

Profiles of Your Future Graduate and Adult Students

Based on EAB's Survey of 8,000+ Prospective Students

Federal policy changes, volatile international demand, intensifying competition, and the looming demographic cliff are reshaping the graduate and adult education market. At the same time, the rapid rise of AI is upending Paid Search strategies and redefining both employer needs and student expectations.

To help institutions better recruit, enroll, and serve graduate and adult learners, **EAB's Adult Learner Recruitment** team surveyed more than 8,000 prospective and current adult students about their preferences, concerns, and goals. **Here are four profiles of your next generation of adult learners.**



Graduate Students

Career-minded and pragmatic



Lead generation strategies and resources

41% research program options for over **12 months**

Strategy

Ensure your marketing campaign captures interest by lasting **20+ months**.

#1 top reason for pursuing a graduate degree is **career advancement**

Incorporate marketing messages that showcase **professional development, leadership growth, and career progression**.

51% look for **admission requirements and processes** when on a school's website

Graduate prospects want clarity on prerequisites, deadlines, and application steps—prominently display this information on your website.



Degree Completers

Fast-moving and highly practical



Exercise to identify website improvements

25% research program options for less than **3 months**

Strategy

Prospective degree completers move with intention. Prioritize **simple next steps, immediate communication, and quick decisions**.

50% look for **cost of attendance** when on a school website

Minimize financial barriers and put information about tuition and fees, aid, transfer credit, and time-to-completion front and center.

31% remove a school from consideration because it is **too far from home**

Geographic convenience matters to degree completers. **Emphasize local access and reduce travel burdens**.



Domestic Students

Focused on flexibility and affordability



Strategies to recruit domestic students

#1 top source students use to explore options is a **school's website**

Strategy

Most domestic students will abandon a website that is not user-friendly. **Optimize your school website for web and mobile access**.

47% prefer all or a majority of their **classes to be delivered online**

Offer **flexible modality options** to appeal to domestic students.

54% are planning to use **financial aid** to fund their education

Include aid information in your recruitment messaging and on your website.



Business Students

Digitally savvy and outcomes-driven



Search visibility tools in the AI era

21% use **AI-powered platforms** to explore options

Strategy

Business prospects are more likely to use AI to explore programs. Ensure your website content is **clear, structured, and digestible for AI models**.

32% are furthering their education to **increase their earning potential**

Connect program cost to salary upside and career acceleration to show proof of return on investment.

16% say a **strong alumni network** helped them see the value of a program

Showcase **career network and employer outcomes** prominently.