

What Do We Know about the Undergraduate Class of 2026?

UPIKE continues to have twice as many of its graduates come to UPIKE as new freshmen than as transfer students: 67% started here as first-time students; 33% transferred to UPIKE from another institution of higher education.

- 24% of graduates had participated in the UPIKE dual credit program
- 23% of transfers came from a KCTCS institution (down 13% from Class 2025)
 - 90% of these coming from Big Sandy Community and Technical College

The most popular majors are Business Administration 16.4%, Nursing (Associates) 12.2%, and Psychology 10.5%.

The oldest graduate is 46 years old, and the youngest graduates are 19 years old (4).

The average time to degree completion for graduates who started at UPIKE as first-time students and receiving bachelor's degrees continues to decline (3.54) due in part to 68% of these students bringing in college credit from high school. The "Endurance Award" goes to Jasmine Carroll Adkins (BS in Psychology), who is graduating today after originally beginning her studies at UPIKE in fall 2017.

A little over half (55%) of the graduates who started at UPIKE as first-time students and receiving bachelor's degrees took out student loans to pay for their education. The average per borrower cumulative principal borrowed for the Class of 2026 UPIKE graduates is \$24,100 (about \$600 MORE than last year's class). [The average student loan debt of new bachelor's degree-completers from public or private nonprofit schools in Kentucky for the Class of 2025 was \$33,691. (Source: <https://www.bestcolleges.com/research/average-student-loan-debt/#average-student-loan-debt>)]

- 77% are from Appalachia, which is similar to the general student population (79%)
- 70% are Kentucky residents, which is similar to the general student population (69%)
 - 43% of these graduated from a high school in Pike County, Kentucky
 - Most of these graduated from Pikeville Independent HS (27%)
- 71% are graduating with the same major as what they intended at the time of admission to UPIKE
- 67% of UPIKE credit hours were a type of distance learning format (28% higher than last year)
 - 12% of graduates took at least one Acadeum course
- More than half (60%) of the graduates had lived in campus housing at some point during their matriculation at UPIKE
- 57% received Pell grant funds, which is similar to the general student population (53%)
- 55% were involved with intercollegiate athletics at some point during their matriculation at UPIKE which is similar than the general student population (58%)
 - 12% basketball
 - 11% football
 - 10% baseball
 - 8% bowling
 - 8% golf
 - 8% soccer
 - 6% Cross country/Track & Field
 - 6% tennis
 - 5% archery
 - 5% cheerleading
 - 21% in other seven sports
- 40% are male, which is lower than the general student population (48%)
- 27% of the graduates are first generation college students, which is higher than the general student population (22%)
- 19% are students of color and/or international students, which is similar to the general student population (18%)
- 15% are graduating with a degree in more than one major; this is higher than prior to the launch of the revised general education program in 2019 (9%)
- 11% of graduates are non-traditional [i.e., over the age of 25, married/been married, and/or have children], which is lower than last year's class
- 8% of graduates participated in at least one music group at some point during their matriculation at UPIKE