



Global & Online Aging Programs Student Survey

The University of Arizona Health Sciences Global & Online Strategic Initiative is designed to advance University of Arizona Health Sciences offerings into the global and online domains and bring the world closer together by defining the future of health care education, research and practice. We are focused on expanding academic programs, clinical expertise, and research in innovative and dynamic ways.

OVERVIEW

This report summarizes University of Arizona Health Sciences student opinions and key takeaways from the Aging Programs Student Survey¹ conducted in collaboration with the [Office of Assessment and Research](#). Students were invited to respond to a survey about proposed interdisciplinary graduate programs in the area of Aging, including the relevance of formal degree programs in Aging, their interest in said programs, and their perspectives on important aspects of these programs—including fair tuition rate. Survey findings can be used to develop valuable programs and positive student experiences in future interdisciplinary Aging programs, as well as effective marketing and recruitment strategies.

PROGRAM SUPPORT & INTEREST AMONG UARIZONA HEALTH SCIENCES STUDENTS

The strong majority of Health Sciences students (87%) agree it is important for universities to offer formal degree programs focused on Aging studies—educating students on the diverse needs and challenges of aging populations and how to advance innovative solutions.

"Aging is one of my passions so it's awesome to see it at the forefront."

-Undergraduate Senior, Physiology

- Graduating Seniors are the academic class most strongly in favor (91%) of universities offering formal degree programs in Aging.
- Among undergraduate students, 36% would consider enrolling in a graduate certificate or master's program in Aging in the future, and 39.1% are unsure, whereas 28% graduate/professional students would consider enrolling in a graduate certificate or master's program in Aging in the future, and 31% are unsure.
- Other educational/professional interests are the main reasons that students would not consider pursuing a graduate certificate or master's degree in Aging.
- Of those that indicated they would not consider these programs, the majority of students (80% undergrad and 52% of graduate/professional) cited "I am not interested in studying Aging" as a reason. The second most popular reason among undergraduates (46%) listed was "I am interested in pursuing other graduate/professional degrees instead."

¹ The online survey was administered 1/22/2021-2/2/2021 to 4694 currently enrolled, Main Campus and online Health Sciences students, including undergraduate, graduate, and professional students from the College of Nursing, College of Public Health, College of Pharmacy, College of Medicine—Tucson, and College of Medicine—Phoenix. Students received an email inviting them to participate in the survey with the option of entering a drawing to win one of ten \$25 gift cards upon completion. A total of 579 students participated in the survey, for a 12.3% response rate. The margin of error for the survey is 3.8% based on a 95% confidence level.

"I think it is going to be an interesting joint program for the healthcare field."
-2nd Year Pharmacy Student



Nearly three quarters (71%) of seniors and more than two thirds (68%) of graduate/professional students would consider recommending an Aging program to a friend or classmate/colleague.



One fifth (22%) of students that would not consider an Aging program right now cited that they may have been interested in pursuing one of these programs had they known about the opportunity earlier in their education.

For respondents who may consider pursuing a master's program in Aging, the specialty concentration or program "tracks" that would be most of interest were, in order of popularity:

1. Nutritional Sciences & Integrative Medicine (28%)
2. Research (17%)
3. Social & Behavioral (17%)
4. Bioethics (11%)
5. Humanities (9%)
6. Law and Policy (7%)
7. Technology (5%)
8. Systems (3%)
9. Business & Management (2%)

"As a paramedic, a majority of my patient population is geriatric. I think that having advanced training in aging would help me better serve my patient population."
-Undergraduate Junior, Emergency Medical Services

The most common *motivations* behind considering a graduate certificate or master's in Aging from UAHS were identified as the following:

1. The desire to expand future career opportunities or bring new knowledge and skills to their current job (31%)

2. The desire to be a more knowledgeable, competitive applicant for future career/research opportunities (30%)
3. The desire to be better positioned for healthcare leadership opportunities (27%)
4. The desire to enroll in graduate school prior to future admission into a health professional graduate program (12%)
5. Other (1%)

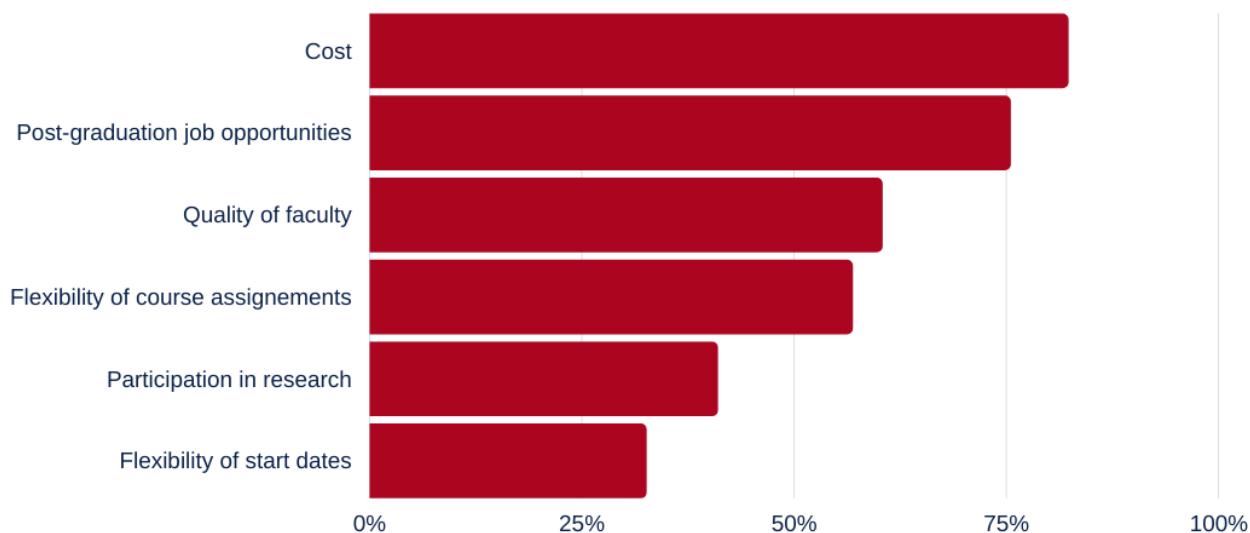
"Definitely a good option for those looking for a medical GPA booster and research opportunity for medical school." -Undergraduate Senior, Physiology

The majority of students cited cost (82%), post-graduation job opportunities (76%), quality of faculty (60%), and flexibility of course assignments (57%) to be important decision-making factors for choosing to enroll in an online graduate certificate or master's degree program in Aging.

- Cost was the most-cited factor in every academic class except Juniors, who cited "Post-graduation job opportunities" slightly more frequently
- Graduate/professional students more frequently consider *flexibility* than undergrads—in both course assignments (74%) and start dates (49%)

"[The Aging programs should be] online asynchronous."
-Graduate Student, Public Health

Important Decision-Making Factors for Students



TUITION & PROGRAM FEES

Program fees and/or a differential tuition might be necessary to offset the costs of faculty, facilities, and administration of the proposed Aging programs. The majority of students either generally agree or are not sure if they agree (29% and 27% respectively) that it would be fair to charge students additional fees in order to offer an innovative approach to education and ensure the most quality experience possible, while 44% of students do not agree that it would be fair to charge additional program fees.

Nearly a third (31%) of the comments we received from the survey expressed concern over cost, with multiple students citing the belief in universal free higher education, among other opinions.

"Love the program, but the cost may be prohibitive for those who would most benefit."

-4th Year Medical Student

However, when presented with relative all-in tuition statistics from other universities offering online graduate certificates and master's programs in Aging, students across were generally aligned in their opinions on expected tuition for University of Arizona Health Sciences programs.

Proposed Online Graduate Certificate in Aging

- Students most commonly indicated that an all-in tuition in the range of \$10,000-\$13,999 would be "a bargain worth consideration" (41%), and an all-in tuition in the range of \$14,000-\$17,999 would be "starting to get expensive but still worth consideration" (36%).
- Cumulatively, the majority of students indicated that an all-in tuition somewhere above \$18,000 would be "so expensive that it wouldn't be worth consideration."

Proposed Online Master's Program in Aging

- Students most commonly indicated that an all-in tuition in the range of \$20,000-\$27,999 would be "a bargain worth consideration" (48%), and an all-in tuition in the range of \$28,000-\$35,999 would be "starting to get expensive but still worth consideration" (33%).
- Cumulatively, the majority of students indicated an all-in tuition somewhere above \$36,000 would be "so expensive that it wouldn't be worth consideration."

"I would do it if it was affordable- that's my biggest thing because financially it's hard for me even though I am very much interested!!"

-Undergraduate Junior, Physiology & Medical Sciences

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Health Sciences students understand and believe in the need for University of Arizona Health Sciences to offer interdisciplinary programs in the area of Aging.
- There is potential for a large amount of interest in these programs among both undergraduate and graduate/professional Health Sciences students.
- Students may be more likely to consider graduate programs in Aging if they gain awareness of options before entering graduate/professional school—undergraduate lead generation will serve as a critical pipeline into these programs.
- UArizona BS in Emergency Medical Services students (paramedics) might see value in advanced training in aging to better serve the populations they work with.
- Marketing and communications should emphasize post-graduation job opportunities, and highlight the expertise and qualifications of program faculty.
- Marketing and communications targeted at graduate/professional students should emphasize the flexibility of these programs.
- Spotlighting “Nutritional Sciences & Integrative Medicine,” “Research,” and “Social & Behavioral” tracks might serve as an effective marketing strategy to pique the interest of the most Health Sciences students.
- Health Sciences students are price sensitive, and thus it will be important to price Aging programs competitively and effectively communicate the value of the education they are paying for.
- It is recommended that the graduate certificate and master's programs have an all-in tuition under \$18,000 and \$36,000 respectively so as not to eliminate the majority of Health Sciences students from the pool of interest.
- In order to maximize interest and enrollments, an all-in tuition at or less than \$13,999 and \$27,999 respectively is recommended.
- Availability of full and partial scholarships will increase interest in the program and help drive the narrative of the programs' accessibility—something that is important to Health Sciences students.