

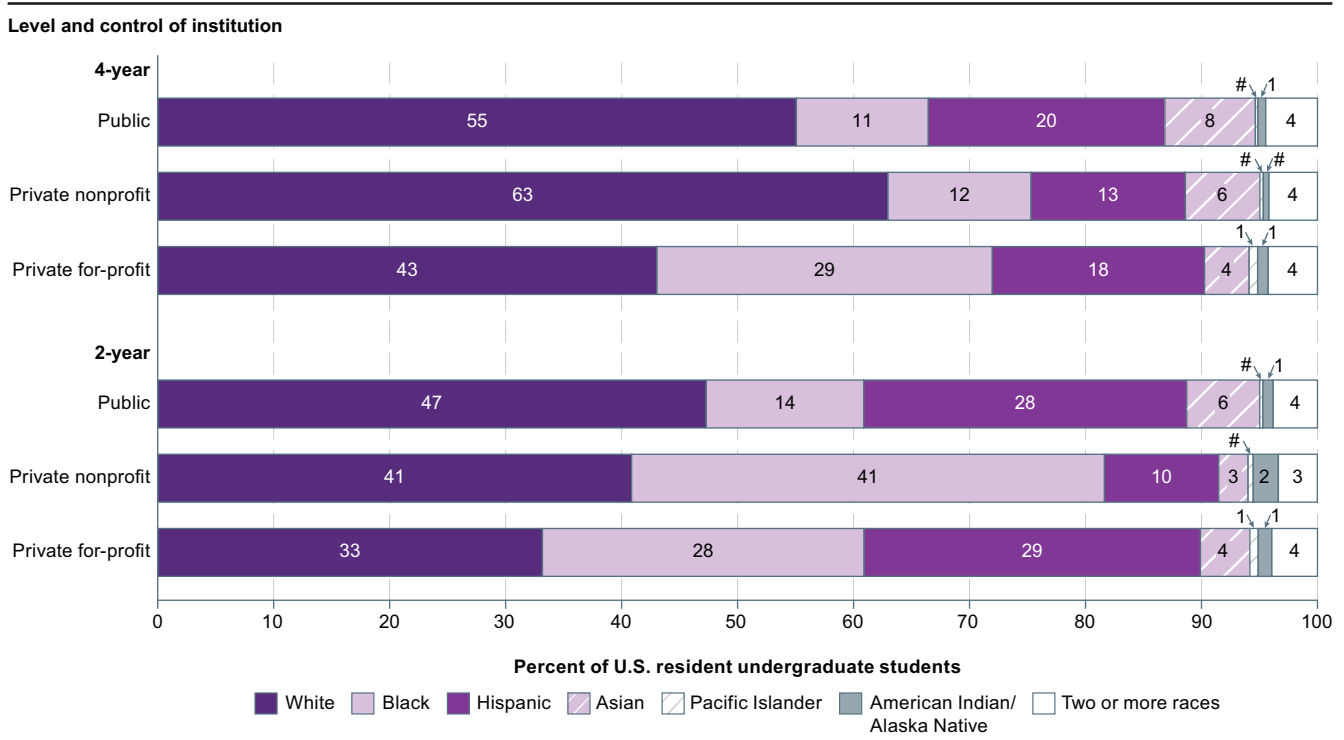
# Characteristics of Postsecondary Students

In fall 2019, some 74 percent of the 11.0 million undergraduate students at 4-year institutions were enrolled full time, compared with 37 percent of the 5.6 million undergraduate students at 2-year institutions.

In fall 2019, there were 16.6 million undergraduate students and 3.1 million postbaccalaureate (graduate) students attending degree-granting postsecondary institutions in the United States.<sup>1,2</sup> Unless otherwise noted, enrollment includes both U.S. resident students and nonresident alien students. The characteristics of students, such as their age and race or ethnicity, varied among public, private nonprofit, and private for-profit 2- and 4-year institutions.

Approximately 11.0 million (66 percent) undergraduate students attended 4-year institutions, and 5.6 million (34 percent) attended 2-year institutions in fall 2019. Of the undergraduate students at 4-year institutions, 8.2 million (74 percent) attended full time and 2.8 million (26 percent) attended part time. Of the undergraduate students at 2-year institutions, 2.1 million (37 percent) attended full time and 3.5 million (63 percent) attended part time.

**Figure 1. Percentage distribution of U.S. resident undergraduate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by level and control of institution and student race or ethnicity: Fall 2019**



# Rounds to zero.

NOTE: Data in this table represent the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Degree-granting institutions grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data.

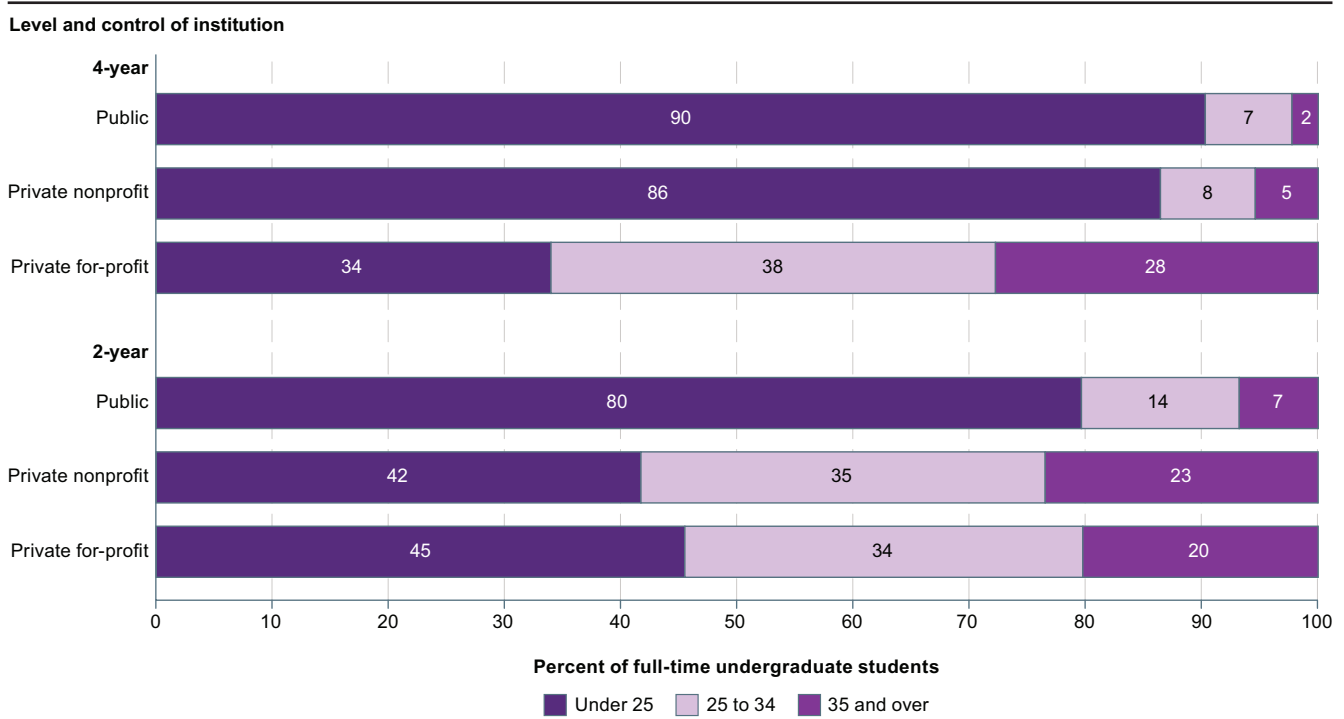
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2020, Fall Enrollment component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2020*, table 306.50.

In fall 2019, the distribution of U.S. resident undergraduate students (full- and part-time) by racial or ethnic groups varied among public, private nonprofit, and private for-profit institutions and between 2- and 4-year institutions.<sup>3</sup> At 4-year institutions, the percentage of undergraduate students who were White was highest at private nonprofit institutions (63 percent), the percentage of Black undergraduates was highest at private for-profit institutions (29 percent), and the percentages of Hispanic and Asian students were highest at public institutions (20 and 8 percent, respectively). Specifically, the 63 percent of undergraduate students at private nonprofit institutions who were White was higher than the percentages at public (55 percent) and private for-profit (43 percent) institutions. The percentage of undergraduate students at private for-profit institutions who were Black (29 percent) was more than double the percentages at private nonprofit (12 percent) and public (11 percent) institutions. The percentage of undergraduate students who were Hispanic was higher at public institutions (20 percent) than at private for-profit and

nonprofit institutions (18 and 13 percent, respectively). The percentages of undergraduate students at public and private nonprofit institutions who were Asian (8 and 6 percent, respectively) were higher than the percentage at private for-profit institutions (4 percent).

At 2-year institutions in fall 2019, the percentages of full- and part-time U.S. resident undergraduate students at public institutions who were White or Asian (47 and 6 percent, respectively) were higher than the percentages at private nonprofit (41 and 3 percent, respectively) and private for-profit (33 and 4 percent, respectively) institutions. In contrast, the percentage of undergraduate students at private nonprofit institutions who were Black (41 percent) was higher than the percentages at private for-profit and public institutions (28 and 14 percent, respectively). The percentages of undergraduate students at private for-profit and public institutions who were Hispanic (29 and 28 percent, respectively) were higher than the percentage at private nonprofit institutions (10 percent).

**Figure 2. Percentage distribution of full-time undergraduate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by level and control of institution and student age: Fall 2019**

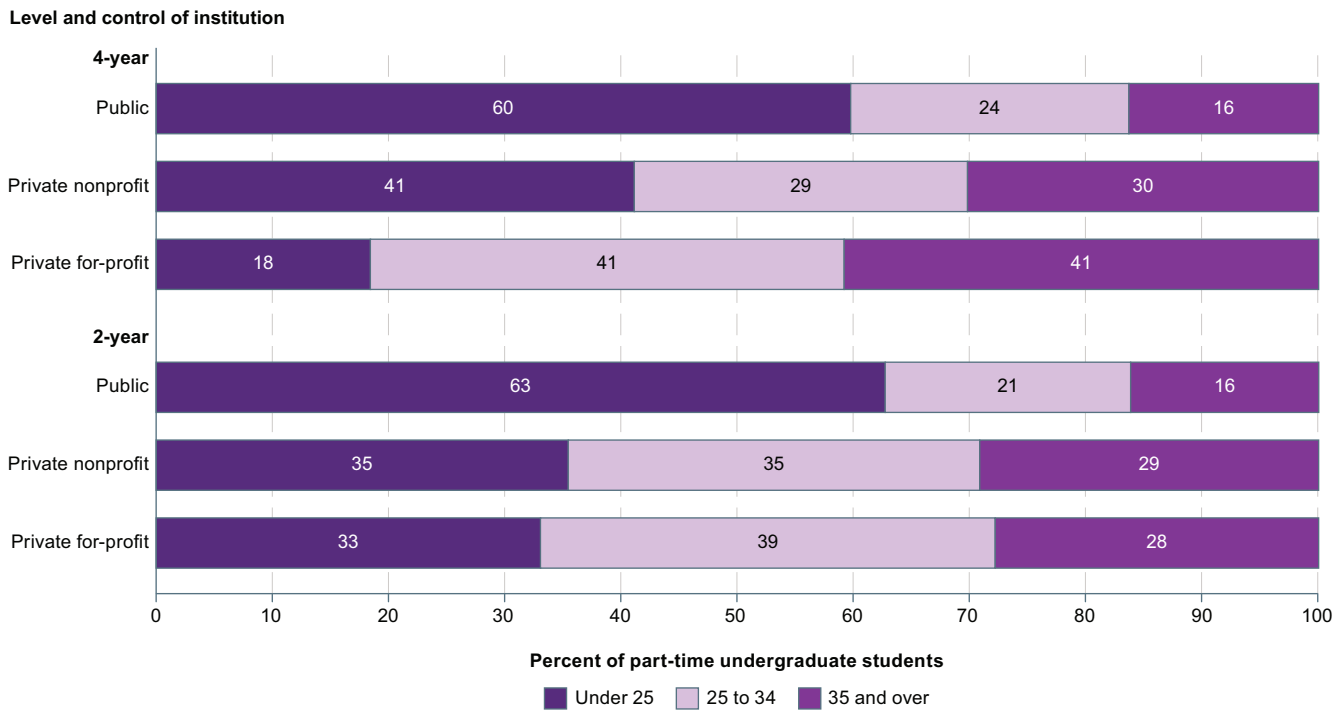


NOTE: Data in this table represent the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Percentage distributions exclude students whose age is unknown. Enrollment includes both U.S. resident students and nonresident alien students. Degree-granting institutions grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2020, Fall Enrollment component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2020*, table 303.50.

At 4-year institutions in fall 2019, private for-profit institutions stood out for the share of their full-time students who were older. The percentages of full-time undergraduate students who were under age 25 were higher at public institutions (90 percent) and private nonprofit institutions (86 percent) than at private for-profit institutions (34 percent).<sup>4</sup> The percentages of full-time undergraduate students ages 25 to 34 at public and private nonprofit institutions were 7 and 8 percent respectively. In contrast, at private for-profit institutions, undergraduate students ages 25 to 34 made up the largest age group of those enrolled full time (38 percent).

At 2-year institutions in fall 2019, private institutions, whether nonprofit or for-profit, served a larger share of older full-time students. The percentage of full-time undergraduate students who were under age 25 was higher at public institutions (80 percent) than at private for-profit (45 percent) and private nonprofit (42 percent) institutions. In contrast, the percentage of full-time undergraduate students who were age 35 and over was lower at public institutions (7 percent) than at private for-profit (20 percent) and private nonprofit (23 percent) institutions.

**Figure 3. Percentage distribution of part-time undergraduate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by level and control of institution and student age: Fall 2019**

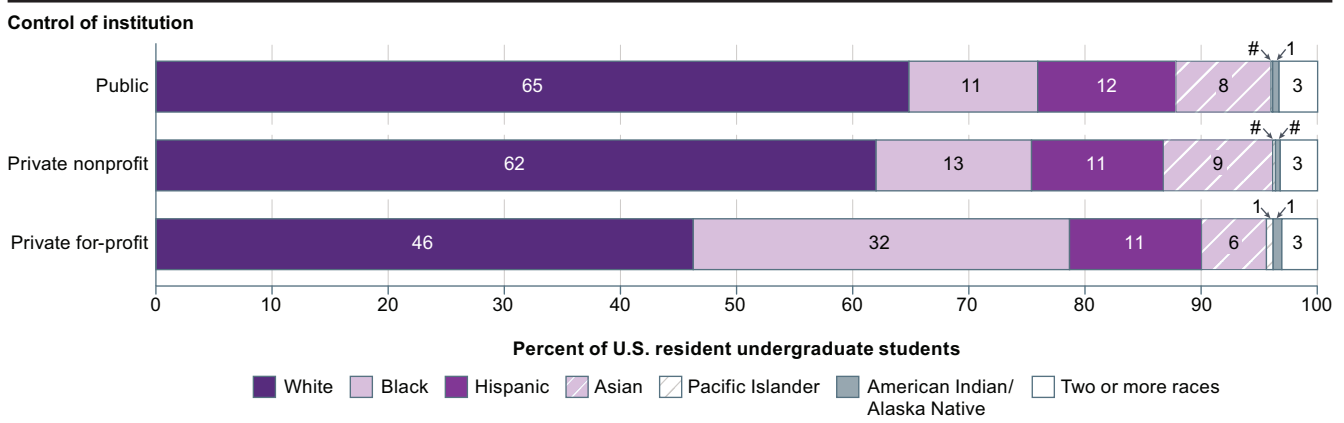


NOTE: Data in this table represent the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Percentage distributions exclude students whose age is unknown. Enrollment includes both U.S. resident students and nonresident alien students. Degree-granting institutions grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2020, Fall Enrollment component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2020*, table 303.50.

The distribution of part-time students included higher percentages of older students than did full-time student enrollment. At 4-year institutions in fall 2019, the percentage of part-time undergraduate students who were under age 25 was higher at public institutions (60 percent) than at private nonprofit (41 percent) and private for-profit (18 percent) institutions. The percentages of part-time undergraduate students who were ages 25 to 34 were lower at public (24 percent) and private nonprofit (29 percent) institutions than at private for-profit (41 percent) institutions. The percentage of part-time undergraduate students who were age 35 and over was lower at public institutions (16 percent) than at private nonprofit (30 percent) and private for-profit (41 percent) institutions.

At 2-year institutions in fall 2019, the percentage of part-time undergraduate students who were under age 25 was higher at public institutions (63 percent) than at private nonprofit (35 percent) and private for-profit (33 percent) institutions. The percentage of part-time undergraduate students who were ages 25 to 34 was lower at public institutions (21 percent) than at private nonprofit (35 percent) and private for-profit (39 percent) institutions. Similarly, the percentage of part-time undergraduate students who were age 35 and over was lower at public institutions (16 percent) than at private for-profit (28 percent) and private nonprofit (29 percent) institutions.

**Figure 4. Percentage distribution of U.S. resident postbaccalaureate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by control of institution and student race or ethnicity: Fall 2019**

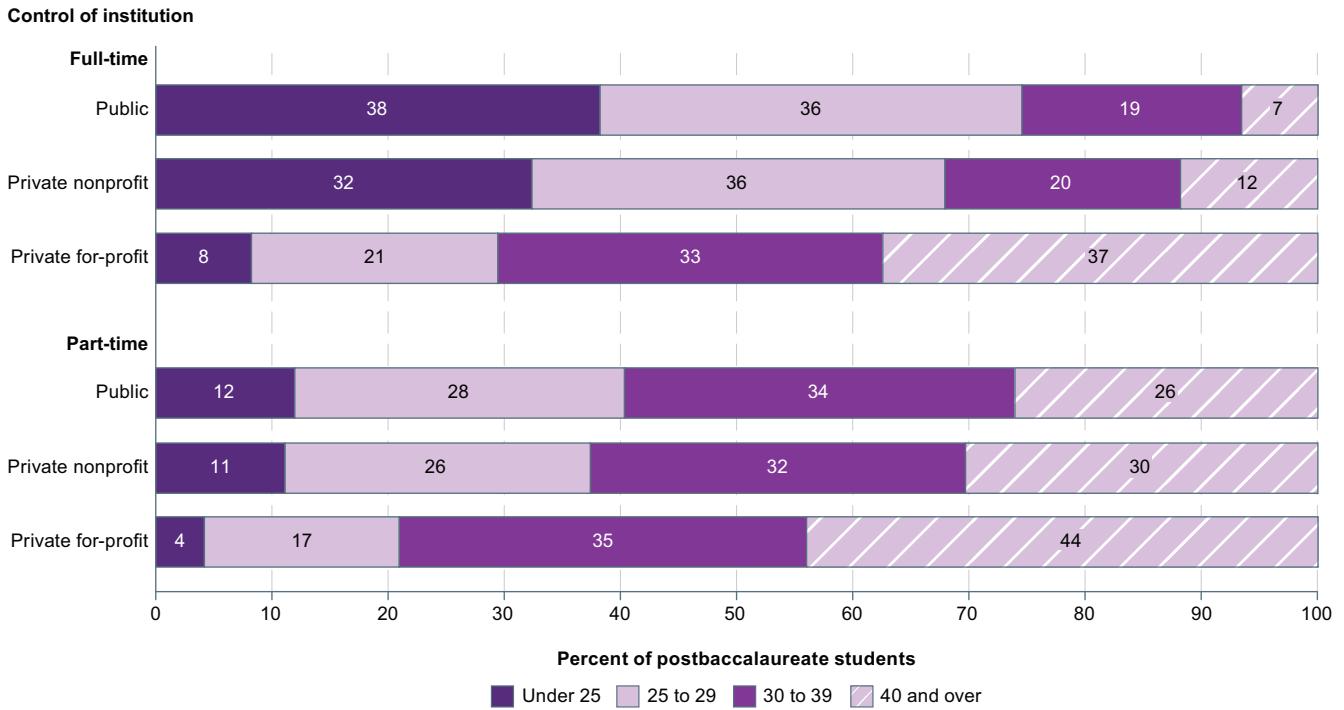


# Rounds to zero.  
NOTE: Data in this table represent the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Degree-granting institutions grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data.  
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2020, Fall Enrollment component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2020*, table 306.50.

In fall 2019, some 49 percent of all postbaccalaureate (graduate) students attended public institutions, 44 percent attended private nonprofit institutions, and 8 percent attended private for-profit institutions. The percentage of graduate students at private for-profit institutions who were Black (32 percent) was more than double the percentages at private nonprofit institutions and public institutions (13 and 11 percent, respectively). Nearly two-thirds of U.S. resident graduate students at public institutions and private nonprofit institutions

were White (65 and 62 percent, respectively), compared with less than one-half of students at private for-profit institutions (46 percent). Hispanic students accounted for 12 percent of graduate student enrollment at public institutions and 11 percent each at private nonprofit and private for-profit institutions. Asian students accounted for 9 percent of graduate student enrollment at private nonprofit institutions, 8 percent at public institutions, and 6 percent at private for-profit institutions.

**Figure 5. Percentage distribution of full-time and part-time postbaccalaureate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by control of institution and student age: Fall 2019**



NOTE: Data in this table represent the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Percentage distributions exclude students whose age is unknown. Enrollment includes both U.S. resident students and nonresident alien students. Degree-granting institutions grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data.  
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2020, Fall Enrollment component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2020*, table 303.50.

In fall 2019, approximately three-quarters of full-time postbaccalaureate students at public institutions were under age 30, with 38 percent under age 25 and 36 percent ages 25 to 29. The majority (68 percent) of full-time graduate students were also under age 30 at private nonprofit institutions, with 32 percent under age 25 and 36 percent ages 25 to 29. In contrast, more than two-thirds

(71 percent)<sup>5</sup> of full-time graduate students at private for-profit institutions were age 30 and over, with 33 percent ages 30 to 39 and 37 percent age 40 and over. Among part-time graduate students, 79 percent were age 30 and over at private for-profit institutions, as were 63 percent at private nonprofit institutions and 60 percent at public institutions.

**Endnotes:**

<sup>1</sup> Data in this indicator represent the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

<sup>2</sup> For more information on how postsecondary enrollment has changed over time, see indicators [Undergraduate Enrollment](#) and [Postbaccalaureate Enrollment](#).

<sup>3</sup> Throughout this indicator, comparisons by race/ethnicity exclude nonresident alien students.

<sup>4</sup> Throughout this indicator, students of unknown ages are excluded from the age analysis.

<sup>5</sup> Detail does not sum to totals because of rounding.

**Reference tables:** *Digest of Education Statistics 2020*, table 303.50; *Digest of Education Statistics 2020*, table 303.60; *Digest of Education Statistics 2020*, table 306.50; *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 306.50

**Related indicators and resources:** [Characteristics of Degree-Granting Postsecondary Institutions](#); [Characteristics of Postsecondary Faculty](#); [Postbaccalaureate Enrollment](#); [Spotlight B: Characteristics of Postsecondary Institutions Serving Specific Minority Racial/Ethnic Groups](#) [*Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups*]; [Undergraduate Enrollment](#)

**Glossary:** College; Control of institutions; Enrollment; Full-time enrollment; Nonresident alien; Part-time enrollment; Postbaccalaureate enrollment; Postsecondary institutions (basic classification by level); Private institution; Public school or institution; Racial/ethnic group; Undergraduate students; U.S. resident