

First Destination Survey and More | Class of 2024

Executive Summary

The First Destination Survey for the Class of 2024, which includes undergraduate graduates from summer 2023, fall 2023 and spring 2024, achieved a knowledge rate of **91.3%**, slightly higher than last year's **91.1%**. Of **1,237 graduates**, we collected post-graduation outcomes for 1,129, while 108 remain unknown. This year's data reveals notable shifts in primary destinations compared to the Class of 2023, particularly in the percentage of graduates pursuing advanced education versus entering the workforce.

Key Findings

- **48%** of graduates secured full-time employment, **down** from 55% last year.
- **42%** of graduates are pursuing advanced education, **up** from 36% last year.
- **6%** of graduates chose other primary destinations, such as military service or entrepreneurship.
- **4%** of graduates were still seeking opportunities at the time of the survey.

Workforce and Education Trends

The percentage of CWRU graduates entering the workforce dropped from 55% last year to 48% this year, aligning with national trends reported by the [National Association of Colleges and Employers](#) (NACE). The Class of 2024 faced a more challenging job market, with employers scaling back hiring compared to previous years. As a result:

- **42%** of graduates pursued graduate or professional school, an increase from **36%** last year, likely due to a more challenging job market.
- **71%** of international students opted for advanced degrees this year, up from **57%** last year, possibly due to visa-related employment challenges and the need for further specialization.

Advanced Education Outcomes

A significant portion of the Class of 2024 chose to pursue advanced education, with many continuing their studies at prestigious institutions, including Case Western Reserve University. Of note:

- **42%** of the Class of 2024 (470 students) enrolled in over 118 institutions domestically and abroad.
- **27** graduates matriculated to Ivy League schools, with representation at all Ivies except Dartmouth.
- **31%** of these students (143 graduates) opted to continue their education at CWRU, demonstrating strong confidence in the institution's academic offerings and research opportunities. Their decision to stay also contributes to the local economy, strengthens the university community and reinforces CWRU's role in developing top-tier talent.



Notable Institutions Attended

Boston University	Johns Hopkins University	University of Chicago
Brown University	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	University of Michigan
Carnegie Mellon University	New York University	University of Oxford
Columbia University	Northwestern University	University of Pennsylvania
Cornell University	Ohio State University	University of Southern California
Duke University	Princeton University	Vanderbilt University
Emory University	Purdue University	Washington University in St. Louis
Georgetown University	Stanford University	Yale University
Georgia Institute of Technology	University of California System	
Harvard University		

Programs of Study

In 2024, graduates from CWRU continued the trend of pursuing higher education in fields with long-standing interest. The largest groups of students are advancing their studies in engineering (19%), medicine (18%), and arts and sciences (16%), which reflect preferences seen in previous years. Business (12%) and biomedical sciences (8.4%) remain strong, while 4% of students are pursuing law and technology.

Degrees Pursued

- Master's degrees (including MBA, arts and sciences master's, master's in public health, and other professional master's): 56% (up from 53% last year)
- MD or DO programs: 16% (up from 12% last year)
- PhD programs: 16% (down from 17% last year)
- DDS or DMD programs: 3% (down from 4% last year)
- Other programs (e.g., DPT, OD, veterinary medicine, PharmD): 5%

Competitiveness for Professional Schools

For the Class of 2024, we combined our First Destination Survey (FDS) data with insights from centralized application services (AMCAS, AACOMAS, LSAC, CASPA, AADSAS, etc.) to assess our students' readiness for advanced programs. These results underscore the strong competitiveness of CWRU graduates, with acceptances at institutions such as CWRU, Columbia, Baylor, Ohio State and Stanford. Highlights include:

- **73%** acceptance rate for MD programs (compared to 47% nationally)
- **81%** combined MD/DO acceptance rate
- **Average MCAT score:** 513
- **Average GPA:** 3.91
- **MD offers:** Average of two offers per student, with one student securing seven offers from top programs

Acceptance to Professional Schools

The Class of 2024 has demonstrated remarkable success in gaining acceptance to professional schools. In fact, **100% of students in the following programs were admitted** to top schools including Duke, Michigan, NYU, UCLA, UPenn, UVA and Washington University in St. Louis:

- **Dentistry:** CWRU graduates had an average DAT score of 21 (vs. 19.82 nationally) and a GPA of 3.81 (vs. 3.67 nationally).
- **Physician assistant:** CWRU graduates had an average GPA of 3.92 (vs. 3.67 nationally).
- **Physical therapy:** CWRU graduates had a GPA of 3.69 (vs. 3.55 nationally).
- **Optometry and pharmacy:** CWRU graduates had a GPA of 3.86 for OD (vs. 3.56 nationally) and 3.79 for PharmD (vs. 3.36 nationally).
- **Law (JD):** CWRU graduates had an average GPA of 3.78 (vs. 3.61 nationally) and an LSAT of 160.3 (vs. 156.1 nationally).

Class of 2024 Employment Outcomes

Fewer graduates reported full-time work as their primary destination, but it remains the largest group. Nearly **28% are in gap year roles**—career-related positions that enhance their competitiveness for professional schools. This aligns with Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) data, which shows **50%** of 2024 MD matriculants took at least one gap year. These roles serve as **strategic stepping stones** for future career advancement.

Salary Trends

Despite the rise in gap year positions, **starting salaries remain strong:**

- **\$70,000-\$74,999**— Median salary range for all students, including gap year roles.
- **\$75,000-\$79,999** – Median salary range for those not in gap year positions.
- **Median salary by college/school (excluding gap year roles):**
 - **\$80,000-\$84,999** – Case School of Engineering
 - **\$60,000-\$64,999** – College of Arts and Sciences
 - **\$67,500-\$72,499** – Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing
 - **\$70,000-\$74,999** – Weatherhead School of Management

Geographic Reach & Top Employers

Graduates secured employment at 320+ organizations across 35 U.S. states and territories, and internationally in Spain, Germany, Austria, Japan, Benin and Thailand. Only one graduate reported fully remote work, reinforcing a strong return to in-person employment. Among international graduates, 89% found opportunities outside Cuyahoga County, while those remaining in Ohio all stayed within the Cleveland metropolitan area.

The top employers hiring three or more graduates include: Cleveland Clinic (42), Case Western Reserve University (15), University Hospitals (14), Epic (8), National Institutes of Health (7), Amazon (6), Deloitte (6), EY (5), Google (4), KeyBank (4), Intel (4), Lincoln Electric (4), Matrix Pointe Software (3), McMaster-Carr Supply Company (3), Northwestern Medicine (3), Parker Hannifin (3), and University of Virginia (3).

Industry & Job Function Trends

The **top five job functions** remain consistent with previous years:

1. **Engineering (26%)** – Declined slightly from 27% in 2023. *Continues to lead.*
2. **Research and Science (16%)** – Increased from 14% in 2023.
3. **Nursing (12%)** – Declined from 14% in 2023.
4. **Healthcare/public health (11%)** – Increased from 8% in 2023. *New to the top 5 this year.*
5. **Information technology (8%)** – Increased slightly from 7% in 2023.

Experiential Education (ExE)

Experiential education remains a cornerstone of the CWRU student experience, with **98%** of the Class of 2024 participating in at least one hands-on learning opportunity. This participation rate has consistently remained **98%-99%** for decades, reflecting CWRU's strong commitment to real-world learning.

Growth in Key Experiences

In 2024, student engagement in several experiential learning areas increased (below). Additionally, 57% of graduates completed three or more distinct types of experiential learning, showcasing a commitment to diverse, hands-on engagement.

- **Internships, co-ops, and practicum positions: 73%** (up from 70%)
- **Research: 85%** (up from 82%)
- **Shadowing: 38%** (up from 33%)
- **Entrepreneurship: 12%** (up from 9%)

Impact of Career Center Engagement

Students who engaged with the Career Center were significantly more likely to participate in **internships, co-ops or practicum experiences (75%)** compared to those who did not (**54%**). This highlights the critical role the Career Center plays in connecting students with high-impact opportunities.

Preparation for Future Success

- **96%** of graduates agreed or strongly agreed that **CWRU prepared them for graduate school.**
- **96%** of those entering full-time employment felt **confident in their job readiness.**

As they take their next steps, we celebrate the Class of 2024's achievements and wish them continued success in their careers and future endeavors.

