

The Future of Online Higher Education

Online education is one of the fastest growing forms of education today – but will it stay that way? See the forecast for overall online enrollment growth across all levels of higher education based on current trends.



External Influences

Despite outpacing overall enrollment in U.S. higher education, online education's growth trajectory may be impacted by the following factors:

Risks to Online Growth



- Declining number of **high school graduates**
- Improving **national economy**
- Increasing competition as **more institutions seek market share**
- Decreasing impact of **"convenience-driven" value proposition**
- Rising interest in **micro-credentials**

Boosts to Online Growth



- Spreading adoption of **"free college" options**
- Declining flow of **international students to the U.S.**
- Increasing **professional adoption**
- Rising focus on **upskilling to meet workforce gaps**
- Improving **technologies, like virtual reality and artificial intelligence**

Online Higher Education Forecasts by Level

By the 2020/21 school year, online programs are expected to account for 26% of all higher education market share. See how this growth breaks down by level:

Bachelor's

Key Online Trends

Online bachelor's programs are still gaining market share, but the growth forecast is slowing in most fields except nursing.

By **2021**, online programs are expected to account for

18.6%

of all bachelor's level market share.

Forecasted Online Market Share by Degree in 2021:



Master's

Key Online Trends

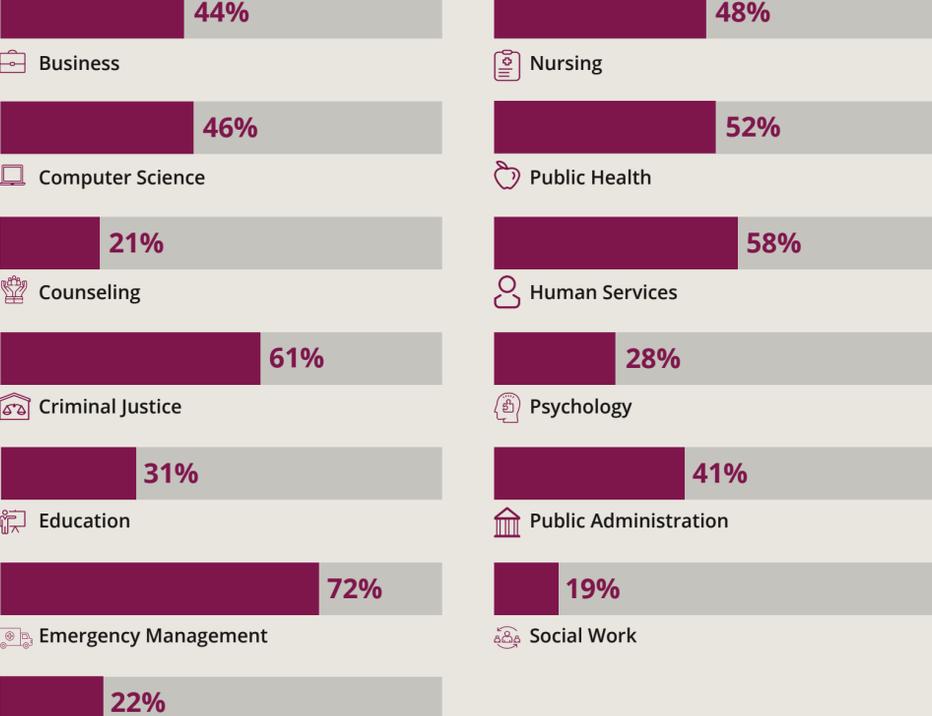
Momentum for online master's programs is still strong due to professional adoption and the convenient format for the target audience, but slowdown is expected as fields become saturated.

By **2021**, online programs are expected to account for

39%

of all master's level market share.

Forecasted Online Market Share by Degree in 2021:



Doctoral

Key Online Trends

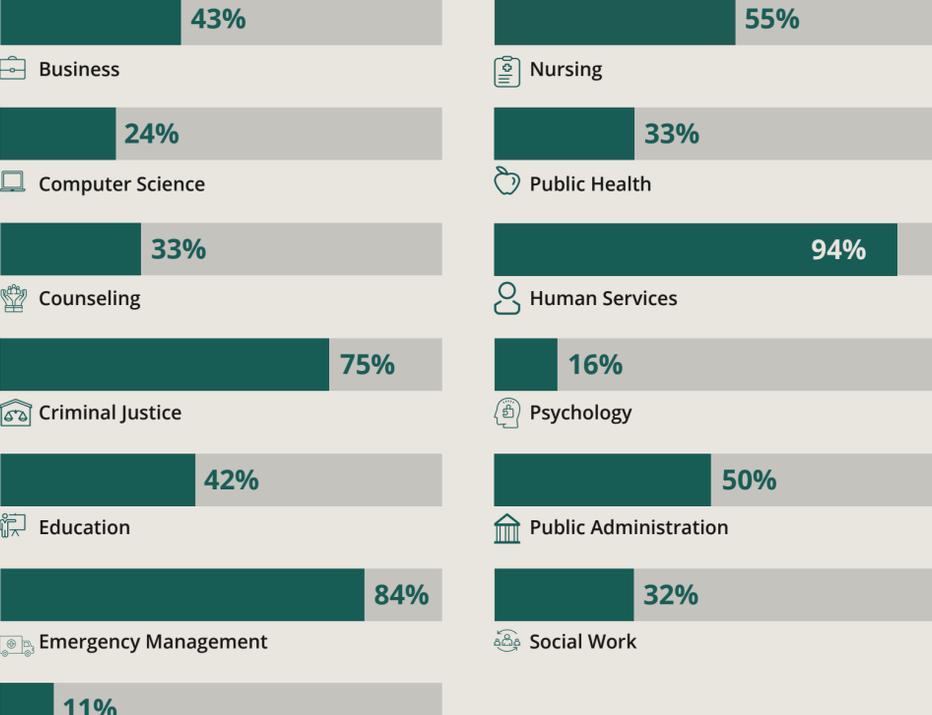
Online programs are already well established in several fields, such as human services, emergency management, and criminal justice, however limited-residency programs may prove popular as non-profit institutions enter the space.

By **2021**, online programs are expected to account for

21%

of all doctoral level market share.

Forecasted Online Market Share by Degree in 2021:



Expand *Your* Online Presence

Overall, forecasts show that online higher education will gain market share in the future. However, competition is increasing and overall student enrollment is declining. Wiley Education Services can help your institution identify which programs can be most successful and differentiate you in the market.

Sources:
National Research Center for College & University Admissions, 2018
Eduventures, 2018

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