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Fast Facts on Graduate Education

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More and more Americans are pursuing graduate credentials, but how much do we really know about this growing student population? Our latest public opinion polling, in partnership with Global Strategy Group, surveyed 1,000 current and recent graduate students from master's and doctoral programs. This infographic lays out our key takeaways on value, transparency, and outcomes in graduate education.

FAST FACTS ON GRADUATE EDUCATION

Most students say that their graduate school met or exceeded their expectations. Only half feel certain that it was worth it.

Students go to graduate school to advance their careers and climb the income ladder—but their employment outcomes influence their perception of value. Graduates who aren't working in their field or are unemployed are much less likely to think their degree was worth it.

Expectations don't match reality for post-graduate employment and salary: 30% of students have not been consistently employed in a relevant field and 35% earn less than they expected.

Among students who took out loans to pay for their graduate degree, 46% borrowed more than originally anticipated, and over half say repayment will take longer than expected.

Prospective graduate students care about programs' employment and earnings outcomes, but less than 20% said they had a lot of information about those factors available when making decisions about where to attend.

The majority of graduate students strongly support requiring institutions to be transparent about student outcomes like graduation rates, debt and borrowing, and typical earnings in order to receive taxpayer dollars.

Students want transparency if an online program manager (OPM) is involved in their education, and they are uncomfortable with OPM employees contacting them without disclosing who they really work for.

Students don't mind an OPM providing tech support for their graduate program but are much less comfortable with academic decisions like curriculum development being outsourced.

Source: Third Way/Global Strategy Group survey of 1,000 current and recent graduate students nationwide. The survey was conducted August 15 through August 29, 2024.



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