FIRST INSTITUTION TO ADMIT YOU?



12 Prospective graduate students of all backgrounds are similar in the priorities that guide their enrollment decisions.

Prospective graduate students’ priorities in their enrollment decision are largely consistent across backgrounds with some notable exceptions:

- Asian students** were considerably more likely to include career opportunities/job placement data and the institution’s reputation among the most important criteria (for each, a difference of more than 10 percent).
- Hispanic/Latinx students** were considerably more likely to include institutional plans for dealing with the pandemic among their decision making priorities.
- Black/African American students** were more likely to include having the flexibility to enroll in multiple course formats than either Asian or Hispanic/Latinx students.

WHICH THREE FEATURES WERE/WILL BE MOST IMPORTANT IN DECIDING WHERE TO ENROLL IN A GRADUATE PROGRAM? (SELECT UP TO THREE.)

PROGRAM FEATURES	ASIAN	BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE	ALL RESPONDENTS
Program content that is the best match to your interests	51%	48%	45%	50%	46%
Career opportunities and graduate job placement	47%	39%	42%	37%	36%
Having the lowest tuition (among institutions considered)	40%	38%	41%	38%	35%
University’s reputation	47%	33%	35%	32%	32%
Having online/hybrid courses available	20%	32%	20%	33%	28%
Having specific faculty with whom you want to study	19%	21%	19%	17%	17%
Being able to enroll in courses year-round	13%	14%	20%	20%	17%
Having shorter courses than traditional semesters	9%	13%	14%	16%	14%
Being able to enroll in a mix of course formats	13%	18%	6%	10%	12%
Their plans for dealing with the pandemic	8%	10%	17%	12%	11%

Key takeaways to boost your recruitment of underrepresented graduate students

Institutions that want to grow the enrollment of domestic students from underrepresented groups must recognize and honor their unique backgrounds, traditions, and outlook. Listening to what drives students from diverse backgrounds, their key interests, and what factors into enrollment decisions is crucial. Students from underrepresented backgrounds compare similarly in these factors to the overall population. There are, however, nuances that can guide institutions and programs in tailoring (rather than overhauling) their operations, offerings, and outreach in a way that will result in greater success with promoting diversity.

Graduate programs should critically evaluate their outreach methods, social media presence, and cultivation techniques in order to ensure that they conform with the processes and methods the today's graduate students employ when searching for a program in which to enroll. The overall survey shows that these factors are crucial to all students, and there is evidence that there will be particular impact amongst underrepresented groups.

Every bit as important is for graduate programs to understand that today's graduate students have very high expectations related to the timeliness of response among the institutions to which they inquire and apply. Nearly 70 percent of all graduate students expect a personalized response within a day of making contact, and nearly one-quarter expect a response within an hour or so. These expectations have been formed through interactions in every aspect of their lives in which timely response is a given. Likewise, 80 percent or more indicating that they will likely enroll at the first institution that admits them, the need for timeliness has gone from “nice to have” to “must have.”

Programs must also adapt to the expectations of today's students for flexibility. Students of all backgrounds indicate that the most common enrollment decision factor is that the program's content is the best matches their interests. The primary market for today's graduate programs are millennials and Gen Z—two generations that have grown up in a “customizable” world. The survey data indicate that this may be a crucial selling point for underrepresented students.

While no graduate program can be all things to all people, institutions that offer programs with ample electives, concentrations, alternative culminating experiences, and optional internships will be best positioned to ensure that students can “see” themselves in the program. Student interests, their priorities, their life experience must be present in both the recruitment marketing and curriculum. It is programs such as these—that prioritize flexibility and “customizability”—that will be best positioned to attract the graduate student of the future, from all backgrounds.

Looking for research and strategies on graduate recruitment?

Talk with our graduate enrollment experts about how we can help you prioritize programs by growth potential and develop personas of potential students.

Ask for a free consultation at [RNL.com/GradEnrollment](https://www.rnl.com/GradEnrollment).

RESEARCH RESULTS

1. WHEN YOU ENROLL, WILL YOU BE MOST LIKELY TO ENROLL:

ENROLLMENT STATUS	ASIAN	BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE	ALL RESPONDENTS
Part time	26%	45%	32%	39%	33%
Full time	74%	55%	68%	61%	67%

2. IN WHAT TYPE OF GRADUATE PROGRAM ARE YOU PLANNING TO ENROLL?

PROGRAM TYPE	ASIAN	BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE	ALL RESPONDENTS
Post baccalaureate certificate	3%	9%	8%	8%	8%
Post baccalaureate certification prep/licensure	7%	7%	6%	6%	7%
Master's degree	51%	43%	58%	52%	43%
Graduate certificate	13%	23%	9%	13%	19%
Graduate certification prep/licensure	3%	5%	1%	5%	4%
Doctorate degree	13%	7%	8%	10%	11%
Professional doctorate (JD, MD, DO, etc.)	9%	4%	6%	5%	5%
Other	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%

3. WHICH IS CLOSEST TO YOUR PREFERRED LENGTH OF COURSES?

COURSE LENGTH	ASIAN	BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE	ALL RESPONDENTS
5-weeks or less	8%	6%	7%	6%	11%
6-9 weeks	18%	15%	19%	21%	16%
10-12 weeks	23%	32%	24%	28%	28%
13 or more weeks (typical semesters)	51%	47%	50%	45%	45%

4. WHICH IS CLOSEST TO YOUR PREFERRED PROGRAM FORMAT/MODALITY?

MODALITY	ASIAN	BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE	ALL RESPONDENTS
Classroom	31%	15%	28%	21%	20%
Partially Classroom/ Partially Online (Hybrid)	48%	56%	45%	45%	48%
100% Online	22%	29%	27%	35%	32%

5. HAS YOUR WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER ONLINE PROGRAMS/COURSES INCREASED SINCE THE PANDEMIC STARTED?

INTEREST IN ONLINE PROGRAMS	ASIAN	BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE	ALL RESPONDENTS
It has increased; I am now more likely to consider online programs or courses.	62%	61%	58%	60%	60%
It has stayed the same, than before the pandemic started.	27%	36%	28%	36%	32%
It has decreased; I am now less likely to consider online programs or courses.	11%	2%	14%	4%	7%

6. IN YOUR FACE-TO-FACE (F2F) COURSES, WHERE WOULD YOU PREFER THAT YOUR IN-PERSON SESSIONS BE OFFERED?*

LOCATION	ASIAN	BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE	ALL RESPONDENTS
On the main-campus	87%	80%	84%	79%	85%
At a site other than the main campus	13%	20%	16%	21%	15%

* only answered by those who prefer a F2F program

7. IN YOUR F2F PROGRAM, WHICH TYPE OF PROGRAM ARE YOU MOST INTERESTED IN? *

TYPE OF PROGRAM	ASIAN	BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE	ALL RESPONDENTS
Cohort program (move through program with same group of students)	45%	44%	44%	36%	49%
Weekday program (weekday prior to 5 p.m.)	32%	30%	29%	34%	33%
Evening programs (weekday evenings)	17%	23%	23%	24%	16%
Weekend program	5%	3%	4%	6%	2%

* only answered by those who prefer a F2F program

8. IN WHICH TYPE OF ONLINE PROGRAM WOULD BE MOST INTERESTED IN ENROLLING? *

TYPE OF ONLINE PROGRAM	ASIAN	BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE	ALL RESPONDENTS
Online, where you work at your own pace and finish as fast of as slow as you can complete the material	38%	41%	42%	43%	48%
Online, with no scheduled virtual meetings with the instructor and classmates	8%	13%	12%	13%	7%
Online, with periodic scheduled virtual meetings with the instructor and classmates	54%	46%	46%	44%	36%

*Only answered by those who prefer an online program

9. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BROAD DISCIPLINES IS CLOSEST TO YOUR INTENDED AREA OF STUDY?

DISCIPLINE	ASIAN	BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE	ALL RESPONDENTS
Business	21%	14%	17%	15%	17%
Health Professions	24%	15%	11%	13%	16%
Computer/Information Science	14%	12%	5%	12%	11%
Education	4%	10%	11%	10%	9%
Counseling/Psychology	5%	7%	14%	9%	9%
Arts and Humanities	7%	8%	9%	9%	8%
Social Sciences	4%	10%	10%	7%	8%
Social Services, Public Administration, Criminal Justice	3%	7%	11%	8%	7%
Engineering	8%	7%	6%	5%	7%
Biological/Physical/ Earth Science	8%	5%	3%	5%	5%
Communications	2%	4%	1%	6%	3%

10. HOW INFLUENTIAL ARE/WILL BE EACH OF THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION SOURCES IN YOUR SEARCH FOR A GRADUATE PROGRAM?

INFORMATION SOURCE	ASIAN	BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE	ALL RESPONDENTS
Search engines (Google, Bing, etc.)	86%	87%	86%	85%	86%
Institutional websites	87%	87%	80%	88%	85%
College search sites	80%	86%	82%	85%	83%
Program ranking websites	83%	81%	76%	84%	81%
Printed rankings guides, etc.	68%	76%	69%	73%	72%
Social media platforms	73%	78%	66%	67%	71%
Printed view books, program brochures, etc.	65%	79%	67%	71%	71%
Videos on YouTube or elsewhere	69%	79%	64%	65%	69%
Online chat	59%	75%	52%	63%	62%
Ads on websites	52%	67%	54%	56%	57%
Ads in magazines, newspapers, etc.	40%	65%	45%	48%	50%
Ads on television	39%	67%	39%	50%	49%
Ads on the radio	29%	56%	38%	44%	42%

11. WHICH SOCIAL MEDIA SITES DID/WILL YOU USE TO LEARN ABOUT GRADUATE PROGRAMS?

SITE	ASIAN	BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE	ALL RESPONDENTS
Facebook	46%	58%	54%	57%	49%
YouTube	38%	55%	42%	41%	44%
LinkedIn	44%	50%	40%	40%	41%
Instagram	36%	30%	28%	29%	31%
None	15%	10%	16%	16%	20%
Twitter	23%	28%	23%	25%	18%
Pinterest	8%	21%	9%	12%	13%
Snapchat	6%	7%	9%	7%	8%
Tik Tok	8%	8%	6%	5%	5%

12. HAVE YOU CLICKED ON ADVERTISEMENTS FOR A COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY THAT YOU SAW ON A WEBSITE OR SOCIAL MEDIA SITE?

SITE	ASIAN	BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE	ALL RESPONDENTS
Yes	63%	72%	69%	68%	67%
No	38%	28%	31%	32%	33%

13. WHAT DID YOU DO AFTER CLICKING ON THE AD'S LINK?

ACTION AFTER CLICKING AD	ASIAN	BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE	ALL RESPONDENTS
Looked at information on a website	71%	69%	67%	76%	71%
Watched a video	38%	52%	42%	45%	45%
Filled out a form to receive a PDF brochure	36%	28%	24%	25%	28%
Filled out a form to have information sent by postal mail	21%	27%	33%	27%	27%
Registered to attend an event	30%	26%	20%	22%	24%
Call a phone number offered in the ad	3%	9%	9%	10%	8%
Nothing	3%	2%	0%	4%	2%

14. DURING YOUR SEARCH FOR A GRADUATE PROGRAM, IN WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING EVENTS DID YOU (OR WILL YOU) PARTICIPATE? PLEASE INDICATE ITS EFFECTIVENESS IN MAKING YOUR ENROLLMENT DECISION.

EVENT	ASIAN	BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE	ALL RESPONDENTS
Face-to-Face Information sessions, open houses, or campus tours	48%	47%	40%	38%	46%
Virtual information sessions, open houses, or campus tours	32%	48%	48%	38%	37%
Virtual one-on-one chat	43%	39%	40%	40%	38%
Video call/interviews	46%	44%	48%	42%	36%

15. WHEN YOU RESEARCH GRADUATE PROGRAMS, WHAT IS/WILL BE THE FOUR MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION YOU WERE LOOKING FOR ON INSTITUTIONAL WEBSITES?

INFORMATION	ASIAN	BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE	ALL RESPONDENTS
Cost/tuition information	62%	52%	49%	57%	55%
Financial aid/ scholarship options	50%	53%	55%	42%	50%
Specific academic program details	42%	41%	38%	48%	42%
Career opportunities and statistics on graduate's job placement	46%	36%	42%	35%	40%
A list of graduate programs or degrees	35%	38%	31%	37%	35%
How to apply for admission	28%	26%	28%	29%	28%
Their plans for dealing with the pandemic	20%	17%	18%	14%	17%
An overview of the school type, mission, programs, and location	18%	19%	12%	13%	15%
Contact information for admissions	11%	17%	8%	14%	13%
Virtual tours	8%	10%	9%	12%	10%
Open house or other admissions event information	9%	8%	11%	11%	10%
A way to get them to send more information	9%	12%	6%	9%	9%
Campus visit information	9%	9%	9%	8%	9%
Videos featuring faculty	7%	7%	13%	10%	9%
Directions to campus	7%	9%	11%	7%	8%
Videos featuring current students	4%	7%	8%	8%	7%

16. AFTER AN INQUIRY, HOW QUICKLY DO YOU EXPECT TO BE RESPONDED TO ON EACH OF THE FOLLOWING CHANNEL?

	RESPONSE TIME	ASIAN	BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC / LATINX	WHITE	ALL RESPONDENTS
Personalized email	Within minutes	20%	25%	14%	17%	20%
	Within hours	18%	31%	19%	25%	22%
	Within a day	30%	23%	45%	31%	37%
	Within 3 days	24%	13%	15%	19%	13%
	Within a week	8%	8%	6%	7%	5%
	I do not want this type of contact	3%	2%	3%	1%	2%
Text message	Within minutes	26%	41%	26%	27%	28%
	Within hours	31%	30%	31%	36%	33%
	Within a day	24%	18%	26%	27%	22%
	Within 3 days	13%	7%	12%	8%	7%
	Within a week	6%	5%	6%	2%	4%
	I do not want this type of contact	14%	10%	11%	14%	12%
Phone call	Within minutes	27%	35%	28%	25%	37%
	Within hours	23%	27%	16%	26%	18%
	Within a day	22%	21%	28%	27%	23%
	Within 3 days	17%	9%	19%	14%	10%
	Within a week	10%	7%	10%	8%	5%
	I do not want this type of contact	17%	9%	13%	13%	13%
Mail to home	Within minutes	7%	12%	7%	8%	7%
	Within hours	13%	15%	14%	15%	16%
	Within a day	16%	15%	19%	17%	18%
	Within 3 days	19%	25%	13%	18%	25%
	Within a week	45%	34%	47%	42%	31%
	I do not want this type of contact	12%	8%	11%	9%	10%
Non-personal email	Within minutes	19%	16%	13%	20%	14%
	Within hours	22%	31%	27%	25%	27%
	Within a day	25%	26%	36%	27%	31%
	Within 3 days	14%	19%	17%	17%	15%
	Within a week	19%	8%	7%	11%	8%
	I do not want this type of contact	14%	11%	13%	9%	12%

17. HOW DID/WILL YOU FIRST CONTACT GRADUATE SCHOOLS/PROGRAMS IN WHICH YOU ARE INTERESTED?

CONTACT METHOD	ASIAN	BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE	ALL RESPONDENTS
Email the school	29%	26%	22%	26%	26%
Schedule a visit to the campus, virtual or in person	8%	8%	10%	6%	8%
Filled out an information request form on website	28%	30%	27%	32%	26%
Attend a recruitment event at the school	15%	9%	11%	10%	12%
Call the school	9%	11%	16%	12%	11%
Submit an application	12%	16%	15%	15%	17%

18. AT HOW MANY INSTITUTIONS DID YOU/ARE YOU MOST LIKELY TO APPLY?

NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS APPLIED TO	ASIAN	BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE	ALL RESPONDENTS
One	17%	17%	18%	23%	23%
Two	27%	47%	42%	42%	42%
Three or more	57%	35%	40%	34%	35%

19. HOW SOON AFTER SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION DO YOU EXPECT TO BE NOTIFIED IF YOU ARE ADMITTED?

ADMISSION NOTIFICATION TIME	ASIAN	BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE	ALL RESPONDENTS
Less than 1 week	43%	49%	41%	47%	43%
7-14 days	18%	22%	24%	20%	16%
14-21 days	16%	20%	15%	16%	18%
Longer than 21 days	24%	9%	21%	17%	22%

20. WILL YOU ENROLL AT THE FIRST INSTITUTION TO ADMIT YOU?

	ASIAN	BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE	ALL RESPONDENTS
Definitely/Likely	79%	88%	83%	86%	85%

21. WHICH THREE FEATURES WERE/WILL BE MOST IMPORTANT IN DECIDING WHERE TO ENROLL IN A GRADUATE PROGRAM? (SELECT UP TO THREE.)

PROGRAM FEATURES	ASIAN	BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE	ALL RESPONDENTS
Program content that is the best match to your interests	51%	48%	45%	50%	46%
Career opportunities and graduate job placement	47%	39%	42%	37%	36%
Having the lowest tuition (among institutions considered)	40%	38%	41%	38%	35%
University's reputation	47%	33%	35%	32%	32%
Having online/hybrid courses available	20%	32%	20%	33%	28%
Having specific faculty with whom you want to study	19%	21%	19%	17%	17%
Being able to enroll in courses year-round	13%	14%	20%	20%	17%
Having shorter courses than traditional semesters	9%	13%	14%	16%	14%
Being able to enroll in a mix of course formats	13%	18%	6%	10%	12%
Their plans for dealing with the pandemic	8%	10%	17%	12%	11%

22. HAVE YOU EVER WATCHED A VIDEO THAT YOU FOUND ON A COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY GRADUATE PROGRAM WEBSITE?

	ASIAN	BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE	ALL RESPONDENTS
Yes	75%	75%	82%	77%	68%
No	18%	24%	16%	19%	24%
I don't want to watch videos	7%	1%	2%	4%	9%

23. WHAT KIND OF VIDEOS ARE MOST APPEALING TO YOU? (SELECT ALL RESPONDENTS THAT APPLY.)

VIDEO TYPE	ASIAN	BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE	ALL RESPONDENTS
Video tours of classrooms	27%	28%	27%	29%	24%
Videos showing the campus	39%	38%	37%	35%	29%
Tutorial videos about the application process	29%	37%	35%	34%	29%
Recent graduates talking about their job search	47%	37%	43%	33%	38%
Faculty talking about their classes	37%	41%	39%	39%	45%
Customized videos with content that matches the programs that interest me	40%	46%	32%	43%	42%
Current students talking about their experiences in the classroom and on campus	50%	60%	43%	50%	54%
Alumni talking about how their degree is supporting their career	40%	47%	44%	41%	42%

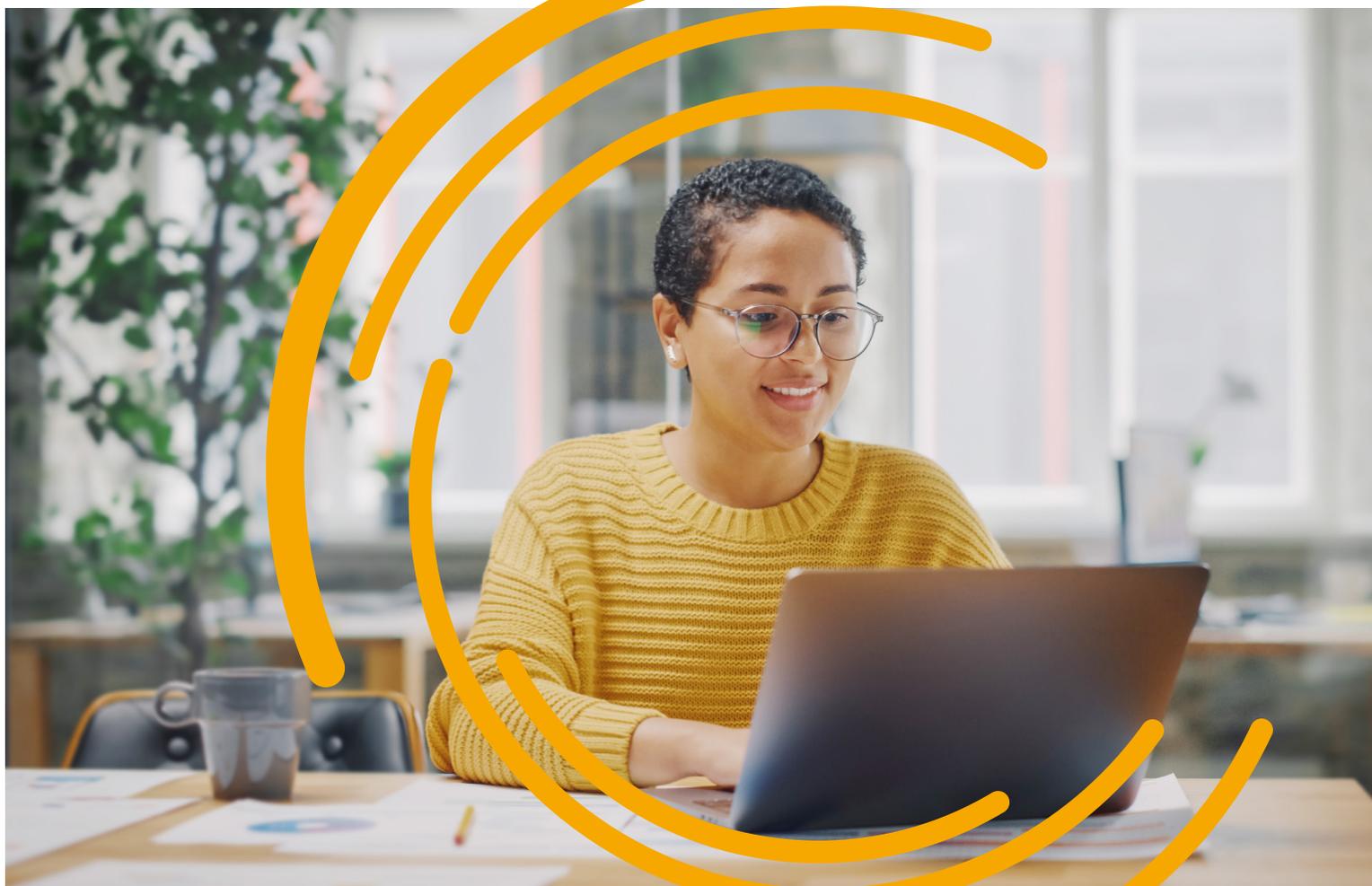
Demographics

24. GENDER

	ASIAN	BLACK / AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC/ LATINX	WHITE	ALL RESPONDENTS
Female	67%	58%	68%	68%	59%
Male	31%	39%	25%	30%	29%
Transgender Female	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Transgender Male	0%	1%	2%	1%	1%
Non-binary/third gender/ Non-conforming	1%	2%	4%	1%	2%
Prefer to self describe	1%	0%	0%	0%	5%
Prefer not to respond	0%	0%	1%	0%	2%

ABOUT THE SURVEY

The survey that underpins this report was administered by electronic survey in January and February 2021. The survey was completed by 1,506 individuals who met the criteria of “planning to enroll in a graduate program within the next 12 months.” All respondents were permanent residents of the United States at the time of the survey and therefore reflect the domestic audience. Respondents self-reported their racial/ethnic identity from a prescribed set of options including “other race/ethnicity” and “prefer not to answer.” Neither of these categories were selected by more than 1 percent of respondents. Respondents were offered a small incentive for their participation.



ABOUT THE RESEARCH SPONSORS



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