
Students from UT System Institutions in the Texas Workforce

Preparing students to participate in the Texas workforce and contribute to the Texas economy is an important component of The University of Texas System (UT) mission. This brief presents the results of a study using administrative records of UT System students from fall 1977 through summer 2022. Data on the 2023 earnings for these former students were provided by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) unemployment insurance (UI) wage records. This first-of-its kind analysis using Texas UI data, leveraging 45 years of enrollment and graduation data from UT System institutions, provides a fuller picture of the contributions UT System alumni and former students of all ages to the Texas workforce.

KEY FINDINGS

- There were over 1.4 million former UT students employed in the Texas workforce during 2023.
- Former UT students represent approximately 11% of workers between the ages of 25 and 64.
- Among workers in Texas between the ages of 25 and 64 with at least some college or a degree, 16% were former UT students.
- Among Texas workers between the ages of 25 and 64, with at least some college or a degree, former UT students represent an estimated 25% of those earning \$200,000 or more.
- Former UT students working in Texas earned over \$133.6 billion in 2023.
- The majority of former UT System students stay in Texas. In 2023, 59% of former students between the ages of 25 and 64 were working in Texas.
- Former UT students found working in Texas are working in these top three industries: Educational Services; Health Care and Social Assistance; and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services.
- Graduates with higher level degrees tend to have higher earnings. Based on the 2023 UI wage records, 49% of doctoral graduates earned \$150,000 or more, and 37% earned \$200,000 or more.

ABOUT THE DATA

Data include administrative records of students enrolled at UT System institutions from fall 1977 through summer 2022. Data on degrees or certificates earned at UT System institutions are available from academic years 1989 through 2022. Only former UT students with a valid SSN that can be matched to the TWC wage data are included in the analysis. Where rates are presented, showing the share of former UT students found in the Texas workforce, this is among trackable students with valid SSNs.

Approximately 7% of former students cannot be matched to the TWC wage records because their student ID is not a valid social security number. Additionally, self-employed or federally employed workers in Texas are not subject to Texas unemployment insurance (UI) reporting. As a result, these workers are not represented in the TWC wage data. Given these factors, the total numbers of former UT students in the Texas workforce are likely higher than those presented in this brief.

THE UT-TRAINED TEXAS WORKFORCE

During calendar year 2023, there were over 1.4 million former UT students found working in Texas. For students whose last year studying at a UT System Institution was in academic year 1977-1978, their average age in 2023 was 72 years old. Among this cohort of former UT students, 15% were found working in Texas in 2023.

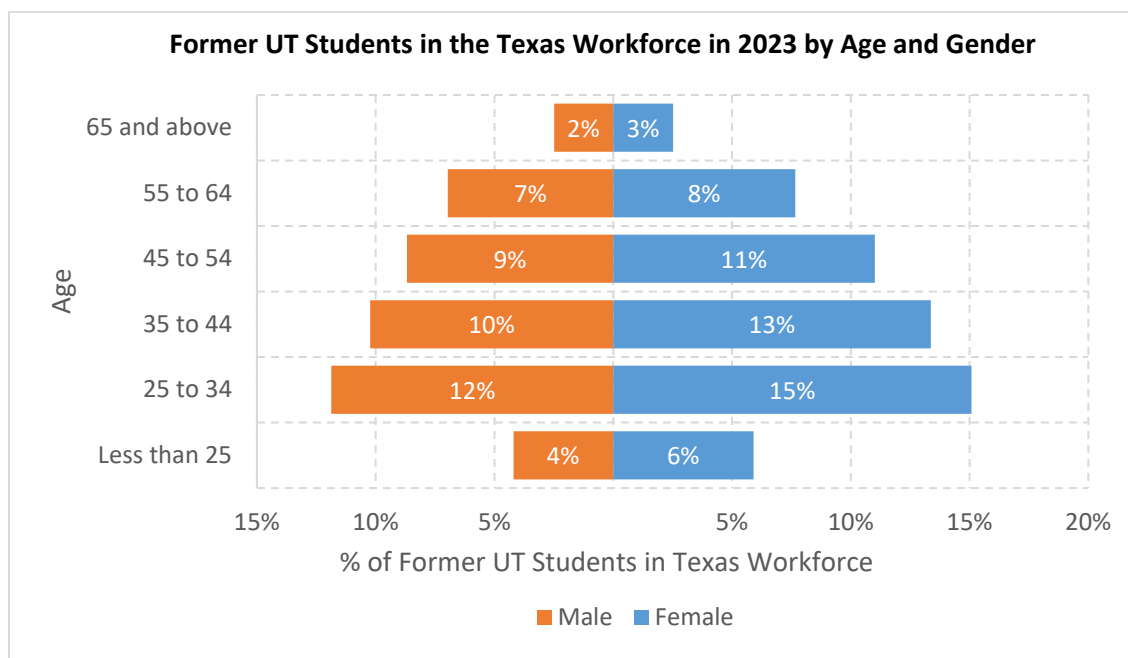
The historical data used in this analysis provides a more comprehensive view of the participation of former UT students in the Texas workforce than similar analyses limited to more recent administrative records. As a result, former students of all age groups are represented as shown in the following table.

Table 1. Match Rate of Former UT Students of All Ages to the 2023 Wage Data

Age Group	Number Found	Percent Found in 2023 Wage Records
Less than 25	144,774	72%
25 to 34	386,093	69%
35 to 44	338,142	63%
45 to 54	282,116	57%
55 to 64	209,582	44%
65 and above	71,749	17%
Total	1,432,456	53%

Source: THECB CBM reports, TWC UI wage records

The majority of former UT students found working in Texas during 2023 were between the ages of 25 and 64. As illustrated in the table below, there were slightly more females than males across every age group. The gender distribution by age group of former UT students overall is very similar to the gender distribution by age of former UT students found working in Texas in 2023.



Source: THECB CBM reports, TWC UI wage records

RATE AT WHICH FORMER STUDENTS AGES 25 TO 64 ARE FOUND WORKING IN TEXAS

Over 2 million former UT students were between the ages of 25 and 64 in 2023 and had valid social security numbers (SSNs) in the state administrative data. Among these trackable students, 59% were found working in Texas. The match rate was lower for former UT students in doctoral programs. Among former doctoral students, 46% were found working in Texas as detailed in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Former UT Students, ages 25 to 64, found in the 2023 Texas Wage Records by Level

Level of Last Enrollment or Award	Number Found Working in Texas	Percent Found Working in Texas*
Undergraduate	877,958	60%
Masters	281,134	59%
Doctoral	56,841	46%
Total	1,215,933	59%

**Among former students with trackable student IDs*

Source: THECB CBM reports, TWC UI wage records

The percentage of former students, across all levels, found working in Texas varied considerably by institution. The UT MD Anderson Cancer Center had the highest share of former students between the ages of 25 and 64 found working in Texas. UT Southwestern Medical Center (UTSWMC) and The University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin) had the lowest shares of former students found working in Texas in 2023 as shown in Table 3. UTSWMC has the highest share of out-of-state students, with this population making up 43% of their fall 2024 enrollment. UT Austin enrolls a much higher share of students from Texas than UTSWMC. However, graduates of UT Austin, the System's flagship institution, may be more likely to seek employment or continue their studies out of state than students at other UT System Institutions.

Table 3. Former UT Students, Ages 25 to 64, found in the 2023 Texas Wage Records by Institution

Institution	Number Found Working in Texas	Percent Found Working in Texas*
UTA	263,323	62%
UT AUS	257,987	49%
UTD	105,582	59%
UTEP	106,833	53%
UTPB	33,844	68%
UTRGV	150,422	69%
UTSA	183,061	63%
SFA	108,267	64%
UTT	54,425	69%
UTSWMC	9,769	47%
UTMB	19,601	64%
UTHSCH	26,114	58%
UTHSCSA	22,162	60%
UTMDA	2,116	75%
Total	1,343,506	59%

**Among former students with trackable student IDs*

Note: Students who previously enrolled or graduated from multiple UT System Institutions are counted separately for each institution attended. As a result, the total for Table 3 is higher than the total for Table 2.

Source: THECB CBM reports, TWC UI wage records

IMPACT TO THE TEXAS ECONOMY

The American Community Survey (ACS) provides estimates of adults between the ages of 25 and 64 with employment subject to Texas unemployment insurance (UI) reporting. The ACS also allows this data to be disaggregated by educational attainment. There were 11 million adults between the ages of 25 and 64 with employment subject to Texas UI reporting in 2023 based on ACS estimates.¹ Approximately 11% of them are former UT students. Among employed workers ages 25 to 64 subject to Texas UI reporting with some college or a degree, 16% were former UT students as detailed below in table 4.

Table 4. 2023 American Community Survey Estimates of Employed Workers Ages 25 to 64 Subject to Texas Unemployment Insurance (UI) Reporting by Educational Attainment

	Estimates from the American Community Survey*	Estimated Percent Comprised of Former UT Students
All Employed Workers Subject to Texas UI Reporting Ages 25 to 64	11,002,121	11.1%
Employed Workers Subject to Texas UI Reporting Ages 25 to 64 with Some College or a Degree	7,433,573	16.4%

**Estimates from 2023 American Community Survey data for workers subject to Texas UI reporting
Source: THECB CBM reports; TWC UI wage records; 2023 ACS, IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota*

Former UT students working in Texas earned over \$133.6 billion in 2023. For context, this is approximately the 2023 GDP of the country of Chile.²

Table 5. Total 2023 Earnings of Former UT Students Found Working in Texas by Level of Last Enrollment or Award

Level	Total 2023 Earnings (Millions)
Undergraduate	\$87,710
Masters	\$33,934
Doctoral	\$11,975
Total	\$133,620

Source: THECB CBM reports, TWC UI wage records

Former UT students were found working in all industry groups. Table 6 below shows the top 5 industries where former students were found working in 2023. Socially impactful industries of Educational Services, as well as Health Care and Social Assistance, had the highest shares of former UT Students.

¹ 2023 ACS, IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota. Does not include self-employed, federal government, or armed services.

² World Bank, World Development Indicators, accessed 3/31/2025.

<https://databank.worldbank.org/reports.aspx?source=2&series=NY.GDP.MKTP.CD&country=#>

Table 6. Top 5 Industries for Former UT Students Working in Texas in 2023

Industry	Percent of All Former Students Found Working in Texas
Educational Services	20.2%
Health Care and Social Assistance	17.7%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	10.9%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	7.0%
Retail Trade	6.5%

Source: THECB CBM reports, TWC UI wage records

Educational Services was the top industry area where former UT students were found working in Texas. When focusing specifically on graduates of UT System institutions between the ages of 25 and 64 working in Educational Services, 73% were employed in the Elementary and Secondary Schools industry subgroup. Multidisciplinary/Interdisciplinary Studies and Education were the most common majors for these graduates, representing 47% of those found working in the Elementary and Secondary Schools industry subgroup. The other 53% of graduates working in the Elementary and Secondary Schools industry subgroup were broadly distributed across all other majors.

It is worth noting that Retail Trade as an industry includes a vast number of occupations, not just those typically associated with direct customer interaction. This industry is an important landing place for managers, logistics and supply chain coordinators, and marketing and advertising specialists.

It is also worth noting that the top industries for former UT students are not uniform across age groups. While Educational Services was the top industry for former UT students overall, this was especially true for older workers. Among former UT students between the ages of 55 and 64, 22% were working in Educational Services in 2023, compared to only 17% of former UT students between the ages of 25 and 34. For this younger group, the top industry was Health Care and Social Assistance. This difference may be indicative of a shift in preferences away from Educational Services and toward the Health Care and Social Assistance industry among younger workers.

Table 7. Top Industries and Median Wages of Former UT Students Working in Texas in 2023 by Age Group

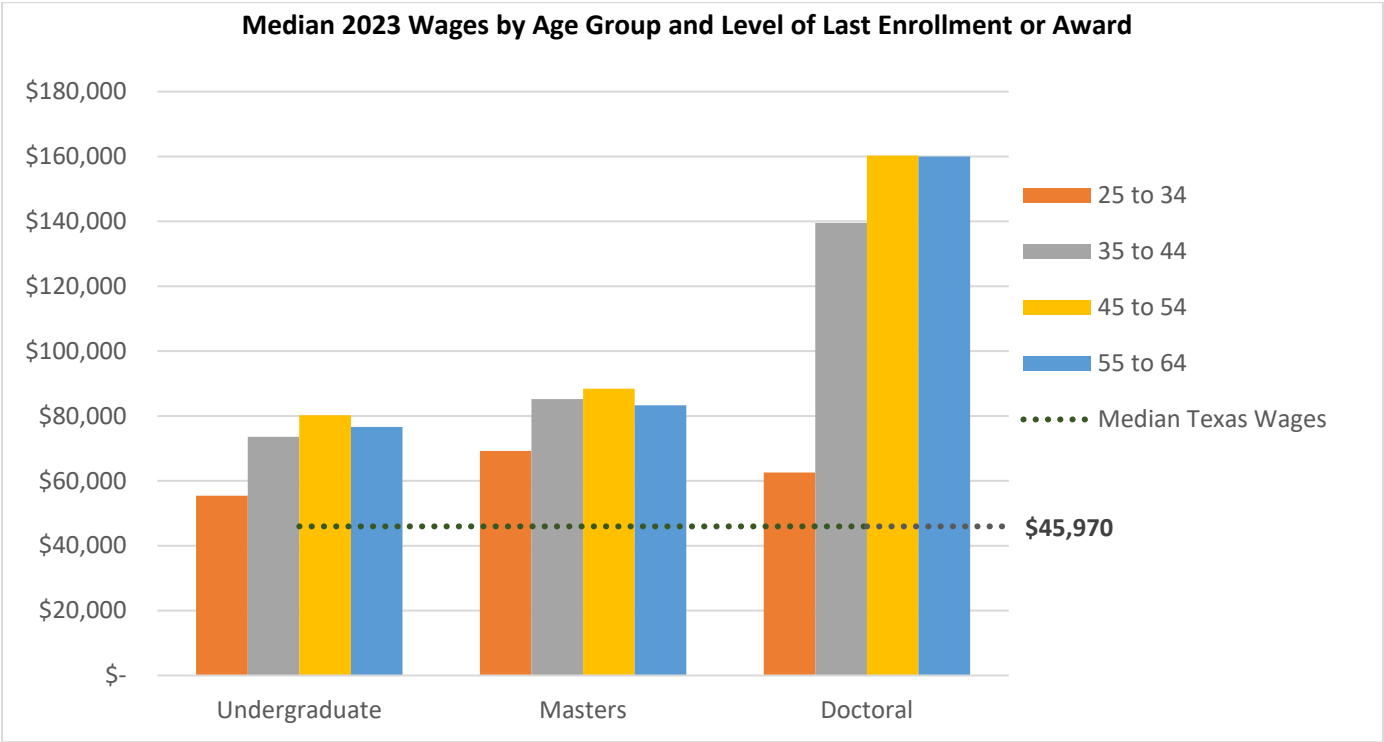
Ages 25 to 34			Ages 55 to 64		
Industry	Count	Median Wage	Industry	Count	Median Wage
Health Care and Social Assistance	74,701	\$61,389	Educational Services	46,884	\$67,269
Educational Services	63,750	\$54,844	Health Care and Social Assistance	32,465	\$90,487
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	49,098	\$73,650	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	21,671	\$111,013

Source: THECB CBM reports, TWC UI wage records

ABOVE AVERAGE WAGES

The median wages in Texas were \$45,970 in May of 2023 according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. A sizeable majority, 67%, of former UT students found working in Texas in 2023 earned more than that.

Graduation detail at the student level is not available prior to 1989. For that reason, the degree level category for each UT student was determined by his or her most recent enrollment or graduation record. Students in the following chart were grouped into the broad categories of undergraduate, master’s, and doctoral levels. As shown below, wages tend to increase for students who pursued higher-level degrees. Median wages for former doctoral students ages 35 to 64 were over three times the median Texas wage.



Source: THECB CBM reports, TWC UI wage records, Bureau of Labor Statistics

Former UT students earning below the median Texas wages tend to be younger, with 44% of this group being under 30 years old. Furthermore, 53% of the former UT students earning less than the Texas median wage were undergraduate students who did not complete a baccalaureate degree before leaving their UT System institution. These were undergraduate students whose last enrollment was during or after academic year 1989, the year graduation data became available, and for whom no degree information was reported. These undergraduate non-completers earning less than the median Texas wage tended to be working in Retail Trade, followed by the Health Care and Social Assistance industries.

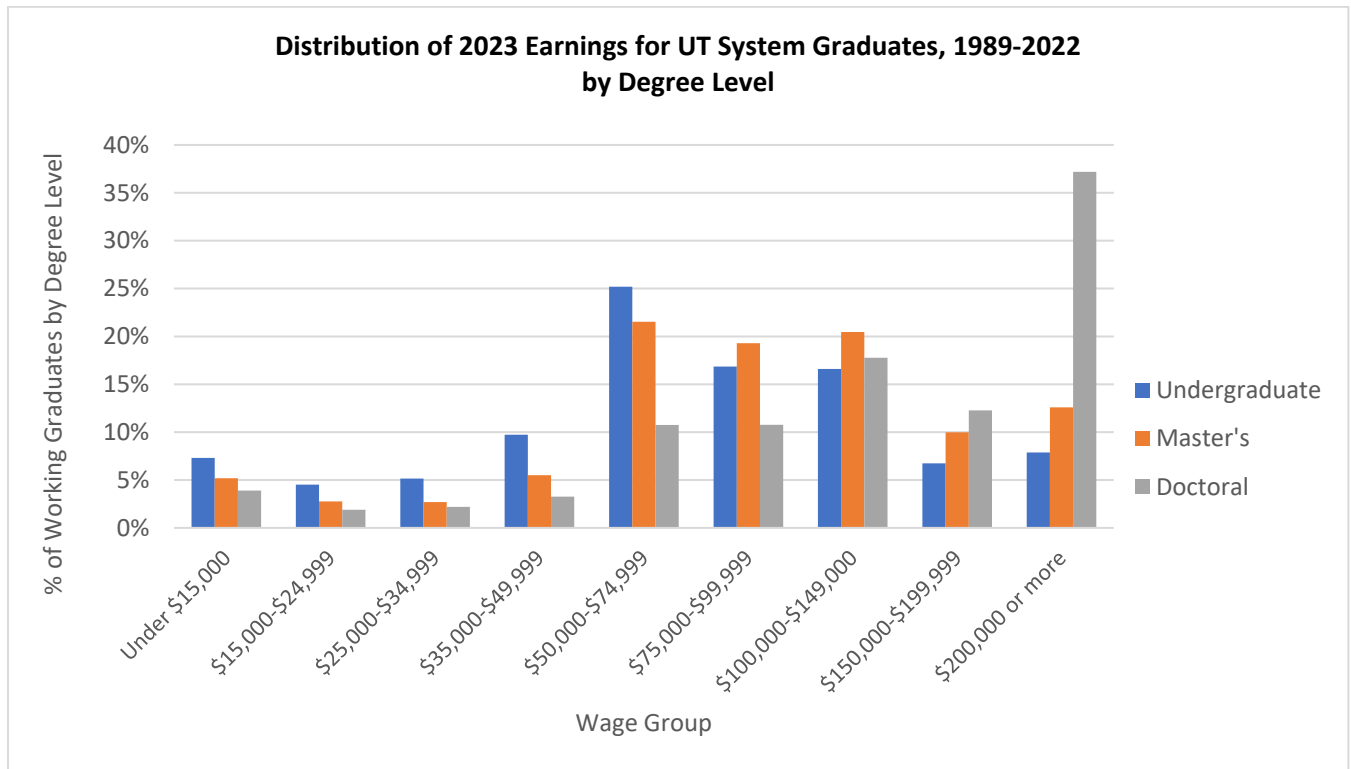
When disaggregating the 2023 earnings of former UT students by wage group, there are sizeable shares of former students in all earnings categories, including those within lower earnings categories that fall below the 2023 Texas median wage. However, among the population of employed workers with some college or a degree, between the ages of 25 and 64, former UT students are underrepresented in the lower wage groups. Former UT students comprise 16.4% of college educated workers ages 25 to 64 in jobs subject to Texas UI reporting. But they represent over 19% of those workers earning between \$75,000 and \$150,000 per year. In addition, they represent over a quarter of employed workers between the ages of 25 to 64 with some college or a degree and who earn \$200,000 per year or more, as detailed below in table 7.

Table 8. Share of Former UT Students Among Texas Workers Ages 25 to 64 with Some College or a Degree

Wage Group	2023 Total Employed in Texas*	Former UT Students Working in Texas in 2023	Former UT Students as an Estimated Percent of Texas Workers Ages 25 to 64 with Some College or a Degree
Under \$15,000	625,992	99,529	15.9%
\$15,000-\$24,999	485,385	61,437	12.7%
\$25,000-\$34,999	656,832	70,202	10.7%
\$35,000-\$49,999	1,071,060	123,689	11.5%
\$50,000-\$74,999	1,795,068	278,430	15.5%
\$75,000-\$99,999	994,608	196,937	19.8%
\$100,000-\$149,000	993,677	193,979	19.5%
\$150,000-\$199,999	388,609	83,632	21.5%
\$200,000 or more	422,342	108,098	25.6%
Total	7,433,573	1,215,933	16.4%

**Total Employed in Texas estimated from 2023 ACS data for workers subject to Texas UI reporting
Source: THECB CBM reports; TWC UI wage records; 2023 ACS, IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota*

The following chart shows the distribution of 2023 wages for graduates of UT System institutions by the level of their last award. Due to data availability, only UT System graduates from academic year 1989 onward who were found working in Texas in 2023 are included.



Source: THECB CBM reports, TWC UI wage records

The chart above shows higher shares of undergraduate completers in the lower earnings groups compared with the shares of graduates who earned master's or doctoral degrees. In each wage group starting at \$75,000 and above, there are higher shares of students who earned master's degrees than shares of students whose last degree at a UT System institution was at the undergraduate level. Furthermore, 49% of doctoral graduates earned \$150,000 or more in 2023 and 37% earned \$200,000 or more.

CONCLUSION

Graduates and former students of UT System institutions make up a sizeable share of the Texas workforce. Based on a review of former UT students going back to fall 1977, an estimated 16% of Texas workers between the ages of 25 and 64 with some college or a degree are former UT students. The majority of former students, 59%, stay and work in Texas. There are more female former UT students in the Texas workforce in every age group, which is consistent with gender distribution of former UT students by age group.

The contributions of former UT students to the Texas economy are sizeable, with former UT students in Texas earning over \$133.6 billion in 2023. Former UT students tend to earn above-average wages. They represent an estimated 25% of Texas between the ages of 25 and 64, with some college or a degree, earning \$200,000 or more. The highest wages tend to be earned by graduates of UT System institutions with more advanced degrees. Among graduates of UT System doctoral programs for working in Texas, 49% earned \$150,000 or more, underscoring the well-documented association between educational attainment and earnings.

The contributions of former UT students to the Texas workforce are also long-lasting. Among former students between the ages of 55 and 64 in 2023, 44% were found working in Texas. Furthermore, among those students whose last year at a UT System institution was during the 1977-1978 academic year, now with an average age of 72, 15% of them were still employed in Texas 45 years later.