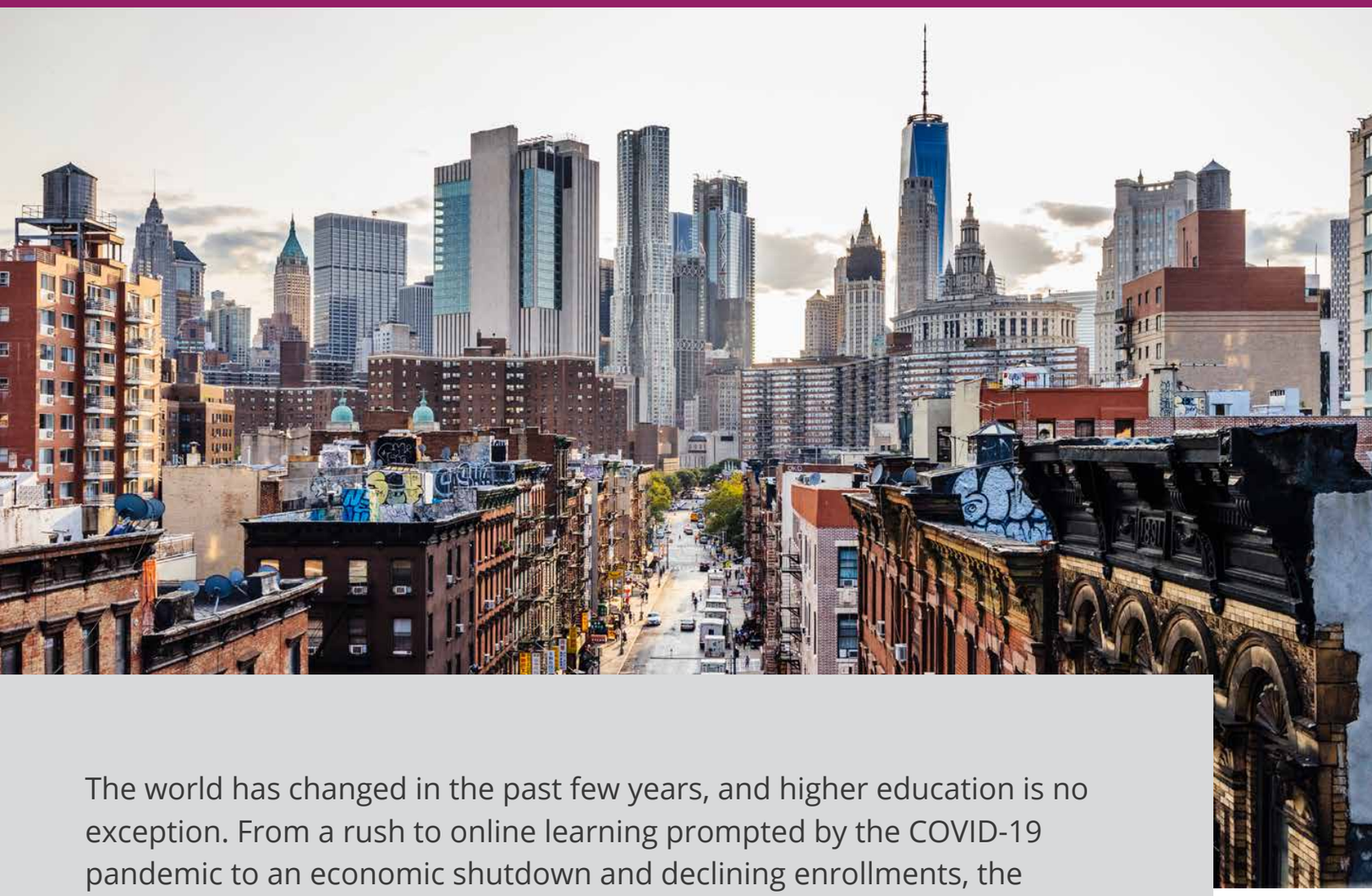
STATE OF THE EDUCATION MARKET

Trends and Insights in Key Graduate Disciplines



The world has changed in the past few years, and higher education is no exception. From a rush to online learning prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic to an economic shutdown and declining enrollments, the market has undergone new and complex challenges.

So, how can you make the right decisions regarding your degree portfolio? We can help. Here's a snapshot of US graduation trends at the master's and doctoral levels based on the **latest IPEDS completions data** from the **2020-2021** academic year.

MASTER'S-LEVEL TRENDS

The top 3 master's degree verticals

Ranked by number of graduates in 2021

#1 BUSINESS

23% of all master's degrees

Business has been the **largest master's vertical since 2011**, and its scale remains unmatched.

Fast facts

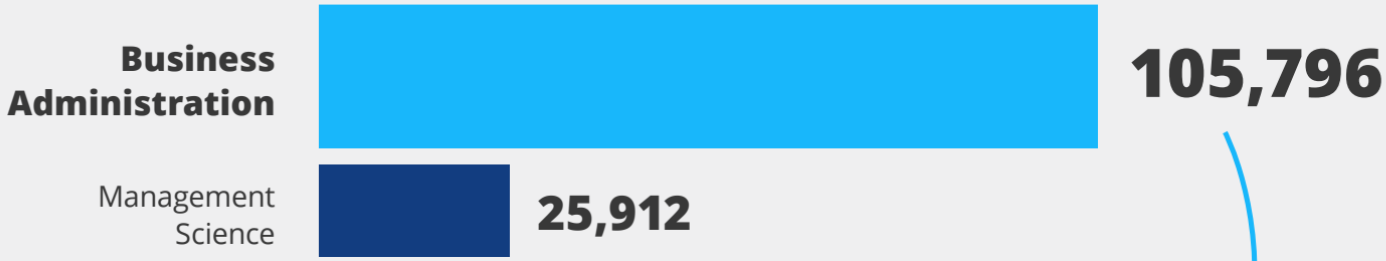
211,358
Total grads

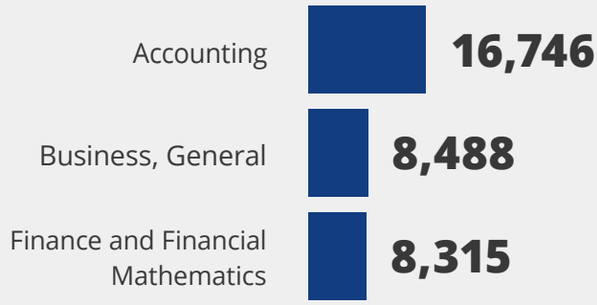
1,269
Institutions reporting grads

51%
Share of programs online

2%
Average growth since 2016

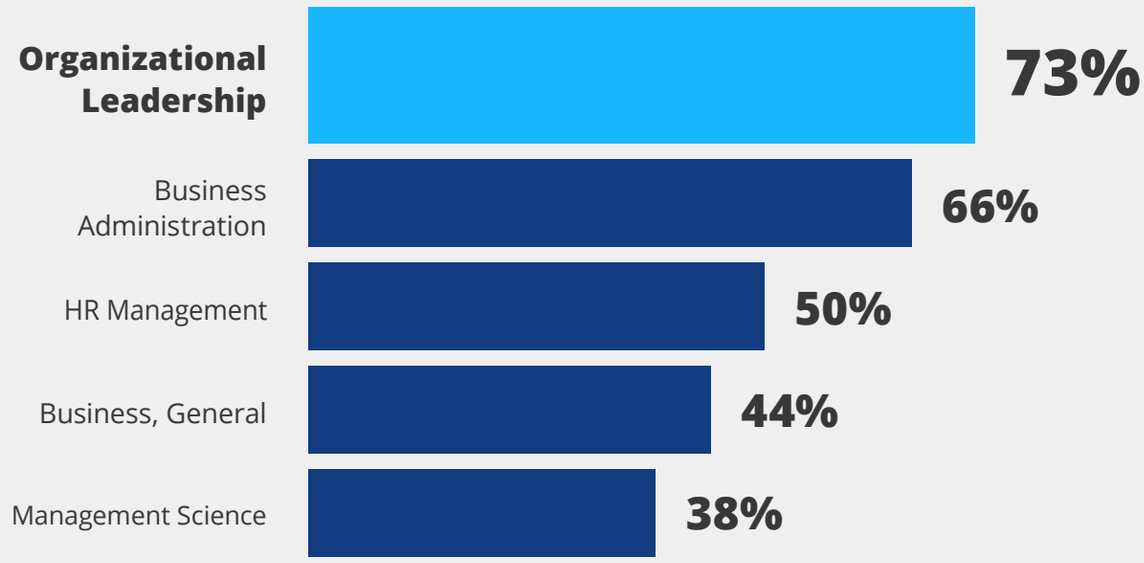
Largest business programs by number of graduates





The MBA edge: More than 2x as many schools reported **MBA** grads (990) than the next most-common program, **Accounting** (472).

Most online business programs



As of 2021, these business degrees were...

Growing the fastest

- Management Science
- Business Statistics
- Organizational Leadership
- Supply Chain Management
- Project Management
- HR Management

Declining the fastest

- Management Information Systems
- Organizational Behavior Studies
- Taxation
- Accounting
- International Business
- Business, General

#2 EDUCATION

18% of all master's degrees

Education has started to recover from the decline from 2011 to 2015 and the steadiness from 2016 to 2020. It grew for the first time in nearly a decade, **up 5% from 2020 to 2021**.

Fast facts

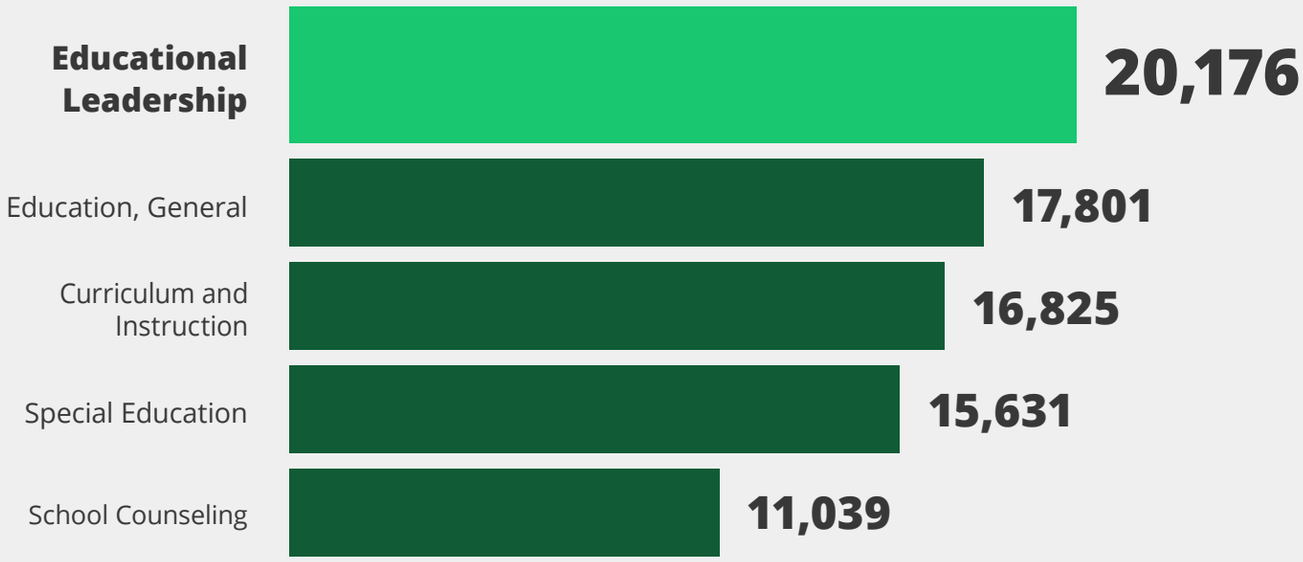
158,506
Total grads

1,180
Institutions reporting grads

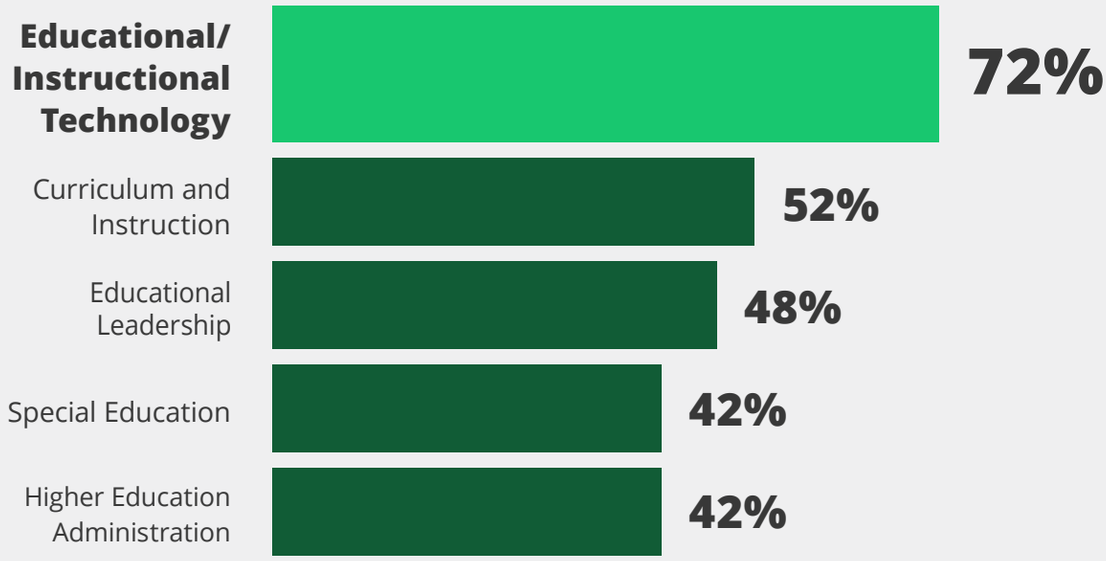
40%
Share of programs online

1%
Average growth since 2016

Largest education programs by number of graduates



Most online education programs



As of 2021, these education degrees were...

Growing the fastest

- Educational/Instructional Technology
- Teacher Education, Multiple Levels
- Special Education
- Early Childhood Education
- Higher Education Administration
- Elementary Education

Declining the fastest

- Education, General
- Physical Education
- Elementary Special Education
- School Counseling
- Educational/Instructional/ Curriculum Supervision
- Curriculum and Instruction

#3 HEALTH

16% of all master's degrees

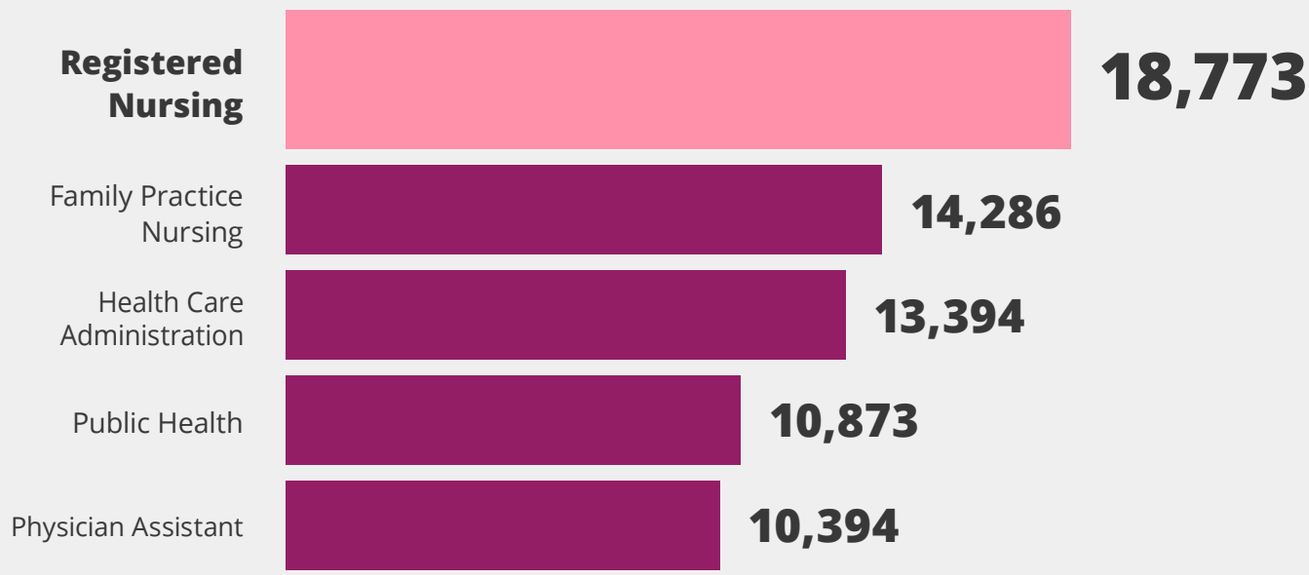
When it comes to growth, health programs are gaining ground. With grads more than tripling since 2004, **health is on track to become the**

second-largest master's vertical in the next few years.

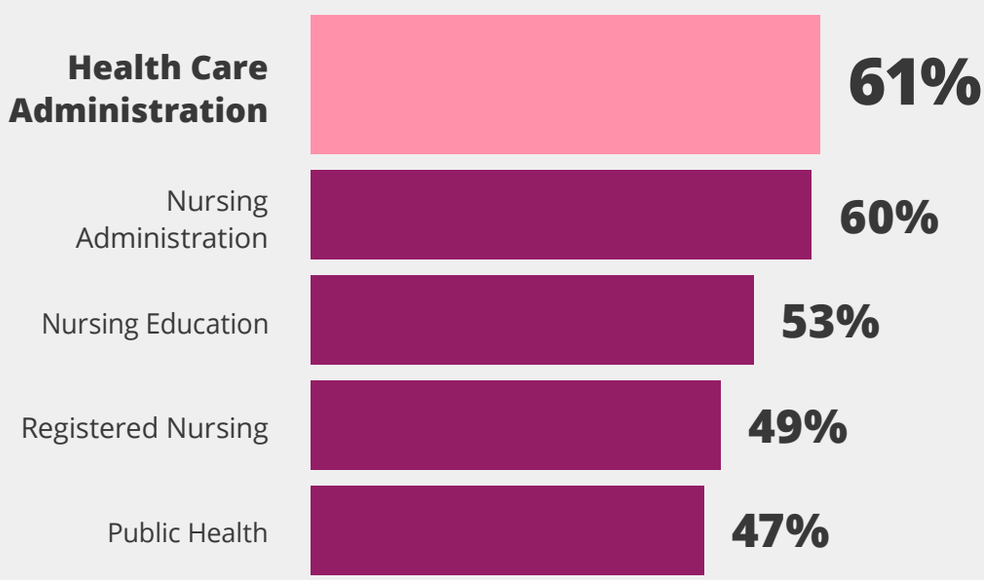
Fast facts

144,198	1,185	32%	5%
Total grads	Institutions reporting grads	Share of programs online	Average growth since 2016

Largest health programs by number of graduates



Most online health programs



As of 2021, these health degrees were...

Growing the fastest

- Medical Informatics
- Nursing Education
- Athletic Training
- Health Services Administration
- Nursing Administration
- Family Practice Nursing

Declining the fastest

- Nursing Science
- Acupuncture
- Marriage and Family Therapy/Counseling
- Adult Health Nurse/Nursing

More top master's programs

Largest master's programs outside the 3 leading verticals

- Social Work
- Computer Science
- Public Administration
- Computer/Information Sciences
- Counseling Psychology
- Electrical Engineering
- Mechanical Engineering
- Information Science
- Psychology
- Information Technology
- Divinity/Ministry
- Library and Information Science
- Sport and Fitness Administration/Management
- Economics and Econometrics
- Architecture and Architectural Sciences
- English Language and Literature

DOCTORAL-LEVEL TRENDS

The top 3 master's degree verticals

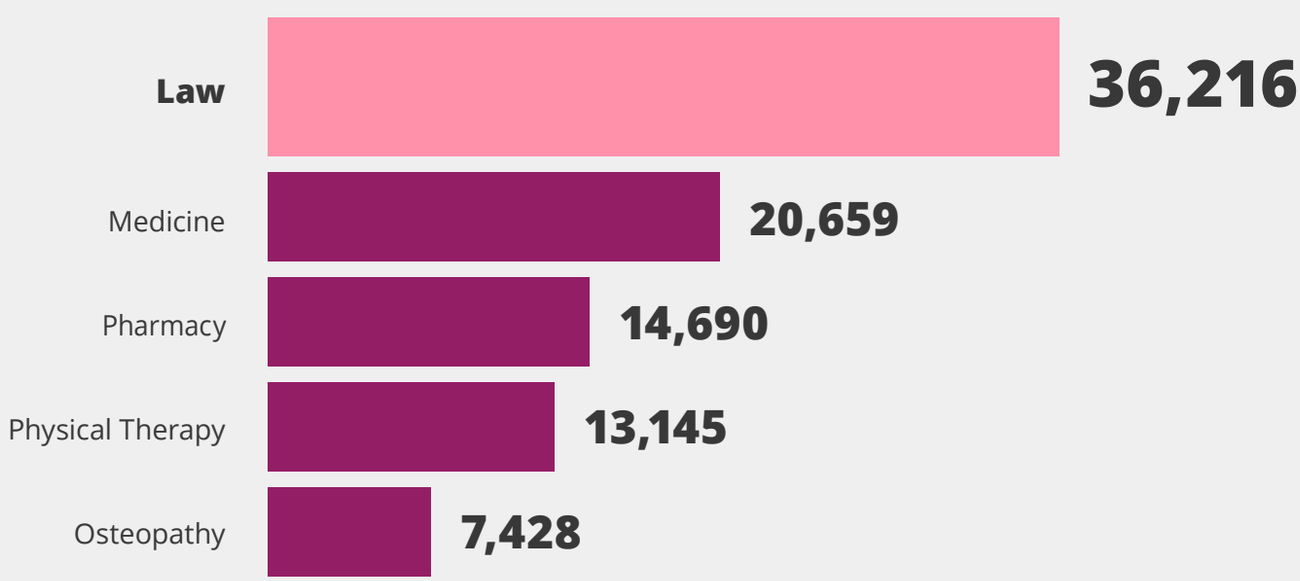
Ranked by number of graduates in 2021

These verticals made up **70%** of doctoral graduates:

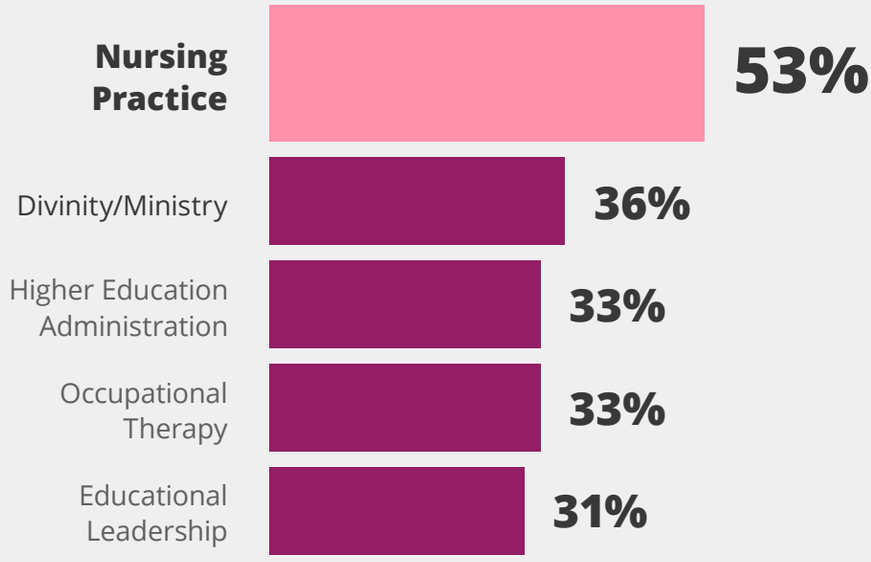
#1	HEALTH
#2	LAW
#3	EDUCATION

Leading the way: Health programs accounted for **44%** of the doctoral market, reporting **2.4x** as many grads as the next-largest vertical.

Largest doctoral programs by number of graduates



Most online doctoral programs



In 2021, these doctoral degrees were...

Growing the fastest

- Occupational Therapy
- Nursing Practice
- Family Practice Nursing
- Social Work
- Divinity/Ministry
- Educational Leadership
- Higher Education Administration
- Theology
- Biomedical Sciences
- Nursing Science

Declining the fastest

- History
- English Language and Literature
- Political Science
- Sociology
- Clinical Psychology
- Psychology
- Education, General
- Chemistry
- Electrical Engineering
- Law

A market standout: Most of the fastest-growing doctoral programs are in health. This field was already growing pre-pandemic, but COVID-19 likely increased the demand for healthcare jobs and degrees.

Want to learn more?

For a closer look, download the full report today:
State of the Education Market 2023: Trends and Insights in Key Graduate Disciplines

WILEY University Services