

# The Future of Beauty & Wellness Education in 2026

Key insights into enrollment patterns,  
emerging priorities for schools, and  
what's driving students and professionals.



Milady®

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SECTION 01

# The Industry at a Glance



# Where the Industry Stands — and Where it's Headed

Despite evolving regulatory and federal headwinds, beauty and wellness education remains an exciting field. Students are entering the field with bold aspirations, and schools are navigating a wave of change shaped by technology and the rapid expansion of distance education.

This report brings together what we're seeing across the broader market and what Milady's proprietary data reveals. Data points include enrollment behaviors, what students and professionals crave, and the rise in distance education programs (especially asynchronous models).

**Our goal is simple:** to give school leaders the clarity and foresight they need to stay proactive, competitive, and aligned with where the industry is going next.

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## By the Numbers: Beauty's Growth Story

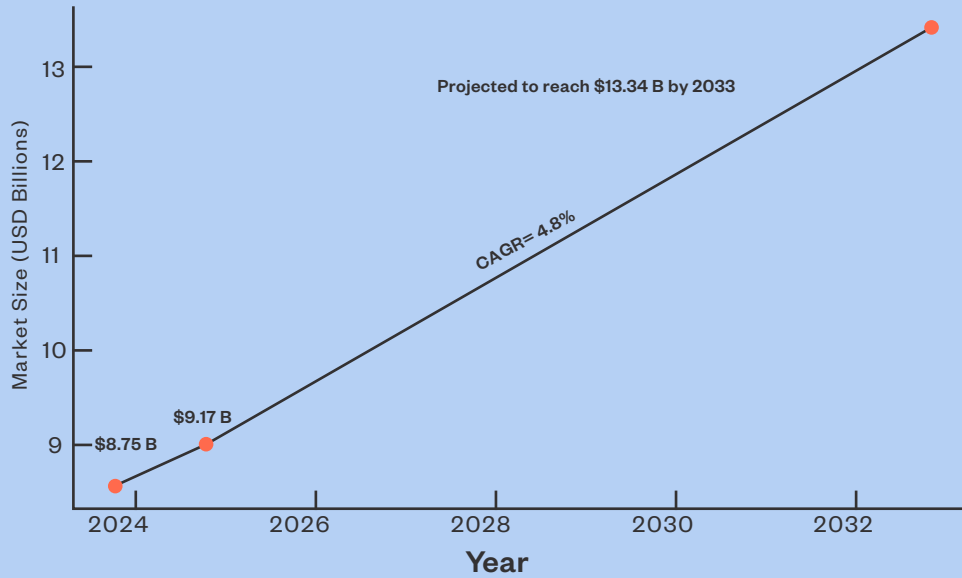
As we enter 2026, the beauty and wellness industry continues its remarkable climb.

Beauty influencers dominate TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube, with Gen Z driving trends in skincare and self-care. Yet every generation—from Boomers and Gen X to Millennials and now Gen Alpha—plays a role in shaping and growing the market.

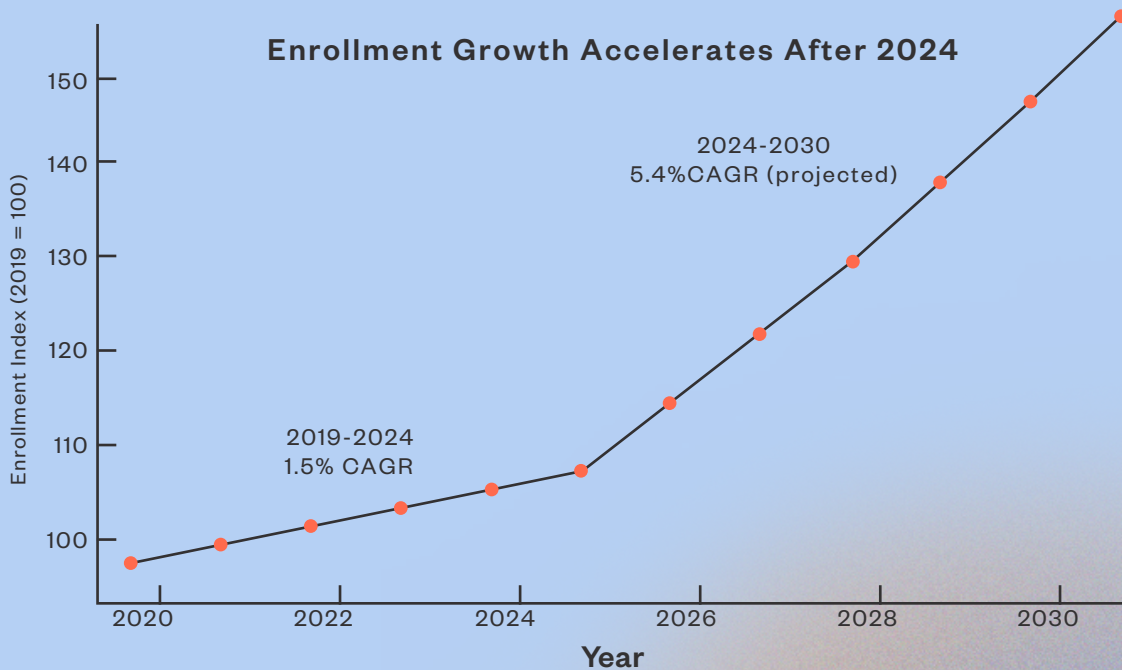
McKinsey estimates the global beauty market at \$450 billion, while an article in the San Diego Reader reports that the professional beauty services segment is projected to reach \$202.5 billion by 2035.

Within this vast ecosystem sits beauty and wellness education. According to Business Research Insights, the global cosmetology and beauty school market grew from \$8.75 billion in 2024 to \$9.17 billion in 2025, and it's projected to reach \$13.34 billion by 2033—a steady 4.8% compound annual growth rate (CAGR).

### Global Cosmetology & Beauty Schools Market Growth (2024-2033)



In the U.S., Validated Insights reports that beauty and wellness school enrollment is expected to accelerate from a 1.6% CAGR achieved from 2019 to 2024 to over three times that, at 5.4% through 2030.



These figures tell a clear story: The beauty and wellness industry is growing rapidly, and education remains central to that momentum. But the question ahead is not just how large the industry will become—it's which schools are prepared to meet changing student expectations and capture a disproportionate share of that enrollment growth.

**UP NEXT:** We break down the impact of distance education.

# The Biggest Shift in Beauty and Wellness Education



# Digital Learning and Distance Education Have Become Competitive Necessities

Before the pandemic, 30% of beauty schools used digital learning, and distance education wasn't even part of the conversation. COVID-19 forced a rapid pivot, with nearly 100% of schools relying on digital to survive. Though challenging, the pandemic demonstrated what was possible in education, even in fields long assumed to require fully in-person instruction.

Today, as we publish this report in early 2026, most beauty schools use digital learning to some degree, and two-thirds of state cosmetology boards now allow distance education.

## Across Milady's customer base:

- 86.7% increase in digital learning since 2019 (11.1% average annual growth)
  - 13% growth from 2023–2024
  - 7.3% growth from 2024–2025
- Hybrid program adoption grew by double digits from 2024 to 2025
- Use of asynchronous distance education nearly doubled year over year
- Today, 4 in 10 schools offer a hybrid program

Schools that have adopted digital learning and distance education are reaping the most benefits, including higher enrollment and stronger market positioning, while programs that have been slow to embrace the digital zeitgeist are finding it increasingly difficult to catch up and remain competitive.

These difficulties won't ease, given student expectations for flexible schedules.



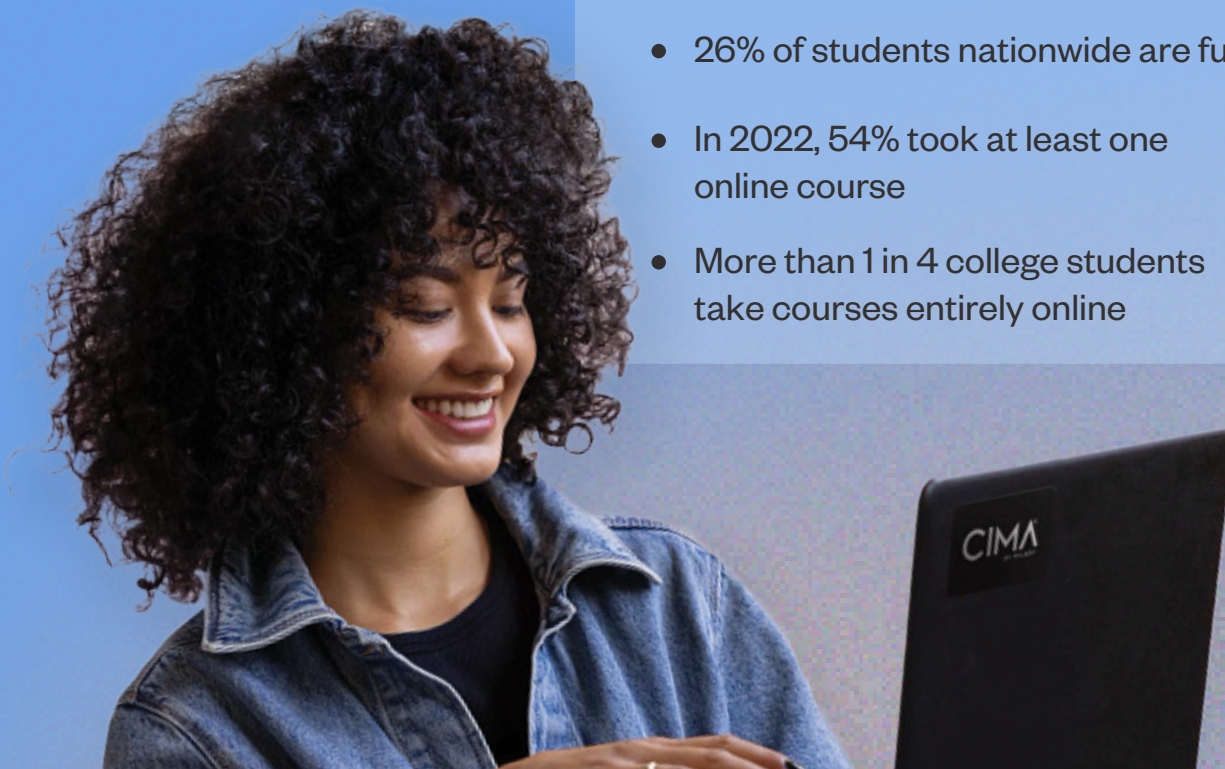
# Student Demand for Flexibility has Shifted Permanently

The pandemic also demonstrated to students—including those enrolled in beauty programs—that they could learn effectively outside a physical classroom. As a result, flexible schedules, particularly ones that offer asynchronous learning, have become increasingly attractive.

In fact, according to our data, a flexible schedule is the top factor influencing a prospective student's choice of beauty school, after location. (Read more about it in section 03.)

This isn't a temporary bump, either. It's a generational expectation, and broader distance learning trends support this argument:

- 26% of students nationwide are fully online
- In 2022, 54% took at least one online course
- More than 1 in 4 college students take courses entirely online



**Schools that don't figure out how to make distance education work for their program will fall behind.**

# Regulatory Momentum is Keeping Pace

NACCAS continues to refine and formalize expectations for distance education, reinforcing this long-term shift toward flexible delivery. With 33 states now allowing distance education and seven more actively reviewing rules, the trajectory is unmistakable.

## The Numbers at a Glance

- **34 states** now allow distance education.
- Distance hours apply **only to theory curriculum.**
- States allow **25–50% of theory hours** to be earned via distance education, with **50% emerging as the norm.**
- **31 states** allow asynchronous distance education.



**Distance education — especially asynchronous theory —  
is becoming a significant operational advantage.**

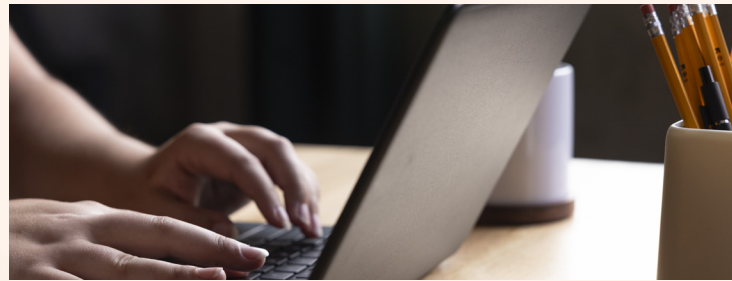
# How Early Adopters Have Already Gained a Competitive Advantage

As distance education becomes normalized across student expectations and state boards, early-adopting schools are already seeing measurable operational advantages.

## Increased enrollment capacity without physical expansion

Hybrid delivery allows schools to stagger in-person requirements and optimize building use, enabling programs to grow without adding square footage and giving schools a cost advantage in high-demand markets.

**REAL IMPACT:** Schools can grow enrollment without increasing facility costs, providing a significant competitive and financial advantage.



## Increased operational efficiencies

When grading, attendance tracking, and student progress monitoring move into a digital environment, instructors reclaim hours once spent on manual administrative work.

**REAL IMPACT:** One multi-campus cosmetology school saved more than 1,185 staff hours per year after moving exam grading into [CIMA](#), Milady's digital learning platform, freeing educators to focus on instruction rather than administrative tasks.

## Improved attendance through reduced commute friction

Distance education removes one of the biggest barriers to consistent attendance: getting to campus.

**REAL IMPACT:** A Manhattan school saw meaningful increases in attendance once students could complete theory curriculum online.



## Better alignment with student expectations

Students accustomed to online coursework expect the same flexibility in beauty education. Schools that adopt distance education and digital learning in the classroom signal that they understand modern learners and are building programs for the world in which students live today.

**REAL IMPACT:** One beauty school owner noted, "Students can revisit videos and activities as often as they need. It's helpful for students who need repetition or missed something in class."

# Digital Learning is the New Normal, and Distance Education is a Strategic Capability, not just a Delivery Method

Schools that treat digital and hybrid learning as core to their operating model are:

- Growing enrollments without expanding facilities
- Improving attendance and retention
- Reducing administrative burden
- Delivering modern learning experiences that students expect
- Gaining market share from slower-moving competitors

The next decade of beauty and wellness education will be shaped by the schools that use distance learning to expand opportunity, build operational excellence, and differentiate their programs.

**UP NEXT:** What today's enrollment patterns reveal about how students are choosing programs and what schools must prepare for next.

## Key Terms at a Glance

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### Distance Education:

When teaching and learning happen remotely, with technology enabling communication and course delivery.

### Hybrid Education:

A program structure where a portion of the curriculum is delivered online and outside the physical classroom. Often used interchangeably with distance education.

### Synchronous Learning:

Real-time online instruction where students and educators are logged in together.

### Asynchronous Learning:

Self-paced online coursework completed outside the classroom and on the student's schedule.

### Digital Learning:

Learning experiences supported by technology, whether delivered in the classroom or online.

# Program Popularity and Enrollment Trends



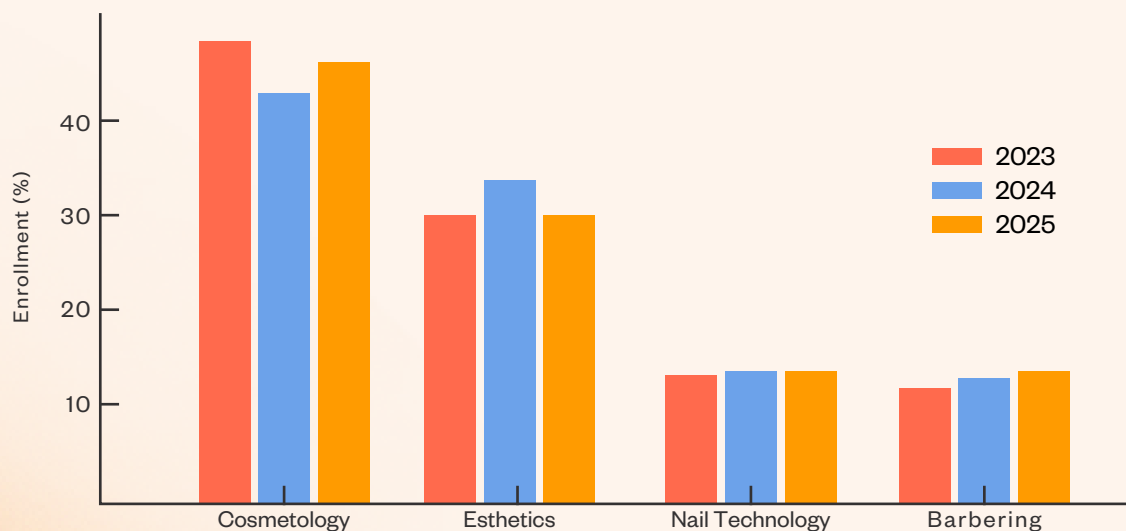
# Patterns + Predictions

Enrollment patterns in beauty and wellness education continue to shift, but the fundamentals remain strong, with cosmetology, esthetics, barbering, and nail technology still anchoring the field.

We're also seeing enrollment reflect the growing interest in flexible, asynchronous options, especially among adult learners who face work, childcare, and commuting barriers. As Section 02 showed, flexibility is now one of the strongest drivers of school choice, and asynchronous theory learning is widening access for students who might otherwise be unable to enroll.

As for the disciplines, Milady data shows that cosmetology remains the cornerstone of the industry, accounting for nearly half of all enrollments, while barbering continues to grow in popularity. Esthetics, after several years of rapid post-pandemic growth, is now stabilizing at a healthy market share, and nail technology is holding steady

**Beauty Program Enrollments Trends (2023-2025) - Grouped Bar Chart**



Below, we discuss these patterns, strategies schools can implement, and predictions for the next year.

## DID YOU KNOW?

The Deloitte Global "2025 Gen Z and Millennial Survey" found that nearly one-third of young adults are skipping traditional college altogether, choosing vocational and trade pathways instead. For many, the appeal lies in flexible schedules, faster workforce entry, and hands-on skills, all hallmarks of beauty and wellness education.

# Cosmetology: The Cornerstone Reclaims Ground

Cosmetology remains the anchor of beauty education, and our 2025 data suggests its position is strengthening. After a few years in which esthetics programs surged, cosmetology is regaining market share, accounting for 45% of all enrollments.

Cosmetology's resilience makes sense. It's always been the broadest gateway into the field, covering hair, skin, and nails under one umbrella. Even as specialized programs gain visibility, a cosmetology license serves as a gateway to other niches.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Cosmetology continues to dominate Gen Z's career interests. According to Validated Insights, nearly 1 in 10 Gen Z workers with a vocational certificate earned it in cosmetology—more than any other trade. That strong pipeline also helps explain why cosmetology remains the industry's cornerstone program.

# Esthetics: The Pandemic Star Finds Its Rhythm

Few programs experienced the kind of spotlight that esthetics did during the pandemic. Skincare became self-care, "maskne" (mask + acne) entered the vocabulary, and consumer curiosity grew around treatments popularized on social media.

Interest in esthetics programs followed. According to our data, esthetics became the fastest-growing segment in the early 2020s, fueled by consumer demand for advanced skincare, corrective treatments, and holistic wellness.

We expect it to stabilize after losing three percentage points to cosmetology in 2025.

**Esthetics remains a vital discipline. The recent dip reflects a market finding its balance, not a waning of interest. Schools that offer advanced or continuing education courses in esthetics are likely to see ongoing demand from both students and licensed professionals eager to specialize further.**



# Barbering, Nails, and More: Creativity Meets Opportunity

While cosmetology and esthetics remain the top programs, other disciplines are also seeing meaningful growth.

Barbering continues its steady rise, propelled by a renewed culture of men's grooming and a generation of barbers building strong personal brands online.

At the same time, nail technology and other short programs, such as makeup artistry, are drawing a loyal following among students seeking faster, more flexible routes into the beauty industry, whether as a full-time pursuit or a passionate side hustle.

Shorter programs can also serve as stepping stones. For example, some students might start in a nail tech program and later upgrade to cosmetology once schedules and finances allow. It's a reminder that the beauty education pipeline isn't linear.



## DID YOU KNOW?

According to a Newsweek article, among Gen Z, makeup artist ranks 4th on the list of dream jobs shared on Instagram (hairdresser and nail artist round out the top 20).

# Curriculum Is Expanding Beyond Technique

For years, beauty education focused almost entirely on hands-on skills. Today, that's only part of the story. Across the country, schools are reimagining their programs to prepare students for real-world success, teaching them not just how to perfect a technique but how to build a thriving business around it.

## Why the Shift Is Happening

**Student expectations are changing:** The new generation of learners views entrepreneurship as the ultimate goal. They want to own their schedules, brands, and futures.

**Employers are asking for more:** Salon and spa owners consistently say the same thing: Graduates know how to perform services, but not always how to sell them, retain clients, or communicate effectively.

**Momentum is building across the industry:** Increasingly, schools are incorporating business and financial literacy modules to strengthen career outcomes and reflect shifting employer and student expectations.

In response, schools are taking a variety of approaches to integrate these new competencies into their programs.

## What Schools Are Doing

**Integrating soft skills into existing lessons:** For example, a class on client consultations might also include how to recommend products, book repeat appointments, and build rapport.

**Adding career-readiness modules:** Courses in entrepreneurship, budgeting, and goal-setting teach students how to treat their craft like a business.

**Case in Point:** One cosmetology school uses CIMA not only for the core curriculum but also for [CIMA Collabs](#), which includes partner content like Prosper U, Beauty as a Business, and PCA Skin. These additions have helped the school stay competitive and meet its state's specific licensing requirements.

*We've taught advanced practice since we opened, so adding PCA's course was a natural fit. It's great to have it all in one place.*

**~ Beauty school owner using CIMA**

# Why Expanding Curriculum Matters

These additions are more than a value-add—they're a differentiator.

- Students leave school with skills that help them succeed as independent professionals.
- Employers gain graduates who are ready to contribute on day one.
- Schools enhance their reputation for producing well-rounded, career-ready professionals.
- Schools build stronger connections with students' aspirations during tours, thereby improving enrollment potential.

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**Case in Point:** A cosmetology school promotes CIMA during admissions tours, giving prospective students a clear look at the digital learning experience and helping the school stand out from programs that still rely solely on print.

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Beauty education has always been about transformation. Now, it's also about empowering students to master not only their craft but also their careers.



**UP NEXT:** What students and professionals are telling us through Milady's RISE Scholarship applications—and what their stories reveal about the future of beauty education.

Insights  
from Milady  
RISE  
Scholarship  
Applicants



# Understanding the People Behind the Passion

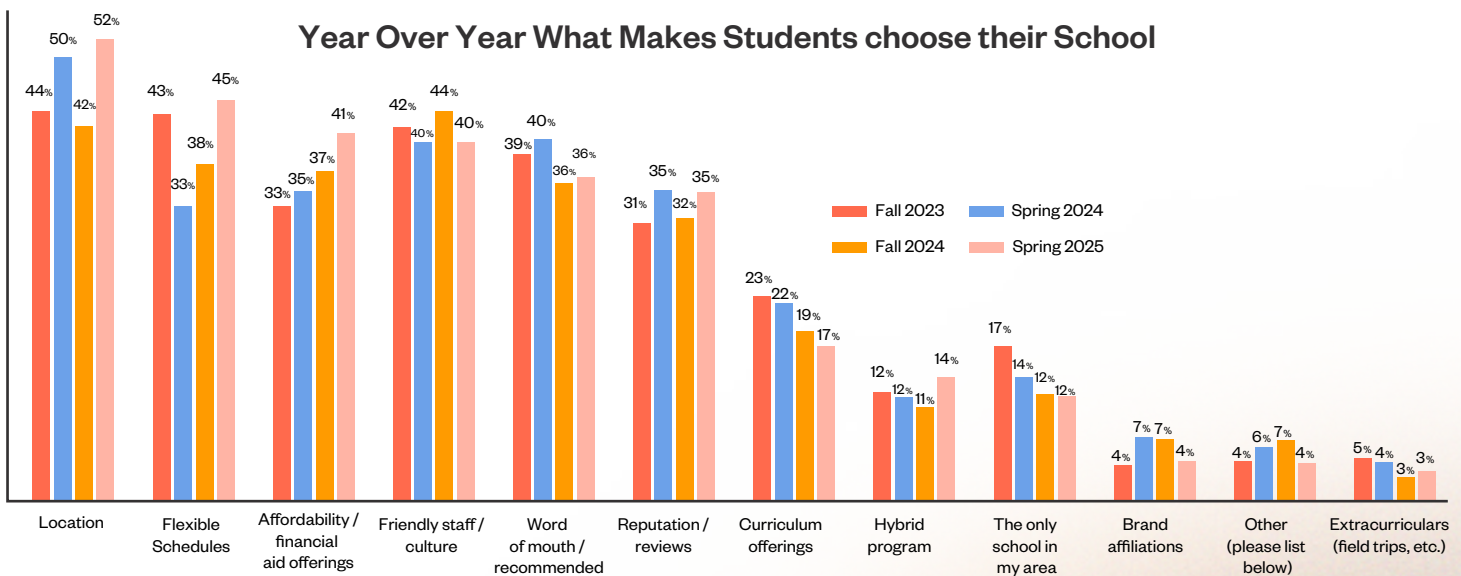
Every year, applications for the Milady RISE Scholarship allow current students and licensed professionals to share their journeys—their why, next steps, and vision for the industry they love.

Since the program's launch in the fall of 2021, thousands have applied, answering real-world questions about their goals and motivations. Their responses provide Milady with something more valuable than numbers: an authentic snapshot of the people shaping the industry's future.

## Why Students Chose Their School

The reasons students chose their beauty school are as practical as they are personal. Data from four RISE application cycles—fall 2023 through spring 2025—show location, flexible schedules, and affordability/financial aid remain the top three decision factors, all at their highest levels since tracking began. Hybrid program options also continue to climb, underscoring the importance of flexibility.

Reputation and reviews are regaining influence after a brief dip, reminding schools that online feedback and alumni advocacy matter.



Behind those choices, however, are personal stories. Some applicants describe beauty as a calling or a long-deferred dream. Others emphasize the appeal of financial independence. Together, these factors reveal how practical realities and personal motivations intersect in shaping where students enroll.

# What Students and Professionals Crave

When we looked more closely at our spring 2025 applications, several themes emerged about what students and professionals crave and the goals they want to achieve.

## Students crave both technical mastery and business savvy

- Nearly all applicants emphasized the importance of ongoing education.
- More than half referenced certifications, workshops, or advanced courses they plan to pursue to stay current with trends.
- 85% of students said they plan to pursue additional certifications after earning their licenses, up 6% from fall 2024.

They're also considering the business side of beauty by seeking additional training in branding, social media, pricing, and client retention to help them succeed as independent professionals.

## Professionals share that drive for lifelong learning and growth

- 71% said they've already pursued new certifications since earning their license, most often in advanced esthetics, lash artistry, or wellness modalities.
- 54% cited hands-on education and mentorship (such as shadowing senior professionals or interning with owners) as the most valuable form of training.
- Many respondents highlighted the need for better training in digital marketing, branding, and social media to grow their businesses.

Together, these responses reinforce a clear message: Today's beauty professionals see education as a continuum. Schools that nurture that mindset through advanced courses, alumni programming, and mentorship opportunities will likely earn loyalty long after graduation.



# What They Dream to Achieve

RISE applicants see beauty and wellness not just as a profession, but as a pathway to independence, creativity, and community impact.

## Students most often shared goals around entrepreneurship, empowerment, and personal fulfillment.

More than 300 applicants referenced business ownership or leadership aspirations in their essays, citing motivations including financial independence, flexible schedules, and a desire to help others feel beautiful inside and out.

### DID YOU KNOW?

According to Salon Renter, about 35% of beauty professionals now work independently, a clear shift toward autonomy and flexibility. Market research also shows that 70% of independent professionals prefer salon suites over traditional salons, and 60% of new beauty professionals say the ability to set their own prices and keep 100% of their earnings makes suites the better option.

## Professionals tend to focus on balance, mentorship, and advancing within the industry.

Many pros wrote about wanting to teach or mentor others, or to transition into education, brand training, or management roles. Their goals suggest a natural evolution from career entry to career empowerment, along with a focus on paying it forward.

Taken together, these insights likely reflect an industry maturing around lifelong learning, where success isn't only about building a career but about shaping a legacy.



# Turning Insight Into Action: What Schools Can Do

The RISE Scholarship findings give schools a valuable window into how today's students and professionals think about learning, careers, and community. Here are several ways schools can apply those insights:



## Reinforce the value of the industry

At career fairs and open houses, emphasize how careers in beauty and wellness are fulfilling and financially viable. Address common misconceptions. Many applicants reported delaying enrollment because others questioned the industry's legitimacy.

## Nurture your alumni network

Invite graduates back for career panels, guest demos, or mentorship programs. Alumni stories show current students what's possible and keep the community connected long after graduation.

## Focus on culture and connection

"Friendly staff and culture" also ranks among the reasons students chose their school. Coach staff to convey enthusiasm for the field, empathy for students, and pride in the school's values.

## Manage your reputation proactively

Encourage satisfied students to share their experiences online. Respond authentically to all reviews—positive and negative—to demonstrate attentiveness and professionalism.

Together, these actions can help schools strengthen enrollment, engagement, and loyalty.

**UP NEXT:** What's rising to the top of school's priority lists.

# What's Next: Emerging Priorities for Schools



# It's All About Flexibility, Wellness, and Career Readiness

Beauty education has always drawn creative, non-traditional learners. What's different today is the intensity of the entrepreneurial drive that so many students bring to the classroom.

One of the most consistent themes in Milady RISE Scholarship applications from 2021 to 2025 is the dream of ownership: students envisioning their own salon, spa, or independent beauty brand.

Where the prevailing advice once urged graduates to gain experience before renting a booth or starting a business, more students now want to build something of their own right away, straight out of school.

**Several cultural shifts are likely fueling this change:**

- The influence of social media
- The normalization of self-employment through the gig economy
- A post-pandemic reevaluation of work that inspired many to pursue passion over predictability

As this student profile evolves, so must the classroom experience. Today's learners, whether they're 18, 38, or 58, crave flexible schedules, wellness and support for their mental health, and practical business skills to turn their big ambitions into sustainable careers. And, of course, keeping students engaged and motivated remains a top priority as well.

The following sections explore these priorities in more depth.

## Give Students the Flexibility They Crave

Our Milady RISE Scholarship data reveals a consistent trend: Right behind location, flexible schedules are the top reason students choose their beauty school.

The good news is that we're seeing more schools respond to this expectation, and the numbers tell the story. Between 2024 and 2025, the percentage of schools offering hybrid programs grew by double digits, and the share of those using asynchronous learning—where students complete theory work on their own schedule—nearly doubled year over year.

### KEY INSIGHT:

Even a few hours can make a difference for students juggling more than school, such as working a full-time job or caring for children or a sick relative. Asynchronous learning empowers students to learn at their own pace and on their own schedule. Students can complete theory lessons after work, on the weekends, or after the kids are asleep.



# Strategies for Making the Shift to Asynchronous Learning

- **Confirm what your state board allows:** Distance education rules vary widely, especially around asynchronous delivery, so schools should verify hour limits and documentation requirements before making changes. *Milady CIMA*, introduced in 2021, was developed to support distance education and adapt to evolving regulatory requirements.
- **Map your content before you launch:** Asynchronous programs require structured lessons, activities, and assessments.
- **Leverage existing resources:** Work with your digital learning platform vendor to ensure a smooth asynchronous rollout. See if the vendor has consultants who can help you make this transition.
- **Promote, promote, promote:** Don't forget to highlight your school's flexible schedules during recruitment. Promote asynchronous hybrid options as a value-add for working adults, parents, and caregivers.



## Keep Students Engaged and Motivated

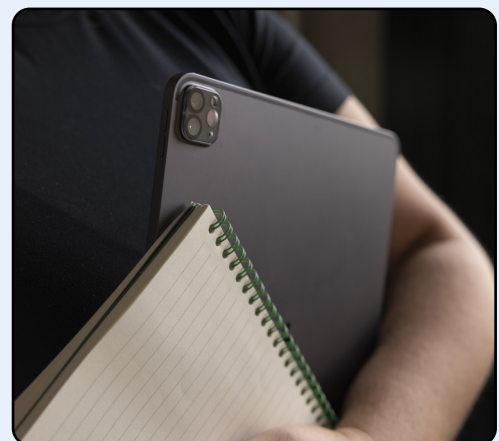
Ask any educator about the number-one challenge in beauty education, and the answer hasn't changed: keeping students engaged and motivated.

But this challenge has grown even more complex in recent years, as many of today's students want to work with clients sooner rather than later and are eager to be their own boss straight out of school.

The most effective programs bridge the gap between learning and doing. They connect classroom content to real-world applications because when students see immediate relevance, they stay motivated to master foundational concepts before advancing to the clinic floor.

## Strategies for keeping students engaged

- **Bring the industry in:** Schedule guest speakers, such as salon owners, alumni, and brand ambassadors, to connect classroom lessons with professional life.
- **Empower students to motivate each other:** Encourage peer-led clubs or digital discussion groups to sustain engagement outside class hours.
- **Show relevance early on:** Connect theory modules to clinic-floor outcomes to prevent drop-off in motivation.



# Pay Attention to Student Mental Health and Wellness

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, mental health challenges among young adults have escalated sharply.

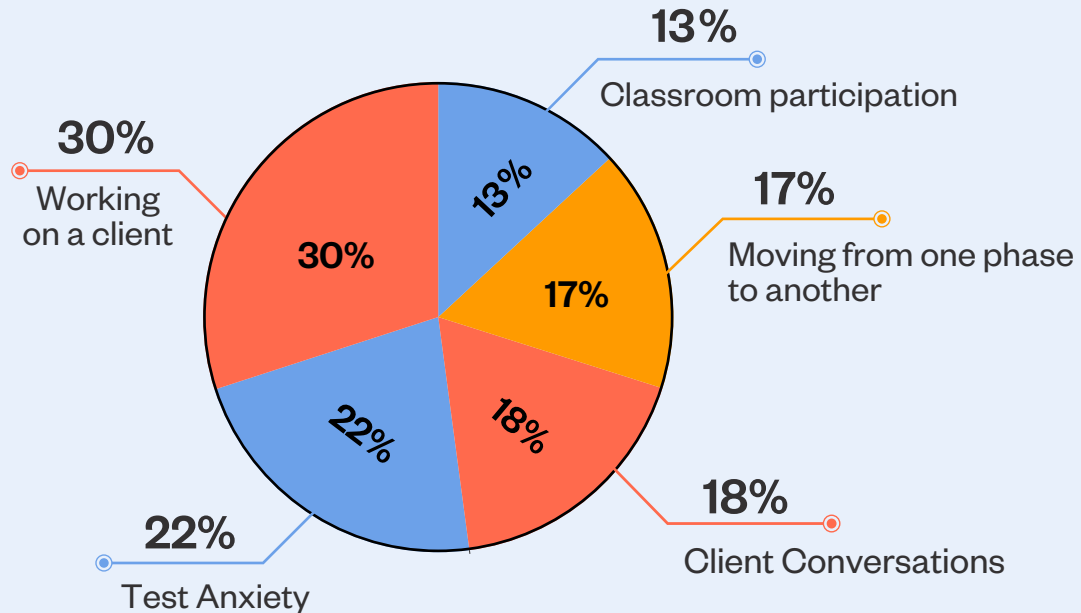
Before 2020, national studies placed the prevalence of anxiety and depressive disorders in this age group at roughly 6 to 8 percent. During and after the pandemic, those rates have risen to as much as three times higher, with reports of anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation increasing worldwide.

For schools, this surge translates directly to the classroom. Many students now arrive carrying higher baseline stress and emotional fatigue than students did just six years ago, making proactive wellness support essential to their success.

## How Anxiety Manifests in the Classroom

During a recent training session titled "Teaching the Anxious Generation," Milady Sr. Educator Success Manager Lisha Barnes surveyed 231 beauty educators about where they see the most anxiety among students.

### Where Beauty Educators See the Most Student Anxiety



These findings underscore what many educators already know: Anxiety shows up in ways that directly impact learning, confidence, and retention.

## How Schools Are Responding

Forward-thinking schools are taking creative steps to support student wellness:

- **Offering 24/7 access to confidential phone** or web-based counseling for stress, anxiety, depression, grief, or caregiving challenges
- **Providing referrals for professional mental-health** counseling and removing barriers to temporary leaves of absence
- **Introducing wellness apps**, such as Soluna, TalkNow Telehealth, or TimelyCare

## Strategies for bolstering student wellness

- **Normalize mental-health support** Present counseling and wellness tools as part of the school experience, not a crisis resource.
- **Train educators to recognize stress signals** Workshops and sessions like "Teaching the Anxious Generation" help instructors respond with empathy and practical strategies.
- **Offer multiple points of access** Combine 24/7 helplines, referral options, and digital wellness apps to meet different student needs.
- **Embed wellness into your school's culture** Reinforce balance, self-care, and resilience in daily interactions, not just in policy or paperwork.

## Strategic Move: Make Mentorship a True Differentiator

Students—especially those eager to launch independent careers—benefit from structured mentorship that bridges school and the professional world.

How to start: Identify a program lead, recruit alumni mentors, and pilot a short-term mentor-mentee match system.

**NOTE:** This focus on mentorship isn't unique to beauty education—it reflects a generational shift. Deloitte's "2025 Global Gen Z and Millennial Survey" found that 86% of Gen Zs and 84% of millennials consider mentorship vital to career success. For beauty schools, embedding mentorship into the learning experience can help bridge classroom learning and real-world readiness.



# Build Business-Savvy Graduates

Passing the state licensing exam has always been the cornerstone of success in beauty and wellness education. But today's students expect more than just exam prep. They want to graduate with the confidence and skills to run a business and manage their careers with independence.

For schools, this means broadening the definition of "readiness." "Licensure remains the goal, but true readiness now extends to financial literacy, marketing acumen, and client relationship skills that help students succeed beyond the classroom.



## Strategies for positioning students for long-term success

- **Start early:** Integrate exam readiness and business skills from day one, not just down the stretch.
- **Teach the business of beauty:** Incorporate real-world lessons on pricing, taxes, budgeting, and marketing.
- **Position business education as a program differentiator:** Promote it in recruitment and admissions as a key value of your program to attract students who are a good fit.

## Prepare Students for Entrepreneurship

Independence has always been part of the beauty profession's DNA, but today's students are embracing it sooner and with greater intensity than ever. Where previous generations of graduates were advised to gain experience working for others before striking out on their own, many of today's students expect to rent a booth, build a client list, or launch their own brand immediately after licensure.

This shift reflects broader cultural forces: the rise of the gig economy, the creator mindset fostered by social media, and a pandemic-era rethinking of work that made self-employment feel both possible and desirable.

For schools, this evolution offers an opportunity. By embedding entrepreneurship education into the student experience—from basic financial literacy to digital marketing and personal branding—schools can meet this generation's ambitions head-on while distinguishing themselves as forward-thinking leaders in beauty and wellness education.

## Strategies for Preparing Students for Entrepreneurship

- **Frame entrepreneurship as attainable** but not necessarily "instant." Share examples of alumni who have built thriving independent careers while demonstrating steps and strategies for getting there.
- **Incorporate business essentials into the core curriculum** Offer workshops or modules on business setup, pricing, taxes, marketing, and customer service.
- **Provide ways for students and program alumni to connect** Whether you create a formal mentoring program or encourage an active alumni association, the goal is to bring students and pros together.

By preparing students to think like entrepreneurs, schools equip them not only to succeed in today's beauty landscape but to help shape its future.



**UP NEXT:** The final section explores where Milady is focused for 2026 and how its latest initiatives are shaping the future of beauty education.

Looking Ahead:  
Milady's Role in  
Shaping the  
Next Era  
of Beauty  
Education



# Where We're Focused & Why It Matters

The shifts outlined in this report point to a new reality: Distance education, flexible pathways, and data-driven instruction are the new foundation of beauty and wellness education.

Our focus for 2026 and beyond is to ensure that schools are prepared to meet the moment. This means continuing to evolve our curriculum, strengthening our digital learning ecosystem, helping students get real-time answers to their questions (powered by the AI Student Assistant), giving students clearer, more confident pathways to exam readiness through **CIMA ExamReady** deepening educator support, and designing everything we build to not only align with the operational realities schools now face but to actively make day-to-day operations easier.

We'll continue analyzing the signals, interpreting change, and investing in tools and instructional design that make modern beauty education not only possible, but exceptional. As the industry continues to move forward, schools deserve a partner who understands not just what's changing but what the changes mean.

Milady invites you to discover how our evolving digital ecosystem can help your school thrive in 2026 and beyond.

- **Existing customers:** Contact your Milady representative to schedule a call.
- **New customers:** Complete the form at [Milady.com/upgrade](https://www.milady.com/upgrade), and we'll be in touch.

# About Milady

Milady, a Cengage Group company, is the leading provider of beauty and wellness learning solutions for schools worldwide. We have been influencing the beauty industry ever since our founder started his own one-man barbering supply business nearly a century ago. Today, we are proud to redefine the standards of being a beauty professional and explore the endless possibilities of beauty's impact on individuals, communities, and the world.



Visit [Milady.com](https://www.milady.com)  
to learn more

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