# 95% of Online Program Graduates Would Recommend Online Education to Others

*BestColleges.com Releases 2022 Edition of Their Annual Online Education Trends Report*

**Mar. 23, 2022 (Seattle, WA)** - BestColleges.com's Online Education Trends Report, released today, revealed that nearly all (95%) college graduates who attended an online program would recommend the experience to others. Click below for more information:

https://www.bestcolleges.com/research/annual-trends-in-online-education/

The eighth annual Online Education Trends Report includes feedback from 351 school administrators and 1,800 college students. Offering the most current view of the online education landscape, this year's student participants included online students, remote learners, graduates of online programs, and prospective online students.

An overwhelming majority of students (90%) felt their online degree has had or will have a positive return on investment (ROI), a slight decrease from last year (93%). While 70% of students reported that online education is better than or equal to on-campus education, this is a slight decrease from last year (74%). A majority (60%) of remote learners (i.e., students enrolled in courses not offered in person due to COVID-19) said they were likely to enroll in online courses or programs after their campuses return to normal operations, an increase from the previous year (49%).

This year, 66% of currently enrolled online students were employed either full or part time, and 97% had children under the age of 18 living at home. The biggest concern students had related to learning in a remote or online environment in 2021 was balancing education with work, family, and household obligations (25%). However, students were most likely to report that the convenience of studying around existing work and family commitments (31%) was their reason for choosing online over on-campus learning options.

When choosing an online program, students' top challenges were finding a program that met their needs and interests (20%) and applying for financial aid and identifying sufficient funding sources (20%). One-quarter (25%) of online graduates had no regrets about their chosen program, while nearly the same amount would do more research about cost and financial aid (24%) and compare more programs (23%) before making a decision if they could go back. Online graduates reported their top challenge to completing their program was paying for higher education while minimizing student debt (25%).

"In the eight years of this study, online program graduates have consistently expressed a level of regret related to cost," said Melissa Venable, Ph.D., the report's author and online education advisor for BestColleges.com. "While some efforts have been made industry-wide to provide more information about what a specific program will cost (such as net price calculators), confusion around college costs and financial assistance persists and more must be done to provide prospective students with the sufficient details."

An overwhelming majority (90%) of school administrators agreed that COVID-19 has impacted demand for online programs, and believe student enrollment in online education will increase over the next few years. Changes related to COVID-19 that school administrators say will be adopted for longer-term use at their institutions post-pandemic include hybrid or HyFlex course design (29%) with in-person and online components, as well as enhanced access to and use of synchronous videoconferencing tools (30%).

The top reported impacts to remote students' futures due to COVID-19-related college changes remained consistent with last year's survey results, but with an overall decrease in numbers. Top negative impacts included delayed graduation date (19% vs. 28% last year), difficulties finding a job (20% vs. 25% last year), and lasting effects to mental health (20% vs. 28% last year). Top positive impacts included having more experience and a higher comfort level working with new technologies (23% vs. 29% last year) and being more adaptable and flexible when unexpected events occur (32% vs. 36% last year).

"Most enrolled students during the past two years have experienced remote and/or online learning to some degree, due to campus closures and continued restrictions related to COVID-19," Venable said. "It will be interesting to track this cohort throughout their remaining college programs and future employment to learn more about the effects of this experience on their future decisions related to learning and work."

**Methodology**

Two online surveys were conducted between November 2021 and February 2022. All data are self-reported.

The first survey collected information from 1,800 college students. Respondents included current remote and online learners, prospective online students, and online degree program graduates. The survey was fielded by Lucid LLC, in partnership with GLG Research, and used a quota sampling approach to provide a sample that represented the four continental U.S. geographical regions (i.e., Midwest, Northeast, South, and West). Additional quotas were implemented to ensure the sample included gender and racial diversity.

Our outreach team connected with schools offering online courses, as reported by the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, for the second survey. Representatives from public and private two- and four-year institutions responded to questions via the Qualtrics platform. This year, 351 school administrators responded to questions about online program design and administration, student support needs, and the continued impact of COVID-19 on their institutions.

**About BestColleges.com**

BestColleges.com empowers students to make smarter educational decisions and find schools that best fit their needs through proprietary research, user-friendly guides, and hundreds of unique college rankings. As a trusted education advisor, they also provide a wide array of college planning, financial aid, and career resources to help students realize life goals and overcome educational challenges as they prepare for careers after college.