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DEBT AND EARNINGS FROM GRADUATE DEGREES
AT UNLV AND UNR
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PURPOSE:

This fact sheet examines debt and earnings data for graduate degrees awarded by the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) and the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR).[1] The original report from the HEA Group – a research and consulting firm focused on college access, value and economic mobility – includes data on debt-to-earnings ratio for various graduate degree programs at universities across the United States.

ABOUT THE DATA:

The HEA Group report explores information from the U.S. Department of Education's College Scorecard. The report compiles debt and earnings measures for over 6,300 graduate degrees offered by hundreds of universities across the country. Debt measures are reflective of those who completed their degrees between 2018 and 2020. Earnings measures reflect a completion cohort that graduated in 2015-2016 and with earnings recorded four years later in 2019-2020, while adjusting to 2021 dollars.

The debt-to-earnings ratio represents the percentage of college debt to a graduate's median earnings four years after graduating. For example, graduates who obtain a master's in Business Administration, Management, and Operations at UNLV end up owing $41,000, but earn $108,506 shortly after graduation, on average. Therefore, their debt is 37.8% of their yearly income. The lower the debt-to-earnings ratio (closer to 0%), the more a graduate is earning relative to their debt a few years after graduation.

KEY FINDINGS:

1. Dentistry ($134,240) was the field of study with the highest median earnings of graduates working four years after completion at UNLV.

2. Registered Nursing, Nursing Administration, Nursing Research, and Clinical Nursing ($127,876) was the field of study with the highest median earnings of graduates working four years after completion at UNR.

3. Dentistry (236.2%) was the UNLV graduate program with the highest debt-to-earnings ratio.

4. Medicine (162.7%) was the UNR graduate program with the highest reported debt-to-earnings ratio.

5. Accounting and Related Services ($19,820) was the UNLV graduate degree program with the lowest median debt of graduates working four years after degree completion.

6. Educational Administration and Supervision ($17,000) was the UNR graduate degree program with the lowest median debt of graduates working four years after degree completion.

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[1] "Think Hard: Your Graduate School's Sector Matters – 2023 Edition". *The HEA Group.* www.theheagroup.com/blog/think-hard-graduate-school

Table 1 displays the debt-to-earnings ratio for 14 UNLV graduate degrees appearing in the original HEA report, as well as the median earnings of graduates and the number of graduates working four years after completion. Dentistry (236.2%) was the UNLV graduate program with the highest debt-to-earnings ratio. The field of study with the lowest median earnings was Student Counseling and Personnel Services ($50,236). The UNLV fields of study with a debt-to-earnings ratio at or higher than 100% were Dentistry (236.2%) and Rehabilitation and Therapeutic Professions (100.5%), indicating a higher median debt than median earnings a few years after graduation. Accounting and Related Services ($19,820) was the UNLV graduate degree program with the lowest median debt of graduates working four years after degree completion.

Table 1: UNLV Graduate Degree Debt-to-Earnings Ratio, 2018-2020

Field of Graduate Study	Type of Degree	Median Earnings of Graduates Working Four Years After Completing[2]	Median Debt of Graduates Working Four Years After Completing[3]	Debt-to-Earnings Ratio
Dentistry	First Professional Degree	$134,240	$317,068	236.2%
Business Administration, Management, and Operations	Master's Degree	$108,506	$41,000	37.8%
Registered Nursing, Nursing Administration, Nursing Research and Clinical Nursing	Master's Degree	$103,119	$34,991	33.9%
Law	First Professional Degree	$97,762	$82,985	84.9%
Rehabilitation and Therapeutic Professions	Doctoral Degree	$92,999	$93,500	100.5%
Health and Medical Administrative Services	Master's Degree	$88,495	$45,094	51.0%
Accounting and Related Services	Master's Degree	$81,316	$19,820	24.2%
Public Administration	Master's Degree	$70,612	$41,660	59.0%
Educational Administration and Supervision	Master's Degree	$68,364	$30,750	45.0%
Curriculum and Instruction	Master's Degree	$64,437	$25,500	39.6%
Social Work	Master's Degree	$64,318	$47,000	73.1%
Special Education and Teaching	Master's Degree	$55,684	$30,875	55.4%
Teacher Education and Professional Development, Specific Levels and Methods	Master's Degree	$55,236	$33,205	60.1%
Student Counseling and Personnel Services	Master's Degree	$50,236	$41,000	81.6%

* Adapted from "Think Hard: Your Graduate School's Sector Matters – 2023 Edition." The HEA Group. www.theheagroup.com/blog/think-hard-graduate-school

[2] Data on median earnings of graduates working four years after completing reflects that of individuals who are both working and not enrolled four years after degree completion.
[3] Data on the median debt of graduates working four years after completing reflects the median Stafford and Grad PLUS loan debt disbursed at the respective institution.

Table 2 displays the debt-to-earnings ratio for nine UNR graduate degrees appearing in the original HEA report, as well as the median earnings of graduates and the number of graduates working four years after completion. Registered Nursing, Nursing Administration, Nursing Research, and Clinical Nursing ($127,876) was the field of study with the highest median earnings of graduates working four years after completion at UNR. Student Counseling and Personnel Services ($49,856) was the graduate program with the lowest reported median earnings of graduates four years after completion at UNR. Medicine (162.7%) was the UNR graduate program with the highest debt-to-earnings ratio. The UNR field of study with the lowest debt-to-earnings ratio was Education Administration and Supervision (30.1%).

Table 2: UNR Graduate Degree Debt-to-Earnings Ratio, 2018-2020

Field of Graduate Study	Type of Degree	Median Earnings of Graduates Working Four Years After Completing[4]	Median Debt of Graduates Working Four Years After Completing[5]	Debt-to-Earnings Ratio
Registered Nursing, Nursing Administration, Nursing Research and Clinical Nursing	Master's Degree	$127,876	$41,000	32.1%
Medicine	First Professional Degree	$106,002	$172,471	162.7%
Business Administration, Management, and Operations	Master's Degree	$96,205	$30,115	31.3%
Communication Disorders Sciences and Services	Master's Degree	$70,658	$41,000	58.0%
Social Work	Master's Degree	$65,890	$31,938	48.1%
Public Health	Master's Degree	$60,071	$43,452	72.3%
Educational Administration and Supervision	Master's Degree	$56,501	$17,000	30.1%
Teacher Education and Professional Development, Specific Levels and Methods	Master's Degree	$54,651	$30,948	56.6%
Student Counseling and Personnel Services	Master's Degree	$49,856	$39,548	79.3%

*Adapted from "Think Hard: Your Graduate School's Sector Matters – 2023 Edition." *The HEA Group.* www.theheagroup.com/blog/think-hard-graduate-school

[4] Data on median earnings of graduates working four years after completing reflects that of individuals who are both working and not enrolled four years after degree completion.
[5] Data on the median debt of graduates working four years after completing reflects the median Stafford and Grad PLUS loan debt disbursed at the respective institution.