



HigherEducation

# Viv Higher Ed Landing Page Toolkit

# Landing Pages for Higher Education Marketing: A Toolkit

Get more leads and improve your lead conversions! This college and university landing page toolkit for student recruitment includes:

- **Landing page checklist** that walks you through how to build a landing page for student recruitment
- **Competitor slides** from universities and colleges in the U.S. and abroad
- **Landing page performance data** to help you improve your lead generation and conversions

# How Do You Compare?

The average conversion rate for higher education landing pages is 4.4%, going up to 6.8% for online certificate programs.

(Source: 2021 Conversion Benchmark Report, Unbounce)

## **Improve Your Results!**

Use this toolkit to create a successful school or program landing page.

This toolkit can also help you identify gaps in your digital recruitment and enrollment marketing strategies.

# Traffic Sources

**Have I considered which channel a prospect used to find my landing page? Did they come through a brand awareness or lead generation campaign?**

**Email**

**Organic social**

**Organic search**

**Paid social**

**Paid search**

**Other\_\_\_\_\_**

Presumably, not all prospects will find your landing page through the same channel.

Understand the value of utilizing different tactics for reaching prospects at different points in the marketing funnel.

# Tone & Emotion

The tone of my landing page promotion matches my channel:

Yes  No

For example, are you advertising on **Instagram** (more creative vibe) or **LinkedIn** (professional development emphasis)?

Harvard's Instagram promotion (left) is more about creativity, and their LinkedIn promotion (right) focuses on skill, certification, and time. They understand the platforms!



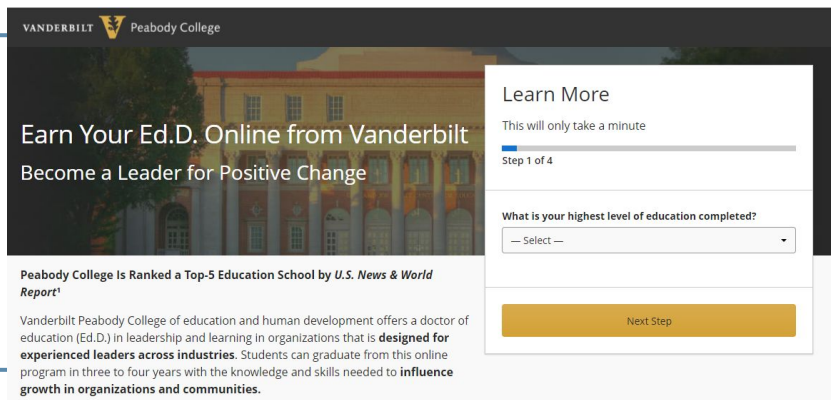


# Consistency & Specificity

My landing page copy is specific to the message, offer, and tone of my ad, post, or email:

Yes  No

Vanderbilt's LinkedIn ad (right) emphasizes the idea of being "influential," while their landing page (left) stresses "positive change." Which is it? There is a lack of consistency.



VANDERBILT Peabody College

## Earn Your Ed.D. Online from Vanderbilt

Become a Leader for Positive Change

Peabody College is Ranked a Top-5 Education School by *U.S. News & World Report*

Vanderbilt Peabody College of education and human development offers a doctor of education (Ed.D.) in leadership and learning in organizations that is **designed for experienced leaders across industries**. Students can graduate from this online program in three to four years with the knowledge and skills needed to **influence growth in organizations and communities**.

### Learn More

This will only take a minute

Step 1 of 4

What is your highest level of education completed?

— Select —

Next Step



Peabody Online at Vanderbilt University

1,544 followers  
Promoted

Become an influential leader with an online Ed.D. in leadership and learning in organizations. Master's degree required.

## Earn Your Ed.D. Online from Vanderbilt University.

Master's Degree Required.

VANDERBILT Peabody College

# Readability

**I checked the readability score of my copy to make sure it's at or below a 9th grade level:**

Yes     No

**Fast Fact: 100% of bestselling fiction** authors write at or below a 9<sup>th</sup> grade level.

(Source: [Contently](#))

You can use readability tools like **Online Utility** or **readable**.

# Read the Room

**I know the traffic temperature of prospects visiting my landing page:**

**Yes**     **No**

Temperature affects how you talk to prospects and what you ask of them.

**Hot**

They're on my email list for prospects and have maybe even clicked on Apply Now a couple of times without converting.

**Lukewarm**

They may have seen a few of my institution's or program's ads, or even clicked on an ad or webpage, but left without providing their contact information.

**Cold**

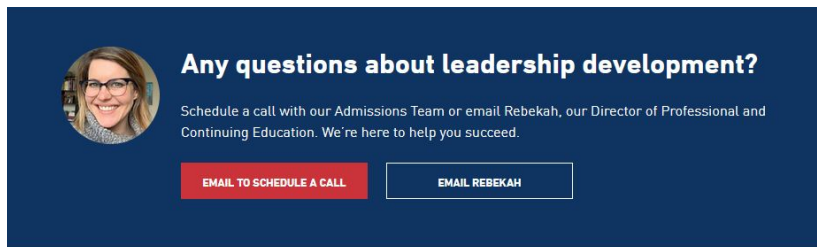
They haven't heard of my institution or program, but might be using general program search terms that match mine.



# Appropriate Primary Call-To-Action

My primary CTA matches my traffic temperature:

Yes  No



**Any questions about leadership development?**  
Schedule a call with our Admissions Team or email Rebekah, our Director of Professional and Continuing Education. We're here to help you succeed.

[EMAIL TO SCHEDULE A CALL](#) [EMAIL REBEKAH](#)

We made a CTA for each threat level on a Tufts landing page.

- Low-threat**
  - = Cold leads
  - = Request Information
- Moderate-threat**
  - = Lukewarm leads
  - = Attend a Live Q&A Webinar
- High-threat**
  - = Hot leads
  - = Register Here

**Take the Next Step**



[REGISTER HERE](#) [REQUEST INFORMATION](#) [ATTEND A LIVE Q&A WEBINAR](#)

Do you need to submit a request for funds and cost justification to your current employer? Download a cost justification email template.

# Secondary Call-To-Action

I have a secondary CTA that is always “Apply Now”:

Yes     No

This trend is unique to higher education. But make sure your secondary CTA is not boring like this! (Our next slide explains why.) In terms of design and placement, it shouldn't upstage the primary CTA.

Colorado Mesa University splits their primary CTA (left) to give prospects more choice and fewer form fields.

Their secondary CTA doesn't overshadow it; the primary CTA literally covers the secondary (Apply Now) while you scroll down!

**Example 1 (Left):** A video player with a play button and a 'MATCH VIDEO' button. Below the video is a yellow bar with the text 'BEGIN YOUR JOURNEY WEST.' and two buttons: 'Text me' and 'Email me'.

**Example 2 (Right):** Two scholarship cards. The first card is titled 'HOUSING SCHOLARSHIP UP TO \$3,000' and lists eligibility criteria. The second card is titled 'FIRST GENERATION SCHOLARSHIP \$1,000 ANNUALLY' and lists eligibility criteria. Below the cards is a grey bar with the text 'VIEW MORE SCHOLARSHIPS +' and a yellow bar with the text 'HIGH EXPECTATIONS. LOW COST.' and a yellow button labeled 'APPLY NOW'.

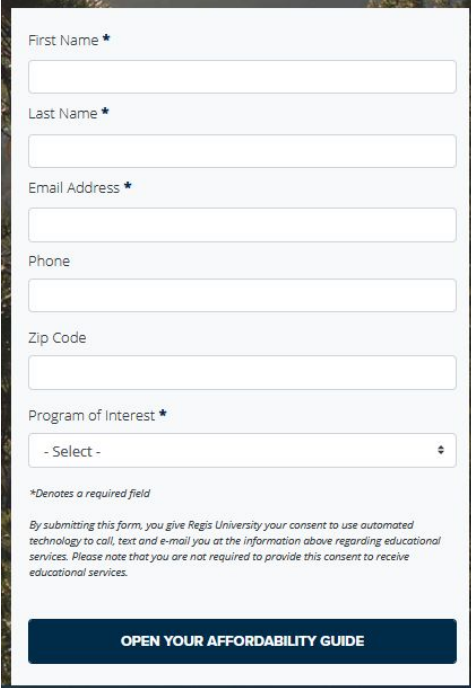
# Call-To-Action Language

We've all seen too many "Request Info" and "Apply Now" buttons! Regis University offers a creative solution for this, replacing "Request Info" with **"Open Your Affordability Guide."**

"Apply Now" buttons can be elevated in the context of an application fee waiver or early application scholarship.

## Example: Apply Now for Early Application Scholarship!

Think how you can provide a resource or sense of urgency to your prospects.



First Name \*

Last Name \*

Email Address \*

Phone

Zip Code

Program of Interest \*

- Select -

\*Denotes a required field

By submitting this form, you give Regis University your consent to use automated technology to call, text and e-mail you at the information above regarding educational services. Please note that you are not required to provide this consent to receive educational services.

**OPEN YOUR AFFORDABILITY GUIDE**

# Privacy Policy as Credibility

I have a link to my institution's information privacy policy in small font right below the primary CTA button:

Yes     No

Most prospects will never click on this, but having one is a credibility indicator. This is extra important **if you're marketing to prospects in Europe**, where strict legislation on this was instituted in 2018: Regulation (EU) 2018/1725.

Victoria University of Wellington does a nice job with their privacy policy text.

Submit →

By completing this form, I understand that the information I provide is being collected for the purposes described in—and will be used in accordance with—the University's [Privacy Notice](#).

# Easy Access to Multiple Forms of Contact

**I have a section with clickable phone number and email for prospects to ask any questions:**

Yes     No

This is also a great place to offer live chat, if your school has it!



Courses at Tufts

 617-627-0609

 [courses@tufts.edu](mailto:courses@tufts.edu)

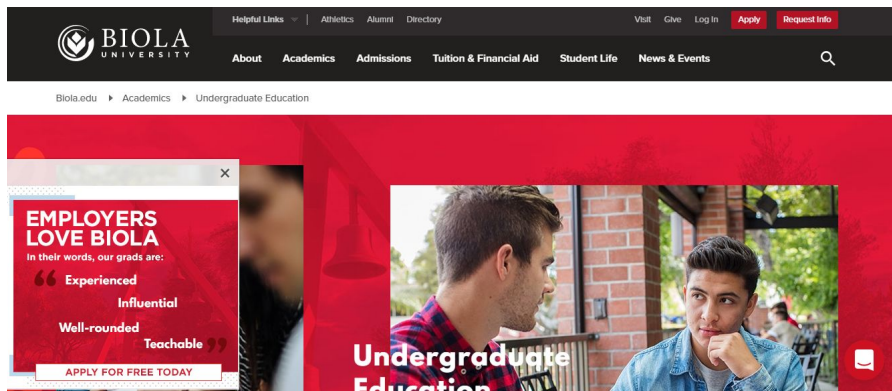
We replaced Tufts' global navigation with a simple header with clickable phone number and email.

# Remove Navigation Buttons

I have removed global navigation from my landing page:

Yes  No

Remove any extra links. Suppress your global navigation (header AND footer). Remove the links from logos, etc. You don't want prospects to click away from your CTAs.



**Fast Fact:** removing the navigation menu can **increase signups by 100%**!  
(Source: [VWO.com](http://VWO.com))

Biola University should remove their global navigation at the top of the page. It's very distracting.



# Clear Value Proposition

The value proposition I'm offering appears in the landing page heading and is reinforced by statistics and social proof:

Yes  No

Your key selling point appears in the heading (and is NOT just a program name; looking at you University of San Francisco). The statistics and testimonials should also reinforce this key point. Harvard's heading emphasizes that the cache of their rankings and reputation are accessible online (good!).



Read about USF's COVID-19 resources and about our return to campus this fall.

UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO  
CHANGE THE WORLD FROM HERE

**Request Info**  
Complete for a \$55 application fee waiver!

**First Name\***

**Last Name\***

**MFA in Writing**  
Develop your writing through an intimate, personalized curriculum designed to nurture individual development, creative vision, and participation in the greater literary community. Students work closely with peers, award-winning writers, and faculty in small workshops and seminars.

- **Publishable Manuscript** — Students receive two semesters of one-on-one instruction to complete a book-length publishable work.
- **Experiment Cross-Genre** — Students have the opportunity to experiment cross-genre



Harvard Business School Online

Courses For Organizations Insights More Info

Learn online from the leaders in business education

Expand your business skills and engage with a global network of learners with our flexible, online courses.

Explore All Courses

Video player showing a woman holding a certificate.

# Messaging Around Skills and Problem Solving

**My messaging focuses on skills students will acquire and problems they will learn to solve:**

Yes     No

**Fast Fact:** Copy that uses **positive emotion** (joy/anticipation) **performs lower** than copy that highlights the problems your institution/program solves.

(**Source:** 2021 Conversion Benchmark Report, Unbounce)

Victoria University of Wellington hits a home run here, bringing multiple points together in one video: community, problem solving, and faculty experts.



# 5-Second Test

**Someone unfamiliar with my campaign understands the key selling point and offer with only 5 seconds to review:**

Yes     No

Yes, really. Test this on an unsuspecting friend or family member! More points if they fit your target demographic.

**Fast Fact:** adjusting your landing page headline with a 5-second test can **improve readability by 233%**

(Source: [Unbounce](#))

# 6-Foot Test

I can read the headline on the landing page while standing 6 feet away from my desktop/laptop:

Yes  No



We created a simple but loud-and-clear headline for Tufts that provides the who (leaders), what (leadership training), why (career and impact), and how (online).

# High-Contrast Button

My CTA button color is high contrast with the rest of my landing page:

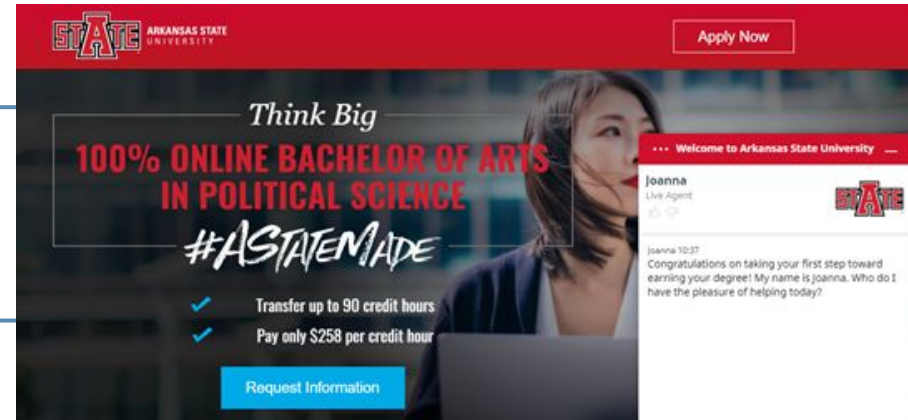
Yes  No

It shouldn't be overly coordinated with the color theme!

**Fast Fact:** a high-contrast CTA button can **increase conversion by 38%!**

(Source: [Klientboost](#))

Arkansas State University's blue button stands out from the rest of the design (red/gray/white). However, it is a bit overshadowed by the chat box and hashtag, which don't need to be so large.



# Streamlined Form or Multi-step Form?

**My lead form is narrowed to the most critical fields, such as name and email:**

- Yes     No     Multi-step form tracking micro-conversions

More fields usually lose people – except when they don't. Good multi-step forms track micro-conversions and get prospects invested. Psychologically, you're **more likely to make a large commitment once you've made a small commitment.**

Academy of Art University's form has a great arrow to draw the eye and useful multi-step fields for prospects searching for "art programs." **Create fields that make prospects feel they'll get the most specific and relevant information.** A multi-step form should benefit them, not you. Make sure you follow through with specifics after they provide you with trust.

The screenshot shows the Academy of Art University website. The header includes the university name, navigation links (HOME, ACADEMICS & CAREERS, WHY PURSUE ART & DESIGN?, GALLERY, ABOUT US), and a search icon. The main content area features a dark background with the text "DREAMING OF A CAREER IN ART & DESIGN?" and a sub-headline "Academy of Art University is one the largest private, accredited art universities in the United States. Offering a unique classroom environment taught by working professionals, there are 40+ distinct areas of study to choose from. You can study online, virtual onsite through Zoom, and on-campus. Right now, we're still open for classes." Below this is a call to action: "Classes for Fall Semester Are Still Available! Inquire Today." On the right side, there is a red sidebar with the heading "Start Here." and a form titled "Select your field of interest". The form contains a list of fields: Architecture, Fine Art and Liberal Arts, Fashion, Gaming, Design, Technology, and Entertainment Arts. Each field has a corresponding icon and a text input field.



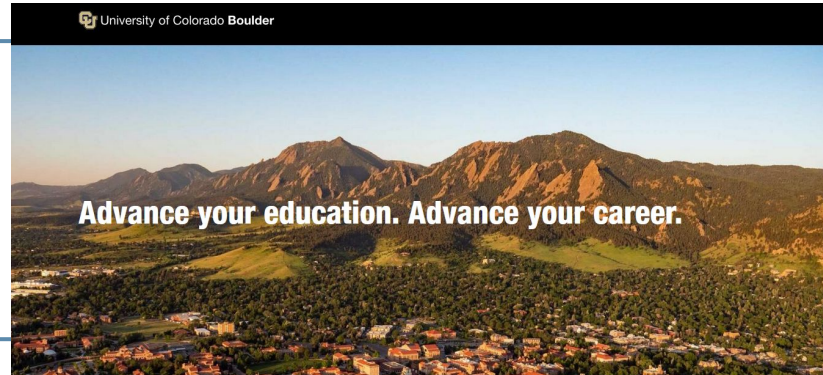
# Hero Image

**I have a large, high-quality image as a header that reflects my key selling point:**

Yes     No

Campus shots can demonstrate history and prestige, diversity, or innovation, depending on the shot/campus. Showing the learning community or the technology can also be important. Ultimately, what you show depends on your audience. (See slide 27 for more on that!)

University of Colorado Boulder knows one of their key selling points is their gorgeous location. (Nice hero image!) However, this graduate program landing page could be strengthened with a header that gives a value proposition specific to their institution.



# Visual Social Proof

I have social proof on my landing page that includes a visual:

Yes     No

This could be a quote from and photo of a student/alumna, a video testimonial, reviews with star ratings, a photo and short blurb on an expert or influential person recommending your school or program, etc.

If you have a lot, you can put them in a slider!

This nice example from Audencia Business School provides a face with career results (at Google!) and calls in high-achieving prospects in marketing.

Brice, Master in Management, Grande Ecole (2011)  
Mid-Market Industry Manager, Education and  
E-Commerce, Google (Ireland)

*"My job at Google is to figure out how to best empower our clients to develop their success."*

Are you a  
**Marketing Master,**  
like Brice?



# Visual Quality Indicators

I have a quality indicator represented visually on my landing page:

Yes     No

This can be **rankings, badges, accreditations, awards, etc.** graphic representations of quality.

Academy of Art University does an excellent job visually representing quality via career outcomes. They also have a great Start Here button that follows you down the page, reminding you to act.

We have graduates working at these respected companies, among others:



Google

MARVEL



# Focus on Learning Outcomes

I have included a short program or course description that is focused on what graduates will be able to do:

Yes     No

Make sure to speak to the problem(s) students want to solve by attending your school/program.

In our work for Tufts, we avoided inspirational text and focused on skills acquired and concrete proof of those skills.



## Workshop Outcomes

- Insight on fostering authentic work relationships
- Greater self-awareness
- Strategies for giving and receiving feedback
- More productive and collaborative dialog
- Relatable communication style and sales positioning
- Standing out as a memorable candidate during a job interview

REQUEST INFORMATION



## Enhanced learning —taught live by a leading expert

These leadership courses online were developed and will be taught live by Beth McCarthy, a Derby Entrepreneurship Center at Tufts faculty member and Fortune 500 consultant on leadership, management, and organizational culture. Each three-hour course is taught over Zoom and features personal interaction with the instructor and fellow students.

LEARN MORE ABOUT BETH MCCARTHY



## Ranked in the Top 30 U.S. Universities by U.S. News and World Report

Tufts is a leading university with a nationwide reputation for excellence, connecting a rigorous research environment with an immersive liberal arts experience.

These leadership workshops could become a stepping stone into numerous [graduate studies in business and management](#).

REGISTER NOW

# Traditional & Creative Financial Resources

**I have included basic financial info,  
highlighting things that make it easier to enroll:**

**Yes**     **No**

Mention scholarships, early application and registration incentives, or even creative resources.

We provided professional development program prospects at Tufts with a downloadable letter to send to employers justifying the cost for professional development.

Do you need to submit a request for funds and cost justification to your current employer? [Download a cost justification email template.](#)

# Avoid Thank-You Page Faux Pas

Prospects who complete the lead generation form are directed to a campaign-specific thank-you page:

Yes  No

Thank-you pages are almost as important as landing pages. They determine whether prospects feel you respect their time. Avoid a generic thank-you page and provide access to an **additional resource specific to their program of interest**.

Maintain the specific style, tone, and message of the channel and landing page. And whatever you do, don't just redirect to your homepage!

Pepperdine has a personalized page with three different ways to reach out to your specific enrollment officer. We received a call from her 2 minutes later!



## Thank You

For requesting more info about our MA in Psychology program.

Your enrollment officer, Kelley Hill, will be in touch with you soon.

If you have any questions, please reach out to your enrollment officer any time.



Kelley Hill

310.568.5664

kelley.hill@pepperdine.edu

Schedule an Appointment



# One Landing Page Per Audience

I have a slightly different landing page  
for each of my target audiences:

Of course, only check the boxes that apply to your goals!

Domestic undergraduate students

## Emphasize:

- **In-Person Program:** how to take a college tour virtually or in-person, sense of community
- **Online Program:** quality indicators like accreditations, rankings, awards; online student/alumni accomplishments (project samples, work accomplishments, etc. hard evidence of quality output)
- **Both:** problems the program or course helps students solve, career results, chat with current students/alumni

## **Domestic parents**

Emphasize: scholarship/financial aid info, career outcomes, sense of community

## **International parents**

Emphasize: scholarship/financial aid info, rankings and career outcomes, safety (if in-person)

## **School counselors**

Emphasize: retention and student success data

## □ Domestic graduate students

Emphasize:

- **In-Person:** subject-specific facilities/resources
- **Online:** quality indicators like rankings, accreditations, awards; meet a leading faculty member online
- **Both:** career outcomes, financial aid, faculty

## □ International graduate students

Emphasize:

- **In-Person:** visa benefits (opportunities to stay after graduation), subject-specific facilities/resources, welcoming professional environment
- **Online:** quality indicators like accreditations and awards; meet a leading faculty member online
- **Both:** rankings, funding opportunities, faculty

## **Visiting students**

Emphasize: transfer credit info

## **Adult professionals**

Emphasize: career and salary data, networking opportunities

## **Employers**

Emphasize: roster of companies, skill-sets, any statistics on retention or diversity, equity, and inclusion

## **Lifelong learners**

Emphasize: course description and faculty

# Always A/B Test

**I am using A/B testing for each of my landing pages to learn more about what my prospects want:**

Yes     No

You can test things like long-form content vs. short-form content, different header images, a streamlined lead form vs. a multi-step form that tracks micro-conversions, etc.

Only test one variable at a time, of course, because...science!

**Fast Fact:** Only 17% of marketers use landing page A/B tests to improve conversion rates. (Source: [HubSpot](#))

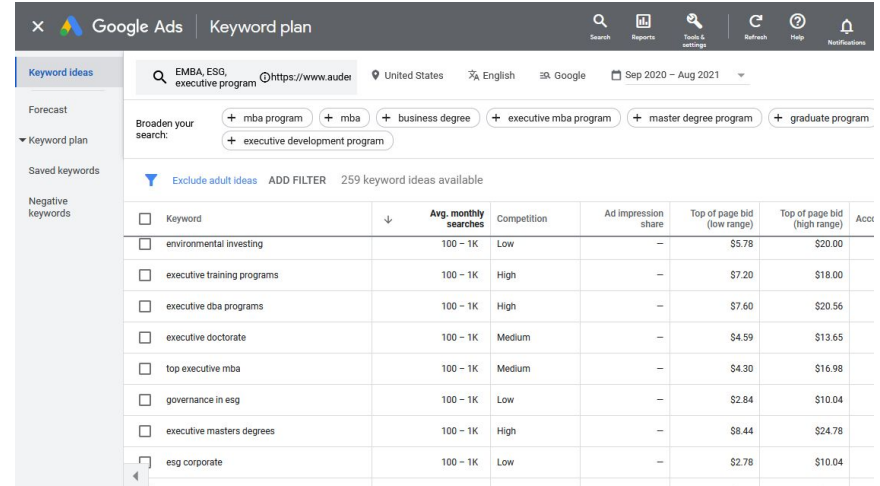
# Keywords

I have done basic keyword research:

Yes  No

Make sure to research competitor keywords, established keywords, and new keywords. This is especially important for your headings and main paragraph.

If you're new to keyword research, start with [Google's Keyword Planner](#). You can follow up with [similarweb](#) and [Ubersuggest](#).



The screenshot shows the Google Ads Keyword Planner interface. The search query is "EMBA, ESG, executive program" for the URL "https://www.auder". The location is set to "United States" and the language is "English". The date range is "Sep 2020 - Aug 2021". The interface includes a sidebar with "Keyword ideas", "Forecast", "Keyword plan", "Saved keywords", and "Negative keywords". The main area displays a table of keyword ideas with columns for Keyword, Avg. monthly searches, Competition, Ad impression share, Top of page bid (low range), and Top of page bid (high range). The table is filtered to "Exclude adult ideas" and shows 259 keyword ideas available.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Keyword	Avg. monthly searches	Competition	Ad impression share	Top of page bid (low range)	Top of page bid (high range)	Acc
<input type="checkbox"/>	environmental investing	100 - 1K	Low	—	\$5.78	\$20.00	
<input type="checkbox"/>	executive training programs	100 - 1K	High	—	\$7.20	\$18.00	
<input type="checkbox"/>	executive dba programs	100 - 1K	High	—	\$7.60	\$20.56	
<input type="checkbox"/>	executive doctorate	100 - 1K	Medium	—	\$4.59	\$13.65	
<input type="checkbox"/>	top executive mba	100 - 1K	Medium	—	\$4.30	\$16.98	
<input type="checkbox"/>	governance in esg	100 - 1K	Low	—	\$2.84	\$10.04	
<input type="checkbox"/>	executive masters degrees	100 - 1K	High	—	\$8.44	\$24.78	
<input type="checkbox"/>	esg corporate	100 - 1K	Low	—	\$2.78	\$10.04	

# SEO

**I have placed appropriate SEO keywords into headings, intro text, and metadata:**

Yes     No

**Fast Fact:** In a survey conducted by Databox, **70%** of respondents said SEO is better than PPC for generating sales. (Source: [Hubspot](#))

# Pixels

**My landing page is using pixels to track how visitors are engaging on the page and when they submit forms:**

Yes     No

This can tell you a lot about the strengths and weaknesses of your page. Use a standard Google Analytics setup with on-page metrics.



# Remarketing

**I have a remarketing campaign for visitors who don't convert:**

Yes     No

Remember what we learned about channels and traffic temperature? Make sure you have a plan to remarket to those cold prospects who didn't complete your form the first time!

# Congratulations!

Your toolbox just got an upgrade! You now have solid examples, data, and recommendations to help you build your next set of landing pages.

**Remember:** any box checked “no” offers a great opportunity for growth!

## Want some help checking off those “yes” boxes?

Get your questions answered and brainstorm quick wins during a free call with our Co-Founder and Lead Strategist, Suzan Brinker, PhD! Email [suzan@vivwebs.com](mailto:suzan@vivwebs.com) to schedule a call.



**Suzan Brinker, Ph.D. | Lead Strategist**

Suzan has dedicated her career to helping higher education initiatives build strong value propositions and communicating them to the right audiences. Her work spans enrollment marketing initiatives at Penn State, Northeastern, Babson, and Tufts. Having served as Director of Marketing in complex university settings, Suzan is excited to lead Viv Higher Education because it gives her the chance to build the agency partner she always wished she had.

Suzan is a collaborative leader who understands how to navigate university environments. She has worked extensively with faculty, administrators, and senior leadership teams and is proud of her track record of increasing conversions and enrollments for initiatives targeting a diverse set of audiences, including: continuing education and lifelong learning; undergraduate and graduate students; domestic and international audiences; and broader university communities and employers.

An aerial photograph of a city, likely New York City, showing a river on the left, a large park in the center, and a dense urban landscape with many skyscrapers on the right. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent white filter.

Thank you!

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