



How America Pays for Grad School

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Background and summary

About Ipsos Public Affairs

Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos is an independent company controlled and managed by research professionals. Ipsos Public Affairs is the social research branch of Ipsos.

We help our clients listen to what their audiences are saying, understand what they are thinking, and anticipate what they have in mind. We know how best to determine and measure their views and opinions.

But we go beyond delivering data. We analyze it, put it in context, and then let our clients know how they can best translate this understanding into efficient and effective policies, programs, communications strategies, and marketing initiatives.

Ipsos Public Affairs is the company that public and private sector leaders, the media and the public rely on for quality research and insight into rapidly evolving public opinion at home and around the world.

About the study

How America Pays for Graduate School is an online survey of 1,597 graduate students ages 20 and older

Topics of the study include:

- about how much they spent on graduate school,
- the resources they used to fund their education,
- their reasons for earning a graduate degree, and
- the considerations they weighed when making decisions about attending.

Interviews were conducted in English between May 18 and July 19, 2017. This timing improved the likelihood that responses would reflect actual, not projected, payment amounts for the 2016 – 17 academic year.

The survey sample comprised a cross-section of key demographic groups, and was stratified to ensure representation of select fields of study.

Composite of how the ‘typical’ graduate student pays for school is a mathematical representation similar to that created for How America Pays for College. Total dollar amounts reported by students are gross costs, before any financial aid is applied, and include their estimates of direct and indirect costs of attending school, including tuition, room and board, any additional cost-of- living expenses, and other expenses.

How America Pays for Graduate School



Grad students enrolled in graduate school are focused on earning credentials that will help them achieve their career goals. They say they are investing in their future, that the degree will help them enter or advance in their field, and that they will earn more with the degree.



Half of those currently enrolled had considered not attending because of the cost, but believe the benefits outweigh the expense, certain the investment in a graduate degree will open, or widen, the door to career opportunity and increased earnings.



The majority take ownership of their decisions to

- Attend: basing their degree and university choices on performance outcomes
- Figure out how to pay for it: creating a plan to pay before enrolling
- Pay for it: being willing to borrow and feeling confident in their decisions.



Graduate students fund more than three-quarters of their expenses themselves, using money they've earned or borrowed. Access to aid is limited, and contributions from family/others is minimal.



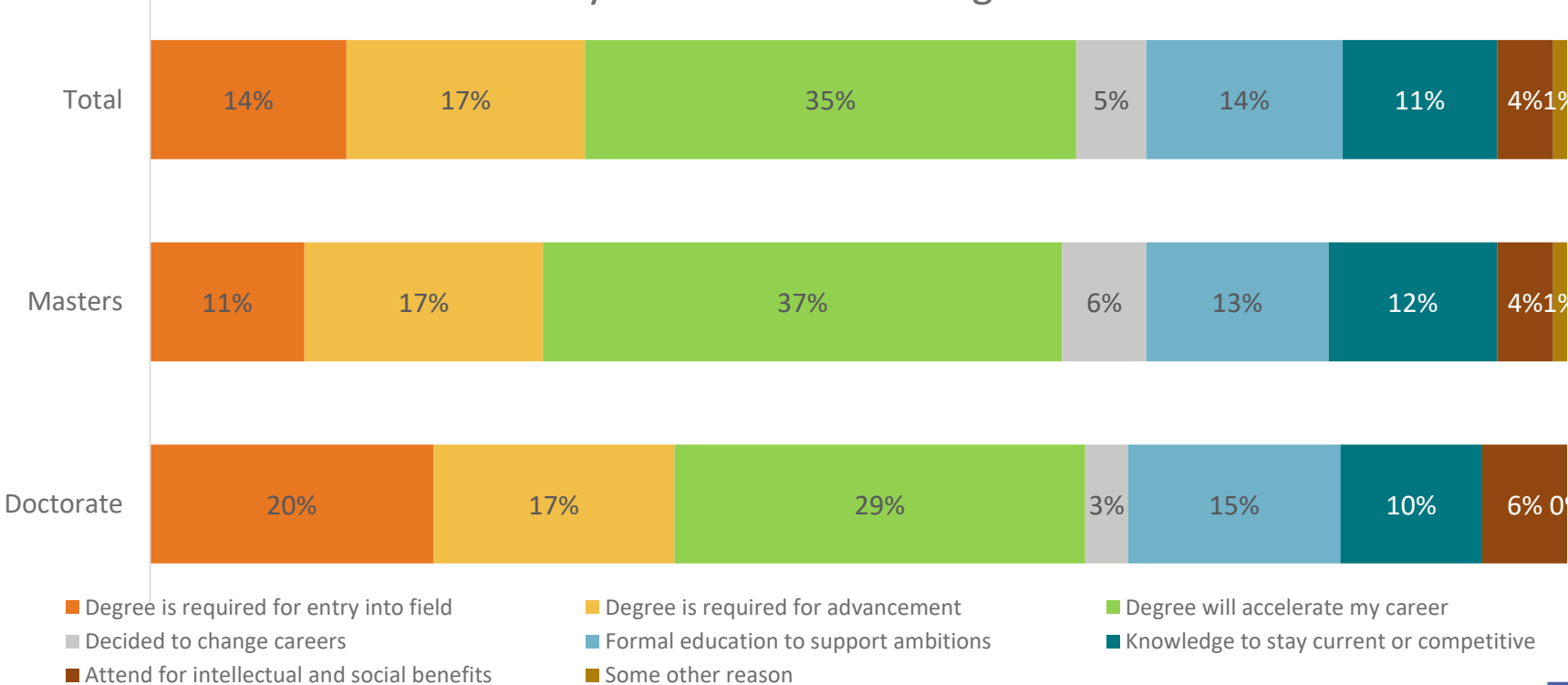
Why students attend grad school

Attitudes toward grad school



Career goals influence grad school attendance

Primary reason for Attending Grad School



Part-time students are more likely to change field

Graduate degree is in the same field as undergrad



74%

All Grad Students



70%

Part-time

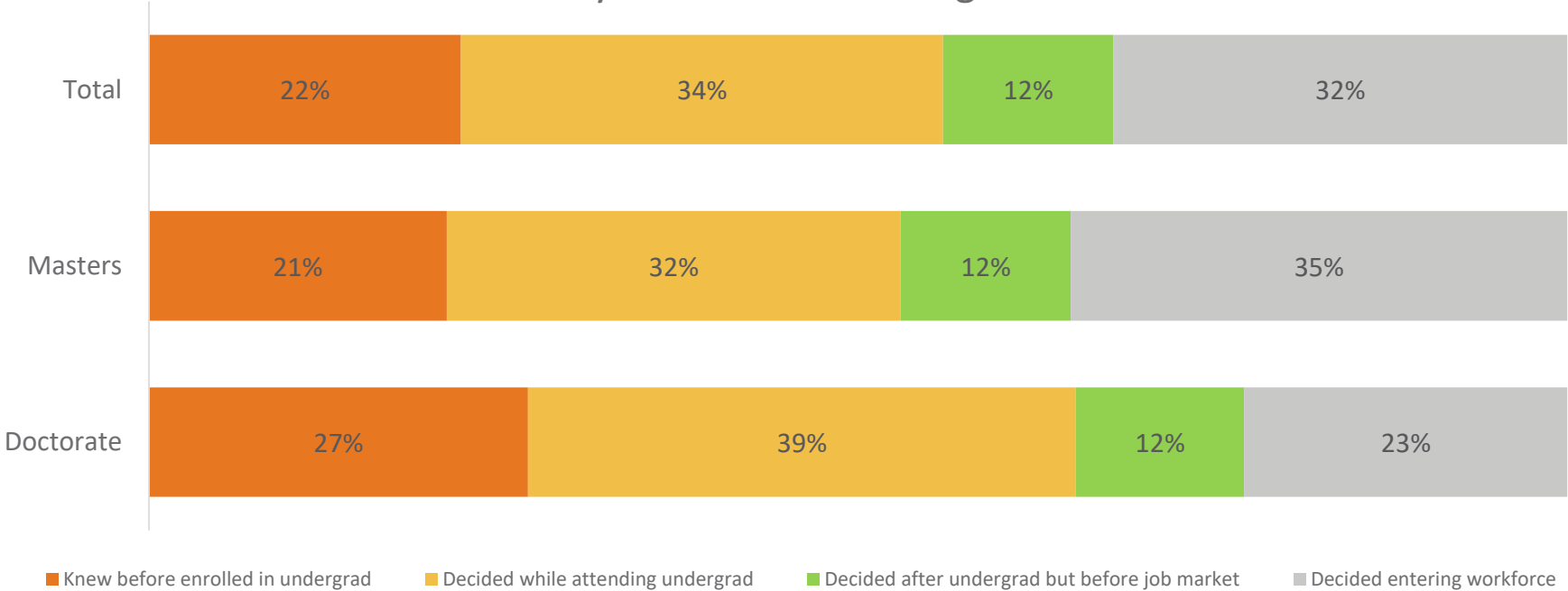


77%

Full-time

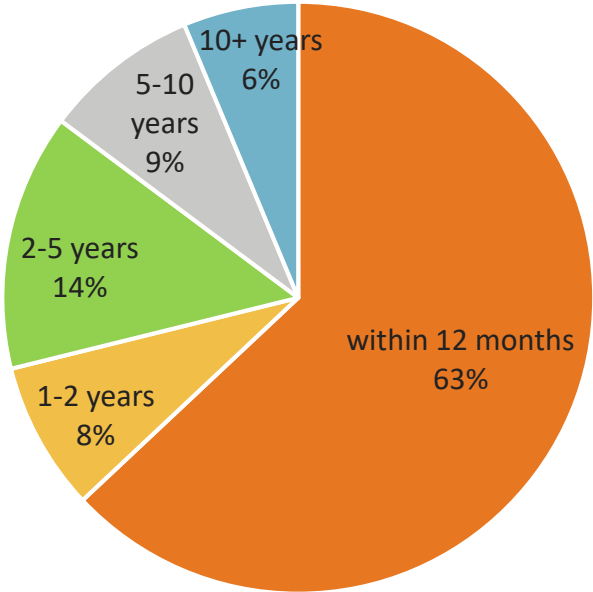
Doctoral students decide earlier to attend grad school

When they decided to attend grad school



Majority enroll within a year of earning bachelors

Time between Undergraduate and Graduate Enrollment



More than half anticipate a substantial salary increase

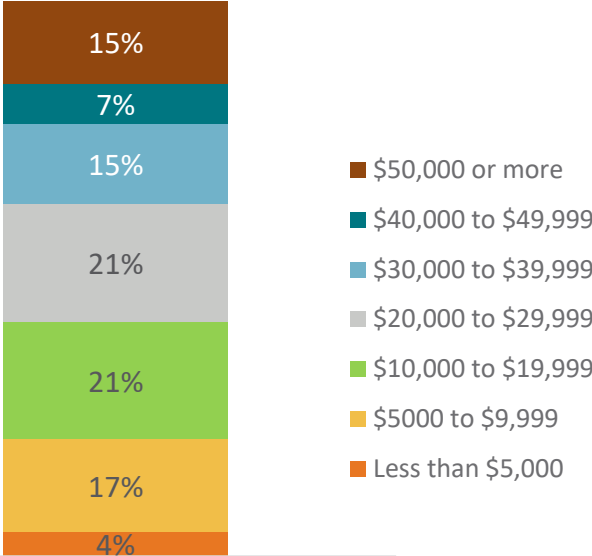
Expect their salary will change after graduation



87%

Employed Grad Students

Estimated Salary increase after Graduation

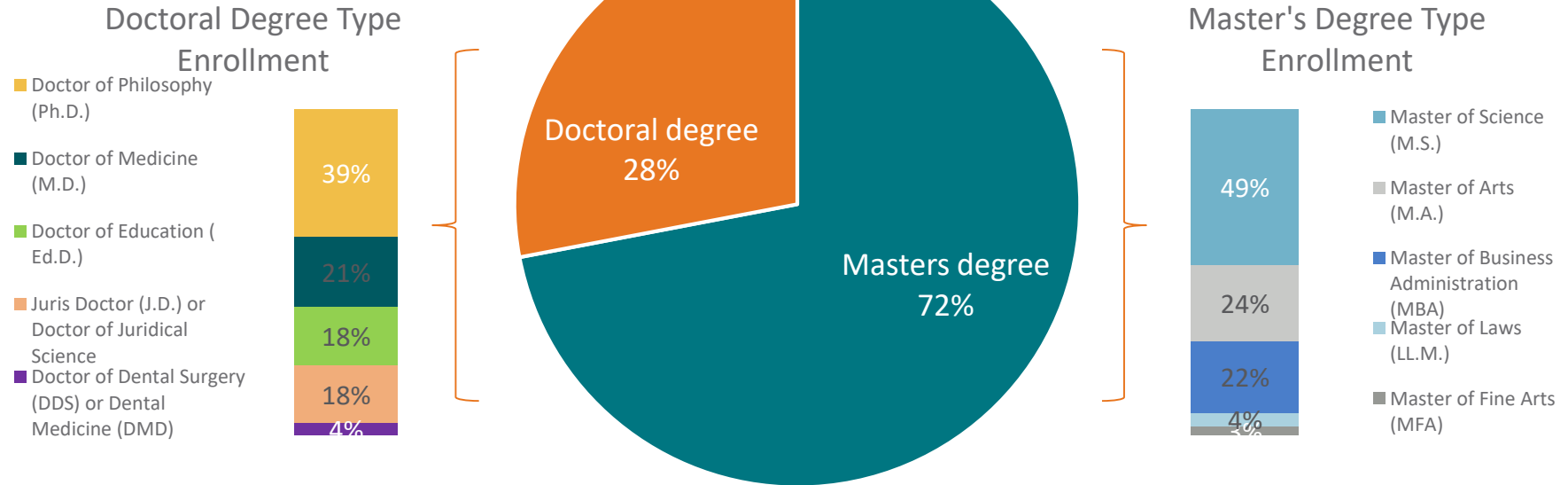


Total
(n=1002)

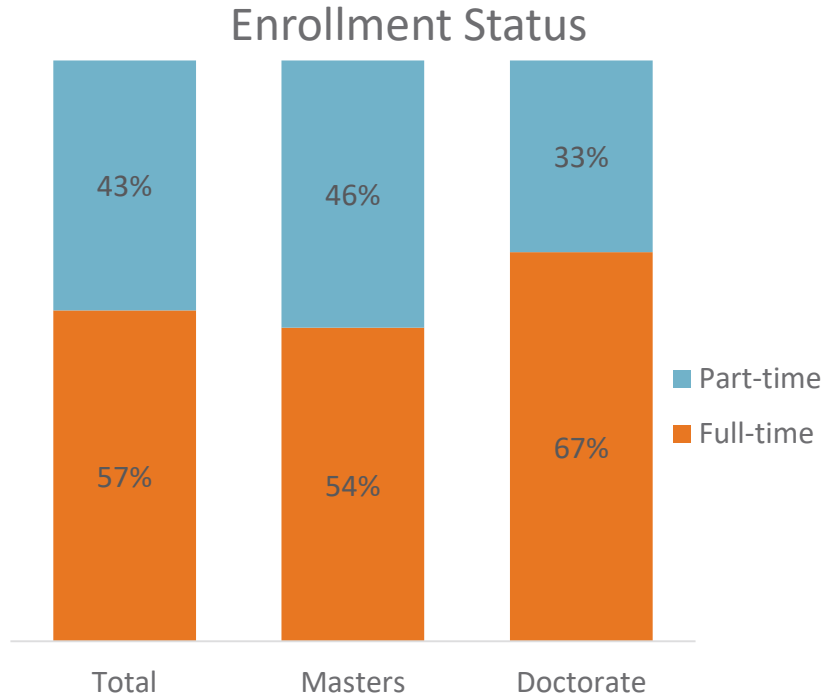


Enrollment decisions and Planning

Decision point: Selecting a degree



Decision point: Full- vs part-time enrollment



Part-time students are more likely to be:

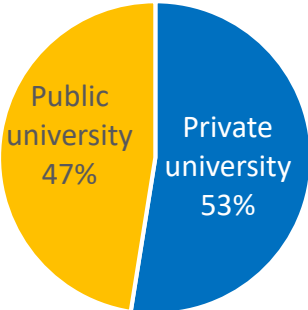
- Currently employed
- Have delayed starting grad school
- Be married
- Have children

Full-time students are more likely to be:

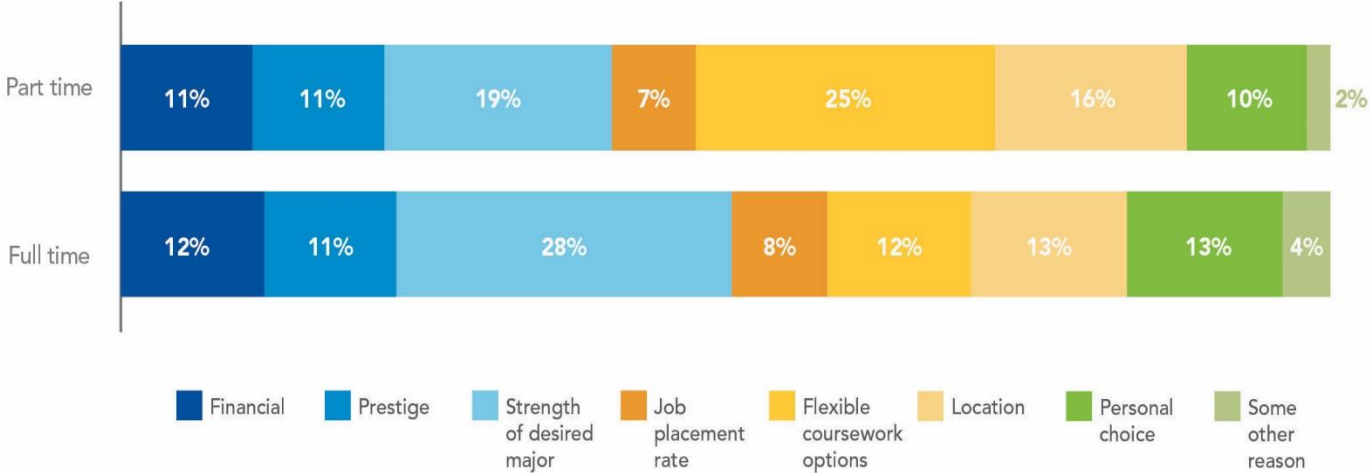
- Younger
- Female
- From the south
- Black or Asian
- Doctorate level

School choice: quality, convenience, and cost

School Type Enrollment



Primary Reason for Selecting the Graduate School, by Enrollment Status



Paying-for-grad school considerations



Planners are more confident

Confident in Paying-for-Grad School Decisions



85%

All Grad Students



90%

Planners



76%

Non-Planners

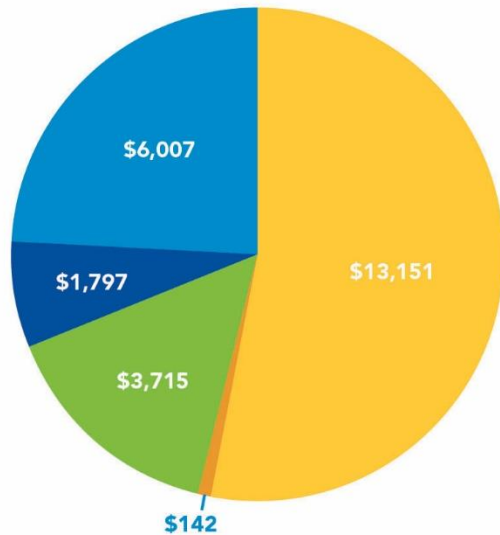


How grad students pay for school

Loans pay more than half of grad school costs

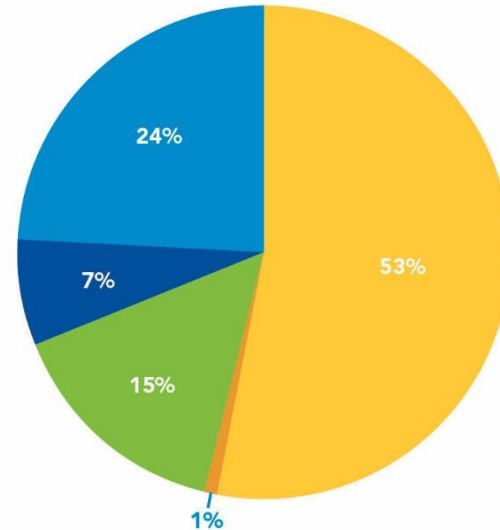
Average amount spent in academic year 2016-17: \$24,812

How the Typical Student Pays for Graduate School, Average Amount



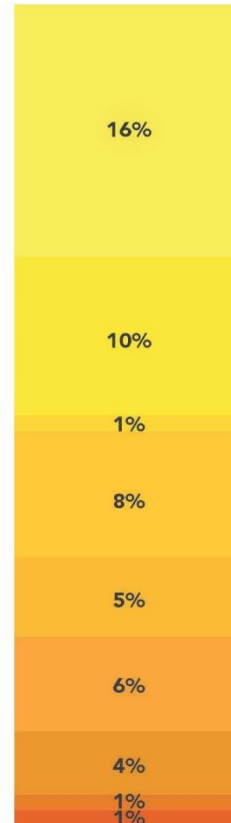
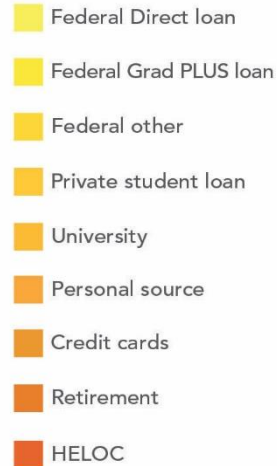
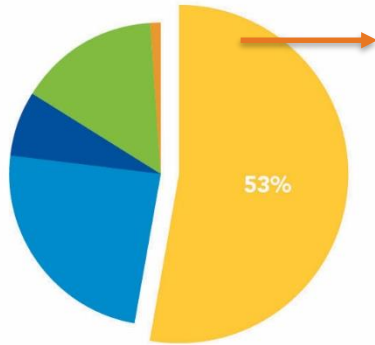
How the Typical Student Pays for Graduate School, Average Funding Source Share

- Student borrowing
- Someone else borrowing
- Grants & scholarships
- External contributions
- Student earnings



Federal student loans are top borrowing source

Average Funding Source Share,
Student Borrowing Detail

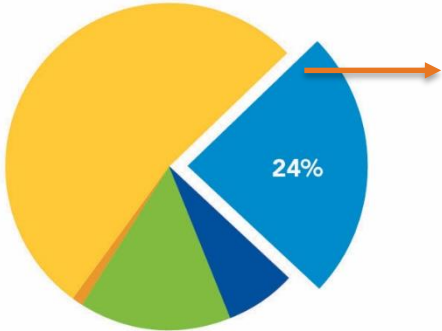


Proportion of costs paid from:

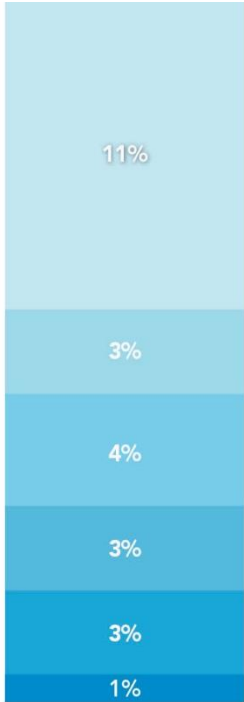
- Federal loans: 27%
- Private or university loans: 13%
- Non-student loan borrowing: 13%

Savings is top personal spending source for grad school

Average Funding Source Share, Student Earnings Detail



- Savings
- Investment income
- Earnings, off campus
- On-campus work (e.g., research, teaching, assistanceship)
- Employer tuition reimbursement or stipend
- Military benefits



Proportion of costs paid from:

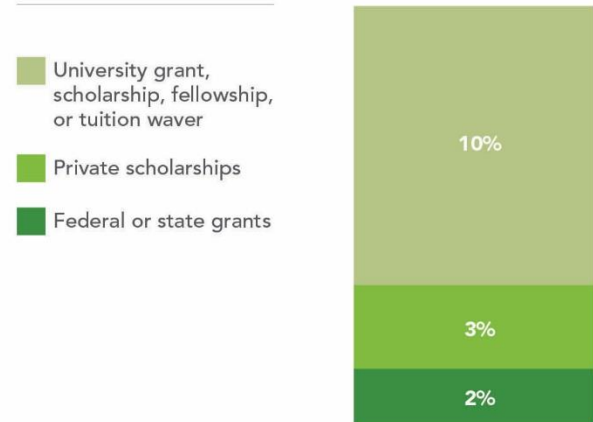
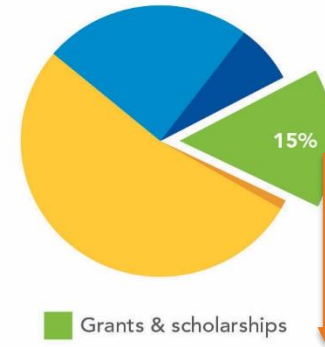
- Savings/investments: 14%
- Current income: 7%
- Benefits: 4%

School top contributor of 'free money'

Proportion of costs paid from:

- University aid: 10%
- Private / community scholarships: 3%
- Government grants: 2%

Average Funding Source Share,
Grant & Scholarship Detail



Part-time attendance comes with a lower price-tag

Full-time students spend nearly 50 percent more on grad school, on an annual basis, than part-time students.

Average annual amount spent in 2016-17



\$19,469

part-time program

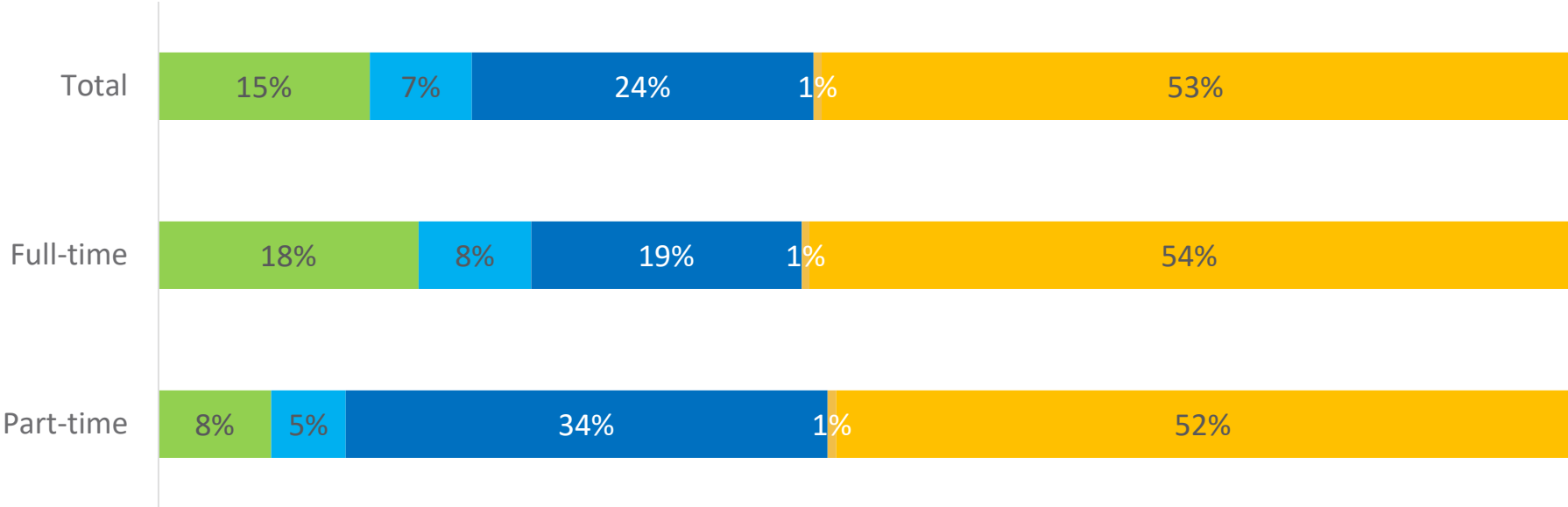


\$28,790

full-time program

Part-time students cover the cost of college themselves

How the Typical Student Pays for Grad School, Funding Source Share, by Enrollment Status



■ Grants & scholarships ■ Non-student income & savings ■ Student income & savings ■ Non-student borrowing ■ Student borrowing

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