



ROI Calculator Research Methodology

Overview

Higher education leaders face persistent challenges with student retention, which directly impacts institutional revenue and student success. To demonstrate the effectiveness of our services, Upswing implemented a research study examining retention outcomes at our partner institutions.

The study analyzed 12 years of publicly available data and found that institutions partnering with Upswing see an average increase of 0.789 percentage points in student retention. This improvement translates to meaningful financial benefits, which our ROI calculator estimates by applying this research-backed figure to your institution's tuition revenue.

Research Approach

What We Studied: We examined first-year student retention rates—the percentage of new students who return for their second year—at institutions before and after they began working with Upswing.

Data Source: The analysis used 12 years of data (2008-2020) from the federal Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), which tracks enrollment and outcomes across all accredited institutions.

Research Design: Rather than simply comparing partner and non-partner schools, we used a sophisticated analytical approach that tracks the same institutions over time. This method isolates Upswing's impact by accounting for other factors that influence retention, such as economic conditions, changing student demographics, and institutional characteristics.

Quality Controls: The analysis controlled for factors known to affect retention, including student demographics, institutional size, faculty ratios, financial aid patterns, and spending on student services. We also verified that partner institutions had similar retention trends to non-partners before beginning their Upswing partnership, ensuring our results reflect genuine impact rather than pre-existing differences.

Key Finding

Upswing partnerships increase student retention by an average of 0.789 percentage points. This improvement represents real financial value—each additional retained student continues paying tuition, fees, and other costs. Our ROI calculator applies this research-validated improvement rate to your institution's specific enrollment and tuition figures to project potential financial benefits.

Why This Matters

Student retention affects both institutional sustainability and student success. This research provides evidence-based confirmation that Upswing's services deliver measurable improvements in student persistence, backed by rigorous analysis of real institutional outcomes over more than a decade.