

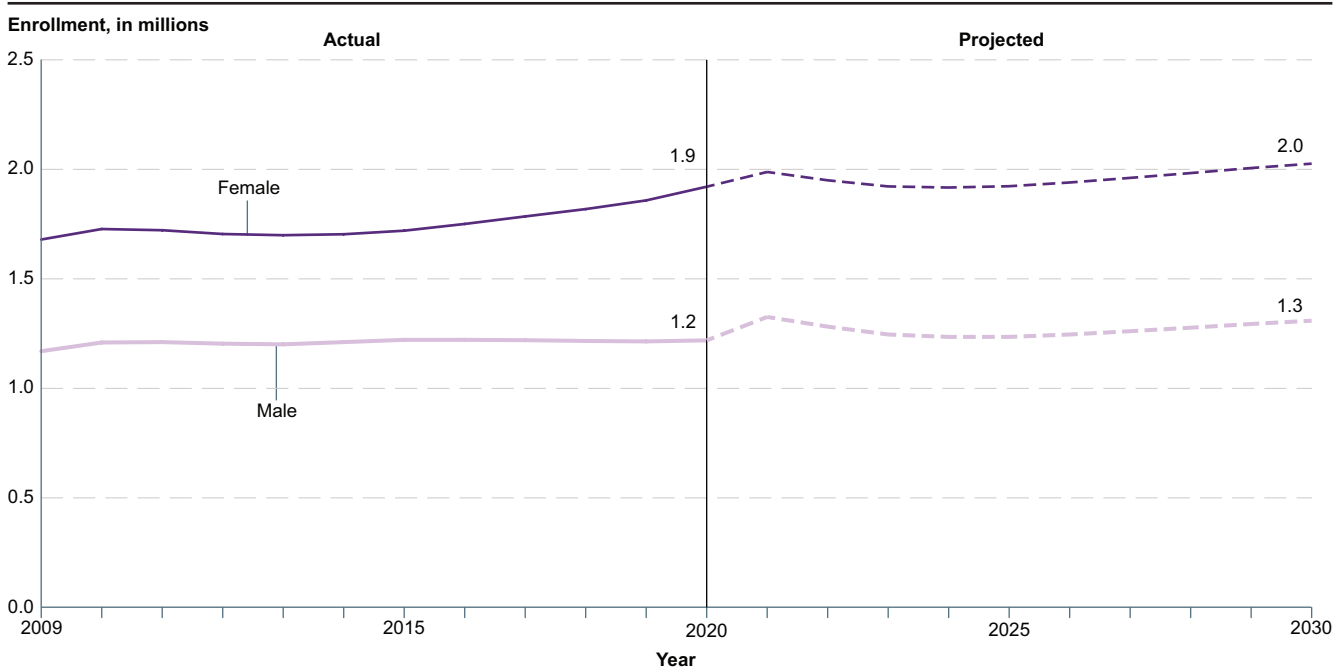
Postbaccalaureate Enrollment

Between fall 2009 and fall 2020, total postbaccalaureate enrollment increased by 10 percent (from 2.8 million to 3.1 million students). By 2030, postbaccalaureate enrollment is projected to be 6 percent higher than in 2020 (3.3 million vs. 3.1 million students).

In fall 2020, the first year in which fall enrollment may have been affected by the coronavirus pandemic, 3.1 million students¹ were enrolled in postbaccalaureate degree programs in the United States.² Postbaccalaureate degree programs include master’s and doctoral programs, as well as professional doctoral programs

such as law, medicine, and dentistry. Between 2009 and 2020, total postbaccalaureate enrollment increased by 10 percent (from 2.8 million to 3.1 million students). Postbaccalaureate enrollment is projected to be 6 percent higher in 2030 than in 2020 (3.3 million vs. 3.1 million students).

Figure 1. Actual and projected postbaccalaureate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by sex: Fall 2009 through 2030

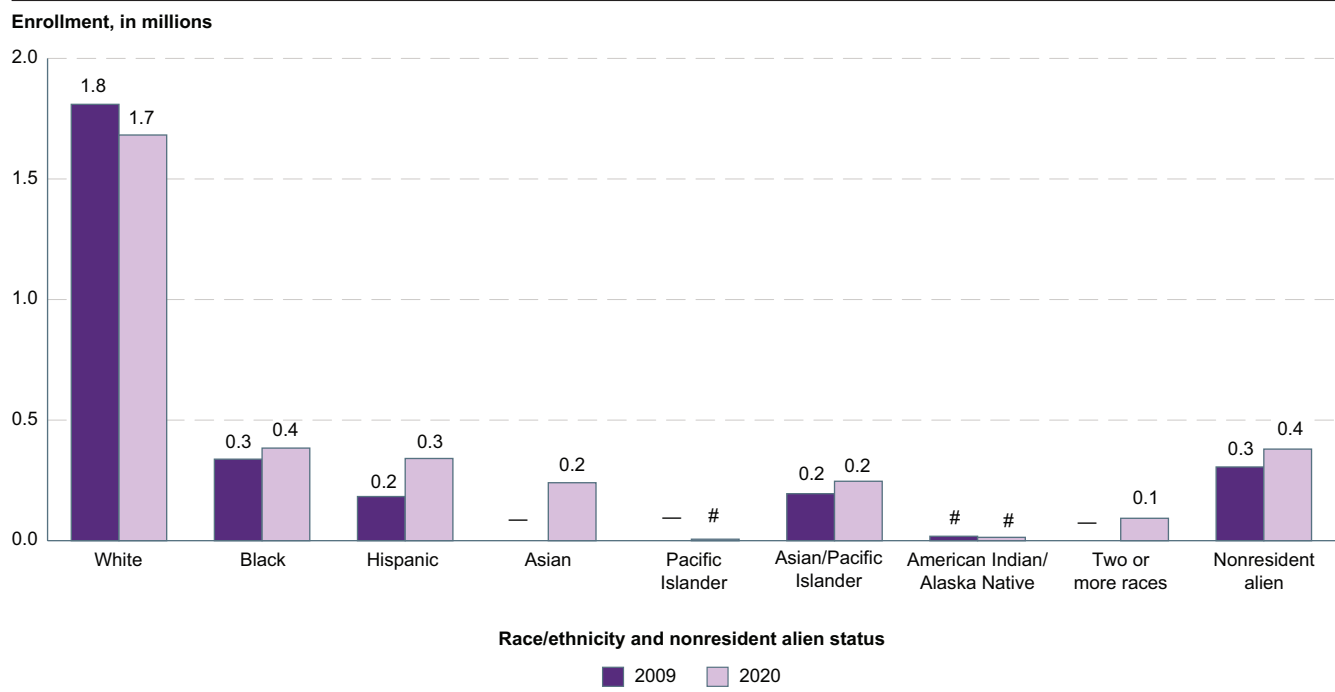


NOTE: Data are for the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Postbaccalaureate degree programs include master’s and doctoral programs, as well as professional doctoral programs such as law, medicine, and dentistry. Degree-granting institutions grant associate’s or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Projections were calculated after the onset of the coronavirus pandemic and take into account the expected impacts of the pandemic. Some data have been revised from previously published figures.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2010 through Spring 2021, Fall Enrollment component. Enrollment in Degree-Granting Institutions Projection Model, through 2030. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2021*, table 303.80.

In fall 2020, female students made up 61 percent of total postbaccalaureate enrollment (1.9 million students), and male students made up 39 percent (1.2 million students). Between 2009 and 2020, female enrollment increased by 14 percent (from 1.7 million to 1.9 million students) and male enrollment increased by 4 percent

(from just under 1.2 million to just over 1.2 million students).³ In 2030, female enrollment is projected to be 5 percent higher than in 2020 (2.0 million students vs. 1.9 million students), while male enrollment is projected to be 7 percent higher than in 2020 (1.3 million vs. 1.2 million students).

Figure 2. Postbaccalaureate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by race/ethnicity and nonresident alien status: Fall 2009 and 2020



— Not available.
Rounds to zero.

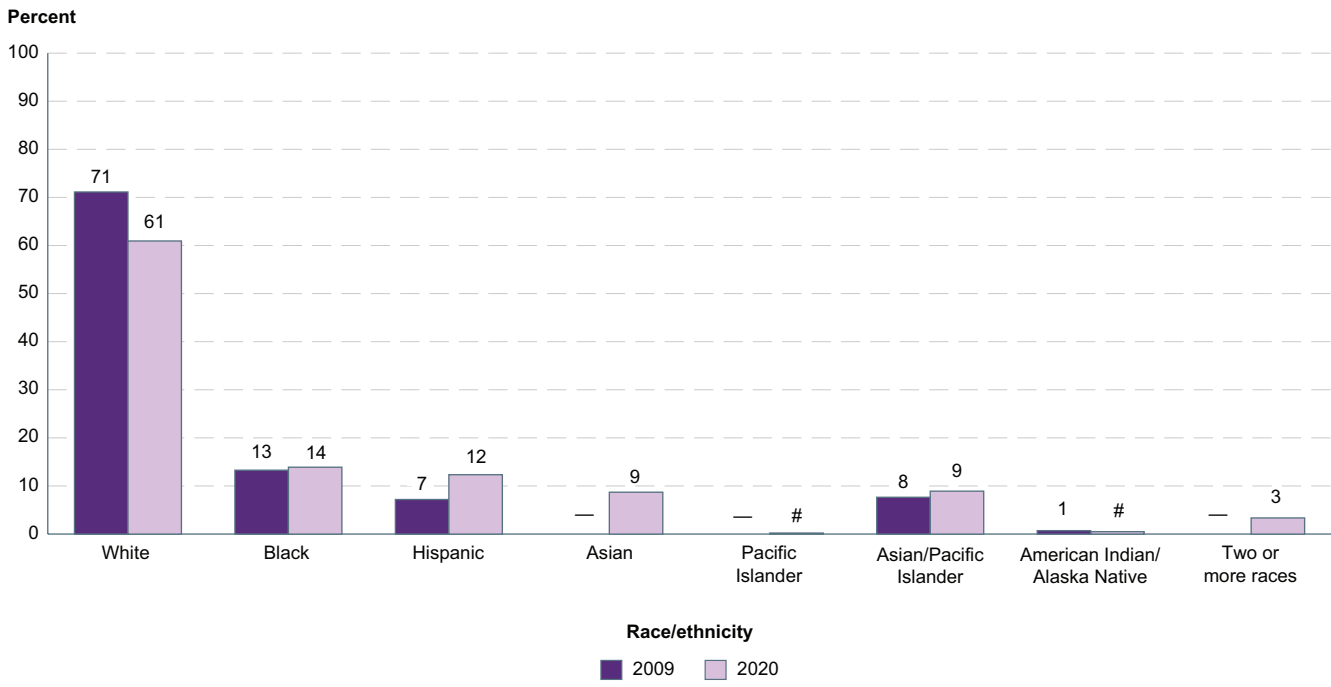
NOTE: Data are for the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Postbaccalaureate degree programs include master's and doctoral programs, as well as professional doctoral programs such as law, medicine, and dentistry. Disaggregated data on postbaccalaureate students who were Asian, Pacific Islander, and of Two or more races were not collected in 2009. In 2009, data for postbaccalaureate students who were Asian included students who were Pacific Islander. In 2009, students of Two or more races were required to select a single category from among the offered race/ethnicity categories (i.e., White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian/Alaska Native). Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Race/ethnicity categories exclude nonresident aliens. Degree-granting institutions grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figure is based on unrounded data.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2010 through Spring 2021, Fall Enrollment component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2021*, table 306.10.

Of the 3.1 million postbaccalaureate students enrolled in fall 2020, some 1.7 million were White, 383,900 were Black, 340,900 were Hispanic, 240,300 were Asian, 92,800 were of Two or more races, 13,800 were American Indian/Alaska Native, and 6,100 were Pacific Islander. Trends in postbaccalaureate enrollment between fall 2009 and 2020 varied across those racial/ethnic groups for which data were available.⁴ During this period, American Indian/Alaska Native enrollment decreased by 25 percent (from 18,300 to 13,800 students) and White enrollment decreased by 7 percent (from 1.8 million to 1.7 million students). In contrast, between fall 2009 and 2020, Hispanic enrollment increased by 86 percent (from 183,000 to 340,900 students), Asian/

Pacific Islander enrollment increased by 26 percent (from 194,900 to 246,400 students), and Black enrollment increased by 14 percent (from 338,000 to 383,900 students).

In fall 2020, degree-granting postsecondary institutions enrolled 379,800 nonresident alien⁵ postbaccalaureate students, a 24 percent increase from the 305,700 students in 2009. Of note, nonresident alien undergraduate enrollment was 11 percent lower in 2020 than just prior to the pandemic in 2019 (379,800 vs. 426,100). This marked the lowest count of nonresident alien students enrolled in postbaccalaureate studies since 2013.

Figure 3. Percentage distribution of postbaccalaureate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by race/ethnicity: Fall 2009 and 2020



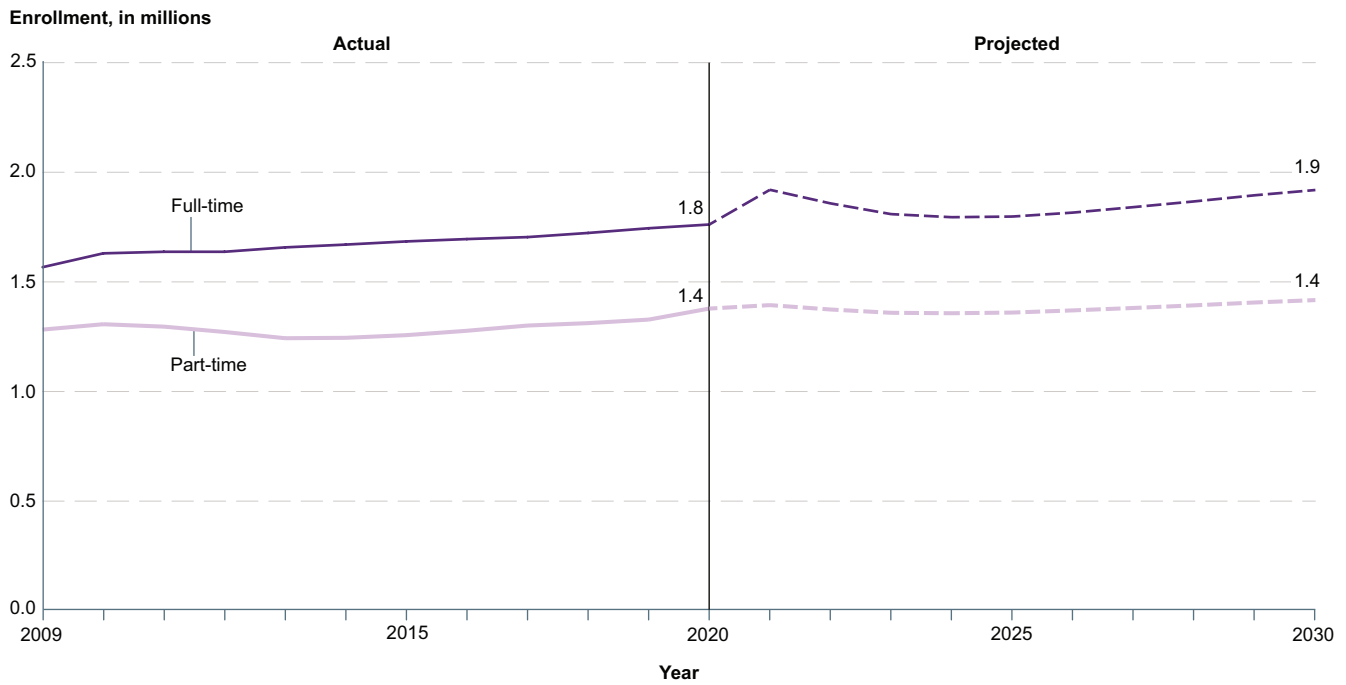
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Rounds to zero.

NOTE: Data are for the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Postbaccalaureate degree programs include master’s and doctoral programs, as well as professional doctoral programs such as law, medicine, and dentistry. Disaggregated data on postbaccalaureate students who were Asian, Pacific Islander, and of Two or more races were not collected in 2009. In 2009, data for postbaccalaureate students who were Asian included students who were Pacific Islander. In 2009, students of Two or more races were required to select a single category from among the offered race/ethnicity categories (i.e., White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian/Alaska Native). Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Race/ethnicity categories exclude nonresident aliens. Degree-granting institutions grant associate’s or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figure is based on unrounded data.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2010 and 2021, Fall Enrollment component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2021*, table 306.10.

Of the 2.8 million U.S. resident postbaccalaureate students (i.e., excluding nonresident alien students) enrolled in fall 2020, the percentage of postbaccalaureate students who were White was lower in fall 2020 (61 percent) than in fall 2009 (71 percent). In contrast, the percentage of postbaccalaureate students who were Hispanic was higher in 2020 (12 percent) than in 2009 (7 percent). In fall 2009 and 2020, the percentages

of postbaccalaureate students who were Black were 13 percent and 14 percent, respectively. In the same years, the percentages of postbaccalaureate students who were Asian/Pacific Islander were 8 percent and 9 percent, respectively. The percentage of postbaccalaureate students who were American Indian/Alaska Native was 1 percent in 2009 and less than 1 percent in 2020.

Figure 4. Actual and projected postbaccalaureate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by attendance status: Fall 2009 through 2030



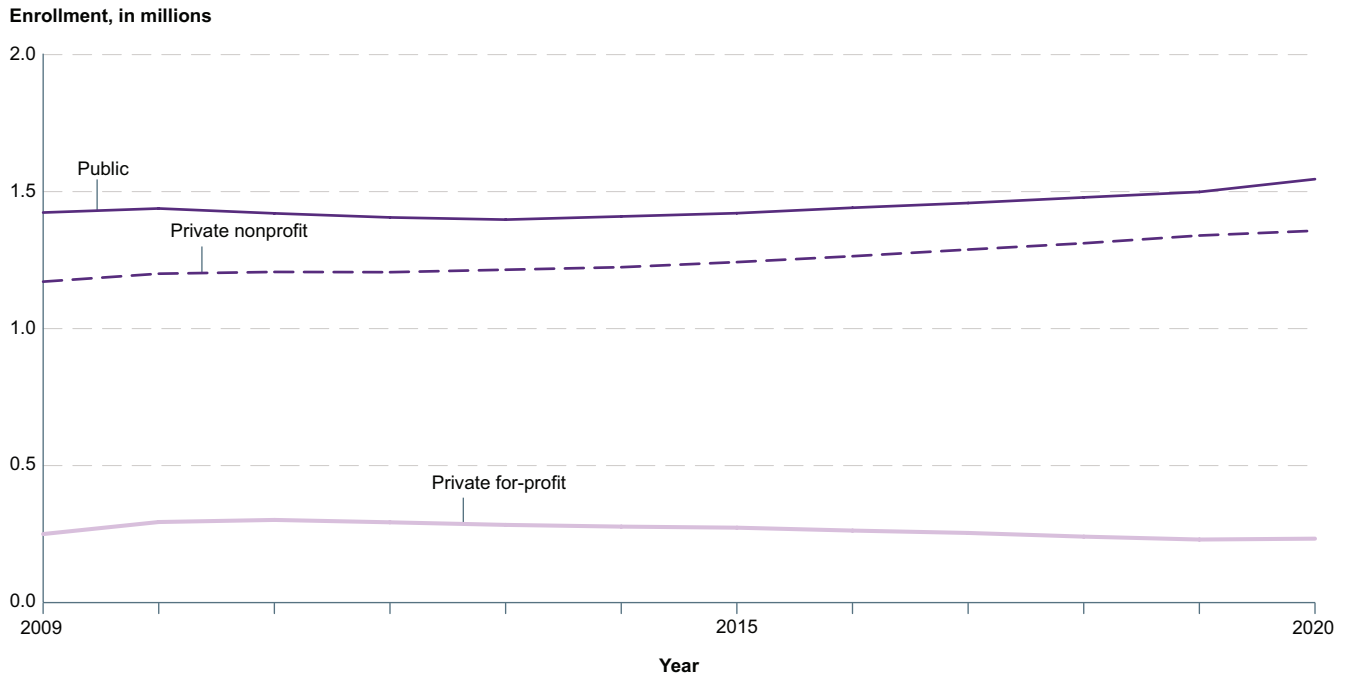
NOTE: Data are for the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Postbaccalaureate degree programs include master’s and doctoral programs, as well as professional doctoral programs such as law, medicine, and dentistry. Degree-granting institutions grant associate’s or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Projections were calculated after the onset of the coronavirus pandemic and take into account the expected impacts of the pandemic. Some data have been revised from previously published figures.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2010 through Spring 2021, Fall Enrollment component. Enrollment in Degree-Granting Institutions Projection Model, through 2030. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2021*, table 303.80.

In fall 2020, there were 1.8 million full-time postbaccalaureate students and 1.4 million part-time postbaccalaureate students enrolled at U.S. postsecondary institutions. Between 2009 and 2020, full-time enrollment increased by 12 percent (from 1.6 million to 1.8 million students). Part-time enrollment was 7 percent higher in 2020 than in 2009 (1.4 million vs.

1.3 million students), although there was no consistent pattern of change throughout the period. Full-time enrollment is projected to be 9 percent higher in 2030 than in 2020 (1.9 million vs. 1.8 million students), while part-time enrollment is projected to be 3 percent higher in 2030 (from just under 1.4 million to just over 1.4 million students).

Figure 5. Postbaccalaureate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by control of institution: Fall 2009 through 2020

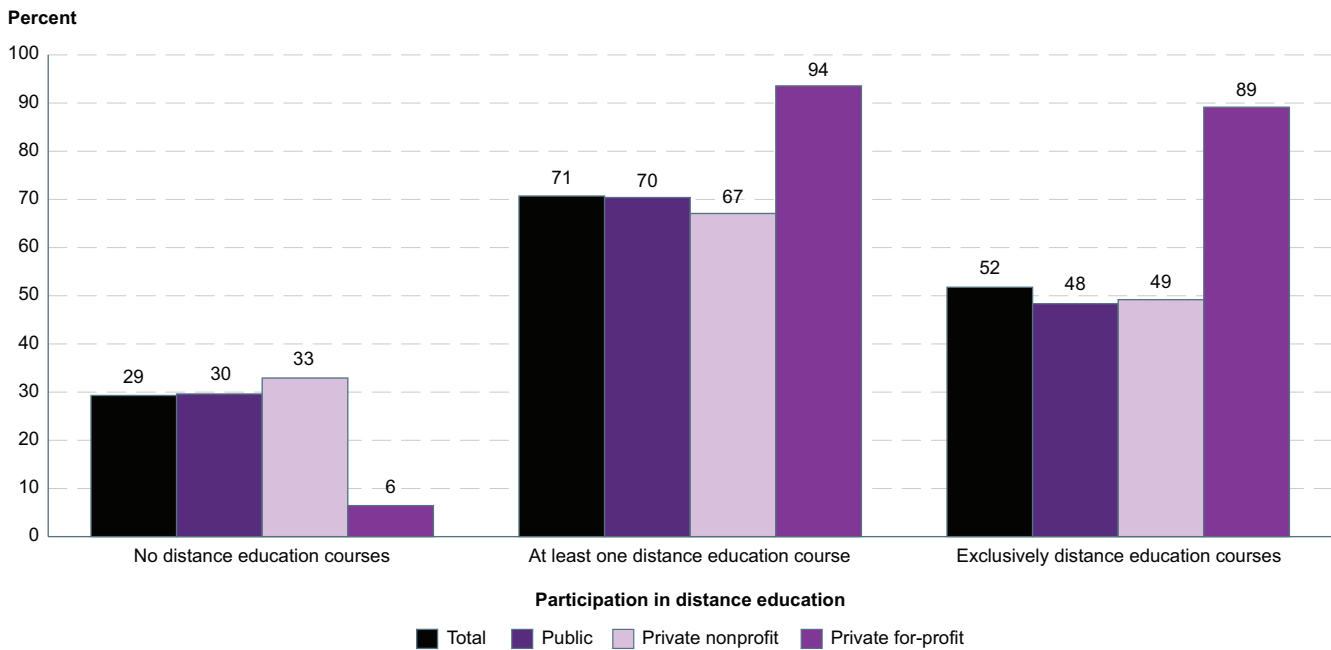


NOTE: Data are for the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Postbaccalaureate degree programs include master’s and doctoral programs, as well as professional doctoral programs such as law, medicine, and dentistry. Degree-granting institutions grant associate’s or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Some data have been revised from previously published figures.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2010 through Spring 2021, Fall Enrollment component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2021*, table 303.80.

In fall 2020, postbaccalaureate enrollment was higher at public institutions (1.5 million students) and private nonprofit institutions (1.4 million students) than at private for-profit institutions (235,700 students). Between fall 2009 and 2020, enrollment increased at public institutions by 9 percent (from 1.4 million

to 1.5 million students) and at private nonprofit institutions by 16 percent (from 1.2 million to 1.4 million students). In contrast, enrollment at private for-profit institutions decreased by 7 percent (from 252,500 to 235,700 students).

Figure 6. Percentage of postbaccalaureate students enrolled in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by participation in distance education and control of institution: Fall 2020



NOTE: Data are for the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Postbaccalaureate degree programs include master’s and doctoral programs, as well as professional doctoral programs such as law, medicine, and dentistry. Degree-granting institutions grant associate’s or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Distance education uses one or more technologies to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the student and the instructor synchronously or asynchronously. Technologies used for instruction may include the following: the internet; one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcasts, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communication devices; audio conferencing; and videocassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs, only if the videocassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs are used in a course in conjunction with the technologies listed above.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2021, Fall Enrollment component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2021*, table 311.15.

Distance education⁶ courses and programs provide flexible learning opportunities to postbaccalaureate students. In fall 2020, some 2.2 million students, or 71 percent of all postbaccalaureate students, enrolled in at least one distance education course. Some 1.6 million students, or 52 percent of total postbaccalaureate enrollment, took distance education courses exclusively.⁷ These were higher than the percentages in 2019. Specifically, 1.3 million students, or 42 percent of all postbaccalaureate students, enrolled in at least one distance education course in 2019 and 1.0 million students, or 33 percent, took distance education courses exclusively. Among students who took distance education courses exclusively in 2020, 52 percent (849,400 students) were enrolled at institutions located in the same state in which they resided, and 41 percent (667,100 students) were enrolled at institutions in a

different state.⁸ This is compared to 44 percent in the same state and 52 percent in a different state in 2019.

The percentage of postbaccalaureate students enrolled exclusively in distance education courses varied by control of institution (i.e., public, private nonprofit, or private for-profit). In fall 2020, the percentage of students at private for-profit institutions who took distance education courses exclusively (89 percent) was higher than the percentages of students at private nonprofit (49 percent) and public (48 percent) institutions who took distance education courses exclusively. The percentage of students who did not take any distance education courses was higher for those enrolled at private nonprofit (33 percent) and public (30 percent) institutions than for those at private for-profit (6 percent) institutions.

Endnotes:

¹ Data in this indicator may not sum to 3.1 million students enrolled in postbaccalaureate degree programs in fall 2020, due to rounding.

² Data in this indicator represent the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

³ Although male enrollment increased by 4 percent between 2009 to 2020 (from 1.17 million to 1.22 students), enrollment in both years rounds to 1.2 million students.

⁴ Disaggregated data on postbaccalaureate students who were Asian, Pacific Islander, and of Two or more races were not collected in 2009. In 2009, data for postbaccalaureate students who were Asian included students who were Pacific Islander. In 2009, students of Two or more races were required to select a single category from among the offered race/ethnicity categories (i.e., White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian/Alaska Native).

⁵ In the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), data for the nonresident alien category are collected alongside data for racial/ethnic categories. Race/ethnicity categories exclude nonresident aliens.

⁶ Distance education uses one or more technologies to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the student and the instructor synchronously or asynchronously. Technologies used for instruction may include the following: the internet; one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcasts, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communication devices; audio conferencing; and videocassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs, only if the videocassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs are used in a course in conjunction with the technologies listed above.

⁷ In comparison, 44 percent of undergraduate students took distance education courses exclusively. See indicator on [Undergraduate Enrollment](#).

⁸ Not all students taking distance education courses exclusively are specified separately in this comparison; for instance, students residing outside the United States or those whose location is unknown are not specified separately.

Reference tables: *Digest of Education Statistics 2021*, tables 303.80, 306.10, and 311.15; *Digest of Education Statistics 2020*, table 311.15; *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, table 306.10; *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 306.10

Related indicators and resources: [Characteristics of Degree-Granting Postsecondary Institutions](#); [Postbaccalaureate Enrollment](#) [*Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups*]; [Trends in Student Loan Debt for Graduate School Completers](#) [*The Condition of Education 2018 Spotlight*]; [Undergraduate Enrollment](#); [Undergraduate Enrollment](#) [*Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups*]

Glossary: Control of institutions; Distance education; Enrollment; Full-time enrollment; Part-time enrollment; Postbaccalaureate enrollment; Private institution; Public school or institution; Racial/ethnic group