



# Understanding the **Changing Market** for Professional Master's Programs

An Introduction for Deans and Other Academic Leaders

Academic Affairs  
Forum







EAB

# Understanding the **Changing Market** for Professional Master's Programs

An Introduction for Deans and Other Academic Leaders

# Academic Affairs Forum

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# Available Within Your Membership

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## Academic Affairs Forum Resources

### Unlimited Access to Publications, Updates, and Webinars

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### Select Publications

#### Academic Planning and Revenue Growth

##### Revitalizing the Program Portfolio

*Elevating Academic Program Performance and Strategic Alignment*

- Setting new program viability hurdles
- Enhancing existing signature programs

##### Smart Growth

*Running the Academy by the Numbers*

- Removing classroom scheduling bottlenecks
- Department-level section-demand analysis

#### Revenue Growth

##### Future Students, Future Revenues

*Thriving in a Decade of Demographic Decline*

- Identifying high-growth, high-potential student markets
- Marketing and support practices to maximize enrollment

#### Online Education Strategy

##### Engaging Faculty in Online Education

*Rightsizing Incentives and Optimizing Support*

- Calibrating incentives for development and instruction
- Training in online pedagogy and course design

##### Online Course Prioritization Guide

*10 Strategies for Promoting Enrollment Growth and Student Success*

- Aligning incentives with strategic priorities
- Re-allocating costs to encourage growth

##### Top 10 Mistakes in Working with Third-Party Vendors for Online Programs

*Tips on Structuring Partnerships to Protect Revenue and Minimize Risk*

- Key considerations for the outsourcing decision
- Lessons learned in vendor negotiations

# Available Beyond Your Membership

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## The COE Forum

### Supporting Educational Innovation Across Program Types and Delivery Models

The COE Forum provides deans of continuing and professional education with market research and advice to help them—and other deans on campus—identify, launch, and grow successful academic degree, certificate, and noncredit programs. We work with a diverse network of institutions that share a common set of challenges in serving nontraditional students.

### Working with Members Across the Spectrum of Nontraditional Education

#### Professional Master's

- How can we support academic leaders in designing financially viable programs?
- What are the most innovative internship, capstone, and experiential learning concepts?

#### Certificates

- How do we convert single course takers into certificate completers?
- What disciplines are best suited for "stackable" credentials?

#### Noncredit

- How can we tailor offerings to match employer tuition reimbursement policies?
- How fast will alternative credentialing go mainstream, and how will it affect demand?

- Marketing and Recruiting
- Market Research
- Student Experience and Outcomes
- Organizational Models

#### Online Education

- How can we ensure consistent quality of online courses in a decentralized institution?
- How do we train, motivate, and compensate faculty to teach online?

#### Degree Completion

- What articulation policies grow enrollments while sustaining quality and student success?
- What advising models and technologies have the highest ROI?

#### Executive Education

- How can we incentivize and run interdisciplinary programs drawing from different units?
- How do we cultivate long-term relationships with employers?

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### COE Forum Services and Capabilities



Real-time employer demand data for degrees across all US markets



Comprehensive database of degree and certificate programs



Customized market research reports



New program launch plans and recommendations

**To learn more** about the COE Forum, email us at [coeforum@eab.com](mailto:coeforum@eab.com) or call 202-266-6400.

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We are grateful to the individuals and organizations who shared their insights, analysis, and time with us. We would especially like to recognize the following individuals and institutions for being particularly generous with their time and expertise.

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# Executive Summary

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## **A Market That Is Growing—and Changing**

Enrollment in master's programs has exploded in the last two decades, leaving many to wonder if the market for new programs is already gone. Yet the market for master's degrees is both growing and changing. Across the next decade, master's degrees are projected to grow far faster than degrees at any other level. By 2022, experts predict, master's degrees will account for nearly a third of all degrees awarded.

This new growth will come primarily from professional master's programs focused on specific job skills that help students gain a new job or advance in an existing position. These programs will, however, look very different from the historically popular professional programs (such as the MBA, JD, and MEd) that account for the majority of graduate degrees added in recent years. With falling demand and barriers to expansion, those degrees now face slower growth as well as increased competition.

In the core graduate degree disciplines of business, law, and education, the best growth opportunities lie in creating specialized programs—such as the master's in finance or master of laws (LLM)—that appeal to new populations of students, make use of existing high-cost resources, and don't devalue existing degrees.

However, the fastest rates of growth in master's degrees across the next decade will take place outside the fields that currently dominate enrollments. Programs in business, law, education, and health care now award 62% of all graduate degrees, but except for health care these fields are not growing at an especially fast rate. Instead, the fastest growth lies in niche programs that are customized to new and rapidly changing roles, such as cybersecurity, data analytics, and health informatics. These programs are commonly housed outside the major professional schools and tend to cross traditional fields and disciplines.

As niche programs are tied so closely to professional opportunities, many of which are regional, demand may be concentrated in particular geographic markets. Unlike traditional master's programs, which depend on brand recognition and rankings to attract students, niche programs can attract students by “micro-targeting” a specific need in a specific industry to a specific student segment.

## **Focusing on Student Segments**

In both core disciplines and new niche fields, the key to capturing emerging market growth is customizing offerings not just to “working professionals” but to distinct segments within this group—career starters, career advancers, career changers, and career crossers—through features such as flexible delivery, stackable credentials, practical experience, accelerated format, interdisciplinary pathways, and professional development.

These features break through the constraints of geography, schedule, age, and academic preparation that have historically and artificially limited the master's degree marketplace. Freed of these constraints, professional master's programs appeal to the needs of a much larger population.



# A Market That Is Growing— and Changing

Graduate Degree Enrollment in the Decade Ahead

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SECTION

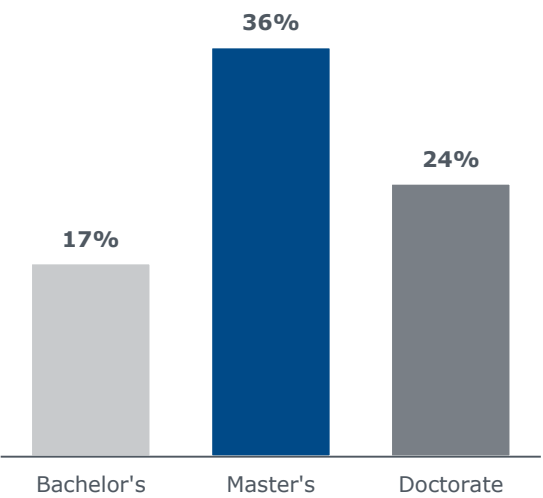
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# The Next Decade's Growth Opportunity

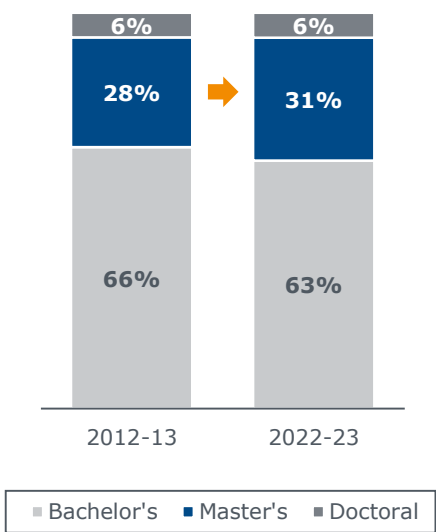
## Master's Degrees Growing Faster Than Any Other Degree Level

Enrollment in master's programs has exploded in the last two decades, leaving many to wonder if the market for new programs is already gone. Yet the market for master's degrees is both growing and changing. Across the next decade, master's degrees are projected to grow far faster than degrees at any other level. By 2022, experts predict, master's degrees will account for nearly a third of all degrees awarded.

**Projected Growth by Award Level**  
*2012–2013 to 2022–2023*



**Current and Projected Degree Completions by Award Level**





Source: National Center for Education Statistics, "Projections of Education Statistics to 2022," Feb 2014; Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

# Growth Concentrated in Professional Master's

## Very Different from Traditional Master's in Market, Delivery, and Goals

This new growth will come primarily from professional master's programs focused on specific job skills that help students gain a new job or advance in an existing position. These programs tend to be part time and low residence, draw on multiple academic departments, make significant use of adjunct faculty, and serve a market of older, professional students who can pay full tuition. In these ways, professional master's programs differ significantly from traditional master's programs that provide a stepping stone to a PhD.

 <b>Traditional Master's</b>	 <b>Professional Master's</b>
Full-time, residential	Part-time, low residence
Thesis	Project or work experience
Path to PhD	Path to employment
Designed around faculty research interests	Designed around employer hiring interests
Taught exclusively by tenure-stream faculty	Taught by tenure-stream faculty and adjuncts
Housed within single department	Cross-disciplinary/multiple departments
Financial aid available	Typically self-pay
Younger, less experienced students	Often older students with work experience

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

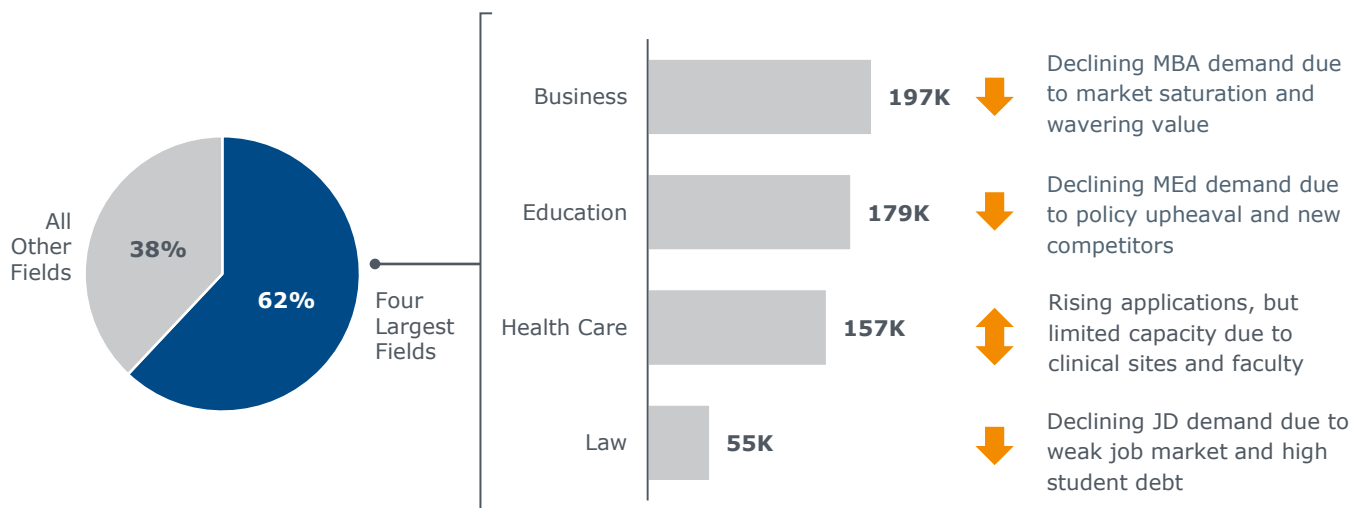
# Yesterday's Opportunities

## Historically Popular Programs Face Falling Demand, Barriers to Expansion

Today's high-growth programs will also differ from the professional programs that drove the last two decades' growth. Programs such as the MBA, JD, MEd, and degrees in the health professions account for the majority of graduate degrees added in recent years. However, with falling demand and barriers to expansion, these degrees now face slower growth as well as increased competition.

### Graduate Degree Completions by Discipline

2012–2013



Policy upheavals have weakened demand for master's of education degrees, and demand for JDs and traditional MBAs is declining in the face of market saturation, wavering value, weak job market, and high student debt. Even if demand were rising, accreditation standards, high fixed costs of faculty and facilities, and potential adverse effects on rankings make expanding enrollment in these programs difficult or impossible. Programs in the health professions are seeing applications rise, but difficulty finding enough clinical placements and faculty is impeding growth here as well.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS Data Center; Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

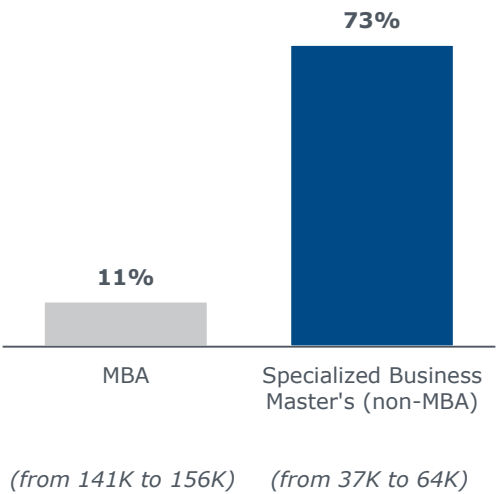
# Specialized Programs in Core Disciplines

## Using Existing Capacity to Reach New Markets of Students

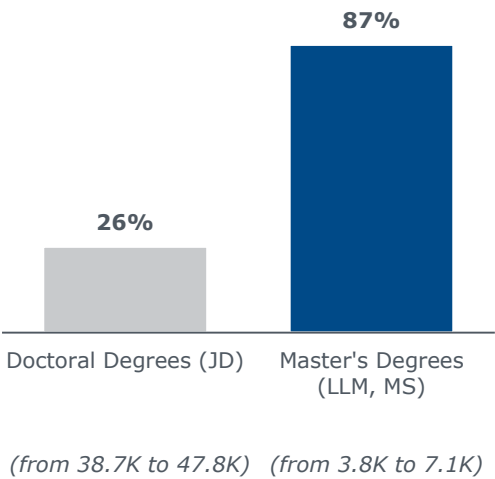
In these historically popular disciplines, the best growth opportunities lie in creating specialized programs—such as the masters in marketing and communications or master of laws (LLM)—that appeal to new populations of students, make use of existing high-cost resources, and don’t devalue existing degrees.

### Growth in MBA and Specialized Business Master’s, 2007–2008 to 2011–2012<sup>1</sup>

Enrollments Reported by US Institutions to AACSB



### Growth in Law Degrees Completed by Award Level 2001–2002 to 2012–2013



1) Beginning with the 2012-13 academic year, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) began grouping data for US institutions with all North American Institutions, preventing longitudinal comparisons for US institutions beyond 2011-12. However, as we explain in section two of this publication, the total number of MBA enrollments reported for all of North America in 2012-13 (156,104) was less than enrollments reported for the US only in the previous academic year (156,400). Thus, between 2011 and 2012, US MBA enrollments declined.

Source: Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, "Business School Data Guide 2014," "Business School Data Trends 2013," and "Business School Data Trends 2009 and List of Accredited Schools"; National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS Data Center; Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

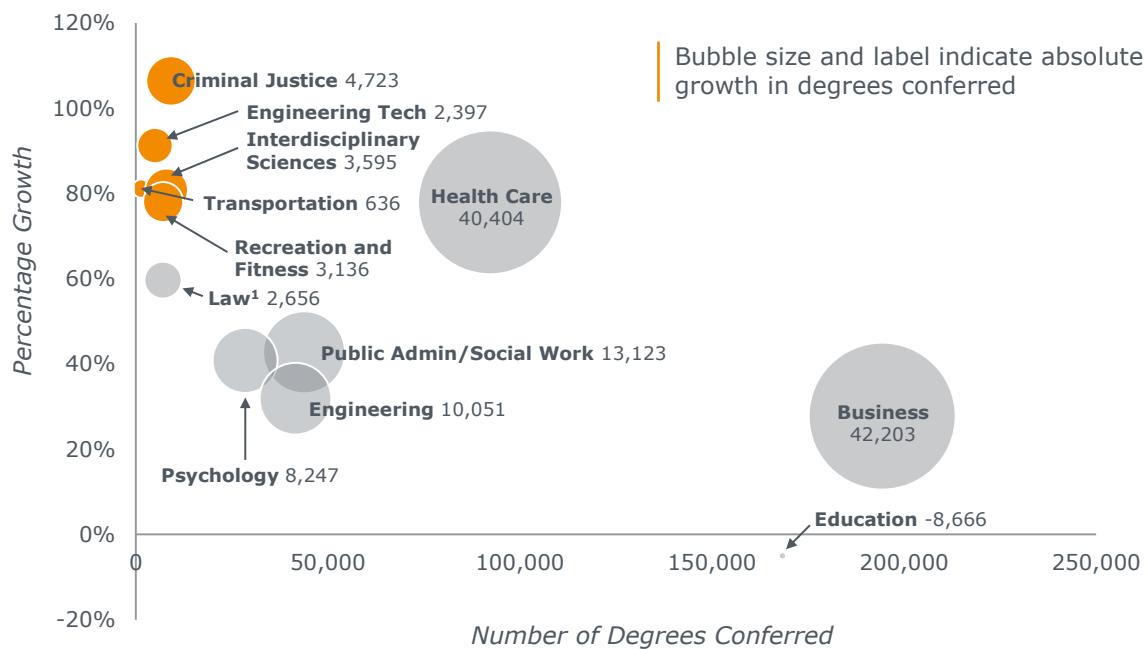
# Fastest Growth Outside Core Fields

## Niche Programs Micro-targeted to New and Rapidly Changing Roles

However, the fastest rates of growth in master's degrees across the next decade will take place outside the fields that currently dominate enrollments. Programs in business, law, education, and health care now award 62% of all graduate degrees, but except for health care these fields are not growing at an especially fast rate. Instead, the fastest growth lies in master's programs designed for new and rapidly changing niche fields, such as cybersecurity, data analytics, and health informatics.

### Growth in Master's Degrees Conferred for Select Disciplines

*Absolute Growth in Degrees Conferred from AY 2006-07 to 2012-13*



These niche programs are commonly housed outside the major professional schools and tend to cross disciplinary boundaries. As they are tied so closely to professional opportunities, many of which are regional, demand may be concentrated in particular geographic markets. Unlike traditional master's programs, which depend on brand recognition and rankings to attract students, niche programs can attract students by "micro-targeting" a specific need in a specific industry.

1) Data for master's degrees in law only; does not include JD.

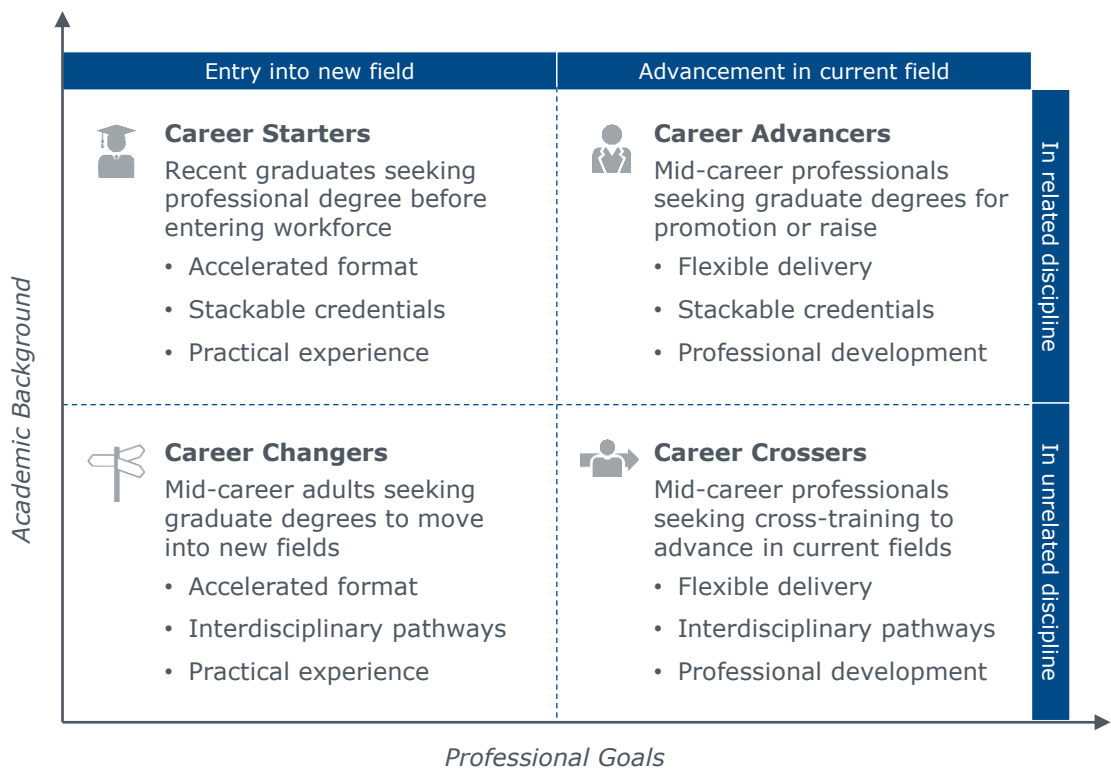
Source: National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS Data Center; Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.



# Looking Beyond ‘Working Professionals’

## Designing Programs to Serve Distinct Market Segments

In both core disciplines and new niche fields, the key to capturing emerging market growth is customizing offerings not just to “working professionals” but to distinct segments within this group. The professional audience includes a range of current and prospective workers with varied needs, including career starters, career advancers, career changers, and career crossers.



Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

# What Working Professionals Want

## Common Attributes of Effectively Designed Programs

The most successful programs offer features—such as flexible delivery, stackable credentials, practical experience, accelerated format, interdisciplinary pathways, and professional development—that increase the ease and value of earning the degree. Each feature exists in at least modest tension with one other. For example, part-time programs with flexible delivery require longer time-to-completion. Program creators need a thorough understanding of their specific market segment to choose the features and trade-offs that align best with prospective students’ needs.

### Flexible Delivery

- Accommodates adults with competing professional and personal commitments
- May expand audience to include new geographic and demographic markets

### Accelerated Format

- Reduces opportunity cost for those taking time off of work for degree
- May also reduce price, depending on credit and tuition structures



### Stackable Credentials

- Allows students to pick out modular, often specialized, parts of degrees
- Encourages students to apply credits toward later, more advanced credentials

### Interdisciplinary Pathways

- Tailors content and pedagogy to students formally trained in another discipline
- Provides common knowledge base to students with varied backgrounds



### Practical Experience

- Fulfills employer demand for new hires with work experience
- Enhances employment outcomes by producing better-prepared graduates

### Professional Development

- Encourages application of program content in current work setting
- Allows for networking, mentorship, and other career advancement benefits



Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

# Accessing a Much Larger Market

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## Program Design Breaks Through Artificial Constraints on Enrollment

Collectively, these features break through the constraints of geography, schedule, age, and academic preparation that have artificially limited the master's degree marketplace in the past. Freed of these constraints, professional master's programs can access a far larger market than ever before.

### Obstacles to Enrollment in Master's Programs



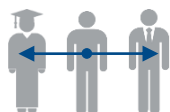
#### Geography

"I can't travel or move to this program."



#### Schedule

"I can't fit this program into my full-time work schedule."



#### Age or Work Experience

"I'm too young (*or too old*) and have too little (*or too much*) work experience for this program."



#### Academic Preparation

"I have the skills for this program—but not the standard qualifications."

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

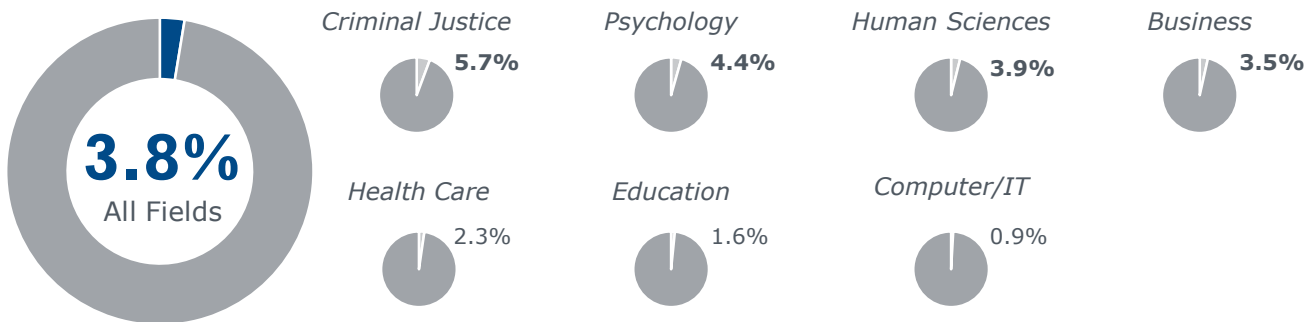
# Worries of Market Concentration Overblown

## Even the Largest Provider Has a Relatively Small Share

With online delivery expanding institutions' geographic reach, some worry that the market for master's degrees will concentrate in a few large, national players. Yet evidence shows these fears to be overblown. Even institutions that have invested most aggressively in national expansion have managed to secure no more than a tiny fragment of the market.

### University of Phoenix's Share of Online Master's Degree Conferred

2012-2013



The University of Phoenix illustrates just how unlikely it is that a few large players will dominate the online master's degree market. The University of Phoenix is currently the largest university in the nation; in the 2012-2013 school year it had 374,006 degree-seeking students and conferred over 14,147 master's degrees through online programs. Even after the recent backlash against for-profit institutions, it still maintains 112 campuses across the country. It also has a marketing budget of about \$558 million. But this single biggest player, with all those funds behind it, still has less than 4% of the online master's market. Its share is greater in some fields (such as criminal justice, where it confers almost 6 percent of degrees), but relatively small overall. It's hard to imagine that one (or even ten) institutions like Phoenix could squeeze out all other universities. In general, we think you have more to fear from your local competitors and peers than from large, national entities.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS Data Center; Tamar Lewin, "University of Phoenix to Shutter 115 Locations," *The New York Times*: October 17, 2012; Apollo Education Group, 2014 Annual Report, 56; Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

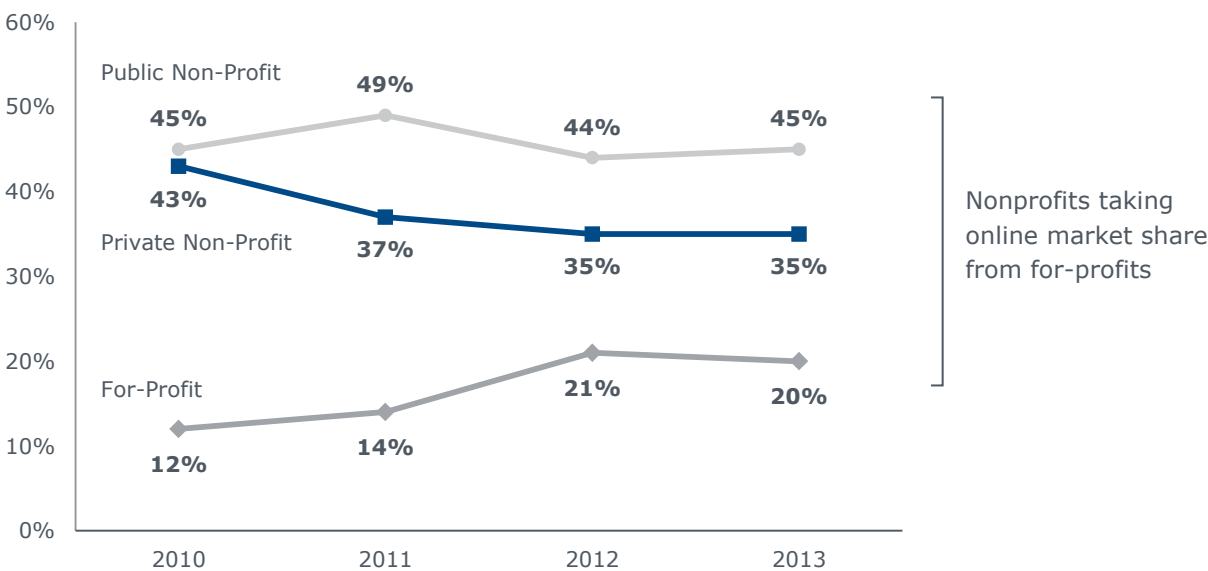
# Tables Turned

## For-Profits Losing Online Share to Nonprofit Institutions

As more nonprofits colleges and universities begin to offer fully online degrees, they are now taking market share away from for-profits. Many students prefer a name they know and would rather earn a degree from a reputable state university than an institution they have only seen advertisements for.

### Online Market Share by Control

2010-2013









Source: Aslanian, CB and DL Clinefelter, "Online College Students 2013: Comprehensive Data on Demands and Preferences" (Louisville, KY: The Learning House, Inc, 2013); Aslanian, CB and DL Clinefelter, "Online College Students 2012: Comprehensive Data on Demands and Preferences" (Louisville, KY: The Learning House, Inc, 2012); Eduventures, "Online Higher Education Market Update, 2011."

# Best Strategy for Growing Tuition Revenue

## Professional Graduate Programs Insulated from Key Challenges

For most institutions, growing professional graduate programs is the fastest and least difficult way to increase tuition revenue substantially. On average, launching a new professional master's program requires 18 months<sup>1</sup>—far less than the time required to achieve comparable gains in tuition revenue through other channels. More importantly, professional master's programs are insulated from many of the daunting challenges to growing tuition revenue at the undergraduate level.

		
	<b>Undergraduate Programs</b>	<b>New Professional Master's</b>
 Demand Growth	Declines in college-age population, difficult economy limiting growth	Program design and delivery removing artificial constraints on market
 Institutional Selectivity and Brand	Difficult to grow enrollment without lowering admission standards	Specialized programs have little or no impact on rankings and brand
 Tuition Pricing	Tuition caps at many publics; students unable/ unwilling to absorb increases	More flexibility pricing degrees at market rates
 Use of Adjunct Faculty	Pushback, quality concerns from increasing reliance on adjuncts	Fewer concerns over lower-cost instruction by professionals working in field

At the undergraduate level, institutions face a host of demographic and economic challenges to growing enrollment. Expanding undergraduate classes may mean lowering admission standards. Bachelor's degrees are often subject to strict tuition guidelines at public institutions, and all institutions are finding the undergraduate market increasingly unwilling and unable to absorb steep increases in tuition. If enrollments do increase, institutions face the challenge of either hiring additional, expensive faculty or managing pushback and quality concerns related to increasing reliance on adjuncts.

By contrast, institutions can expand professional master's programs with less impact on selectivity and brand, and they may have more flexibility pricing professional degrees at market rates. Finally, these programs can make use of adjunct instructors with far less protest, since it makes sense to have professionals in the field teach other working professionals.

1) While 18 months is average, time to launch new programs varies across institutions.

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.



# Reaching New Students in Core Professional Fields

Specialized Programs in Education, Business, Law, and Health Care

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SECTION

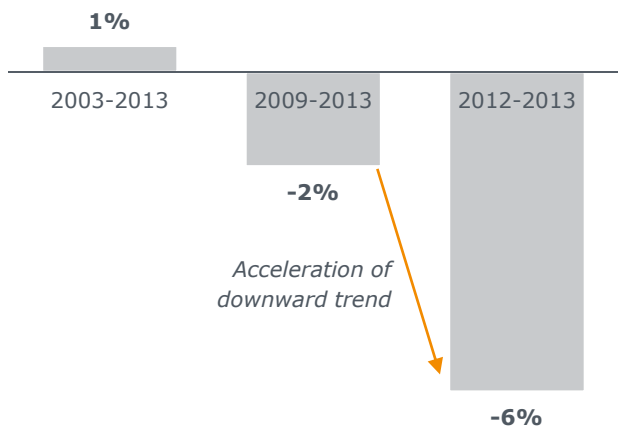
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# MEd: A Degree Under Scrutiny

## K-12 Policy Upheaval Threatens Demand for Master's of Education

The most popular degrees in education, business, and law are facing serious threats to enrollment. Over the last few years, states have scrutinized teacher education, and several have rolled back policies that had guaranteed automatic salary bumps to teachers with advanced degrees. This, combined with frozen school budgets, sluggish hiring, and changes to the K-12 teaching environment (such as a growing emphasis on assessment), has made the master's in education a less desirable degree.

**Average Annual Percentage Change in Master's Degrees Awarded in Education**



**THE CHRONICLE**  
of Higher Education

**Duncan: Rewarding Teachers for Master's Degrees Is a Waste of Money**

**EDUCATION WEEK**

**Education Master's Programs: Add Value or Shut Down**

M I L W A U K E E  
**JOURNAL SENTINEL**

**Loss of Master's Bump Has Impact on Teachers, Grad Schools**

Source: Jeff Allum, "Graduate Enrollment and Degrees: 2003 to 2013" (Washington, DC: Council of Graduate Schools, 2014) 101; Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

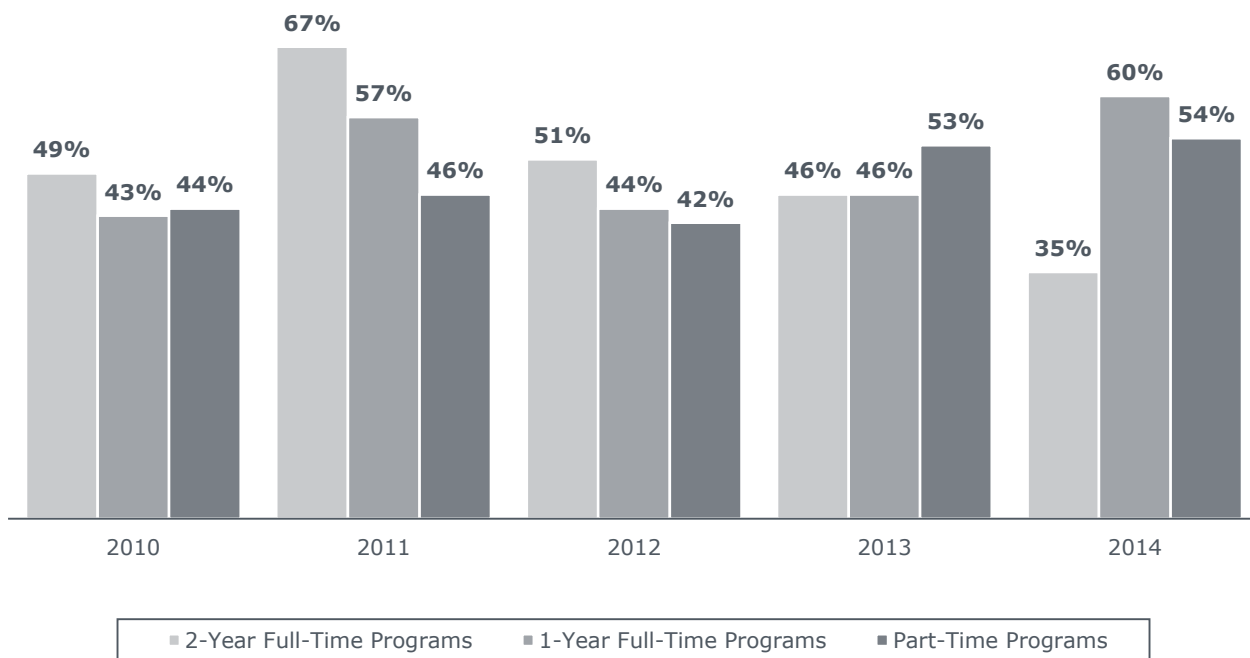


# MBA: No Longer an Exclusive Degree

## Many Questioning Degree's Return on Investment

Business schools have also seen softening demand for their flagship programs. Some of this decline is cyclical; MBA enrollments typically tick up when a recession begins and then decline as the economy recovers and students go back to work. But this time we're also seeing public opinion question the value of the degree. Many feel this increasingly common degree no longer delivers a sufficient return on investment for most students.

### MBA Programs Reporting Decline in Application Volume



*the Atlantic*

**There Are Officially  
Too Many MBAs**

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

**A Smart Investor  
Would Skip the MBA**

**QUARTZ**

**If You Can't Get into a  
Top 5 MBA Program,  
Don't Even Bother**

**BusinessWeek**

**The MBA's Value?  
Debatable**

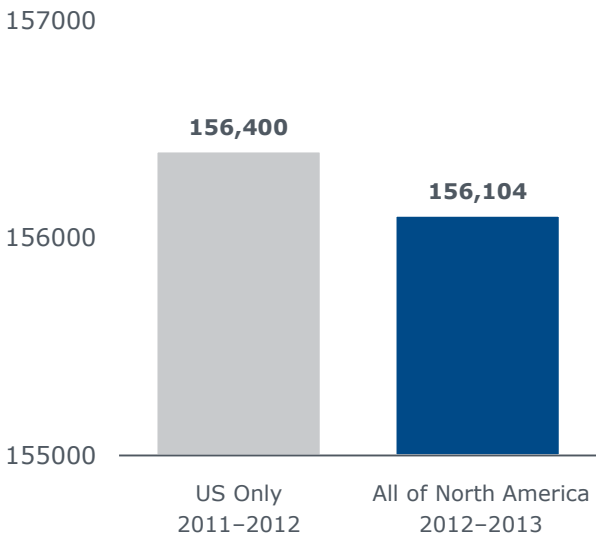
Source: Graduate Management Admissions Council, "2014 Application Trends Survey", 2014:7, 10; Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

# Enrollments Now in Decline

## US MBA Growth Rates Dropping into the Negative

Between the 2011-12 and 2012-13 academic years, the number of students enrolled in US MBA programs actually declined. In 2012-13, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) stopped reporting on enrollments for US institutions only and began grouping that data with all institutions in North America, preventing exact longitudinal analysis for the US beyond 2011-12. However, the total number of MBA enrollments reported for all of North America in 2012-13 (156,104) was less than enrollments reported for the US only in the previous academic year (156,400).

### MBA Enrollments Reported by AACSB

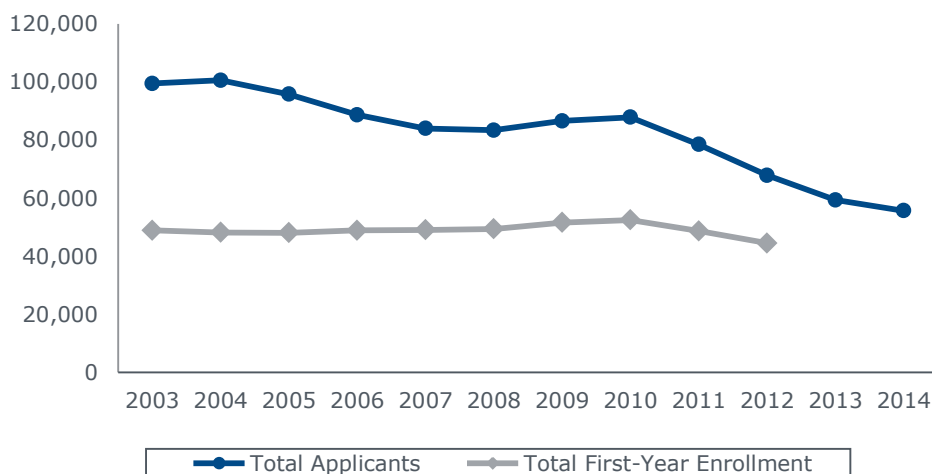


# JD: A Degree in Crisis

## Applications and Job Prospects Are Plummeting Together

Law firms are reducing costs by opting for less expensive alternatives to lawyers, including paralegals, new technology, and outsourcing. Facing bleak employment prospects, many students who in the past would have studied to become lawyers are pursuing other fields. Applications have plummeted over the last several years, and the number of applicants is now dangerously close to the number of open seats.

### Applications and Matriculations to JD Programs, 2003-2013



**The New York Times**

**Law Schools' Applications Fall as Cost Rises and Jobs Are Cut**



salon.com

**Law School Is a Sham**

**TIME**

**Just How Bad Off Are Law School Graduates?**

**BusinessWeek**

**The Case Against Law Schools**

Source: American Bar Association, "Enrollment and Degrees Awarded, 1963-2012"; Law School Admissions Council, "End-of-Year-Summary: ABA (Applicants, Applications & Admissions), LSATs, Credential Assembly Service; Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

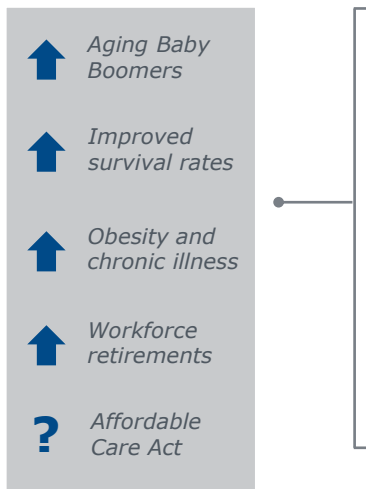
# Health Care: Demand Outpacing Capacity

## Receiving More Interest Than Programs Can Accommodate

Health care is the one core field that is experiencing no shortage of demand. Many health professions—including physician assistants, physical therapists, audiologists, nurse anesthetists, and occupational therapists—are projected to grow rapidly as the population becomes older and sicker (from chronic diseases such as obesity and diabetes). Yet programs are struggling to find the facilities, faculty, and clinical placements needed to grow enrollment.

### 1.7M New Jobs Projected

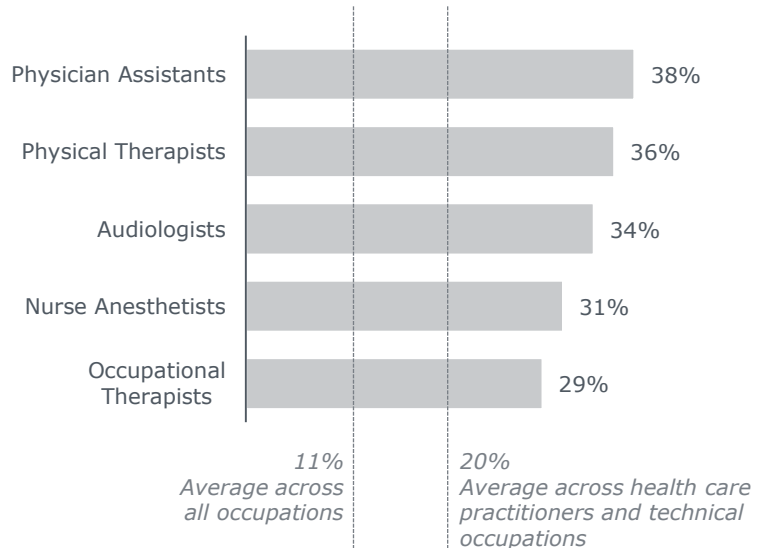
2012–2022



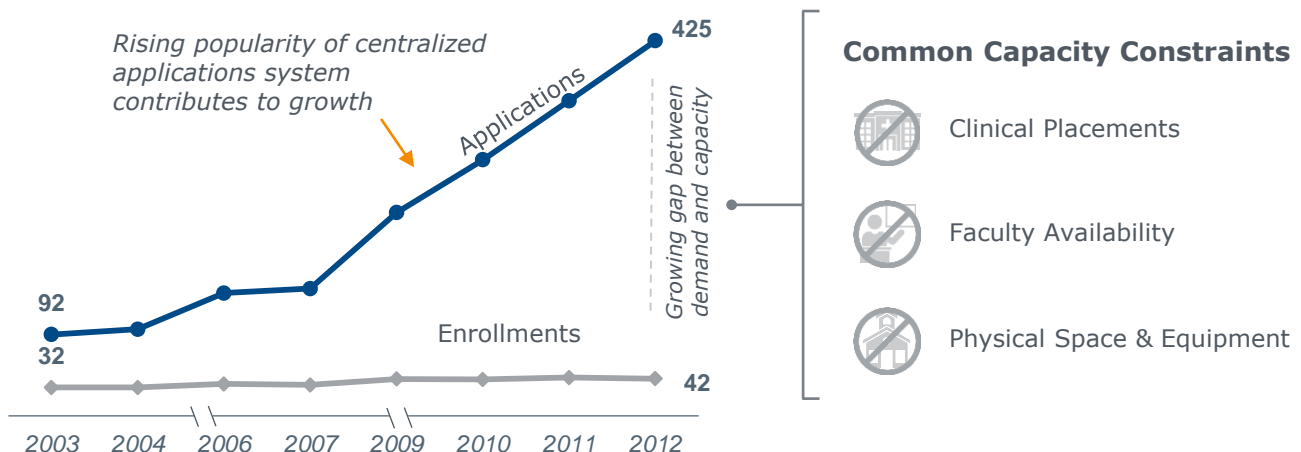
Health Care Practitioners and Technical Occupations

### Projected Growth for Select Occupations

2012–2022



### Average Number of Applications and Enrollments in Doctor of Physical Therapy Programs, 2003–2012

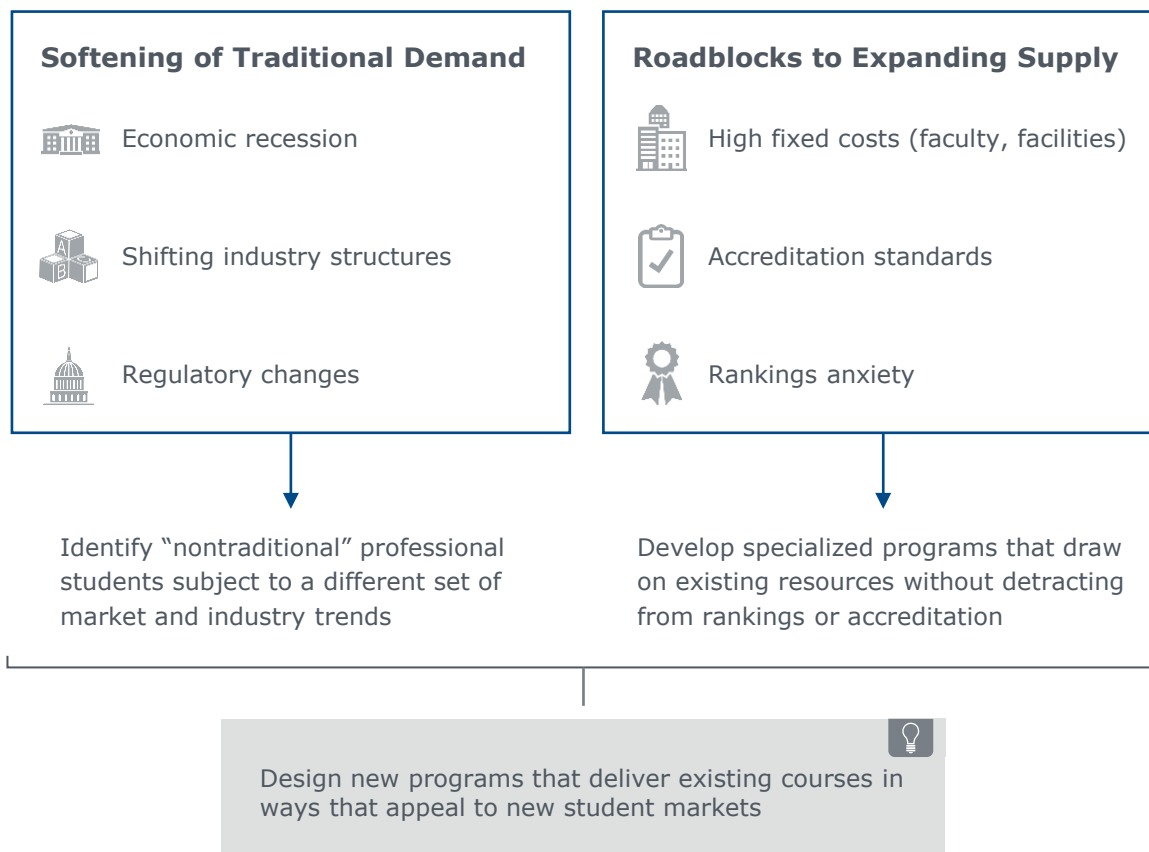


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2014–15 Edition*; Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, "Health Care," June 2012; Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education, "2012–2013 Fact Sheet"; Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

# Solving Challenges to Demand and Supply

## New Specialized Programs Open Opportunity for Growth

Even if students were clamoring for more MEds, MBAs, and JDs, most universities would face challenges expanding these programs as well. Accreditation standards often limit class size, and the fixed costs of faculty and facilities are extremely high. Also, it may be difficult to increase enrollment without lowering admission standards and damaging a program’s ranking. The best strategy for overcoming these challenges to demand and supply is creating new specialized programs that appeal to new populations of students, make use of existing high-cost resources, and don’t devalue existing degrees.



Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

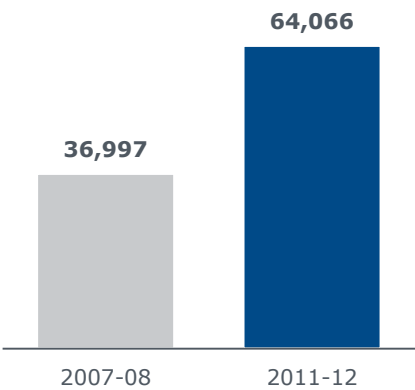
# A Growing Trend

## Many Institutions Already Shifting Resources to New Specialized Programs

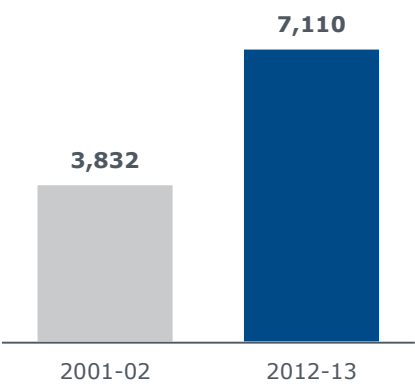
Many institutions have begun shifting resources from core graduate programs such as the MBA toward specialized master’s programs that serve new audiences—such as the master’s in marketing or management. Across the last five years, the number of enrollments in these programs have nearly doubled. Law schools are also starting to diversify their portfolios beyond the JD, adding LLM programs for current lawyers looking for specialization in fields such as taxation, or foreign-trained lawyers seeking exposure to US law. The number of degrees awarded by these programs has almost doubled in the last 10 years.

### US Enrollments in Specialized Business Master’s<sup>1</sup>

*Reported by US Institutions to AACSB*



### Master’s Degrees in Law Awarded (LLM and MS)



1) AACSB stopped reporting on enrollment data for US institutions in 2011-2012. Beginning with 2012-13, data for US institutions is grouped with data for all North American institutions. Data on all North American Institutions is not reported for years prior to 2012-13.

Source: Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, "Business School Data Trends 2013," and "Business School Data Trends 2009 and List of Accredited Schools"; National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS Data Center; Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

# Reaching New Student Segments

## Specialized Programs Move Beyond Segment Field Has Traditionally Served

Core professional programs tend to serve one of the four student segments outlined in section one: career starters, career advancers, career changers, and career crossers. The MBA, for example, focuses on career advancers, while the JD serves career starters. New specialized programs will serve working professionals outside the segment the field has traditionally served.



Traditional Degree, Segment Served	Opportunities Serving New Student Segments	
<b>Education</b> Career Advancers (MEd)	<b>Career Changers</b> <i>Alternative routes to licensure</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State-based alternative licensure programs</li> <li>Local fellows programs (e.g., New York City Teaching Fellows)</li> </ul>	
<b>Business</b> Career Advancers (MBA)	<b>Career Crossers</b> <i>Programs for technical professionals</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive MBA in Management of Technology</li> <li>Physician Executive MBA</li> </ul>	<b>Career Starters</b> <i>Programs for pre-professionals</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MS in Management</li> </ul>
<b>Law</b> Career Starters (JD)	<b>Career Advancers</b> <i>LLMs for practicing lawyers</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Master of Laws in Employee Benefits</li> <li>Global Professional Master of Laws</li> </ul>	<b>Career Crossers</b> <i>Programs for non-lawyers</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Master of Studies in Law for Health and Science Professionals</li> </ul>
Health Care Career Starters (entry-level clinical degree)	<b>Career Advancers</b> <i>Post-professional degrees</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Doctorate in Occupational Therapy</li> </ul>	<b>Career Changers</b> <i>Post-baccalaureate pre-health programs</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-physical therapy certificate</li> <li>Communicative Sciences and Disorders Leveling Program</li> </ul>

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

# For Career Starters

## Speed Entry into Workforce, Lead into Advanced Degrees

The MS in Management offered by Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) is an innovative master's degree targeted to career starters. Built entirely out of existing MBA courses, the 10-course program can be completed in one year. After accumulating two or more years of work experience, program graduates may then earn MBA at WPI by completing only seven additional courses; nine of their ten MS courses count toward the MBA degree. Since students would need twice as long to complete an MBA elsewhere, this "stackability" encourages master's students to return to WPI for their MBA.



### MS in Management/MBA

Recent graduates jump-start career with one-year master's, then return with work experience for MBA



#### Accelerated Format

- 10 courses from MBA program
- Tuition incentive covers cost of four courses for young alumni who complete in two semesters

#### Alternative Approach

Reduce time to master's with 4+1/3+2 option



#### Stackable Credentials

- 9 courses count toward MBA
- Returning students can earn MBA after only seven more courses, including capstone

#### Alternative Approach

Build stackable certificates out of master's curricula



#### Practical Experience

- No experience required for MS
- Students must earn 2+ years of work experience before returning for MBA

#### Alternative Approach

Offer 3-semester MS to allow for summer internship

WPI encourages graduates of its own BA programs in science and engineering to enroll in its MS in Management by offering an alumni tuition incentive. Recent graduates who complete the program in two semesters receive a tuition waiver for four courses.



# For Career Advancers

## Accommodate Current Work and Varied Academic Backgrounds

Some of the most innovative examples of degrees for career advancers are at the doctorate level, though they are professional doctorates rather than PhDs. Thomas Jefferson University, a health sciences institute in Philadelphia, offers a hybrid doctorate in occupational therapy that accommodates students' schedule and travel limitations and differences in academic background. The program offers three start dates per year and the option to attend all on-campus sessions virtually. Its modular curriculum allows multiple points of entry, depending on students' prior degree attainment.



### Advanced Doctorate in Occupational Therapy

Modular curriculum accommodates various academic backgrounds, while delivery options accommodate schedule and travel limitations



#### Flexible Delivery

- Asynchronous online courses with three start dates per year
- Saturday on-campus sessions twice each semester, with option to attend virtually

#### Alternative Approach

Schedule half-term courses for busy professionals



#### Stackable Credentials

- Multiple points of entry build on prior academic credentials:
  - 46-credit track with BS
  - 33-credit track with MS
- Optional 12-credit certificate can be applied toward OTD

#### Alternative Approach

Offer prior learning credit for professional experience



#### Professional Development

- Core courses include clinical, research, and leadership skills
- Capstone fellowship brings new learning from academic work into current place of employment

#### Alternative Approach

Facilitate networking through alumni events, social media

Students who have a bachelor's degree in occupational therapy must complete 46 credits to earn the professional doctorate. Those who enroll with a master's degree (the most common entry-level credential in the field today) need to complete only 33 credits. Many students who enroll with master's degrees opt to take a 12-credit advanced certificate before committing to a full doctorate. Those who decide to proceed can then apply these credits toward their degree.

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

# For Career Changers

## Provide Fast Routes for Students Trained in Diverse Fields

Since teaching has historically been a popular field for career changers, schools of education have been particularly innovative in creating alternative paths to licensure that fast-track career changers into the classroom. In a program designed with the state of Virginia, Regent University prepares midcareer adults for full-time, mentored teaching in as little as four months. After completing the first phase of this two-phase program, students may teach full time on a provisional licensure. This option allows students to hold a paying job while they complete the program’s second phase.



### Career Switcher Teacher Licensure and MEd

Provisional licensure prepares midcareer adults for full-time, mentored teaching in as little as four months



#### Accelerated Format

- Three start dates (May, Aug, Jan) allow employed students to set their own pace
- One-third of students complete all six pre-licensure courses in one intensive summer term

#### Alternative Approach

Apply program prerequisites toward degree requirements



#### Interdisciplinary Pathways

- Students demonstrate subject expertise from bachelor’s and 5+ years of work experience
- Courses teach general pedagogy, plus research-based methods for classroom management and measurable learning

#### Alternative Approach

Offer post-bac classes to help students meet prerequisites



#### Practical Experience

- Level I: Five of six courses include structured practicum
- Level II: Full year of teaching under provisional license, with mentorship from retired teacher or school administrator

#### Alternative Approach

Provide unpaid externships if paid placements are scarce

The program also offers online delivery and three start dates so students can select their own pace. Those who start in August have a full year to earn their provisional licensure, while those who start in May can do the same in four months and start teaching as soon as the K-12 school year begins.

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

# For Career Crossers

## Customize Format and Curriculum for Target Audience’s Industry

Programs for career crossers tend to provide either general skills for technically trained professionals (such as management for engineers) or technical skills for generally trained professionals (such as compliance for law or business executives). The University of Tennessee’s Physician Executive MBA falls into the first category. Its delivery of general business competencies is tailored to the distinct professional needs of its niche audience.



### Physician Executive MBA

Distinct professional needs of niche audience shape delivery of general business competencies



#### Flexible Delivery

- One-year, blended format reduces commitment
- Saturday classes recorded in case of emergency absences
- Four one-week residencies fit into PTO and CME allowances

#### Alternative Approach

Offer 100% online route to expand geographic bounds



#### Interdisciplinary Pathways

- Curriculum teaches business principles through health care applications and case studies
- No prior business coursework assumed

#### Alternative Approach

Provide introductory courses to “level” diverse backgrounds



#### Professional Development

- Credential-conscious health care industry values MBA over non-degree programs
- Annual symposia connect 450 physician alumni for continuing education and networking

#### Alternative Approach

Diversify audience to facilitate interprofessional learning

Since doctors are generally busy during the week, classes take place on Saturdays. And, since doctors may need to miss class due to medical emergencies, classes are recorded and archived for later viewing. On-campus components are scheduled into four one-week residencies that fit into standard allowances for continuing medical education and PTO.

The classroom experience is also tailored to physicians. Instructors use case studies based in health care, and program admission is restricted to physicians, since physicians prefer to study and network with peers.

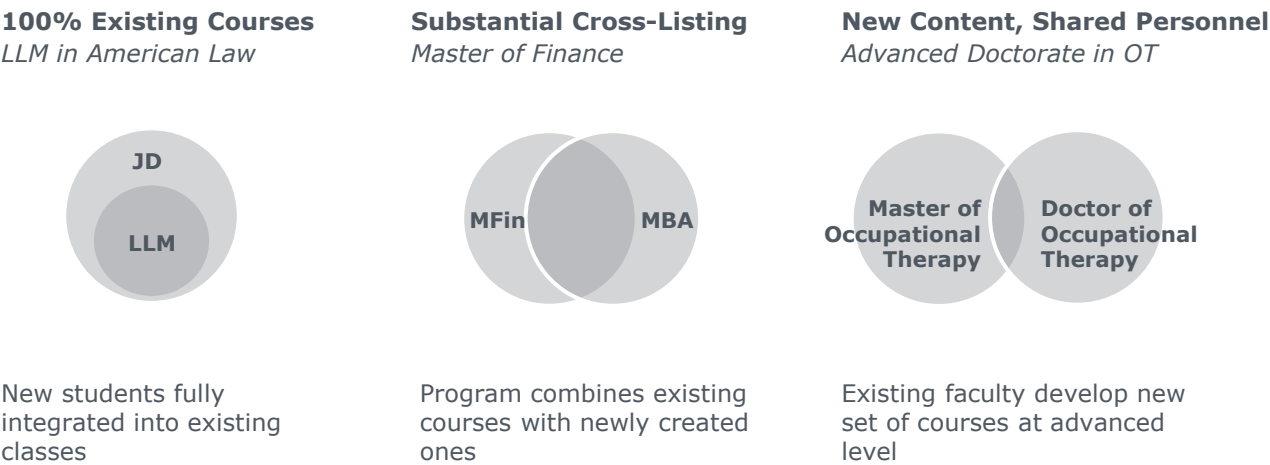
Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

# Don't Start from Scratch

## New Programs Should Draw on Existing Faculty and Courses

One key to reaching new market segments cost-effectively is drawing on existing resources. The nature of your new and existing programs will determine the degree of potential cross-listing. Some side programs do require substantial course development, but they may still reduce costs of program launch by drawing largely on existing faculty.

### Models for Cross-listing Content







In law, the LLM in American Law is often built entirely out of the JD program; foreign-trained lawyers simply join domestic law students in their classes. In business, the specialized master's program often shares some core and elective courses with the MBA, while maintaining a set of dedicated courses in more technical topics. An advanced doctorate in occupational therapy would require many courses not currently offered at the master's level, but existing faculty could develop them.

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

# The Cross-listing Debate

## Do Challenges of Cross-listing Courses Outweigh Efficiencies?

While cross-listing courses between new and existing programs offers clear advantages, there are also possible complications to keep in mind.

Advantages of Cross-listing		Related Challenges
 New Expenses	Reduces course development costs	May require creation of new course sections
 Instructional Logistics	Increases instructional efficiency, especially for small programs	Often requires reconciliation of conflicting schedules and grade scales across programs
 Classroom Experience	Provides greater academic, professional, and cultural diversity in the classroom	Demands that instructors balance the needs of students with divergent experiences
 Curricular Content	Enhances elective options (if new courses are added to core program curriculum)	May result in electives too specialized or technical to be relevant to core program

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.



# Serving New and Rapidly Changing Professions

Niche Programs Micro-targeted to Evolving Roles

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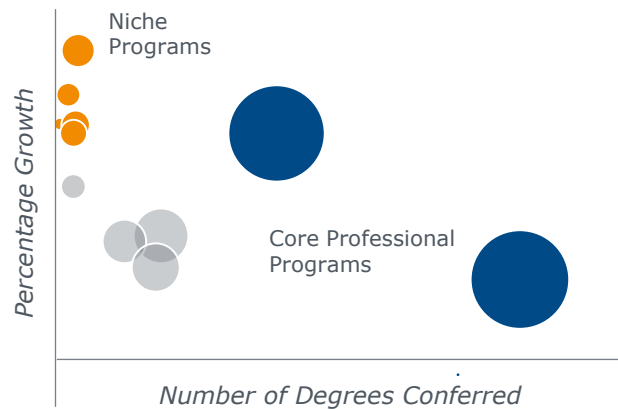
SECTION

3

# Serving Students in New and Rapidly Changing Roles

## Hyper-customization More Important Than Institutional Brand

In the decade ahead, the fastest growth in master's enrollments will come from specialized programs serving new and rapidly changing industries, such as cybersecurity, data analytics, and health informatics. A much larger range of institutions can compete effectively for these enrollments. Programs in core professional fields typically rely on institutional brand and rankings to attract students. Programs serving niche markets rely on micro-targeting: they attract students by designing programs that are highly customized to their specific industry and role.



### Core Professional Programs

- Larger enrollment
- Slower growth
- Targeted to large, well established professions (lawyers, teachers)
- Less focus on specialized skills

Marketing focused on institutional brand and reputation

### Niche Programs

- Smaller enrollment
- Faster growth
- Targeted to new industries, new and rapidly changing roles (e.g., cybersecurity engineer)
- More focus on specialized skills

Attract students with programs highly customized to their industry and role

Niche programs tend to cross disciplinary boundaries and have multiple potential “homes” across campus. Data analytics programs, for example, are housed in business schools, engineering schools, schools of arts and science, continuing education units, or even their own interdisciplinary centers. The programs may draw faculty from across these units.

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

# Understanding Students' Needs

## Students' Unique Profile Should Influence Every Aspect of the Program

Successful niche programs address the constraints, values, and ambitions of the specific students they serve. These considerations should shape a program's launch cycle, marketing strategy, administration, and student services.

If Your Students Are...		Then You Need to Offer...
In fast-changing industries	→	Faster program approval
Strongly focused on ROI	→	Rigorous market research
Long out of college	→	More flexible admissions requirements
Evaluating multiple programs	→	Student-centric program design
Shopping online	→	Online marketing and recruiting
Working full-time	→	Flexible delivery modes
Expecting 24/7 support	→	Working adult support services
Looking to rise within their organization	→	Leadership development
Seeking a degree as route to a specific job	→	Career placement

### Examples of Niche Programs

Agricultural Communications	Digital Fabrication	Intelligence Analysis
Biodefense	Emerging Media	Mechatronic Engineering
Bioinformatics	Geodesign	Nursing Informatics
Computational Linguistics	Geographical Information Science	Online Education
Construction Management	Geospatial Intelligence	Quality Engineering
Cyber-Physical Systems Engineering	Health Care Analytics	Renewable Energy Engineering
Cybersecurity	Health Informatics	Social Media Management
Data Analytics	Human-Computer Interaction	Sustainability Management

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.



# A Market-Driven Approach to Program Design

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## Analyzing Industries, Roles, Skills, and Geographic Markets

Even more critically, designing and marketing niche programs for fast-changing roles requires staying on the pulse of the evolving industries in which graduates will work. Colleges and universities have traditionally relied on industry advisory boards, Bureau of Labor Statistics data, and student surveys to guide decisions on new professional programs. For niche programs targeting rapidly changing roles, institutions need detailed and accurate information on emerging trends in what skills and qualifications employers are demanding and how demand is fluctuating for specific roles, with specific types of employers, and in specific geographic areas.

### Critical Questions for Program Design



#### Industries and Employers

- In what fields should this program prepare graduates to work? Who might hire them?
- What employers might seek contract training?



#### Required Skill Sets

- What specialized skills should our program teach to match employer needs?
- What general skills (e.g., leadership) do roles in this field typically require?



#### Occupations and Roles

- To what types of positions should we target our program?
- What level of education and specialized training do these positions require?



#### Geographic Markets

- What metropolitan areas demonstrate the strongest demand for this program?
- What industries or employers are driving demand within the hottest markets?

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

# Real-Time Employer Demand Analytics

## The COE Forum’s Market Research Service

### A Powerful New Market Research Tool

The COE Forum provides member institutions with a complimentary market research service that helps institutions plan their program portfolio, validate market demand, and grow existing programs.

Our team of market research analysts uses data from Burning Glass, a Boston-based leader in human capital data analytics, to provide information you can’t get from surveys, Bureau of Labor and Statistics data, or typical job posting database searches. Burning Glass’s unique artificial intelligence tools mine hundreds of millions of online job postings for real-time intelligence on the titles, skills, and educational requirements in demand across the country and in your local and regional market.

Our analysts then conduct any additional research needed to answer your questions, interpret all the data, and prepare a customized report that explains the findings clearly and succinctly.

### A Quantum Leap in Market Insight

*What You Can’t Get from Surveys, BLS, or Keywords*

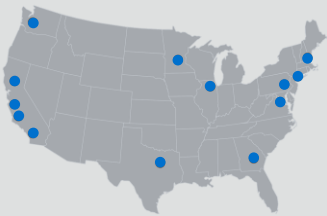
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|--|---|
| ✓ Data mining of “natural language” postings   | ✓ Key skills and certifications                   |
| ✓ Unprecedented geographic specificity         | ✓ Validation of faculty’s anecdotal assumptions   |
| ✓ Specific job titles, beyond O-Net categories | ✓ Early warning of growing (and declining) demand |
| ✓ Minimum educational requirements, by title   | ✓ No time lag in gauging emerging skills          |

### Illustrative Analysis

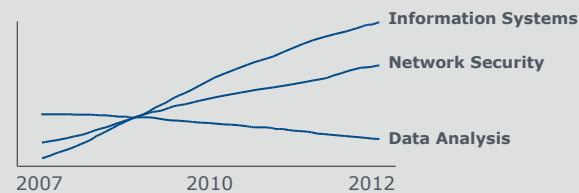
Top Job Titles



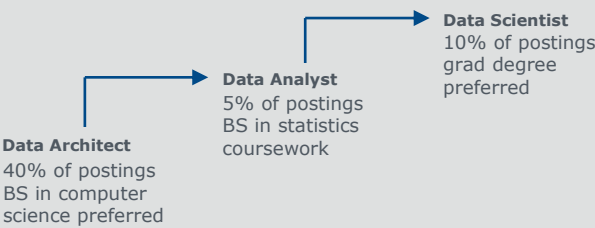
Top Hiring MSAs



Fastest Growing Skills



Emerging Career Ladders



## Ensuring Enrollments Across the Program Development Life Cycle

<div>Real-Time Employer Data</div> <div>National Enrollment Data</div> <div>Peer Program Benchmarking</div> <div>Thought Leader Interviews</div> <div>Industry Literature</div> <div>Accreditation and Associations</div>	<b>NEW PROGRAMS</b>	
	> Inform Strategic Planning	Scan the region for top five fastest growing fields to select focus of new degree completion program
	> Validate Market Demand	Confirm market size and employer interest before launching new master's in engineering management
	<b>EXISTING OFFERINGS</b>	
	> Refresh the Curriculum	Revise learning objectives of long-standing IT degree to include cutting-edge skills required by employers of technology professionals
	> Refine the Marketing Message	Quantify the career value proposition in recruiting materials with compelling data on job postings and top employers to command the attention of prospective students

## Identifying the Next Decade's Critical Employer Needs

In addition to conducting projects at member request, the COE Forum combines state-of-the-art analytics with deep insight into emerging demand drivers in major fields, alerting members to national, regional, and state-by-state trends in employer hiring, job titles and position descriptions, and critical skills and competencies.



### Future Field Reports

Cybersecurity

Second Bachelor's Degrees

Allied Health and Nursing

Aging Services



### State Market Demand Dashboards

Fastest growing job titles

Hottest skills and competencies

Employers with greatest hiring need

Trends in state and regional employment

To learn more about the COE Forum, email us at [coeforum@eab.com](mailto:coeforum@eab.com) or call 202-266-6400.





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