In the following report, Hanover Research provides an overview of adult learners’ preferences and priorities, specifically for students enrolled in four-year institutions. Then, Hanover provides six case studies of selective institutions, providing information about the demographics and study preferences of adult students.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

According to secondary literature on adult learners in higher education, the majority of adult learners are financially independent, employed, have dependents, and must balance work, school, and family responsibilities. However, adult learners are often a more diverse group of students than the literature suggests. This report focuses on programs for adult learners at selective, four-year institutions, who often tend to be in their mid-20s, may be interested in creative, non-profit, or policy-related careers, and are more interested in on-campus than online programs.

Therefore, in this report Hanover highlights the qualities and study preferences of adult learners at selective institutions. First, Hanover provides some information about the factors that influence satisfaction and priorities among adult learners specifically at four-year institutions. Then, Hanover provides six case studies of selective institutions. Case studies detail the typical demographic profile, attributes, and study preferences of adult learners.

KEY FINDINGS

- Among interviewed programs, the most popular areas of study among adult students are political science, organizational leadership, psychology, economics, creative writing, English, history, international relations, and engineering. However, the popularity depends heavily on the institution. For example, Tufts University’s adult learners gravitate toward computer science and engineering, while Fordham University’s are more often enrolled in political science, organizational leadership, psychology, and economics. The characteristics of the institution appear to determine the popular areas of study.

- Adult students at selective institutions tend to be younger than traditional adult students – in their late 20s and early 30s – and may or may not have families. Depending on the program, students also may or may not work while completing the degree. Programs at Tufts University and Bard College, for example, provide traditional coursework only, so adult learners tend to be younger and without families. These students take courses during the day, full time. Fordham University’s program, in contrast, offers night and weekend classes and most enrolls students who have families and work full-time. DePaul University offers traditional coursework and an adult online program, and its adult population is split between those under and over 30.

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Adult learners who choose four-year institutions prioritize program offerings, financial assistance, cost, and impact on their current or future job. They appear to be pragmatic regarding educational goals, focusing on immediate cost and career advancement. Students at interviewed institutions share this educational pragmatism, according to interviews.

Adult learners tend to come into programs at selective four-year institutions with at least some transfer credits. Many learners enroll in programs with an associate’s degree or a year of prior coursework. Most programs require that the adult learner have some prior education but generally will not accept students who have previously earned a bachelor’s degree.

Adult education programs at interviewed selective institutions take different approaches: some offer bachelor’s degrees in all majors, while others offer only a limited number of majors. Programs sometimes merely organize adult students, who then choose areas of study from among the traditional undergraduate offerings. Fordham’s School of Professional and Continuing Studies and DePaul University’s School of New Learning, in contrast, provide a limited number of majors that are offered with evening, weekend, or online courses. None of the programs examined for this report offer general studies, and most do not offer certificates.

Financial aid is available at all interviewed adult education programs. Some programs require that adult students enroll full-time to receive financial aid, while other programs, such as the Fordham University School of Professional and Continuing Studies, offer financial aid to part-time students as well. Aid includes applicability for Stafford Loans and Pell Grants and some private scholarships. International students in these programs are not eligible for aid.
ADULT EDUCATION AT SELECTIVE INSTITUTIONS

OVERVIEW

While adult education literature and programs typically focus on non-traditional students who return to higher education while continuing to work full time and care for families, there are also populations of adult students who seek out highly selective institutions and enroll full-time.

Even among elite institutions, older students are typically put into a separate application pool. Availability of financial aid among this pool is quite different, with a greater percentage of federal Pell Grants being awarded to adults while a greater percentage of private scholarships and institutional grants being awarded to traditional students. In addition to financial aid differences, adult students may rely on a spouse’s income or may continue to work at least part-time during an academic program. Most adult students do not reside on campus.  

According to Noel-Levitz, which conducts a yearly study about adult learners’ preferences, fit and congruence between what adult learners expect from their educational experience and what they ultimately receive is extremely important for adult learner satisfaction. The Noel-Levitz survey describes the priorities and satisfaction of adult learners specifically at four-year institutions, which help elucidate the tendencies of adult learners choosing more traditional educational institutions.

Figure 1.1 on the following page describes the enrollment factors important to adult students who choose four-year institutions. Students rated factors on a scale of one to seven, where seven was very important.

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11201495
Figure 1.1: Ranking Enrollment Factors for Adult Students at Four-Year Institutions  
(From Most Important to Least Important)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RANK</th>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>IMPORTANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Availability of program I wanted</td>
<td>6.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Convenient time and place for classes</td>
<td>6.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (tie)</td>
<td>Flexible pacing for completing a program</td>
<td>6.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (tie)</td>
<td>Time required to complete program</td>
<td>6.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Availability of financial assistance</td>
<td>6.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Requirement for current or future job</td>
<td>6.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>6.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ability to transfer credits</td>
<td>6.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Reputation of institution</td>
<td>6.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Availability of online courses</td>
<td>6.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>High rate of job placement</td>
<td>6.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Credit for learning gained from life and work experiences</td>
<td>6.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Program accreditation by professional organization</td>
<td>6.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Distance from campus</td>
<td>5.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Tuition reimbursement from employer</td>
<td>5.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Ability to design my own program</td>
<td>5.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Employer endorsement</td>
<td>4.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Courses held at employment site</td>
<td>4.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Labor union support</td>
<td>4.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Availability of childcare</td>
<td>3.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Noel-Levitz 4

Adult learners at traditional, four-year institutions prioritize program offerings higher than any other factor. They also appear to be pragmatic in terms of educational goals. Financial assistance, cost, and requirement to current or future job all rate among the most important factors. In contrast, childcare is rated lowest. Time required for a program is also important to adult learners, who rate pacing, time required, and convenient time and place for classes among the top four enrollment factors.

All of these data points suggest that practical concerns are most important to adult students who choose four-year institutions. In particular, study programs in preferred subjects, well-paced programs, and reasonable cost highlight a focus on program availability and cost-efficiency.

In addition to these qualities, adult learners tend to be selective about their studies and self-directed. Adult learners want to learn what is meaningful to them, which reinforces the notion that adults are pragmatic with their approach to education. They are self-directed and take responsibility for their learning. 5 Adults, particularly those who choose four-year institutions, and even more for those who choose selective institutions, are a distinct

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5 “Engaging Adult Learners.” Ryerson University. 
http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/lt/resources/handouts/EngagingAdultLearners.pdf
population. They are interested in studying what they value in an autonomous atmosphere that respects their concerns as adults.

**CASE STUDIES**

This section provides case studies about how selective, four-year institutions serve adult undergraduate students. Some of these institutions have adult education programs in place that provide flexible programming opportunities for students, while others group adult students in with the broader student body.

Hanover reviewed news articles and other recent literature to discover information about selective institutions with adult student populations, identifying the 19 institutions presented below. Hanover reached out to admissions representatives and administration at each institution via two rounds of email and one round of phone calls.

- Agnes Scott College
- Bard College
- Columbia University
- DePaul University
- Fordham University
- Marymount Manhattan College
- Mercy College
- Metropolitan College of New York
- Monroe College
- Mount Holyoke College
- New York University
- Oberlin College
- Saint Joseph's College
- Swarthmore College
- Trinity College
- Tufts University
- University of Pennsylvania
- Yale University
- Selective Liberal Arts Institution for Women (Anonymous)

Two institutions, Manhattan Marymount University and Swarthmore College, indicated that they do not have a significant adult student population. Some institutions responded that they were unable to participate but felt that focusing research on this different adult student demographic was interesting and valuable. Hanover includes interview summaries from the six institutions that were willing to participate in the research: Agnes Scott College, Bard College, DePaul University, Fordham University, Tufts University, and one institution – a selective liberal arts institution for women – that asked to remain anonymous.

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6 Carol L. Jackson, Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students, Marymount Manhattan. Email Correspondence. June 19, 2014.
7 Suzi Nam, Director of Admissions, Swarthmore College. Email Correspondence. June 20, 2014.
**AGNES SCOTT COLLEGE**

Agnes Scott College is a private, four-year institution in Decatur, Georgia. The college enrolls 885 students, nearly all of whom are undergraduates.\(^8\) A small minority of degrees are awarded to adult students, as shown in the figure below:

![Figure 1.2: Agnes Scott College 2012 Degree Completions by Age](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTITUTION NAME</th>
<th>DEGREE TYPE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>18-24</th>
<th>25-39</th>
<th>40 AND ABOVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agnes Scott College</td>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: IPEDS

**Program Components**

Hanover Research interviewed Alvanita Negron, Associate Director of Admission for Agnes Scott College, and all subsequent information about this institution is derived from the interview.\(^9\) The college offers transfer admission to adult non-traditional students who are at least 24 years old. Agnes Scott College typically enrolls approximately 10 adult students per year.

When accepting transfer students, Agnes Scott College requires that students have taken classes in the last five years and must have a GPA of 3.0 or above. Most students come from community colleges. Once accepted into the college, students are part of the traditional undergraduate population and take courses during the day. There are no cohort elements to the adult program apart from an on-campus student group for adult learners. Most students enroll full-time and work around their course schedules.

**Financial Aid**

Both part-time and full-time students are eligible for financial aid, including merit-based aid.

**Adult Learner Profile**

The age range of adult students extends up to the mid-60s, but the majority of adult learners at the college are in their 40s. A few are in their late 20s or early 30s. However, the college has seen a recent trend toward younger students in the last two years. Most students have families.

While adult students at Agnes Scott pursue the arts and humanities, the overall student population is extremely small, the adult student population is small, and the adult student population is traditional. Still, even Agnes Scott College has seen a trend of decreasing age in its adult student population.

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\(^{8}\) “Agnes Scott College.” College Navigator. http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/?q=agnes+scott&s=all&id=138600

\(^{9}\) Alvanita Negron, Associate Director of Admission, Agnes Scott College. Phone Interview. June 30, 2014.
Areas of Study

While it is difficult to characterize typical areas of study, Negron notes that adult learners are often pragmatic with their educational goals. Some also demonstrate interest in humanities and the arts, with creative writing and dance attracting adult students. There does not appear to be any particular majors that are less appealing to the adult students than the overall student population.

BARD COLLEGE

Bard College is a four-year, private institution in New York with 2,342 students. As shown in the figure below, only a small minority of associate’s and bachelor’s degree completions at the college are attributed to students older than 25. Bard enrolls undergraduate adult students through its Returning to College Program (RCP).

Figure 1.3: Bard College 2012 Degree Completions by Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTITUTION NAME</th>
<th>DEGREE TYPE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>UNDER 18</th>
<th>18-24</th>
<th>25-39</th>
<th>40 AND ABOVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bard College</td>
<td>Associate's degree</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bachelor's degree</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master's degree</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: IPEDS

Program Components

Individuals who are 25 or older and who have completed one year of college to transfer into Bard College are eligible to apply to the RTC program.

According to Mark Halsey, the Associate Dean of Bard College, “The program is founded on the premise that returning students benefit from a liberal arts education by participating actively in the regular undergraduate curriculum.”

However, RCP has its challenges. Unlike other adult-oriented programs, Bard does not offer night classes, weekend classes, or other flexible course options that are typically geared toward adults. Courses are offered during the day, so Bard RTC students take courses with the overall undergraduate student population.

12 Ibid.
Previously, Bard College offered another program called the Continuing Studies Program, which allowed students to take fewer classes over a longer period of time. Students could also take night classes from a smaller list of courses offered specifically toward adult students. The program was reworked into RCP in 2007 after Bard received a grant from the Bernard Osher Foundation. The grant was not renewed and now the program only supports a few students per year.\(^{15}\)

The program remains ideal for students who want to complete their degrees as quickly as possible and who live in the area. It is atypical for an adult-oriented program and attracts students who prefer to attend a higher education institution full-time.\(^{16}\)

**Financial Aid**

Bard only offers financial aid to adult students who take at least three classes in a given semester. Adults are not offered on-campus housing and are placed in regular classes along with all other undergraduates.\(^{17}\)

**Adult Learner Profile**

Currently, the program enrolls three to five new students per year. Most students are between 25 and 30 years old, although there are often one or two students in their 30s or 40s. Students typically come in without a degree but must have one year of undergraduate education to qualify. This year, three new students have associate’s degrees. Students do not typically have children.\(^{18}\)

At Bard College, adult students tend to be younger than the average adult student, with most in their mid to late 20s. Most students do not have families and do not work full time while taking courses. Students also take regular Bard College coursework in a traditional delivery model. All of this points to a non-traditional adult student population. However, the number of adult students is quite small, and Bard College does not appear to prioritize attracting adult students.

**Areas of Study**

According to Greg Armbruster, RCP Director, students do not gravitate toward any particular majors, though he has seen the Writing Arts program gain popularity recently among RCP participants.\(^{19}\)

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\(^{16}\) Ibid.


\(^{18}\) Greg Armbruster, Return to College Director, Bard College. Email Correspondence. June 12, 2014.

\(^{19}\) Ibid.
DePaul University

DePaul University is a four-year, private institution in Chicago with 24,966 students, 16,498 of whom are undergraduates. The university has a significant adult undergraduate population. In 2012, 27.2 percent of bachelor’s degrees were awarded to adult students. Most master’s degrees and post-baccalaureate or post-master’s certificates are also awarded to students over the age of 25.

**Figure 1.4: DePaul University 2012 Degree Completions by Age**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTITUTION NAME</th>
<th>DEGREE TYPE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>18-24</th>
<th>25-39</th>
<th>40 AND ABOVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DePaul University</td>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>3,646</td>
<td>2,647</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master's degree</td>
<td>2,672</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>2,096</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post-baccalaureate or post-</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>master’s certificate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: IPEDS

Hanover corresponded via email with Coleen Dickman, Reports Analyst in the Institutional Research and Market Analytics office at DePaul University. The university enrolls adult students primarily through its School for New Learning (SNL), which offers undergraduate programs in Leadership Studies, Applied Behavioral Sciences, Computing, Early Childhood Education, General Business, or in an Individualized Focus Area.

**Program Components**

SNL offers online and on-campus programs. Transfer credits are available for prior learning and competences, and most students take two to three years to complete a degree in the program. Students can also transfer into the regular undergraduate program.

**Financial Aid**

Financial aid is available to students who take at least six credits per quarter. There are also special scholarships, such as the Bridge Scholarship, available to adult learners in the SNL program.

**Adult Learner Profile**

According to the fact files created by the university, approximately half of adult learners are under 30 and half are over 30. Dickman was unable to provide information about whether

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21 Coleen Dickman, Reports Analyst in the Institutional Research and Market Analytics, DePaul University. Email Correspondence. June 24, 2014.
24 “Undergraduate FAQ.” DePaul University. http://snl.depaul.edu/About/Admission/Undergrad_FAQ.asp
adult learners typically work, have families, or take courses full-time. Students between the ages of 24 and 29 are more often enrolled in the broader undergraduate program, while students who are at least 30 gravitate toward the SNL program, which offers individualized and experiential learning. Similarly, most students aged 24 to 29 are enrolled full-time, while older adults tend to take courses part-time.

Overall, DePaul has a large adult student population at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Approximately half of the adult students are under 30. These younger adult students tend to enroll full-time in business, communication, digital media, and liberal arts programs. DePaul prioritizes attracting and retaining adult students in particular, as seen through its SNL program.

**Areas of Study**

Other than participation in the SNL program, adult students also enroll in the broader undergraduate population. These students tend to choose programs in business, liberal arts and sciences, health fields, and computing and digital media.

**Fordham University**

Fordham University is a private institution in New York with 15,170 students, 8,325 of whom are undergraduates. The institution enrolls a small but significant adult undergraduate population, with 169 bachelor’s degree completions, or approximately 9 percent of completions, attributed to individuals 25 years or older. Additionally, the majority of post-baccalaureate and post-master’s certificates in 2012 were awarded to adult students.

**Figure 1.5: Fordham University 2012 Degree Completions by Age**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTITUTION NAME</th>
<th>DEGREE TYPE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>18-24</th>
<th>25-39</th>
<th>40 AND ABOVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fordham University</td>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>1,750</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
<td>2063</td>
<td>572</td>
<td>1,245</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post-baccalaureate or post-master’s certificate</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: IPEDS

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28 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
Program Components

The majority of undergraduate adult students are enrolled through Fordham’s School of Professional and Continuing Studies (SPCS). The SPCS offers majors in business, psychology, communications, English, economics, social work, and education as well as a variety of certificate programs, such as a Digital and Social Media Certificate and a Post-Baccalaureate Pre-Medical Certificate.  

Courses are offered through a non-traditional schedule and format: they meet once a week in the evenings for three hours per session for a total of 15 weeks. In addition, the SPCS offers two types of intensive courses: “mid-range intensives” that meet for five hours every other Saturday or Sunday throughout the semester and “full-on intensives” that meet for eight and a half hours per session over two weekends. Online courses are also available. Adult learners may also enroll in Fordham’s traditional undergraduate program, but the cost is substantially higher than degree and certificate programs offered through the SPCS. Courses at the SPCS are taught by adjunct faculty, while courses at the traditional undergraduate program are taught by professors.

Adult Learner Profile

Fordham’s adult student population appears to be fairly traditional. The age of SPCS students ranges from 20 to 65, and while this age range encompasses younger adults, students tend to have families, work full time, and choose the SPCS for non-traditional course delivery, including online, weekend, and evening coursework. Most students come into the program with transfer credits. The adult undergraduate population is large in size, and the SPCS program appears to be flourishing.

Financial Aid

Financial aid is available for both part-time and full-time students in the program. The Office of Student Financial Services works with SPCS students to determine eligibility for Pell Grants, New York State Tuition Assistance Plan, Stafford Student Loans, and Hope Scholarship Federal Tax Credits for part-time adult students.

33 Isabelle Frank, Dean of Fordham College of Liberal Studies, Fordham University. Email Correspondence. June 20, 2014.
34 Ibid.
Areas of Study

The most popular areas of study in the SPCS are political science, organizational leadership, psychology, and economics. However, Dean Frank notes that the most popular areas of study change year by year. Majors focused on the sciences, meanwhile, appear broadly less popular with students in the SPCS than with the general population.  

Selective Liberal Arts Institution for Women

Hanover Research interviewed the Associate Director of Admissions for the adult education program at a selective liberal arts institution for women. The interviewee wished to remain anonymous. All following information about this institution comes from the interview.

Program Components

The adult learners program began 1975 as a means to help women who wanted to complete a degree after marriage. The program is constantly evolving to provide women with an education that serves their specific needs. Now, there are peer mentors for students, handbooks about life in the area, and a residence hall specifically for adult learners who are single as well as those that have families. The program continues to attract students from across the country, but there has been a decline in applications with the rise of online educational offerings for adult learners.

Students must have at least 48 transfer credits to apply, and most students come from community colleges. The transfer policy at this institution is somewhat strict; the program does not accept life experience credits, CLEP, or online courses. Students must take mathematics classes at least as advanced as pre-calculus to apply. Unlike other institutions, there is no core curriculum or distribution requirements for students, so once admitted to the program adult students are free to pursue educational directions of their choice.

The program does not offer online classes. There are a small number of evening courses. Most students complete coursework full time, while some take classes two or three days per week while working part-time. The majority of students take 12 or more credits per semester.

Financial Aid

Students must take at least eight credits to qualify for financial aid. Approximately 90 percent of students receive need-based financial aid, and most complete eight to 10 hours per week of work study. There is also special funding for women who have children under 18, where work study hours are converted into grant funding through the generosity of a donor family. The program also offers grants of up to $25,000 to current students or recent graduates of the adult program, which allows students to pursue something they otherwise

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37 Associate Director of Admission. Phone Interview. June 26, 2014.
would not be able to do. For example, students pursue writing a book, creating art, and so forth. There is also emergency funding available for essentials like childcare, job interviews, transit, and necessities.

**Adult Learner Profile**

This program attracts a diverse adult student population from across the country and abroad. Unlike most institutions, this one offers robust student funding, on-campus housing, and traditional coursework, which attracts many adults looking for “the college experience.” Adult learners typically range in age from 20 to 69 years old. The Associate Director of Admissions has worked with the adult learner program since 1981. During her tenure, the oldest student she has seen was 84, while the youngest was 19. To be eligible for entrance, students must be over 24 years old, a veteran, or have a dependent other than a spouse. Currently, about half of students are under 30 and half are over 30.

In the last few years, a greater number of younger students have been applying to the program. Some have families, but it is difficult to determine what proportion do as the institution does not track that information. At any given time there are about 100 students enrolled in the program. However, the program has noticed a downward trend in adult applications as online adult education has become more prominent.

**Areas of Study**

Among adult students, 41 percent major in the sciences, 24 percent major in the humanities, and 34 percent major in the social sciences. Psychology appears particularly popular. However, the popular areas of study generally do not seem much different than the overall student population.

**TUFTS UNIVERSITY**

Tufts University is a private four-year institution with a total enrollment of 10,837 students, 5,225 of whom are undergraduates. The university awarded 54 bachelor’s degrees and 70 certificates to adult learners in 2012.

**Figure 1.6: Tufts University 2012 Degree Completions by Age**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTITUTION NAME</th>
<th>DEGREE TYPE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>18-24</th>
<th>25-39</th>
<th>40 AND ABOVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tufts University</td>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>1,377</td>
<td>1,322</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
<td>1,108</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>834</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post-baccalaureate or post-master’s certificate</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: IPEDS

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Program Components

All adult students enter Tufts University through The Resumed Education for Adult Learning (REAL) Program, which is open to adults who are 24 years or older. REAL students must have taken at least two courses at either a two- or four-year institution within five years of application. All students in the REAL program take traditional courses. The program offers generous transfer credits and accepts transfer credits from all standard academic, non-vocational courses.

The program is small, with an average of 40 to 45 students enrolled per year. Students typically do not work as they complete the program. Most have approximately two years of community college coursework prior to entry into the program.

Financial Aid

Students are eligible for financial aid. In addition to standard aid such as Stafford Loans and Pell Grants, 10 students per year entering the REAL program are given the Bernard Osher Re-entry Scholarship.

Adult Learners Profile

The overall number of adult students is small, with only 40 to 45 enrolled per year. The average age of students in the REAL program is late 20s to early 30s. Only a minority of the students in the program have families. The REAL program, in effect, allows for networking and social connections between adult students, but the program itself does not provide separate majors, coursework, or programmatic aspects. Students in the REAL program take standard Tufts University coursework. Adult learners at Tufts University tend to pursue engineering and science degrees.

Areas of Study

Dean Herbert notes that students in the REAL program appear to be pragmatic about their educational goals. They focus on degree paths that are likely to lead to successful careers. Currently, the most popular areas of study include engineering, biomedical engineering, and computer science. English, international relations, and history are also popular choices. Dean Herbert says that the trend toward engineering and computer science has been particularly noticeable in the last several years, especially with international students in the REAL program. When noting the career-minded orientation of REAL program participants, she contrasts this engineering trend with several years ago, when premedical tracks were particularly popular with the same group. One major that appears less popular with REAL program participants is art history.

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40 Jean Herbert, Associate Dean, Tufts University. Phone Interview. June 19, 2014.
41 Ibid.
43 Ibid.
PROJECT EVALUATION FORM

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