

4 Types of Undergraduate Students



WHO IS THE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT?

A recent survey by Wiley Education Services sought to define undergraduate learners by studying their motivations, triggers, traits, and behaviors. Wiley found that most undergraduate students pursue a degree for four distinct reasons. By learning about these traits, your university can improve its marketing and enrollment strategies.



The Strivers

STRIVERS believe that earning a degree is necessary to achieve their future goals. They realize that they need to learn new skills or reskill to advance.

KEY GOALS

Attain a balance of professional achievement and personal fulfillment



44%

of all undergraduate students



Top Motivations

Explore new opportunities and achieve their goals



Barriers

Concerned about application logistics and staying focused on coursework



Wants

Would like 100% online, in-state for lower tuition, and a well-known brand



Demographic

Age mid-30s to mid-40s and diverse in gender



Common Degrees

No degree stands out — **STRIVERS** run the gamut



The Seekers

SEEKERS are interested in helping others and are less motivated by salary or promotions. Many are retired or unemployed and are not looking for work.

KEY GOALS

Tailor studies to their exact interests, and provide programs that fit their lifestyle



18%

of all undergraduate students



Top Motivations

Fulfill a personal achievement



Barriers

Cost



Wants

Would like a specific online program at a reasonable cost that accommodates their interests



Demographic

Age 45+ and primarily female



Common Degrees

SEEKERS often pursue Health and Human Services and Psychology degrees



The Upgraders

UPGRADERS need to level up their education to a bachelor's degree so they can attract better employment opportunities. These students are most likely to pursue a graduate degree or a professional certification after obtaining a bachelor's degree.

KEY GOALS

Improve their career prospects and expand their job options



15%

of all undergraduate students



Top Motivations

Need education options that are flexible and efficient



Barriers

Concerned about school and life balance



Wants

Would like ease, convenience, and the ability to transfer credits so they can graduate quickly



Demographic

Age <30 and primarily female



Common Degrees

UPGRADERS often pursue nursing degrees



The Questioners

QUESTIONERS are skeptical that college is worth the effort and wonder if a degree program will make a difference for them. They have moderate income and are less motivated by personal interest or passion.

KEY GOALS

They vary across the group, but have shown less of a demand for tailoring their studies than the other segments



23%

of all undergraduate students



Top Motivations

Would like to fit in with peers getting their degrees



Barriers

If their educational journey gets disrupted, it tends to take them longer to finish



Wants

Would like an accredited, reputable, and well-known brand



Demographic

Age <30 and primarily male



Common Degrees

QUESTIONERS are often undecided

Understand students' perspectives to anticipate and meet their needs.

By understanding the unique needs, motivations, and challenges of your prospective undergraduate students, you can provide more personalized engagement opportunities.

COMING SOON!

Watch for Wiley's upcoming Undergraduate Student Segmentation Report for more insights. In the meantime, visit our blog to read our [latest reports](#) and find more resources on trends in higher ed.