

Graduate Degree ROI Study 2026 by OnlineMastersColleges.com (OMC)

Master's Degree Return on Investment by Field.

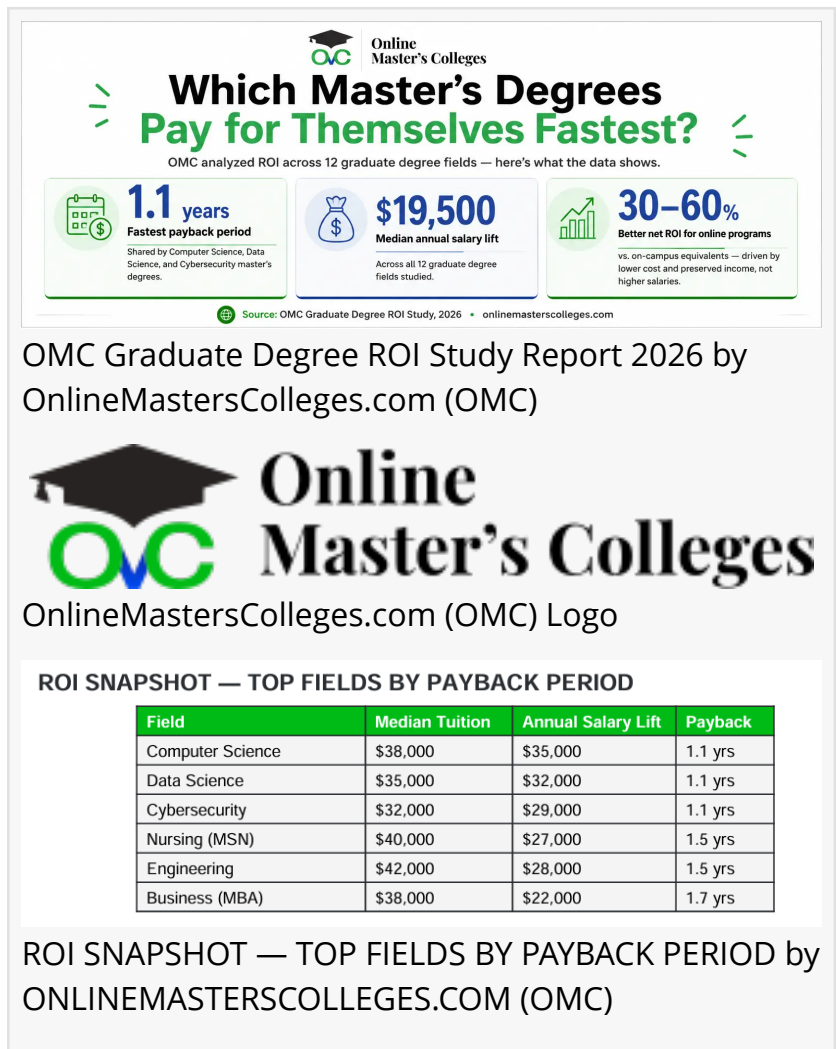
RENO, NV, UNITED STATES, July 22, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study measures graduate degree return on investment across 12 major subject areas using federal earnings data, tuition benchmarks, and a proprietary payback period model. The findings show that ROI varies enormously by field — and that program cost, not just salary outcome, is often the deciding factor.

KEY FINDINGS

- Median salary lift across all fields analyzed: ~\$19,500/year
- Highest-ROI fields (under 2-year payback): Computer Science, Data Science, Cybersecurity, Engineering, Nursing, MBA
- Online programs produce 30–60% better net ROI than on-campus equivalents in most fields
- Public university graduates pay 30–60% less in tuition than private university graduates for comparable post-degree salaries
- Affordable, cost-controlled programs frequently outperform expensive programs on ROI

OMC ROI RATING FRAMEWORK



High ROI: Payback period under 3 years

Medium ROI: Payback period 3–6 years

Low ROI: Payback period 6+ years

ROI SNAPSHOT — TOP FIELDS BY PAYBACK PERIOD

Field	Median Tuition	Annual Salary Lift	Payback
Computer Science	\$38,000	\$35,000	1.1 yrs
Data Science	\$35,000	\$32,000	1.1 yrs
Cybersecurity	\$32,000	\$29,000	1.1 yrs
Nursing (MSN)	\$40,000	\$27,000	1.5 yrs
Engineering	\$42,000	\$28,000	1.5 yrs
Business (MBA)	\$38,000	\$22,000	1.7 yrs

OMC RESEARCH FINDING

In many graduate fields, reducing program cost has a greater impact on ROI than increasing expected post-graduation salary. A \$30,000 degree with a \$20,000 annual salary lift can outperform a \$90,000 degree with a \$25,000 lift.

ABOUT ONLINEMASTERSCOLLEGES.COM

OnlineMastersColleges.com helps students evaluate, compare, and choose graduate education options through rankings, university profiles, subject hubs, market reports, ROI studies, and decision-support resources.

Read the full report: <https://www.onlinemasterscolleges.com/graduate-degree-roi-study/>

contact@onlinemasterscolleges.com

OnlineMastersColleges® and OMC are trademarks of Smart Dust Systems.

Stephen Lukes

Online Masters Colleges

+1 614-982-0752

stephen.lukes@onlinemasterscolleges.com

Visit us on social media:

[LinkedIn](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Facebook](#)

[YouTube](#)

[TikTok](#)

[X](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/928547381>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.