



PRESENTATION HANDOUT



Exploring the Challenges and Solutions for Recruiting Online Students Today

Finding from the 2022 Online Student Enrollment Report

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Vice President, Research Graduate and Online

The details:

- ✓ 1,609 respondents (thank you **Plexuss** for your sample)
- ✓ Administered February, 2022
- ✓ Respondent target: those who have searched for an online program in the last 12 months.
- ✓ Survey focus:
 - ✓ How they search – in detail
 - ✓ How they make their decisions
 - ✓ Expectations of institutions
 - ✓ Program details



2022 Online Student Recruitment Report

10 Challenges and Solutions for
Serving Online Students Today

Co-sponsored by:

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Why “Challenges and Solutions” in marketing and recruitment?

- ✓ Other reports focus on the totality of the online student
- ✓ RNL has a historic focus on recruitment and has brought that to the online market in recent years.
- ✓ We have the experts to not only comment on the challenges, but also to offer solutions.
- ✓ Each solution is written as if an institutional stakeholder had read the report and asked “so what does this mean for me.”

Today we’re going to talk about the challenges.

A person is shown from the chest down, wearing a blue checkered shirt. They are holding a smartphone in their right hand and looking at the screen. In the foreground, the keyboard of a laptop is visible. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

10 Challenges

1. Online enrollment has become an essential ingredient for enrollment health.

TABLE 2: UNDERGRADUATE YEAR-OVER-YEAR FALL ENROLLMENT CHANGE BY FORMAT

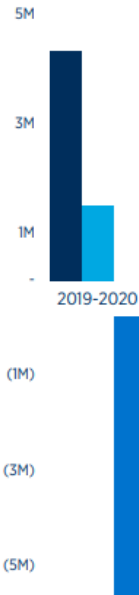
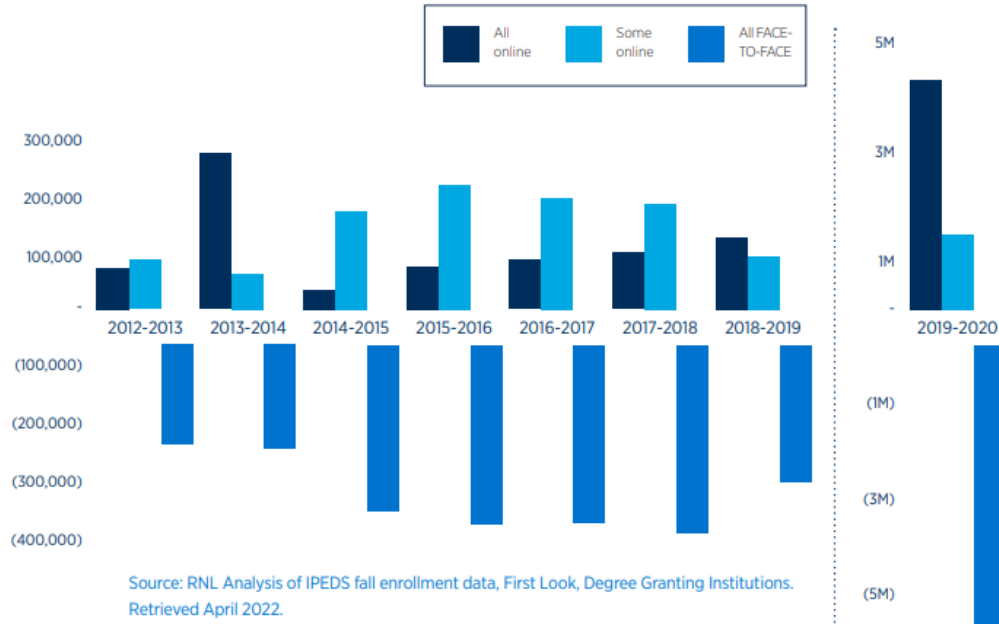
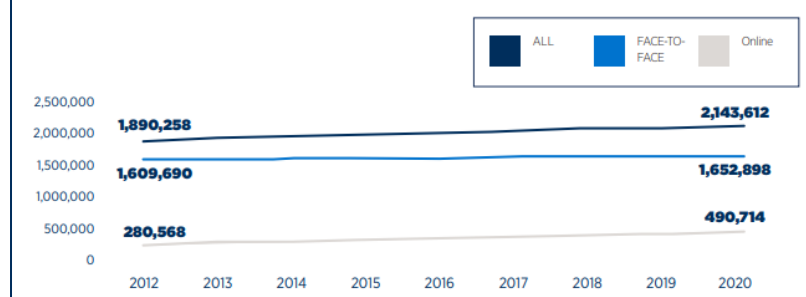
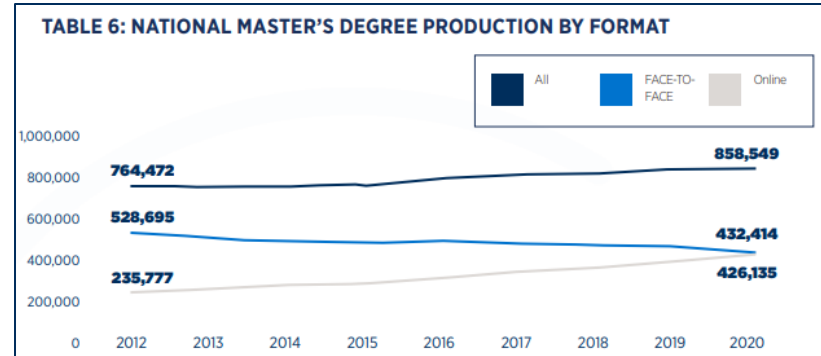
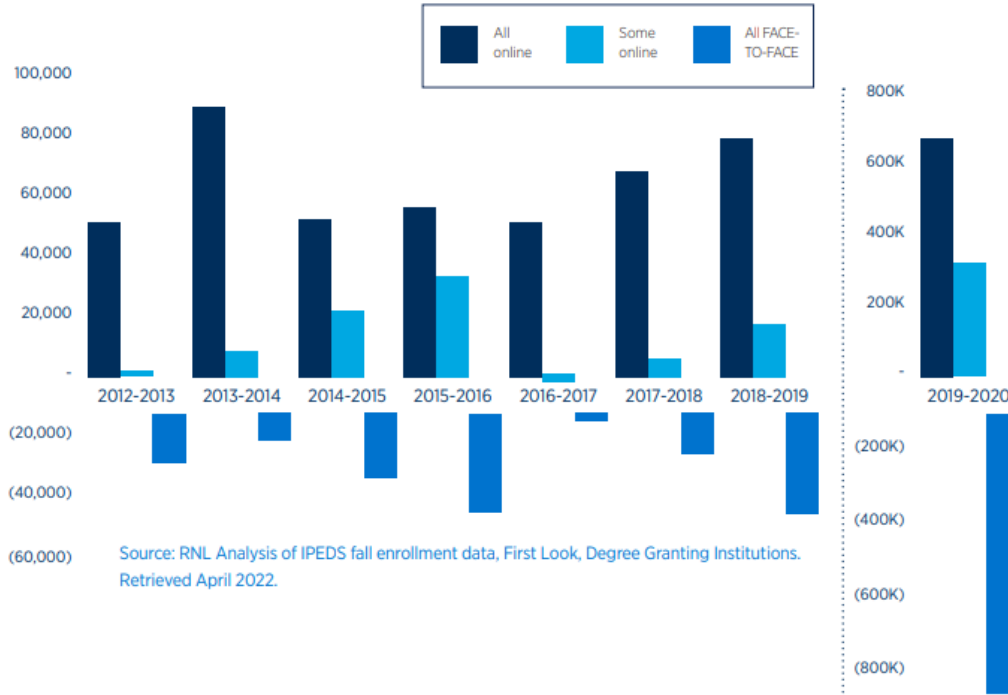


TABLE 3: NATIONAL BACHELOR'S DEGREE PRODUCTION BY FORMAT



1. Online enrollment has become an essential ingredient for enrollment health.

TABLE 5: GRADUATE - YEAR-OVER-YEAR FALL ENROLLMENT CHANGE BY FORMAT



1. Online enrollment has become an essential ingredient for enrollment health.



Solution

Consider the following process to ensure maximum success:

- 1** Understand that the development of successful online programs is not an act of transition, but one of transformation. If the programs themselves are not configured in a manner that aligns with student preferences, prospective online students will move on to the next program.
- 2** Once programs conform to market demand, ensure that these programs are “visible” to prospective students through modern omnichannel marketing on the platforms and channels they use daily. People cannot “buy” what they do not know exists.
- 3** The content that is included in marketing communications must connect with prospective online students—using the right formats, featuring the right “stories,” and speaking to the motivations of online students.
- 4** The best marketing and content in the world will not result in enrollments if institutions do not also meet the expectations of prospective students in terms of initial response times, preferred communication channels, admission decision timelines, and much more.

2. The largest opportunity for online growth is at the bachelor's level.

TABLE 7: INTENDED ONLINE CREDENTIAL

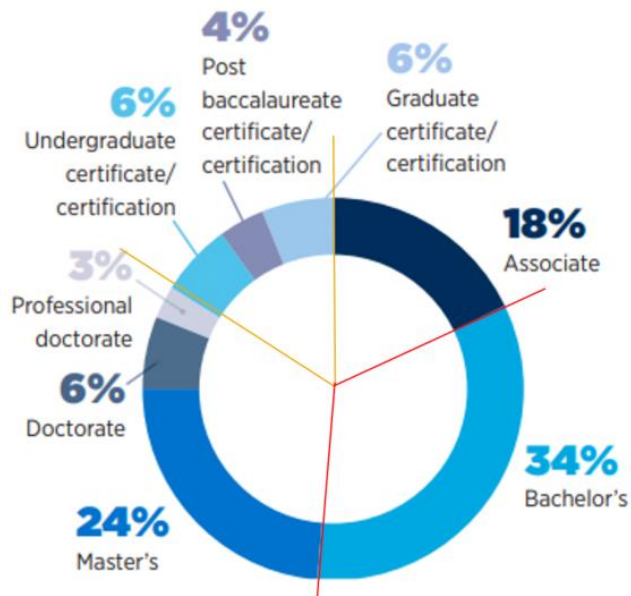
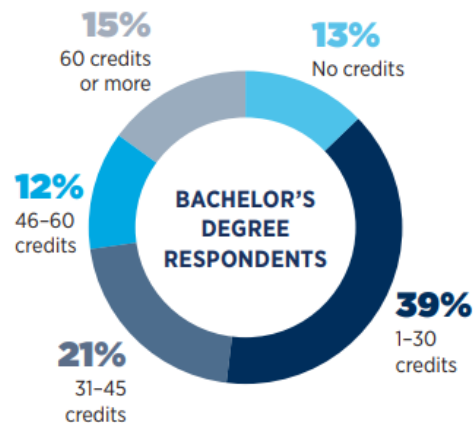


TABLE 8: PREVIOUSLY EARNED UNDERGRADUATE CREDITS
(bachelor's degree respondents only)



3. There is no single discipline that is the “sure thing.”

TABLE 9: INTENDED DISCIPLINE OF STUDY	UNDER-GRADUATE DEGREE	GRADUATE DEGREE	NON-DEGREE
Business	23%	25%	25%
Education	12%	↓ 10%	9%
Health Professions	↑ 12%	7%	15%
Computer/Information Science	↑ 11%	↑ 16%	14%
Counseling/Psychology	8%	5%	7%
Social Services/Public Admin./Criminal Justice	6%	4%	5%
Arts and Humanities	5%	3%	5%
Social Sciences	5%	3%	4%
Engineering	4%	↑ 10%	6%
Biological/Physical/Earth Sciences	4%	2%	2%
Communications	3%	4%	3%
Other	7%	10%	5%

3. There is no single discipline that is the “sure thing.”



TABLE 10: PLANNING TO ENROLL IN A BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM
(among business student responses)

82%
Undergraduate
Business Degree

89%
Graduate
Business Degree

74%
Non-Degree
Business

Will enroll in a concentration:
Undergrad Degree: 90%
Grad Degree: 96%

Detail on Business Programs:

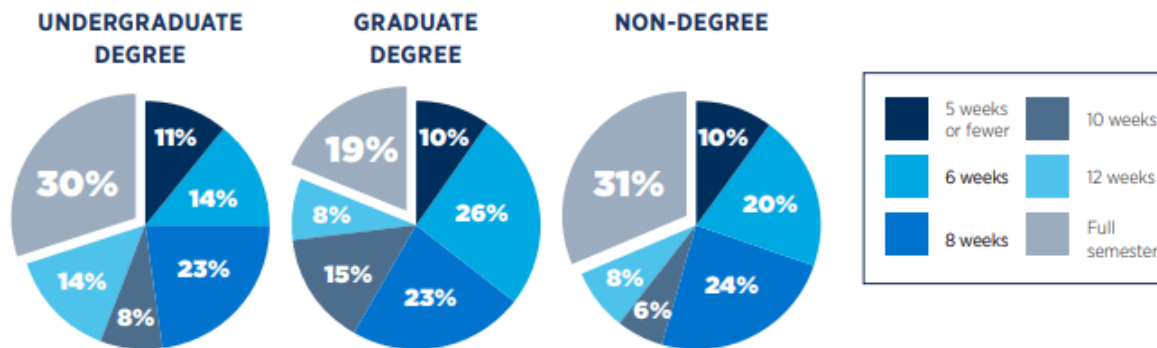
Concentration	Undergrad. Degree	Graduate Degree
Finance	11%	31%
Accounting	26%	8%
Marketing	19%	12%
Human Resources Management	11%	18%
International Business	7%	8%
eCommerce	5%	5%
Computer Information Systems	4%	8%
Other	4%	4%
Healthcare Management	3%	2%

Business Non-Degree Field of Study	Non-Degree
Finance	29%
Accounting	22%
Marketing	7%
Human Resources Management	13%
International Business	7%
eCommerce	11%
Computer Information Systems	0%
Other	2%
Healthcare Management	0%



4. Online students seek programs with shorter courses and are willing to do some synchronous activities.

TABLE 11: PREFERRED LENGTH OF COURSES



	UNDER-GRADUATE DEGREE	GRADUATE DEGREE	NON-DEGREE
1	17%	21%	30%
2	44%	41%	37%
3	21%	23%	23%
4 or more	17%	15%	11%

4. Online students seek programs with shorter courses and are willing to do some synchronous activities.

TABLE 13: PREFERENCE: SELF-PACED OR STRUCTURED

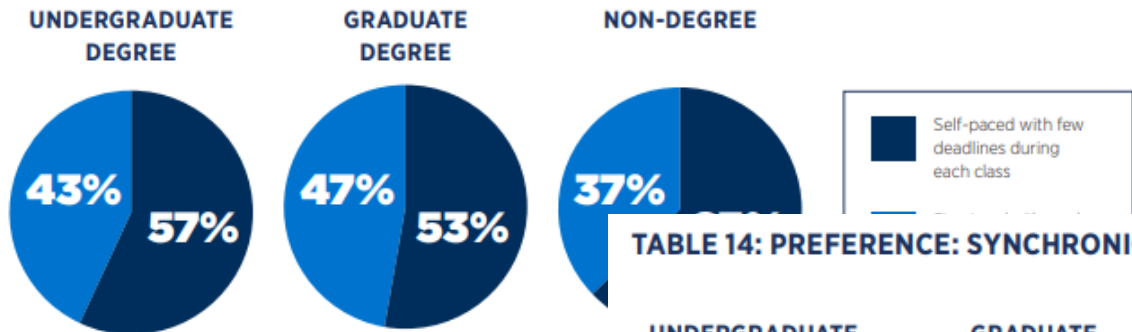
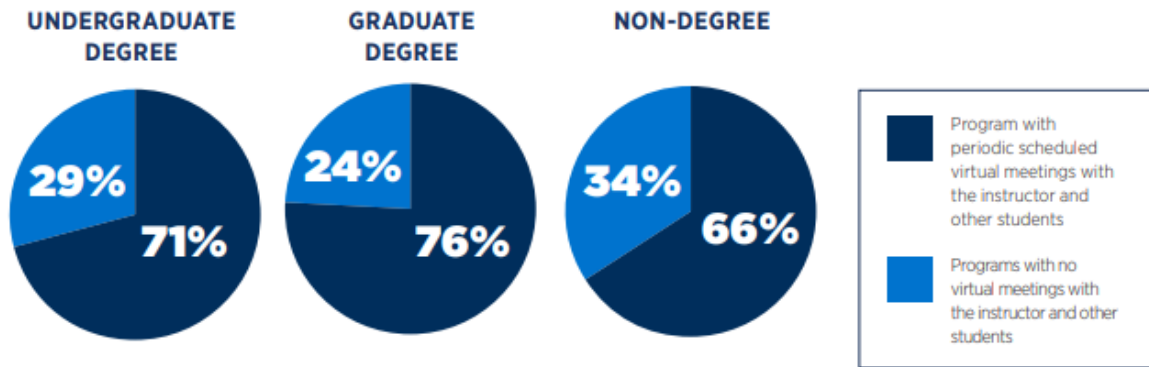


TABLE 14: PREFERENCE: SYNCHRONICITY



5. Online students search/research online, requiring sophisticated multi-channel digital marketing.

TABLE 15: SOURCES USED TO FIND ONLINE PROGRAMS OF INTEREST	UNDER-GRADUATE DEGREE	GRADUATE DEGREE	NON-DEGREE	
Search engines	89%	85%	95%	
College/program search sites	77%	78%	61%	
Ads on social media	58%	73%	57%	
Someone I know	53%	56%	56%	
Ads on websites	54%	52%	46%	
Ads on streaming TV	51%	47%	36%	
Ads on broadcast or cable TV	46%	50%	39%	
Videos on YouTube or elsewhere	44%	48%	48%	
Printed materials from institutions	38%	36%	31%	
Ads in newspapers, magazines, etc.				
	Printed rankings guides	32%	31%	27%
	Ads on streaming radio	28%	27%	18%
	Billboards/other outdoor ads	28%	24%	19%
	Ads on local broadcast radio	26%	26%	13%
	Ads on podcasts/other streaming audio	26%	18%	18%



5. Online students search/research online, requiring sophisticated multi-channel digital marketing.

TABLE 18: CLICKED ON DIGITAL ADS FOR ONLINE PROGRAMS

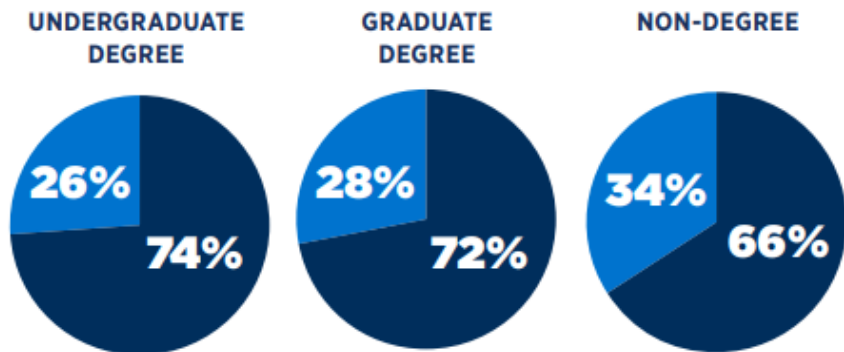
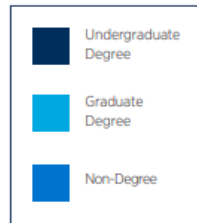
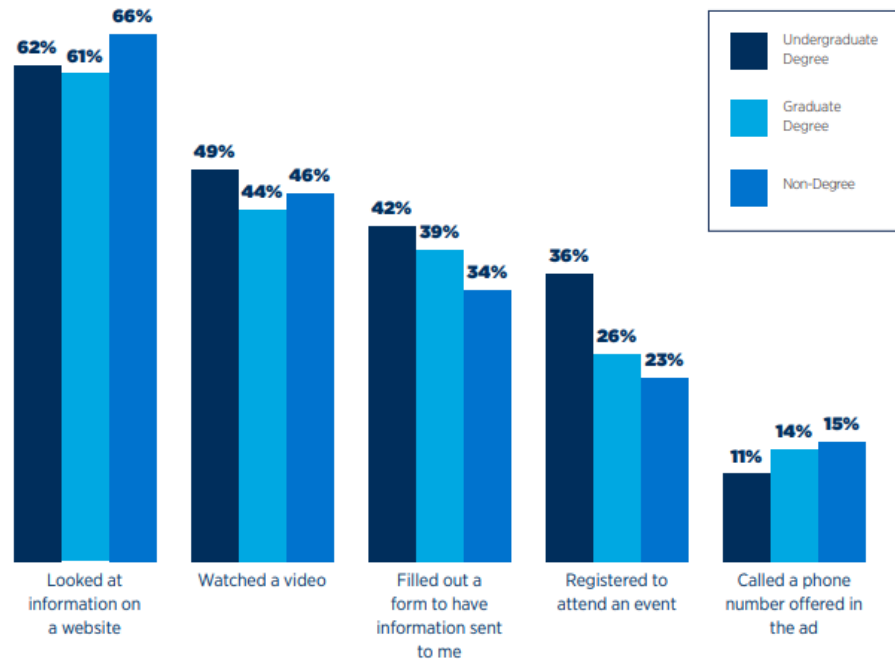


TABLE 19: ACTION AFTER CLICKING DIGITAL ADS



6. They expect video, virtual recruiting events, and mobile-friendly content.

TABLE 20: WATCHED VIDEOS ON INSTITUTIONAL WEBSITES DURING SEARCH

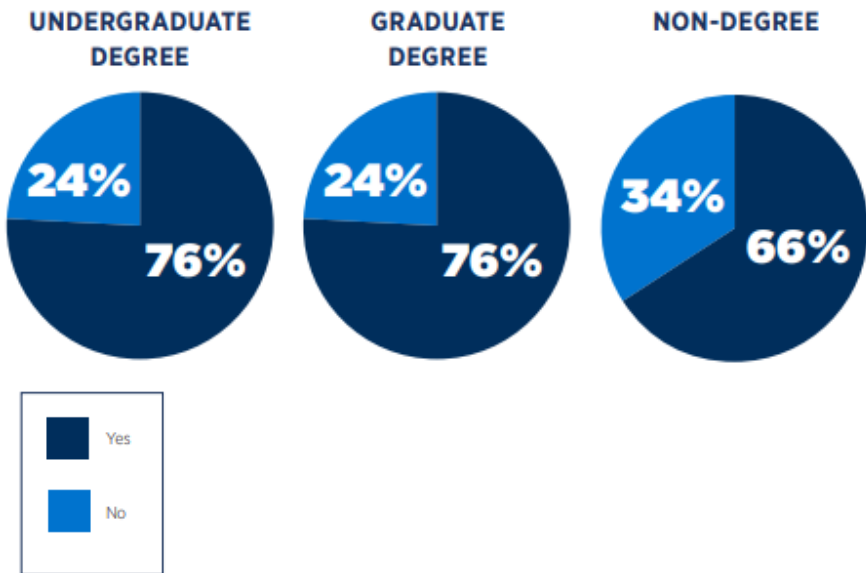
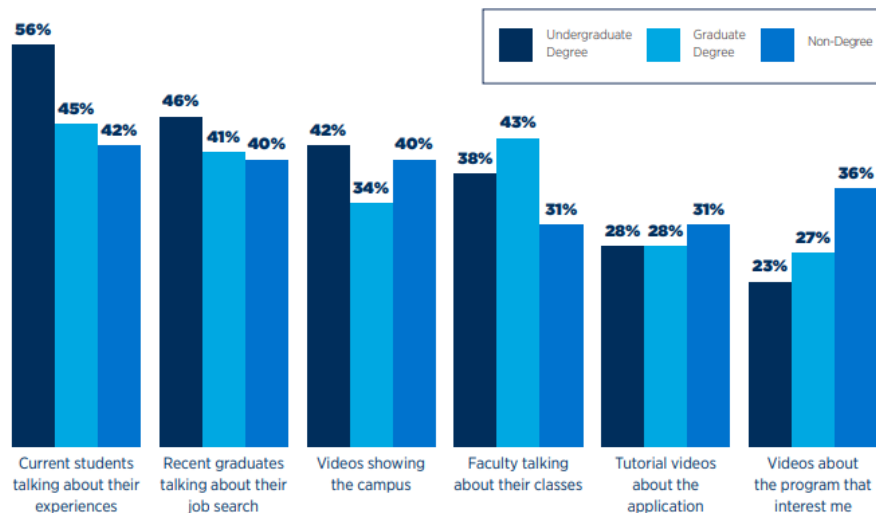


TABLE 21: PREFERRED VIDEO CONTENT



6. They expect video, virtual recruiting events, and mobile-friendly content.

TABLE 23: PARTICIPATION IN RECRUITMENT EVENTS	UNDER-GRADUATE DEGREE	GRADUATE DEGREE	NON-DEGREE
Virtual information sessions, open houses, or campus tours	58%	61%	65%
Face-to-face information sessions, open houses, or campus tours	47%	51%	35%
Video call/interviews	26%	29%	37%
Telephone call	17%		

TABLE 25: SEARCH/ENROLLMENT FUNCTIONS DONE ON MOBILE DEVICE	UNDER-GRADUATE DEGREE	GRADUATE DEGREE	NON-DEGREE
Request information about a program	58%	63%	59%
Request information about the school	48%	45%	44%
Complete application	44%	39%	47%
Register for classes	43%	34%	44%
Schedule virtual or face-to-face meeting	40%	37%	33%
Attend a webinar	27%	26%	27%
Register for virtual or face-to-face open house	24%	23%	28%
Use chat tool	23%	22%	26%
I won't use my mobile device for any of these things	4%	3%	7%



7. Online students are highly attuned to the cost of tuition and fees.

TABLE 26: MOST IMPORTANT ENROLLMENT FACTORS

(Respondents chose their three most important factors.)

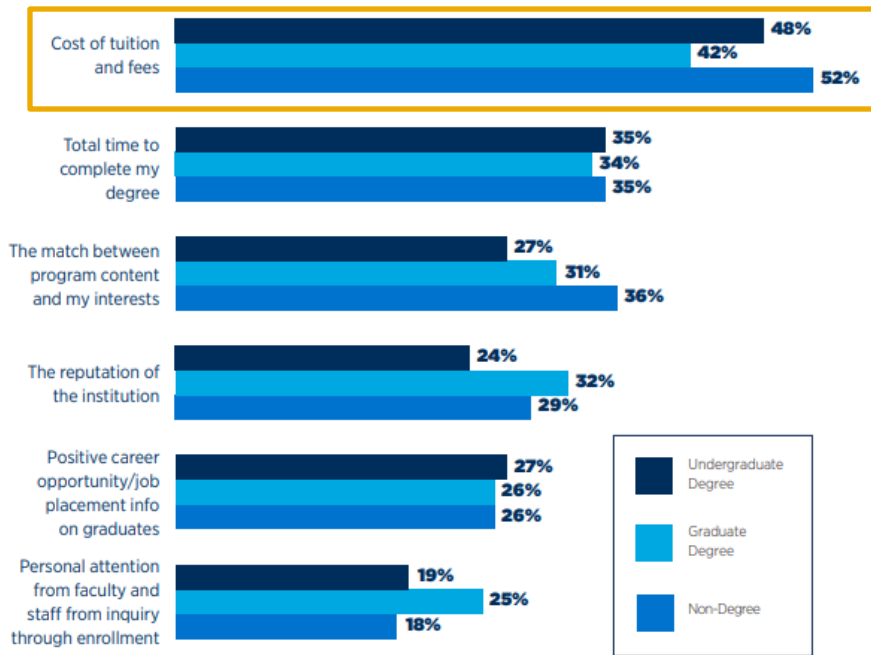


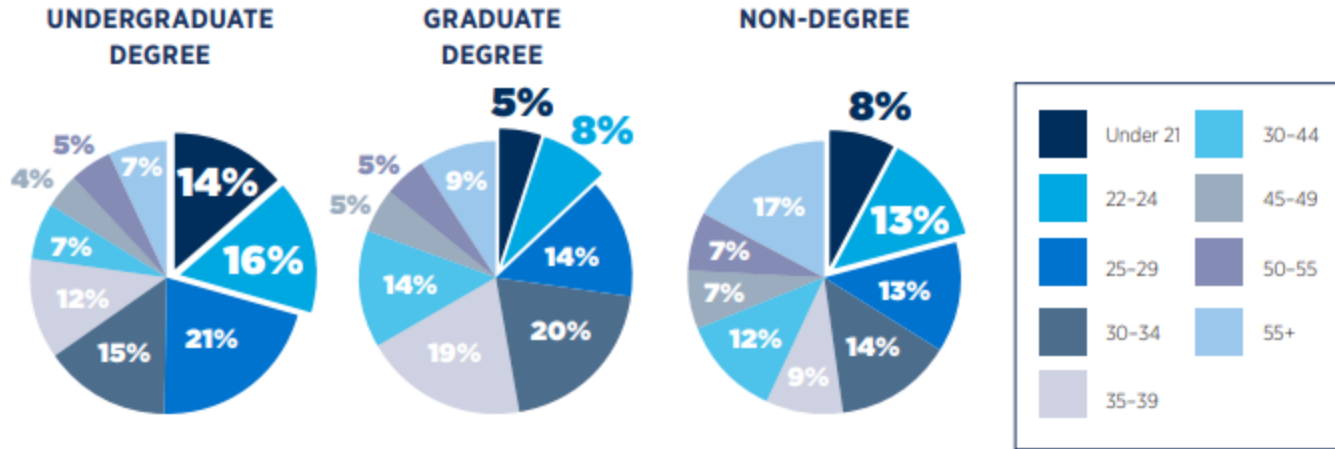
TABLE 27: MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON INSTITUTIONAL WEBSITES

	UNDER-GRADUATE DEGREE	GRADUATE DEGREE	NON-DEGREE
Cost/tuition information	38%	37%	41%
A list of programs or degrees	31%	34%	29%
Financial aid information	35%	23%	29%
Detailed information on available online programs	28%	31%	36%
Admissions requirements/admissions process	28%	30%	29%
Information on the career outcomes of recent graduates	19%	19%	21%
Information on related careers	19%	18%	18%
Program modality details	18%	23%	21%
An overview of the schools mission, values, and similar details	15%	14%	16%
Virtual tours	14%	14%	13%
Videos featuring faculty	13%	14%	10%
Open house/other admissions event information	13%	12%	7%
Videos featuring current students	12%	11%	10%
Message from the dean or program director	10%	8%	8%



8. Online students are younger than you think.

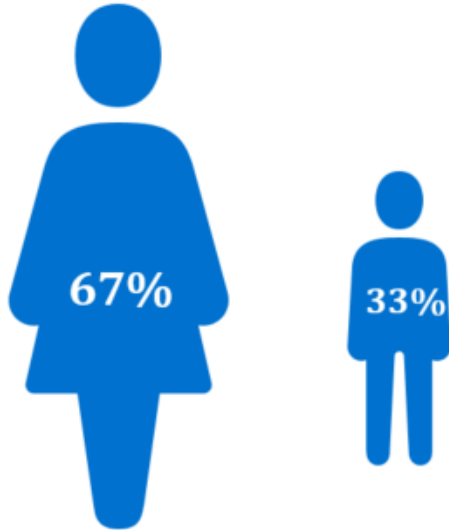
TABLE 28: AGE OF RESPONDENTS



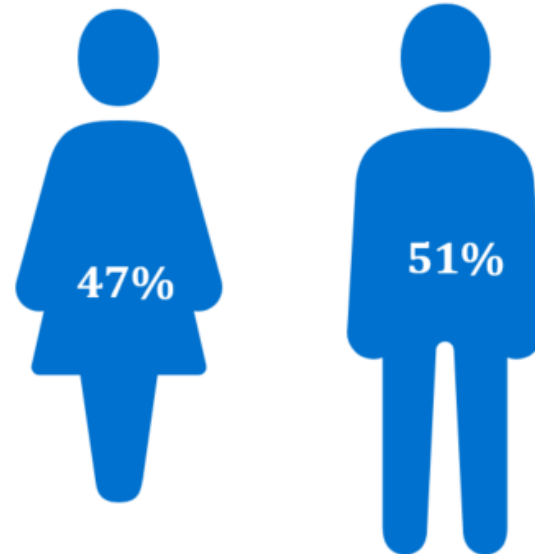
8. Online students are younger than you think.



Graduate Students



Online Students



9. Online students demand personalized attention and speedy response and reward programs that meet these expectations.

TABLE 33: EXPECTED RESPONSE TIMES AFTER FIRST INQUIRY	UNDER-GRADUATE DEGREE	GRADUATE DEGREE	NON-DEGREE
Personalized email			
Immediately	27%	19%	17%
Within 3 hours	21%	20%	20%
Within a day	29%	26%	33%
More than 1 day	23%	36%	30%
Text message			
Immediately	27%	24%	20%
Within 3 hours	25%	27%	35%
Within a day	25%	23%	25%
More than 1 day	23%	27%	21%
Phone call			
Immediately	29%	24%	25%
Within 3 hours	19%	20%	20%
Within a day	26%	26%	28%
More than 1 day	26%	31%	27%

+45: 41%

+45: 36%

+45: 48%

9. Online students demand personalized attention and speedy response and reward programs that meet these expectations.

TABLE 30: NUMBER OF ONLINE PROGRAMS CONSIDERED

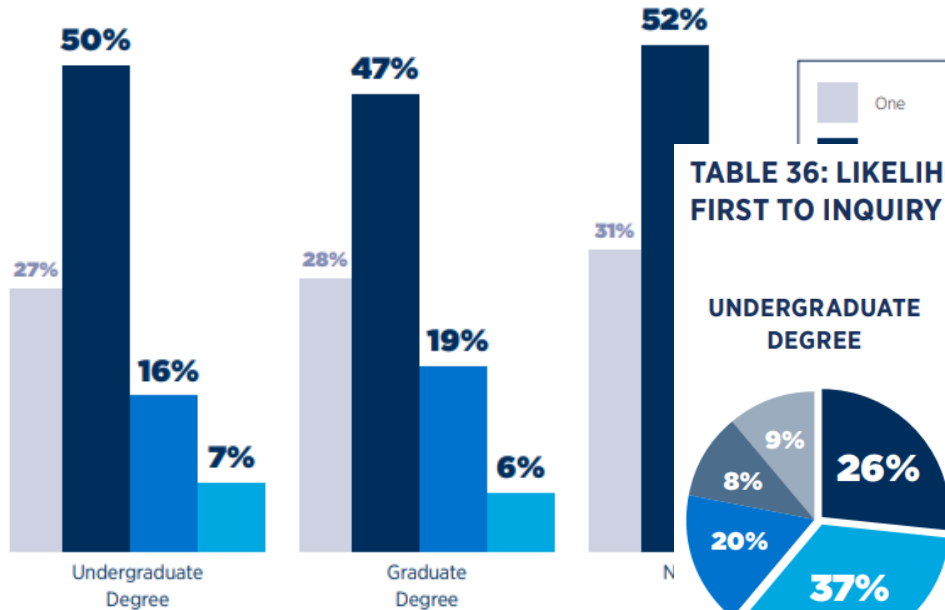
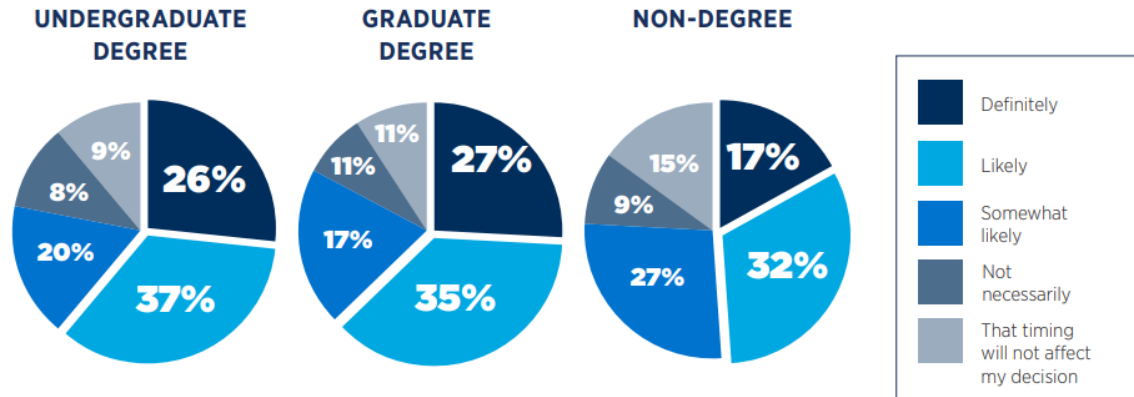


TABLE 36: LIKELIHOOD OF ENROLLING IN PROGRAM THAT RESPONDS FIRST TO INQUIRY



9. Online students demand personalized attention and speedy response and reward programs that meet these expectations.

TABLE 32: ACCEPTABLE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY	UNDER-GRADUATE DEGREE	GRADUATE DEGREE	NON-DEGREE
Personalized email	95%	97%	95%
Non-personalized email	89%	89%	86%
Text message	92%	92%	85%
Phone call	89%	90%	90%
Material mailed to home	93%	93%	92%
Digital or social media channel	81%	81%	71%

TABLE 33: PREFERRED METHOD OF CONTACT FROM INSTITUTIONS (BY DEGREE TYPE)	UNDER-GRADUATE DEGREE	GRADUATE DEGREE	NON-DEGREE
Personalized email	53%	57%	53%
Text message	20%	15%	17%
Phone call	13%	13%	17%
Material mailed to home	7%	6%	7%
Non-personalized email	6%	7%	6%
Digital or social media channel	1%	3%	1%

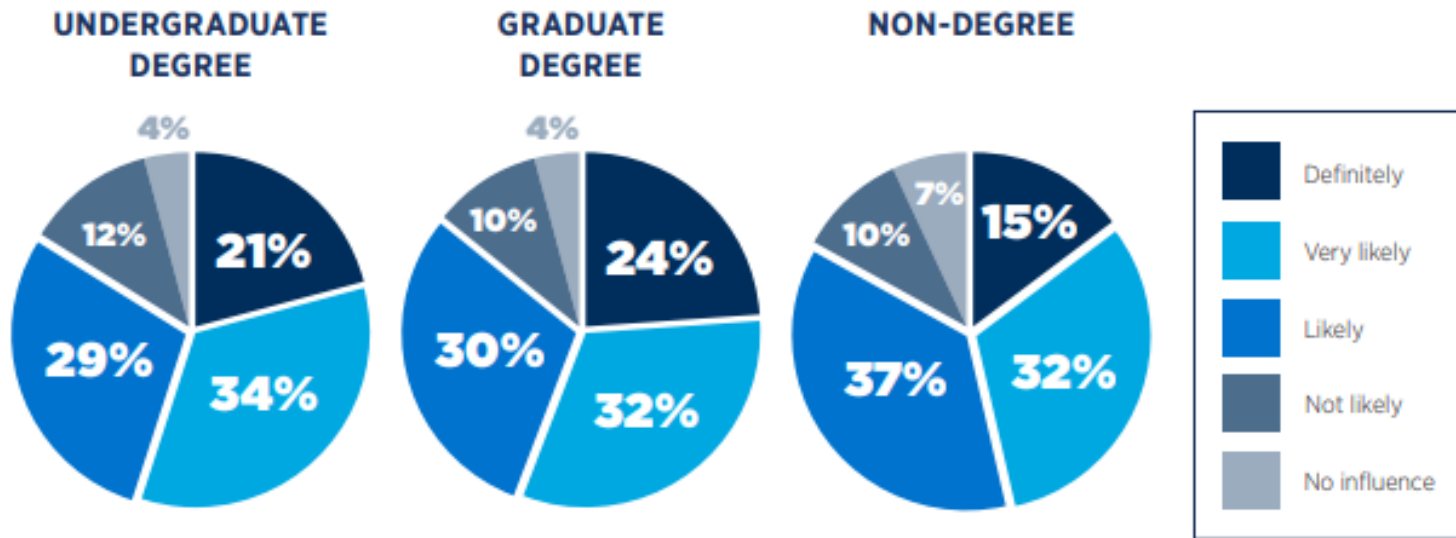
10. Online students expect to be admitted quickly and will enroll where they are admitted first.

TABLE 38: EXPECTED TIME TO RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF ADMISSION	UNDER-GRADUATE DEGREE	GRADUATE DEGREE	NON-DEGREE
Within 24 hours	11%	15%	8%
1-3 days	34%	29%	32%
4-7 days	30%	27%	31%
7-14 days	18%	19%	20%
14-21 days	5%	7%	6%
Longer than 21 days	2%	3%	3%

TABLE 37: NUMBER OF ONLINE PROGRAMS APPLIED TO	UNDER-GRADUATE DEGREE	GRADUATE DEGREE	NON-DEGREE
One	33%	36%	48%
Two	46%	43%	35%
Three	15%	15%	14%
Four or more	6%	6%	4%

10. Online students expect to be admitted quickly and will enroll where they are admitted first.

TABLE 39: LIKELIHOOD OF ENROLLING IN ONLINE PROGRAM THAT OFFERS ADMISSION FIRST





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THANK YOU

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