Looking forward as a year of unprecedented challenges comes to a close, critical questions remain for educational institutions, learners, employers, and workers. Are the individuals interested in education going to enroll? In the new economy that emerges from the old, will skills translate into employment? And as the economy improves, will Americans’ confidence in the value of education rebound with it? Major findings from the past nine months serve as a guide to key challenges that lie ahead.

This week’s data are based on the Strada Public Viewpoint and Strada Student Viewpoint surveys, which together collected more than 25,000 responses this year. The research is intended to provide insights to the education and training providers, policymakers, employers, and individual Americans who are navigating the COVID-19 crisis.

Confidence in the value of education has fallen among aspiring adult learners. When students have the support to connect their education to a career, they are more likely to say their education will be worth the cost.

Since the onset of the pandemic, Americans have expressed a consistent preference for nondegree and skills training options.