

POLICY BRIEF

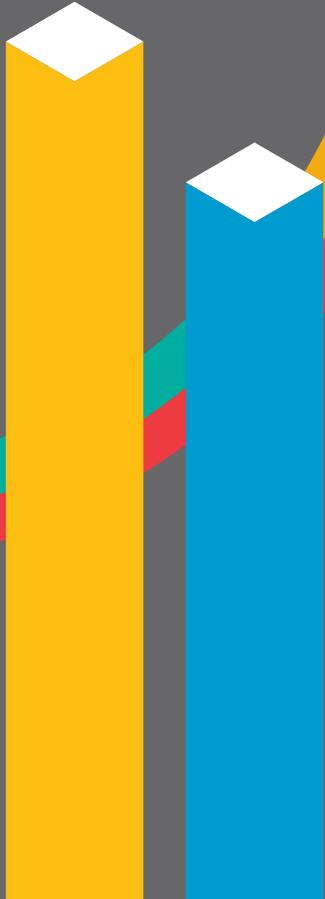
NEW AMERICA EDUCATION POLICY PROGRAM
MARCH 2014



THE GRADUATE STUDENT DEBT REVIEW

THE STATE OF GRADUATE
STUDENT BORROWING

JASON DELISLE



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Jason Delisle is Director of the New America Federal Education Budget Project. He can be reached at delisle@newamerica.org.

Owen Phillips, a graduate student at Georgetown's Master of Public Policy program, and intern on the New America Education Policy Program, assisted with data compilation for this report.

Ross van der Linde, a communications associate on New America's Education Policy Program, produced graphics for this report.

ABOUT NEW AMERICA

New America is a nonprofit, nonpartisan public policy institute that invests in new thinkers and new ideas to address the next generation of challenges facing the United States.

The New America Education Policy Program's work is made possible through generous grants from the Alliance for Early Success; the Annie E. Casey Foundation; the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund; the Grable Foundation; the Foundation for Child Development; the Joyce Foundation; the Kresge Foundation; Lumina Foundation; the Pritzker Children's Initiative; the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation; and the W. Clement and Jessie V. Stone Foundation.

© 2014 New America

This report carries a Creative Commons license, which permits non-commercial re-use of New America content when proper attribution is provided. This means you are free to copy, display and distribute New America's work, or include our content in derivative works, under the following conditions:

Attribution. You must clearly attribute the work to New America, and provide a link back to www.newamerica.org.
Noncommercial. You may not use this work for commercial purposes without explicit prior permission from New America.

Share Alike. If you alter, transform, or build upon this work, you may distribute the resulting work only under a license identical to this one.

RISING DEBT IN GRADUATE EDUCATION

Is America's student debt problem due more to expensive graduate degrees than unaffordable undergraduate educations? This New America analysis of U.S. Department of Education data reveals that debt for students who earned a range of master's and professional degrees has surged in recent years and the trend gained significant momentum in the years between 2008 and 2012.

This key finding, among many others in this report, suggests that the largest changes in student borrowing are taking place in graduate education.

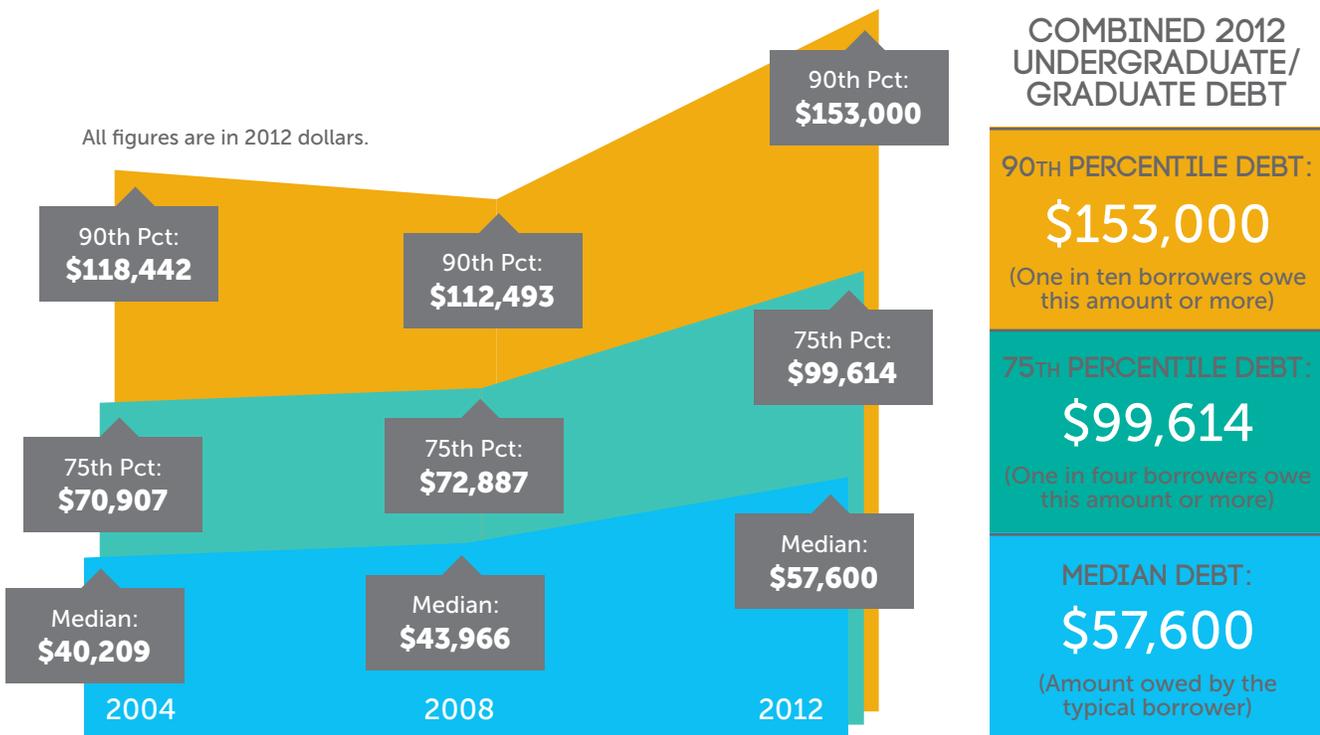
Moreover, this trend is not limited to what many already know are high-cost credentials like those in medicine and law. According to the data, in 2004, the median level of indebtedness for a borrower who earned a Master of Arts degree was \$38,000. In 2012, that figured jumped to \$59,000, after adjusting

for inflation. Debt levels for other master's degrees, such as a Master of Science or a Master of Education, show similar trends. For borrowers at the 75th percentile of indebtedness, the increases are even larger in absolute terms. For most master's degrees, debt at the 75th percentile jumps from about \$54,000 for degree recipients in 2004 to \$85,000 in 2012, after adjusting for inflation.

So how much of the \$1 trillion in outstanding student loans financed graduate and professional degrees versus bachelor's or associate degrees? If the breakdown resembles recent disbursements, it is about 40 percent.¹

Despite these trends, most accounts of student debt treat loans from graduate and undergraduate studies as one and the same, distorting how we view issues of college costs, student debt, and what policymakers should do in response. A 2013 Wall Street Journal article about rising costs at four-year colleges and universities is a typical example.² It profiles twenty-three-year-old Nicole Preucil, a public university student with \$60,000 in student loans, who says:

"I think tuition is absolutely too much... I kind of didn't realize how expensive it was going to be here... I think about my loans, and I try to pay off my interest... I think it will take a long time in my profession to pay it off."



Given the framing of the article – rising college costs and student debt – careful readers are surprised to learn that Nicole earned her undergraduate degree with a manageable \$10,000 in loans, about one-third of what is typical for her peers who borrowed, after she “cobbled together scholarships and grants [and] worked part time” to pay for her education.³ That is why her comments regarding unaffordable tuition are actually about graduate school and the \$50,000 in debt she added to her initial \$10,000 to pursue that degree.

In fact, Nicole’s story is about how our system of undergraduate public higher education worked well. It was her decision to borrow \$50,000 for graduate school, and a school’s pitch to sell her a degree at that price, that dashed what otherwise would be a success story.

This New America report shows that Nicole’s story is not unusual. Her debt level is now the norm for a master’s degree recipient who borrows to pay for school. Balances for undergraduates, meanwhile, are low on average compared to those of graduate and professional students.⁴

This report provides many more details about the alarming trends in what students are borrowing to finance graduate and professional degrees and, indirectly, what institutions of higher education are charging for those credentials. It displays a set of statistics on debt levels of students who completed various types of master’s and professional degrees in 2004, 2008, and 2012 using information from the U.S. Department of Education’s National Postsecondary Student Aid Studies.⁵

This report is meant to encourage policymakers, the media, students, and others to start examining issues of college access, cost, and student debt only after first distinguishing between graduate education and a more limited definition of “college,” a two-year or four-year postsecondary credential.

Confusing undergraduate with graduate debt in discussions of college costs and student loans is problematic because the two categories of credentials are really quite different and warrant different types and levels of public support.

The failure to distinguish between those two very different categories of credentials is a serious flaw in how we think about student debt. Students, families, and taxpayers invest significant resources in financing “college,” in large part because a bachelor’s or associate degree is a must for anyone who wants to secure a middle-class income. If students are taking on unmanageable debt to earn those credentials, then many would argue that the system isn’t working. We should not, however, draw the same conclusions from debt levels of students who attend graduate and professional school. While a graduate or professional degree boosts a student’s earnings prospects and the economy at large, it is not the foundation for economic opportunity and middle-class earnings that a two- or four-year degree now provides.

Moreover, our system of higher education aims to underwrite much of the cost and risk that students take on when they pay for an undergraduate education. It exists to target benefits to students from families with fewer means, and it shields students from the multitude of uncertainties that

they face when they begin their educations and as they repay their loans.

That is not the case when it comes to graduate and professional degrees. Students pursuing these degrees already have an undergraduate degree, and they should be far more informed consumers. Therefore, they shouldn’t need a lot of public support to finance their next credential, which is why there are no Pell Grants for master’s degrees.

The recent spike in debt for graduate degrees should also focus policymakers’ attention on the lack of loan limits for students pursuing graduate degrees and income-based repayment programs that include loan forgiveness benefits.⁶ The debt statistics in this New America report suggest that graduate and professional students are likely borrowing at levels that will lead to substantial waves of student loan forgiveness in the coming years. Policymakers may wish to reexamine if that is the best way the federal government can support our higher education system or whether these policies themselves are to blame for the marked increase in borrowing for graduate and professional degrees in recent years.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The U.S. Department of Education conducts the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS) every four years to compile a comprehensive research dataset based on student-level records, financial aid provided by the federal government and other sources, student demographic, and enrollment data. It is the primary source of information that the federal government (and others, such as researchers and higher education associations) uses to analyze student financial aid. NPSAS data come from multiple sources, including school records, government databases, and student interviews. The survey data include students who indicated that they expected to or had completed graduate and professional studies in the year the survey was administered.

Using the PowerStats tool from the National Center for Education Statistics, New America analyzed NPSAS data on the debt of students who completed graduate or professional degrees in 2004, 2008, and 2012, by degree program. The data reflect debt levels by percentiles and for this report we display the 50th percentile and the 75th percentile (the tables in the back also include the 90th percentile). While the data are available based on all students who complete degrees, regardless of whether or not they have student loans, this report focuses on the students who leave with debt.

For example, in this report the debt level at the 50th percentile of students who completed a Master’s of Science reflects the median level of debt of all graduate students in a particular program with debt. It is, in other words, the debt of a typical borrower when they completed the degree. Debt at the 75th percentile reflects a debt level at which 25 percent of indebted graduates have more debt and 75 percent have less. Because we focus on the debt levels of those who borrow and not the debt levels of all graduates, we also show the share of graduate and professional students who have debt.

DEBT LEVELS

The debt figures in this report reflect a borrower's total debt at approximately the point they complete their degree. This includes debt incurred for undergraduate and graduate studies; loans from all sources, including federal, state, and private (although the largest share is federal); and accrued interest during in-school and other deferment periods that has been capitalized (i.e. added to the principal balance of the loan). It does not include interest that has accrued but not yet been capitalized and thus slightly understates borrowers' actual debt burdens. The tables at the end of the report break out undergraduate, graduate, and combined debt levels. However, readers should note that these figures are not perfectly additive because they are percentile distributions of slightly different populations within the survey data.⁷

Debt levels are all adjusted for inflation to 2012 dollars using the Personal Consumption Expenditures Price Index. Although borrowers are automatically enrolled in a 10-year repayment plan upon repayment, the monthly payment figures in the report reflect fixed payments on the debt over a 15-year repayment term at a 6 percent interest rate. Borrowers with at least \$10,000 in federal student loans can repay over 15 years if they choose, and those with more debt can elect terms that range from 20 to 30 years.⁸ Borrowers with higher balances tend to use these extended terms.

DEGREE PROGRAMS

The report breaks out the type of degree programs by seven categories based upon classifications provided by the Department of Education: Master of Business Administration (MBA), Master of Education, Master of Science, Master of Arts, Law (LL.B. or J.D.), Medicine and Other Health Science, and all other master's degrees (which includes Master of Public Policy, Master of Social Work, Master of Public Health, Master of Fine Arts, and all other master's degrees not otherwise listed). The Medicine and Other Health Sciences category is a combination of Medicine (MD), Medicine or Osteopathic Medicine, Dentistry (DDS, DMD), Chiropractic (DC, DCM), Pharmacy (PharmD), Optometry (OD), Podiatry (DPM, DP, PodD), and Veterinary Medicine (DVM).

We exclude doctoral and PhD programs, post-baccalaureate certificate programs, and theology programs to better focus the report on master's degrees and professional degrees, and to exclude categories in which very limited data were reported. In cases where totals for all degree categories are shown in this report, the figures include all of the degree categories as reported in the NPSAS, including those not broken out on an individual basis in this report (i.e. PhD programs, etc.).

NOTES

1 Clare McCann. "New Pell Grant, Federal Loan Data Reveal Changing Tides in Financial Aid." Ed Money Watch, New America Foundation, September 12, 2013: http://edmoney.newamerica.net/blogposts/2013/new_pell_grant_federal_loan_data_reveal_changing_tides_in_financial_aid-92009. Recent disbursement figures for a complete academic year suggest graduate loans comprise approximately 34 percent of federal loans; most recent quarterly reports show the graduate loan share of the entire outstanding federal student loan portfolio is likely closer to 40 percent because those loans are typically larger and borrowers enroll in extended repayment terms.

2 Douglas Belkin and Caroline Porter. "College Tuition Increases Slow, Government Aid Falls," Wall Street Journal, October 22,

2013: <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702303672404579152021987960980>.

3 The average cumulative borrowing by those who complete a bachelor's degree in 2012 was \$29,384. That figure excludes accrued, unpaid interest. Ben Miller. "The Student Debt Review." New America, February 2014: http://education.newamerica.net/sites/newamerica.net/files/policydocs/TheStudentDebtReview_2_18_14.pdf.

4 Ibid. Lower undergraduate loan balances may be due in part to caps on borrowing in the federal student loan program. A dependent undergraduate borrower can borrow a maximum of \$5,500 in her first year, \$6,500 in her second, and \$7,500 each year thereafter. The aggregate limit is \$31,000. An independent undergraduate can borrow \$4,000 more in the first two years and \$5,000 more in later years with an aggregate limit of \$57,500. Note that borrowers can enter repayment with balances higher than the aggregate limit due to interest accrual. Additionally, a small share of undergraduate borrowers have federal Perkins Loans in addition to Stafford loans. Perkins Loans do not count toward the aggregate loan limit for Stafford loans.

5 Whether a student completed is not verified by transcript data used in the survey. Instead, it is based upon either self-reported information or sometimes institutional records indicating that the student already has or is expected to earn a credential in the NPSAS administration year. As a result, it is possible that students may say they are going to graduate but in fact not end up doing so or that a student ends up graduating who did not indicate that they would.

6 The federal government lets graduate and professional students finance the entire cost of their educations with federal loans, for any degree, for any length of time, including all living expenses, regardless of the total cost. Graduate and professional students may first take out \$20,500 per year in Unsubsidized Stafford loans, and after that, they can tap federal Grad PLUS loans for the rest of the costs. A series of programs, Income-Based Repayment, Pay As You Earn, and Public Service Loan Forgiveness, that lawmakers enacted in 2007 and 2010 let borrowers repay those loans based on a small share of their incomes, regardless of their debt loads. After 10 or 20 years, remaining balances are forgiven. Note that undergraduates face relatively low limits in the federal loan program, thereby limiting the benefits of loan forgiveness under these plans. That is because a borrower entering repayment with \$30,000 in federal loans could have his debt forgiven under one of the repayment programs only if he earns an unusually low income for an extended period of time. Someone with a master's degree who has \$80,000 in debt, on the other hand, can earn an average income for his peer group for most of his repayment term and his payment will still be too low to fully repay the debt. He will have a balance forgiven.

7 Specifically, the 50th percentile of debt for borrowers who have undergraduate debt when they leave graduate school is not exactly the same population of respondents who are included in the 50th percentile of borrowers who leave graduate school with any type of debt. Thus it is not accurate to back out the undergraduate debt levels from the combined debt levels to arrive at the graduate debt levels, nor is it accurate to add undergraduate debt levels to graduate debt levels to calculate combined debt levels.

8 According to the Department of Education, 63 percent of graduate borrowers that entered repayment in 2012 chose a 10-year repayment plan, with the balance of borrowers repaying over a longer timeframe. See "Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, Program Integrity: Gainful Employment," U.S. Department of Education, March 14, 2014: Page 146. <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/highered/reg/hearulemaking/2012/notice-proposed-rulemaking-march-14-2014.pdf>.; The Department of Education also reports, separately that borrowers who elect to repay over longer periods of time have higher loan balances (about \$40,000) which is more consistent with debt levels from a graduate or professional education compared to those in the 10-year repayment plan who have about \$15,000 in loans on average. See: "Direct Loan Portfolio by Repayment Plan." U.S. Department of Education, Office of Federal Student Aid: <http://studentaid.ed.gov/about/data-center/student/portfolio>.

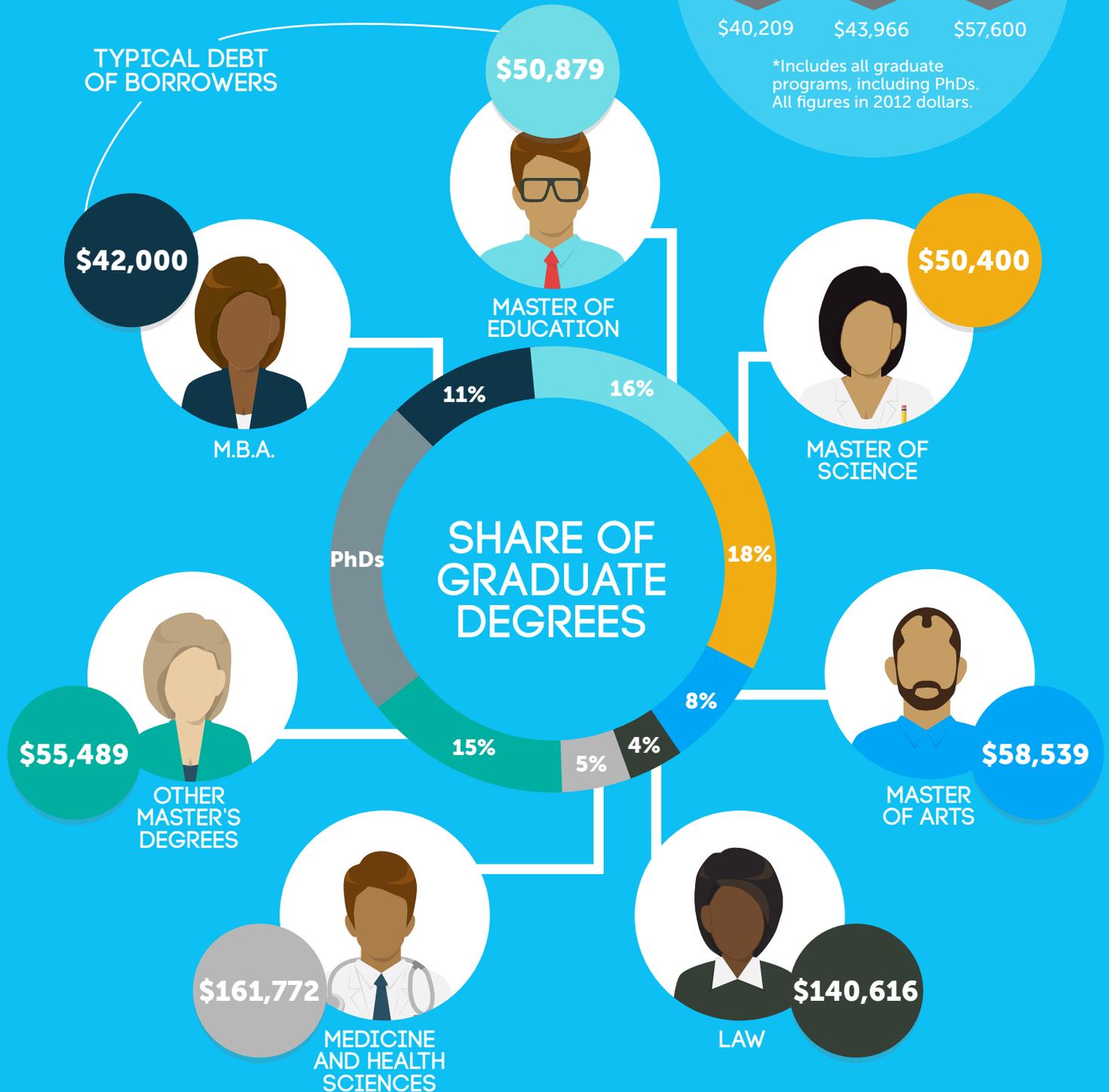
COMBINED UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE DEBT (2012 COMPLETERS)

DEBT OF ALL GRADUATE BORROWERS AT THE 50TH PERCENTILE*

2004	2008	2012
\$40,209	\$43,966	\$57,600

*Includes all graduate programs, including PhDs. All figures in 2012 dollars.

TYPICAL DEBT OF BORROWERS





COMBINED UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE DEBT

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (M.B.A.)

2012 SUMMARY

(CHANGES FROM 2004-2012)

TYPICAL DEBT OF GRADUATES WHO BORROW

\$42,000 (▲ \$627)

TYPICAL MONTHLY PAYMENT

\$354 (▲ \$5)

SHARE OF ALL GRADUATE DEGREES CONFERRED

2004



2008



2012



PERCENT OF GRADUATES WITH DEBT



DEBT OF BORROWERS AT THE 50TH PERCENTILE

(DEBT OF A TYPICAL BORROWER)



Monthly Payment
\$349



Monthly Payment
\$375 ▲ \$26



Monthly Payment
\$354 ▼ \$21

DEBT OF BORROWERS AT THE 75TH PERCENTILE

(ONE IN FOUR BORROWERS ARE MORE INDEBTED)



Monthly Payment
\$556



Monthly Payment
\$562 ▲ \$6



Monthly Payment
\$590 ▲ \$28

Note: Figures use real 2012 dollars. Monthly Payments assume 6 percent interest rate and 15-year repayment term. Information is limited to those who complete degrees.



COMBINED UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE DEBT

MASTER OF EDUCATION

2012 SUMMARY

(CHANGES FROM 2004-2012)

TYPICAL DEBT OF GRADUATES WHO BORROW

\$50,879 (▲ \$20,153)

TYPICAL MONTHLY PAYMENT

\$429 (▲ \$170)

SHARE OF ALL GRADUATE DEGREES CONFERRED

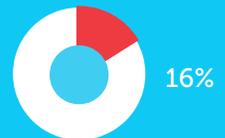
2004



2008



2012



PERCENT OF GRADUATES WITH DEBT



DEBT OF BORROWERS AT THE 50TH PERCENTILE

(DEBT OF A TYPICAL BORROWER)



Monthly Payment
\$259

Monthly Payment
\$286 ▲ \$27

Monthly Payment
\$429 ▲ \$143

DEBT OF BORROWERS AT THE 75TH PERCENTILE

(ONE IN FOUR BORROWERS ARE MORE INDEBTED)



Monthly Payment
\$449

Monthly Payment
\$495 ▲ \$46

Monthly Payment
\$675 ▲ \$180

Note: Figures use real 2012 dollars. Monthly Payments assume 6 percent interest rate and 15-year repayment term. Information is limited to those who complete degrees.



COMBINED UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE DEBT

MASTER OF SCIENCE

2012 SUMMARY

(CHANGES FROM 2004-2012)

TYPICAL DEBT OF GRADUATES WHO BORROW

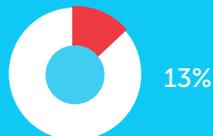
\$50,400 (▲ \$15,435)

TYPICAL MONTHLY PAYMENT

\$425 (▲ \$130)

SHARE OF ALL GRADUATE DEGREES CONFERRED

2004



2008



2012



PERCENT OF GRADUATES WITH DEBT



DEBT OF BORROWERS AT THE 50TH PERCENTILE

(DEBT OF A TYPICAL BORROWER)



Monthly Payment
\$295



Monthly Payment
\$354 ▲ \$59



Monthly Payment
\$425 ▲ \$71

DEBT OF BORROWERS AT THE 75TH PERCENTILE

(ONE IN FOUR BORROWERS ARE MORE INDEBTED)



Monthly Payment
\$490



Monthly Payment
\$517 ▲ \$27



Monthly Payment
\$716 ▲ \$199

Note: Figures use real 2012 dollars. Monthly Payments assume 6 percent interest rate and 15-year repayment term. Information is limited to those who complete degrees.



COMBINED UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE DEBT

MASTER OF ARTS

2012 SUMMARY

(CHANGES FROM 2004-2012)

TYPICAL DEBT OF GRADUATES WHO BORROW

\$58,539 (▲\$20,574)

TYPICAL MONTHLY PAYMENT

\$494 (▲\$174)

SHARE OF ALL GRADUATE DEGREES CONFERRED

2004



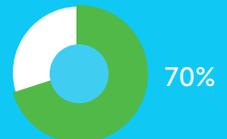
2008



2012



PERCENT OF GRADUATES WITH DEBT



DEBT OF BORROWERS AT THE 50TH PERCENTILE

(DEBT OF A TYPICAL BORROWER)



Monthly Payment
\$320

Monthly Payment
\$365 ▲\$45

Monthly Payment
\$494 ▲\$129

DEBT OF BORROWERS AT THE 75TH PERCENTILE

(ONE IN FOUR BORROWERS ARE MORE INDEBTED)



Monthly Payment
\$505

Monthly Payment
\$593 ▲\$88

Monthly Payment
\$767 ▲\$174

Note: Figures use real 2012 dollars. Monthly Payments assume 6 percent interest rate and 15-year repayment term. Information is limited to those who complete degrees.



COMBINED UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE DEBT

LAW (LL.B. OR J.D.)

2012 SUMMARY

(CHANGES FROM
2004-2012)

TYPICAL DEBT OF GRADUATES
WHO BORROW

\$140,616 (▲ \$51,983)

TYPICAL MONTHLY
PAYMENT

\$1,187 (▲ \$439)

SHARE OF ALL
GRADUATE
DEGREES
CONFERRED

2004



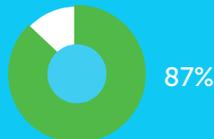
2008



2012



PERCENT OF
GRADUATES
WITH DEBT



DEBT OF
BORROWERS
AT THE 50TH
PERCENTILE

(DEBT OF A
TYPICAL BORROWER)



Monthly
Payment
\$748

Monthly
Payment
\$760 ▲ \$12

Monthly
Payment
\$1,187 ▲ \$427

DEBT OF
BORROWERS
AT THE 75TH
PERCENTILE

(ONE IN FOUR
BORROWERS ARE
MORE INDEBTED)



Monthly
Payment
\$1,077

Monthly
Payment
\$1,119 ▲ \$42

Monthly
Payment
\$1,636 ▲ \$517

Note: Figures use real 2012 dollars. Monthly Payments assume 6 percent interest rate and 15-year repayment term. Information is limited to those who complete degrees.



COMBINED UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE DEBT MEDICINE AND HEALTH SCIENCE

Includes: Medicine (MD), Medicine or Osteopathic Medicine, Dentistry (DDS, DMD), Chiropractic (DC, DCM), Pharmacy (PharmD), Optometry (OD), Podiatry (DPM, DP, PodD), and Veterinary Medicine (DVM)

2012 SUMMARY

(CHANGES FROM 2004-2012)

TYPICAL DEBT OF GRADUATES WHO BORROW

\$161,772 (▲ \$38,569)

TYPICAL MONTHLY PAYMENT

\$1,365 (▲ \$325)

SHARE OF ALL GRADUATE DEGREES CONFERRED

2004



6%

2008



4%

2012



5%

PERCENT OF GRADUATES WITH DEBT



90%



84%



87%

DEBT OF BORROWERS AT THE 50TH PERCENTILE

(DEBT OF A TYPICAL BORROWER)



\$123,203



\$127,132



\$161,772

Monthly Payment
\$1,040

Monthly Payment
\$1,073 ▲ \$33

Monthly Payment
\$1,365 ▲ \$292

DEBT OF BORROWERS AT THE 75TH PERCENTILE

(ONE IN FOUR BORROWERS ARE MORE INDEBTED)



\$168,248



\$179,908



\$226,203

Monthly Payment
\$1,420

Monthly Payment
\$1,518 ▲ \$98

Monthly Payment
\$1,909 ▲ \$391

Note: Figures use real 2012 dollars. Monthly Payments assume 6 percent interest rate and 15-year repayment term. Information is limited to those who complete degrees.



COMBINED UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE DEBT

ALL OTHER MASTER'S DEGREES

Includes: Master of Public Policy, Master of Social Work, Master of Fine Arts, Master of Public Health, and other Masters Degrees

2012 SUMMARY

(CHANGES FROM 2004-2012)

TYPICAL DEBT OF GRADUATES WHO BORROW

\$55,489 (▲\$23,839)

TYPICAL MONTHLY PAYMENT

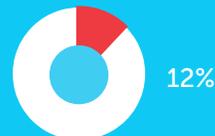
\$468 (▲\$201)

SHARE OF ALL GRADUATE DEGREES CONFERRED

2004



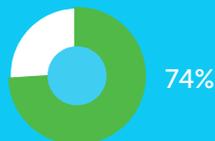
2008



2012



PERCENT OF GRADUATES WITH DEBT



DEBT OF BORROWERS AT THE 50TH PERCENTILE

(DEBT OF A TYPICAL BORROWER)



Monthly Payment
\$267



Monthly Payment
\$389 ▲ \$122



Monthly Payment
\$468 ▲ \$79

DEBT OF BORROWERS AT THE 75TH PERCENTILE

(ONE IN FOUR BORROWERS ARE MORE INDEBTED)



Monthly Payment
\$394



Monthly Payment
\$605 ▲ \$211



Monthly Payment
\$746 ▲ \$141

Note: Figures use real 2012 dollars. Monthly Payments assume 6 percent interest rate and 15-year repayment term. Information is limited to those who complete degrees.

TABLE 1. UNDERGRADUATE DEBT LEVELS

AMOUNT STILL OWED FOR THOSE WHO BORROWED ON ALL UNDERGRADUATE LOANS BY GRADUATE PROGRAM, FOR COMPLETED DEGREE PROGRAM

50th Percentile

Graduate programs	2004	(+/-)	2008	(+/-)	2012	(+/-)
Business Administration	\$15,954	\$9,103	\$22,992	\$7,618	\$26,486	\$6,622
Education Masters	\$17,657	\$4,713	\$20,262	\$3,960	\$25,000†	\$4,818
Master of Arts	\$18,125	\$4,363	\$19,411	\$2,764	\$24,762	\$7,023
Master of Science	\$18,773	\$5,434	\$19,346	\$3,734	\$25,200**	\$2,329
Other Master's Degree	\$18,736	\$3,995	\$16,933	\$3,394	\$22,142*	\$2,425
Medicine (MD) & Other Health Science	\$21,240	\$5,377	\$17,931	\$4,314	\$21,000	\$8,389
Law (LLB or JD)	\$19,647	\$5,496	\$14,302	\$2,859	\$16,650	\$3,359
Total¹	\$17,727	\$1,939	\$19,070	\$1,115	\$23,066**	\$1,950

75th Percentile

Graduate programs	2004	(+/-)	2008	(+/-)	2012	(+/-)
Business Administration	\$27,826	\$12,389	\$36,668	\$14,540	\$40,750	\$10,435
Education Masters	\$25,939	\$3,763	\$28,605	\$4,364	\$40,000**	\$7,104
Master of Arts	\$24,822	\$8,682	\$31,783	\$7,111	\$44,917**	\$9,309
Master of Science	\$29,545	\$5,559	\$28,207	\$5,040	\$38,738**	\$4,026
Other Master's Degree	\$26,453	\$4,335	\$25,026	\$4,848	\$35,000**	\$4,241
Medicine (MD) & Other Health Science	\$28,828	\$4,808	\$36,787	\$10,272	\$40,731†	\$9,738
Law (LLB or JD)	\$29,545	\$6,487	\$26,486	\$3,534	\$35,000	\$11,171
Total¹	\$27,704	\$2,158	\$28,605	\$2,308	\$39,550**	\$3,343

All values reported in 2012 dollars.

(+/-) shows confidence intervals at the $p \leq .05$ level.¹ Includes Theology degrees, PhDs, and post-bacalaureate certificates not shown here.* Indicates only the change from the prior period is significant at the $p \leq .05$ level.† Indicates only the change from 2004 to 2012 is significant at the $p \leq .05$ level.** Indicates the changes from 2004 to 2012 and 2008 to 2012 are significant at the $p \leq .05$ level.

Data generated with PowerStats tool provided by the National Center for Education Statistics

Source: National Postsecondary Student Aid Study 2004, 2008, and 2012

90th Percentile

Graduate programs	2004	(+/-)	2008	(+/-)	2012	(+/-)
Business Administration	\$43,062	\$11,735	\$48,336	\$9,502	\$50,000	\$15,702
Education Masters	\$35,453	\$6,422	\$40,430	\$6,371	\$50,000†	\$11,219
Master of Arts	\$35,453	\$16,031	\$44,456	\$14,550	\$63,000†	\$20,622
Master of Science	\$39,267	\$8,795	\$42,377	\$7,249	\$54,000**	\$8,909
Other Master's Degree	\$33,090	\$2,664	\$39,006	\$7,134	\$52,200**	\$10,114
Medicine (MD) & Other Health Science	\$47,271	\$37,754	\$47,674	\$18,149	\$90,000**	\$27,591
Law (LLB or JD)	\$47,271	\$16,819	\$47,674	\$20,571	\$67,500	\$16,539
Total¹	\$37,849	\$3,876	\$42,431	\$4,679	\$54,000**	\$6,549

Percent with Debt

Graduate programs	2004	(+/-)	2008	(+/-)	2012	(+/-)
Business Administration	32.5%	8.7	38.3%	7.7	33.0%	8.0
Education Masters	39.3%	6.5	48.4%*	6.8	52.3%†	7.5
Master of Arts	42.1%	9.5	44.6%	8.7	47.2%	7.5
Master of Science	26.7%	5.8	36.8%*	5.8	40.6%†	5.9
Other Master's Degree	33.9%	10.1	41.1%	5.9	43.9%	5.0
Medicine (MD) & Other Health Science	57.6%	7.4	45.8%	7.6	53.0%	7.8
Law (LLB or JD)	45.8%	7.5	49.5%	6.1	47.5%	7.7
Total¹	36.0%	3.2	41.2%	2.5	42.4%†	2.6

TABLE 2. GRADUATE DEBT LEVELS

AMOUNT STILL OWED FOR THOSE WHO BORROWED ON ALL GRADUATE LOANS BY GRADUATE PROGRAM

50th Percentile

Graduate programs	2004	(+/-)	2008	(+/-)	2012	(+/-)
Business Administration	\$33,090	\$17,652	\$28,483	\$8,877	\$36,129	\$5,810
Education Masters	\$27,455	\$5,178	\$25,607	\$7,407	\$35,350**	\$3,824
Master of Arts	\$27,942	\$7,147	\$34,294	\$8,983	\$43,109†	\$8,141
Master of Science	\$32,564	\$5,066	\$28,143	\$5,858	\$36,000	\$6,212
Other Master's Degree	\$25,999	\$4,352	\$37,376	\$6,126	\$38,734**	\$5,545
Medicine (MD) & Other Health Science	\$103,033	\$22,761	\$111,304	\$21,488	\$135,000†	\$17,465
Law (LLB or JD)	\$76,816	\$12,411	\$83,654	\$7,404	\$128,125**	\$11,174
Total¹	\$33,681	\$3,482	\$34,146	\$3,417	\$41,000**	\$3,098

75th Percentile

Graduate programs	2004	(+/-)	2008	(+/-)	2012	(+/-)
Business Administration	\$55,726	\$19,612	\$54,790	\$15,198	\$53,780	\$10,036
Education Masters	\$41,374	\$4,615	\$44,060	\$5,341	\$50,000	\$7,918
Master of Arts	\$43,726	\$13,500	\$50,637	\$11,783	\$64,258†	\$11,789
Master of Science	\$43,726	\$16,485	\$52,165	\$8,076	\$60,424	\$9,712
Other Master's Degree	\$35,712	\$6,915	\$60,658	\$8,409	\$64,030**	\$8,607
Medicine (MD) & Other Health Science	\$143,593	\$26,676	\$163,169	\$19,934	\$200,000**	\$9,684
Law (LLB or JD)	\$118,178	\$11,998	\$116,042	\$8,357	\$173,105*	\$18,653
Total¹	\$60,419	\$7,417	\$62,241	\$4,039	\$76,405**	\$4,962

All values reported in 2012 dollars.

(+/-) shows confidence intervals at the $p \leq .05$ level.¹ Includes Theology degrees, PhDs, and post-bacalaureate certificates not shown here.* Indicates only the change from the prior period is significant at the $p \leq .05$ level.† Indicates only the change from 2004 to 2012 is significant at the $p \leq .05$ level.** Indicates the changes from 2004 to 2012 and 2008 to 2012 are significant at the $p \leq .05$ level.

Data generated with PowerStats tool provided by the National Center for Education Statistics

Source: National Postsecondary Student Aid Study 2004, 2008, and 2012

90th Percentile

Graduate programs	2004	(+/-)	2008	(+/-)	2012	(+/-)
Business Administration	\$85,007	\$33,589	\$85,556	\$15,263	\$67,175	\$23,275
Education Masters	\$55,295	\$8,947	\$63,441	\$5,363	\$80,000†	\$16,839
Master of Arts	\$74,074	\$33,039	\$73,082	\$11,833	\$81,953	\$23,574
Master of Science	\$68,839	\$19,072	\$67,511	\$8,110	\$92,126	\$13,906
Other Master's Degree	\$59,089	\$19,657	\$76,557	\$8,445	\$107,000**	\$17,329
Medicine (MD) & Other Health Science	\$199,573	\$30,391	\$209,253	\$18,114	\$248,468**	\$11,405
Law (LLB or JD)	\$141,814	\$17,723	\$149,440	\$8,392	\$202,392**	\$11,836
Total¹	\$106,360	\$13,898	\$97,592	\$7,863	\$134,000**	\$9,247

Percent with Debt

Graduate programs	2004	(+/-)	2008	(+/-)	2012	(+/-)
Business Administration	48.1%	10.3	54.4%	6.7	49.4%	9.1
Education Masters	49.4%	6.0	55.2%	6.8	59.7%**	7.0
Master of Arts	57.7%	9.9	60.5%	7.9	62.1%	6.9
Master of Science	40.0%	7.5	45.7%	5.6	53.6%**	4.8
Other Master's Degree	68.8%	9.0	56.6%*	5.2	71.8%*	5.1
Medicine (MD) & Other Health Science	89.8%	5.1	82.3%	7.3	87.4%	5.0
Law (LLB or JD)	86.5%	5.8	87.3%	4.9	85.6%	4.8
Total¹	54.6%	3.4	54.6%	2.3	58.6%	2.5

TABLE 3. COMBINED UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE DEBT LEVELS
 AMOUNT STILL OWED FOR THOSE WHO BORROWED ON ALL EDUCATION
 LOANS BY GRADUATE PROGRAM, FOR COMPLETED DEGREE PROGRAM

50th Percentile

Graduate programs	2004	(+/-)	2008	(+/-)	2012	(+/-)
Business Administration	\$41,373	\$13,160	\$44,496	\$12,271	\$42,000	\$11,751
Education Masters	\$30,726	\$10,763	\$33,910	\$6,847	\$50,879**	\$11,491
Master of Arts	\$37,965	\$8,899	\$43,247	\$6,492	\$58,539**	\$13,706
Master of Science	\$34,965	\$6,099	\$41,904	\$6,782	\$50,400†	\$7,815
Other Master's Degree	\$31,650	\$9,803	\$46,085*	\$5,301	\$55,489**	\$6,919
Medicine (MD) & Other Health Science	\$123,203	\$15,714	\$127,132	\$20,030	\$161,772**	\$19,108
Law (LLB or JD)	\$88,634	\$17,014	\$90,052	\$7,182	\$140,616**	\$17,135
Total¹	\$40,209	\$5,015	\$43,966	\$2,739	\$57,600**	\$2,954

75th Percentile

Graduate programs	2004	(+/-)	2008	(+/-)	2012	(+/-)
Business Administration	\$65,855	\$25,796	\$66,640	\$9,523	\$69,906	\$13,381
Education Masters	\$53,264	\$8,131	\$58,621	\$16,372	\$80,000**	\$11,890
Master of Arts	\$59,860	\$13,689	\$70,307	\$13,440	\$90,892**	\$11,176
Master of Science	\$58,055	\$13,976	\$61,284	\$8,779	\$84,808**	\$12,319
Other Master's Degree	\$46,668	\$14,285	\$71,734*	\$6,024	\$88,409**	\$9,361
Medicine (MD) & Other Health Science	\$168,248	\$22,585	\$179,908	\$20,880	\$226,203**	\$19,998
Law (LLB or JD)	\$127,632	\$17,060	\$132,641	\$10,426	\$193,823**	\$18,008
Total¹	\$70,907	\$5,060	\$72,887	\$3,001	\$99,614**	\$5,657

All values reported in 2012 dollars.

(+/-) shows confidence intervals at the $p \leq .05$ level.

¹ Includes Theology degrees, PhDs, and post-bacalaureate certificates not shown here.

* Indicates only the change from the prior period is significant at the $p \leq .05$ level.

† Indicates only the change from 2004 to 2012 is significant at the $p \leq .05$ level.

** Indicates the changes from 2004 to 2012 and 2008 to 2012 are significant at the $p \leq .05$ level.

Data generated with PowerStats tool provided by the National Center for Education Statistics

Source: National Postsecondary Student Aid Study 2004, 2008, and 2012

90th Percentile

Graduate programs	2004	(+/-)	2008	(+/-)	2012	(+/-)
Business Administration	\$118,074	\$24,162	\$95,827	\$17,322	\$103,780	\$20,556
Education Masters	\$73,405	\$7,784	\$84,116	\$15,500	\$116,872**	\$16,933
Master of Arts	\$79,807	\$11,933	\$95,457	\$23,428	\$131,832†	\$28,959
Master of Science	\$75,080	\$26,978	\$91,650	\$13,891	\$123,374**	\$18,572
Other Master's Degree	\$73,599	\$12,031	\$88,329*	\$6,949	\$124,000**	\$11,248
Medicine (MD) & Other Health Science	\$213,754	\$38,182	\$227,789	\$29,188	\$268,455**	\$16,741
Law (LLB or JD)	\$155,376	\$31,452	\$171,628	\$10,581	\$224,061**	\$25,527
Total¹	\$118,442	\$7,587	\$112,493	\$7,607	\$153,000**	\$6,188

Percent with Debt

Graduate programs	2004	(+/-)	2008	(+/-)	2012	(+/-)
Business Administration	53.5%	9.6	60.7%	6.3	57.0%	9.4
Education Masters	60.4%	6.3	68.1%	6.2	67.3%	7.1
Master of Arts	62.6%	9.9	66.6%	7.4	69.5%	6.9
Master of Science	47.1%	8.1	54.0%	5.5	59.3%†	5.0
Other Master's Degree	74.0%	8.3	62.5%*	5.2	75.0%*	5.0
Medicine (MD) & Other Health Science	89.8%	5.1	84.0%	6.8	87.0%	5.0
Law (LLB or JD)	86.5%	5.8	87.3%	4.9	86.3%	5.0
Total¹	60.7%	3.3	62.9%	2.3	64.1%	2.4

TABLE 4. GRADUATE PROGRAMS OVERVIEW
 GRADUATE PROGRAMS AS SHARE OF GRADUATE DEGREES CONFERRED, BY YEAR

Graduate programs	2004	2008	2012
Business Administration	11.3%	12.0%	10.9%
Education Masters	18.2%	20.3%	16.2%
Master of Arts	6.2%	6.8%	7.7%
Master of Science	13.0%	13.6%	18.1%
Other Master's Degree ¹	10.9%	11.6%	14.8%
Medicine (MD) & other health science ²	5.6%	3.7%	5.4%
Law (LLB or JD)	5.4%	4.3%	3.5%
Total³	70.6%	72.3%	76.6%

¹Includes Master of Public Policy, Master of Social Work, Master of Fine Arts, Master of Public Health, and Other.

²Includes Medicine or Osteopathic Medicine, Dentistry (DDS, DMD), Chiropractic (DC, DCM), Pharmacy (PharmD), Optometry (OD), Podiatry (DPM, DP, PodDD), and Veterinary Medicine (DVM).

³Includes Theology degrees, PhDs, and post-bacalaureate certificates not shown here.

Data generated with PowerStats tool provided by the National Center for Education Statistics

Source: National Postsecondary Student Aid Study

New America Education Policy Program

1899 L Street, NW
Suite 400
Washington DC 20036
Phone 202 986 2700
Fax 202 986 3696

www.newamerica.org
www.edcentral.org