

WGU Tennessee Education Survey

INTRO: Hello, I'm (first name) and I'm with a market research firm that's conducting a survey about some important issues in Tennessee. I am not trying to sell you anything. Would you mind spending about 15 minutes answering some questions? Your answers will remain confidential.

S1. Are you currently employed, meaning you work at least 30 hours a week? (screen out those who answer no)

S2. Are you or is a member of your household employed by the Tennessee state government? (screen out those who answer yes)

S3. Do you or does a member of your household work for a university or other institution of higher learning? (screen out those who answer yes)

S4. Are you registered to vote? (screen out those who answer no)

Q1. In general, when thinking about the value of a college education today, would you say that the overall value most college graduates get back over their lifetime is:

1. Worth more than the cost of attending college	31%
2. Worth less than the cost	40%
3. About equal to what they pay for college	21%
4. DK/REFUSED/NA	9%

Q2. In general, how important do you think it is for someone to have a college degree or a career-related certificate beyond a high school diploma? Would you say it is:

1. Very important	42%
2. Somewhat important	44%
3. Not very important	8%
4. Not at all important	4%
5. DK/REFUSED/NA	2%

Q3. I'm going to read you some statements about education. For each one, please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement.

Q3A. A college degree or certification beyond high school is essential for getting a good job.

1. Strongly agree	32%
2. Somewhat agree	36%
3. Neither agree nor disagree	10%
4. Somewhat disagree	15%
5. Strongly disagree	8%
6. DK/REFUSED/NA	--

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(REPEAT PROMPTS AS NECESSARY TO COMPLETE)

Q3B. A college degree or certification beyond high school leads to a higher income.

1. Strongly agree	40%
2. Somewhat agree	33%
3. Neither agree nor disagree	13%
4. Somewhat disagree	9%
5. Strongly disagree	5%
6. DK/REFUSED/NA	1%

Q4. How about you? What is the highest level of education that you completed?

[READ CATEGORIES AS NECESSARY]

1. Less than high school	1%
2. High school	16%
3. Some college	23%
4. Associate degree or certificate	16%
5. College degree	31%
6. Postgraduate degree (M.A, LLD, Ph.D.)	14%
7. DK/REFUSED/NA	--

Q4A. [ASK if Q4==3] How many semesters did you complete? [READ CATEGORIES AS NECESSARY]

1. 2 semesters or less	30%
2. 3 to 4 semesters	39%
3. 5 or more semesters	26%
4. DK/CAN'T REMEMBER	4%

Q5. [ASK IF Q4==3|4|5|6] Do you currently have student loan debt?

1. Yes	27%
2. No	73%
3. DK/REFUSED/NA	--

Q6. [ASK IF Q4==5|6] How useful would you say your college education has been in preparing you for a job or career? Would you say:

1. Very useful	49%
2. Somewhat useful	31%
3. Not too useful	10%
4. Not at all useful	10%
5. DK/REFUSED/NA	--

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Q7. [ASK IF Q4<=3] For each of the following, please tell me whether or not it has been an obstacle to you in completing a college degree. [RANDOMIZE Q7A-Q7F]

Q7A. Family responsibilities

- | | |
|------------------|-----|
| 1. Yes | 61% |
| 2. No | 36% |
| 3. DK/REFUSED/NA | 3% |

Q7B. Job or work responsibilities

- | | |
|------------------|-----|
| 1. Yes | 60% |
| 2. No | 37% |
| 3. DK/REFUSED/NA | 3% |

Q7C. The cost of a degree

- | | |
|------------------|-----|
| 1. Yes | 62% |
| 2. No | 31% |
| 3. DK/REFUSED/NA | 7% |

Q7D. The difficulty of finding classes that fit your schedule

- | | |
|------------------|-----|
| 1. Yes | 40% |
| 2. No | 53% |
| 3. DK/REFUSED/NA | 7% |

Q7E. The time it would take to complete a degree

- | | |
|------------------|-----|
| 1. Yes | 57% |
| 2. No | 39% |
| 3. DK/REFUSED/NA | 4% |

Q7F. The student loan debt you would have to take on

- | | |
|------------------|-----|
| 1. Yes | 55% |
| 2. No | 41% |
| 3. DK/REFUSED/NA | 4% |

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Q8. Do you think of your current job as a career, as a steppingstone to a career, or do you think of it as just a job to get you by?

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| 1. A career | 61% |
| 2. A steppingstone to a career | 15% |
| 3. Just a job to get you by | 22% |
| 4. DK/REFUSED/NA | 2% |

Q9. In general, do you feel you have the education and training necessary to get the kind of job or career you would like to have, or do you need more education and training?

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1. Have necessary education and training | 68% |
| 2. Need more | 27% |
| 3. DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NA | 5% |

Q10. [ASK If Q9=2] If you decided to get more education and training, which of the following would you be most likely to use?

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1. A community college | 35% |
| 2. A 4-year public college or university | 22% |
| 3. A 4-year private college or university | 7% |
| 4. A for-profit college or university | 1% |
| 5. A technical school | 24% |
| 6. Another type of university | 6% |
| 7. DK/REFUSED/NA (Do Not Read) | 4% |

Q11. Do you ever plan to return to school?

- | | |
|------------------|-----|
| 1. Yes | 19% |
| 2. No | 55% |
| 3. Maybe | 23% |
| 4. DK/REFUSED/NA | 3% |

Q12: [ASK IF Q11=1|3] Do you have convenient access to high-speed, broad-band internet?

- | | |
|------------------|-----|
| 1. Yes | 93% |
| 2. No | 5% |
| 3. DK/REFUSED/NA | 2% |

Q13. [ASK IF Q11=1|3] Would you say you are comfortable enough with technology to take a college-level course entirely online?

- | | |
|------------------|-----|
| 1. Yes | 90% |
| 2. No | 7% |
| 3. DK/REFUSED/NA | 3% |

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Q14. Have you needed to buy new equipment such as a computer, monitor or some other device, in order to continue to work or go to school online during the pandemic?

- | | |
|------------------|-----|
| 1. Yes | 27% |
| 2. No | 72% |
| 3. DK/REFUSED/NA | 1% |

Q15: [ASK IF Q14=1] Did that purchase or purchases create a financial hardship for you?

- | | |
|------------------|-----|
| 1. Yes | 47% |
| 2. No | 51% |
| 3. DK/REFUSED/NA | 1% |

Thank you. Now we would like to ask you a few general questions about college education in Tennessee.

Q16. In terms of higher education and workforce development, how would you rate the following in terms of what should be the top priorities of Governor Bill Lee's administration? Would you say they should be a top priority, a middle priority, a low priority, or not a priority at all?

16A. Affordability of college and technical training

- | | |
|------------------|-----|
| 1. Top | 60% |
| 2. Middle | 26% |
| 3. Low | 9% |
| 4. Not at all | 3% |
| 5. DK/REFUSED/NA | 2% |

16B. Access to college and technical training in rural areas

- | | |
|------------------|-----|
| 1. Top | 52% |
| 2. Middle | 34% |
| 3. Low | 9% |
| 4. Not at all | 2% |
| 5. DK/REFUSED/NA | 3% |

16C. College readiness

- | | |
|------------------|-----|
| 1. Top | 46% |
| 2. Middle | 37% |
| 3. Low | 10% |
| 4. Not at all | 3% |
| 5. DK/REFUSED/NA | 4% |

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16D. Student debt

1. Top	42%
2. Middle	31%
3. Low	17%
4. Not at all	7%
5. DK/REFUSED/NA	3%

16E. Graduation/completion rates

1. Top	49%
2. Middle	35%
3. Low	9%
4. Not at all	3%
5. DK/REFUSED/NA	4%

16F. Ability of graduates to succeed in the workplace

1. Top	50%
2. Middle	32%
3. Low	10%
4. Not at all	3%
5. DK/REFUSED/NA	4%

Q17. Since taking office, Governor Bill Lee has focused on increasing higher education opportunities in rural areas. Do you agree or disagree with Gov. Lee's emphasis on increasing higher education opportunities in rural areas?

1. Strongly agree	45%
2. Somewhat agree	33%
3. Neither agree nor disagree	10%
4. Somewhat disagree	4%
5. Strongly disagree	3%
6. DK/REFUSED/NA	5%

Q18. How would you rate the options most people have for attending college in Tennessee? Would you say they are excellent, good, not very good, or poor?

1. Excellent	19%
2. Good	55%
3. Not very good	15%
4. Poor	5%
5. DK/REFUSED/NA	6%

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Q19. Do you think Tennessee's state government should increase its funding for college education, keep it about the same, or decrease the amount it spends?

- | | |
|------------------|-----|
| 1. Increase | 53% |
| 2. Keep it same | 35% |
| 3. Decrease | 7% |
| 4. DK/REFUSED/NA | 5% |

Q20. From what you know or understand, do you think Tennessee's colleges and universities provide adequate financial aid for students who want to obtain a college degree? If you don't have an opinion, just say so.

- | | |
|------------------|-----|
| 1. Yes | 39% |
| 2. No | 21% |
| 3. No opinion | 29% |
| 4. DK/REFUSED/NA | 12% |

Q21. Do you personally view the problem of student loan debt for people in the United States to be a major problem, a minor problem, or not a problem?

- | | |
|------------------|-----|
| 1. Major problem | 59% |
| 2. Minor problem | 28% |
| 3. Not a problem | 9% |
| 4. DK/REFUSED/NA | 4% |

Q22. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement: For Tennessee's economy to compete with other states, it is essential to have an educated workforce. Would you say you:

- | | |
|----------------------|-----|
| 1. Strongly agree | 51% |
| 2. Somewhat agree | 38% |
| 3. Somewhat disagree | 6% |
| 4. Strongly disagree | 2% |
| 5. DK/REFUSED/NA | 3% |

Now I'd like to ask you about online college education.

Q23. Generally speaking, do you think that online college degree programs are better, about the same, or worse than traditional, in-person degree programs?

- | | |
|-------------------|-----|
| 1. Better | 10% |
| 2. About the same | 44% |
| 3. Worse | 36% |
| 4. DK/REFUSED/NA | 10% |

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Q24. Generally speaking, do you think that employers rate an employee who has received their college degree from an online degree program the same, better, or worse than a similar applicant who has received their degree from a traditional, in-person degree program?

- | | |
|------------------|-----|
| 1. The same | 41% |
| 2. Better | 9% |
| 3. Worse | 36% |
| 4. DK/REFUSED/NA | 15% |

Q25. The nontraditional HOPE scholarship program, funded by our state lottery, provides tuition assistance for qualifying Tennesseans age 25 and older who are returning to college or enrolling for the first time. It is available for those attending two- and four-year colleges in Tennessee, and can be used to pursue degrees through online programs at those schools.

Some people argue that these HOPE scholarships should be available for students enrolled at other state-approved online universities. Would you say you:

- | | |
|----------------------|-----|
| 1. Strongly agree | 30% |
| 2. Somewhat agree | 39% |
| 3. Somewhat disagree | 12% |
| 4. Strongly disagree | 11% |
| 5. DK/REFUSED/NA | 8% |

We're almost done. The final questions are for statistical purposes.

GENDER. (BY OBSERVATION)

- | | |
|-----------|-----|
| 1. Male | 45% |
| 2. Female | 55% |

D1. REGION

Do you live in East, Middle or West Tennessee?

- | | |
|---------------------|-----|
| 1. West Tennessee | 25% |
| 2. Middle Tennessee | 37% |
| 3. East Tennessee | 39% |

D2. AGE

- | | |
|----------|-----|
| 1. 18–34 | 26% |
| 2. 35–44 | 24% |
| 3. 45–64 | 42% |
| 4. 65+ | 7% |

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D3. RACE

What is your race or ethnic group?

1. White/Anglo	76%
2. African-American	13%
3. Hispanic/Other	7%
4. Declined	4%

D4. These days, many colleges and universities offer courses online. Have you ever taken a course online?

1. Yes	48%
2. No	51%
3. DK/REFUSED/NA	1%