

# The Condition of Education 2011





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MAY 2011

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## *Letter from the* **Commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics**

MAY 2011

To ensure reliable, accurate, and timely data, which are necessary to monitor the progress of education in the United States, Congress has mandated that the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) produce an annual report, *The Condition of Education*. This year's report presents 50 indicators of important developments and trends in U.S. education. These indicators focus on participation and persistence in education, student performance and other measures of achievement, the environment for learning, and resources for education. The report also uses a group of the indicators to take a closer look at changes in postsecondary education in the United States by institution level and control. As more students in the United States pursue education beyond high school, the distribution of students across institutions, such as public, private not-for-profit, and private for-profit, has been shifting. We take a look at these changes to see how they are reshaping postsecondary education.

Enrollment in U.S. schools is expected to grow in the coming years. From 2008 through 2020, public elementary and secondary enrollment is projected to increase to 53 million students. Undergraduate enrollment is expected to increase from 17.6 million students in 2009 to 20.0 million in 2020. Enrollment in postbaccalaureate programs is projected to increase through 2020 to 3.4 million students. These increases in enrollment will be accompanied by a growing diversity of students.

Overall, progress on national assessments in reading and mathematics has been made among 4th- and 8th-graders since the early 1990s. On both mathematics and reading assessments, significant gaps among racial/ethnic groups remain, though the mathematics and reading gaps between White and Black 4th-graders have narrowed since the assessments were first given. In 2007–08, above 75 percent of public high school students graduated on time with a regular diploma, reflecting an increase since 2001 when it was 73 percent. Other measures showing improvements are the status dropout rate, which declined among all racial/ethnic groups and was 8 percent overall in 2009, and rates of postsecondary degree attainment, which increased for Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaska Native students.

NCES produces an array of reports each year that present findings about the U.S. education system. *The Condition of Education 2011* is the culmination of a year-long project. It includes data that were available by April 2011. In the coming months, other reports and surveys informing the nation about education will be released. Along with the indicators in this volume, NCES intends these surveys and reports to help inform policymakers and the American public about trends and conditions in U.S. education.



Jack Buckley  
**Commissioner**  
National Center for Education Statistics

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# Reader's Guide

*The Condition of Education* is available in two forms: this print volume for 2011 and an electronic version on the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) website (<http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe>). *The Condition of Education* website includes the entire content of the 2011 print volume, plus special analyses from the 2000 through 2010 editions, and selected indicators from earlier editions of *The Condition of Education*. (See page xxii for a list of all the indicators that appear on *The Condition of Education* website.)

The print volume of *The Condition of Education 2011* is divided into five sections of indicators. Each section begins with a summary of the general topic areas covered by the indicators in the section both in this volume and on the website. Each indicator consists of a page with key findings and technical notes, one or two figures and/or tables on the adjacent page, and one or more supplemental tables, found in *appendix A*. The supplemental tables feature the estimates used in the indicator discussion as well as additional estimates related to the indicator. Where applicable, tables of standard errors for estimate tables are available on the NCES website (<http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe>). Additional information on data sources, analyses conducted, and definitions of variables and measures can be found in the supplemental notes in *appendix B*. Finally, a glossary of key terms, a bibliography, and an index are featured in *appendixes C–E*.

 This icon on the main indicator page lists references for related indicators, supplemental tables, glossary terms, and other sources that provide more information relating to the indicator. Indicators use the most recent national and international data available from either NCES or other sources that are relevant to the indicator. When the source is an NCES publication, such as the *Digest of Education Statistics 2010* (NCES 2011-015), the publication can be viewed on the NCES website (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch>).

## Data Sources and Estimates

The data in this report were obtained from many different sources—including students and teachers, state education agencies, local elementary and secondary schools, and colleges and universities—using surveys and compilations of administrative records. Users of *The Condition of Education* should be cautious when comparing data from different sources. Differences in aspects such as procedures, timing, question phrasing, and interviewer training can affect the comparability of results across data sources.

Most indicators in *The Condition of Education* summarize data from surveys conducted by NCES or by the Census Bureau with support from NCES. Brief explanations of the major NCES surveys used in this edition of *The*

*Condition of Education* can be found in *supplemental notes 3 and 4* of this volume. More detailed explanations can be obtained on the NCES website (<http://nces.ed.gov>) under “Surveys and Programs.” Information about the Current Population Survey (CPS), another frequent source of survey data used in *The Condition of Education*, can be found in *supplemental note 2* and at <http://www.census.gov/cps/>.

Data for indicators reported in this volume are obtained primarily from two types of surveys: universe surveys and sample surveys. Some indicators report data taken from entire populations (universe surveys), such as *indicator 37* (Variations in Instruction Expenditures). With this type of survey, information is collected from every member of the population. For example, data for *indicator 37* were obtained from each school district in the United States. When data from an entire population are available, estimates of the total population or a subpopulation are made by simply summing the units in the population or subpopulation. A universe survey is usually expensive and time consuming, so many surveys collect data from a sample of the population of interest (sample survey). For example, *indicator 10* (Reading Performance) reports information from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which assesses a representative sample of students rather than the entire population of students. When a sample survey is used, statistical uncertainty is introduced because data come from only a portion of the entire population. This statistical uncertainty must be considered when reporting estimates and making comparisons.

Various types of statistics derived from universe and sample surveys are reported in *The Condition of Education*. Many indicators report the size of a population or a subpopulation, and often the size of a subpopulation is expressed as a percentage of the total population. In addition, the average (or *mean*) values of some characteristic of the population or subpopulation may be reported. The average is obtained by summing the values for all members of the population and dividing the sum by the size of the population. An example is the annual average salaries of full-time instructional faculty at degree-granting postsecondary institutions (*indicator 44*). Another measure that is sometimes used is the *median*. The median is the midpoint value of a characteristic at or above which 50 percent of the population is estimated to fall, and at or below which 50 percent of the population is estimated to fall. An example is the median annual earnings of young adults who are full-time, full-year wage and salary workers (*indicator 17*).

Estimates based on universe and sample survey data may be affected by a wide range of potential data collection errors, such as coverage errors, response errors, data coding errors, and data entry errors. Estimates of the size of these types of errors are typically not available.

## Standard Errors

Using estimates calculated from data based on a sample of the population requires consideration of several factors before the estimates become meaningful. When using data from a sample, some margin of error will always be present in estimations of characteristics of the total population or subpopulation because the data are available from only a portion of the total population. Consequently, data from samples can provide only an approximation of the true or actual value. The margin of error of an estimate, or the range of potential true or actual values, depends on several factors such as the amount of variation in the responses, the size and representativeness of the sample, and the size of the subgroup for which the estimate is computed. The magnitude of this margin of error is measured by what statisticians call the “standard error” of an estimate.

When data from sample surveys are reported, as is the case with most of the indicators in *The Condition of Education*, the standard error is calculated for each estimate. The standard errors for all estimated totals, means, medians, or percentages reported in the supplemental tables of *The Condition of Education* can be viewed on the NCES website (<http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/>).

The standard errors of the estimates for different subpopulations in an indicator can vary. As an illustration, *indicator 10* reports the average reading scale scores of 12th-grade students between 1992 and 2009. In both 2005 and 2009, the average reading scale score for 12th-grade students in high-poverty schools was 266 (see table A-10-2). In contrast to the similarity of these scores, the standard errors for these estimates were 2.0 and 1.0, respectively (see table S-10-2). The average score with the smaller standard error provides a more reliable approximation of the true value than the average score with a higher standard error. In addition, standard errors tend to diminish in size as the size of the sample (or subsample) increases.

In order to caution the reader when interpreting findings in *The Condition of Education*, estimates from sample surveys are flagged with a “!” when the standard error exceeds 30 percent of the estimate, and suppressed with a “‡” when exceeding 50 percent of the estimate.

## Data Analysis and Interpretation

When estimates are from a sample, caution is warranted when drawing conclusions about one estimate in comparison to another, or about whether a time series of estimates is increasing, decreasing, or staying the same. Although one estimate may appear to be larger than another, a statistical test may find that the apparent

difference between them is not reliably measurable due to the uncertainty around the estimates. In this case, the estimates will be described as having no measurable difference, meaning that the difference between them is not statistically significant.

Whether differences in means or percentages are statistically significant can be determined using the standard errors of the estimates. In this publication and others produced by NCES, when differences are statistically significant, the probability that the difference occurred by chance is less than 5 percent, according to NCES standards.

For all indicators in *The Condition of Education* that report estimates based on samples, differences between estimates (including increases and decreases) are stated only when they are statistically significant. To determine whether differences reported are statistically significant, two-tailed *t* tests at the .05 level are typically used. The *t* test formula for determining statistical significance is adjusted when the samples being compared are dependent. The *t* test formula is not adjusted for multiple comparisons. When the difference between estimates is not statistically significant, tests of equivalence can be used. An equivalence test determines the probability (generally at the .15 level) that the estimates are statistically equivalent, that is, within the margin of error that the two estimates are not substantively different. When the difference is found to be equivalent, language such as “x” and “y” “were similar” or “about the same” has been used. When the variables to be tested are postulated to form a trend, the relationship may be tested using linear regression, logistic regression, or ANOVA trend analysis instead of a series of *t* tests. These alternate methods of analysis test for specific relationships (e.g., linear, quadratic, or cubic) among variables. For more information on data analysis, please see the NCES Statistical Standards, Standard 5-1, available at [http://nces.ed.gov/statprog/2002/std5\\_1.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/statprog/2002/std5_1.asp).

A number of considerations influence the ultimate selection of the data years that are featured in *The Condition of Education*. To make analyses as timely as possible, the latest year of data is shown if it is available during report production. The choice of comparison years is often also based on the need to show the earliest available survey year, as in the case of the NAEP and the international assessment surveys. In the case of surveys with long time frames, such as surveys measuring enrollment, the decade's beginning year (e.g., 1980 or 1990) often starts the trend line. In the figures and tables of the indicators, intervening years are selected in increments in order to show the general trend. The narrative for the indicators typically compares the most current year's data with those from the initial year and



then with those from a more recent period. Where applicable, the narrative may also note years in which the data begin to diverge from previous trends.

## Rounding and Other Considerations

All calculations within *The Condition of Education* are based on unrounded estimates. Therefore, the reader may find that a calculation, such as a difference or a percentage change, cited in the text or figure may not be identical to the calculation obtained by using the rounded values shown in the accompanying tables. Although values reported in the supplemental tables are generally rounded to one decimal place (e.g., 76.5 percent), values reported in each indicator are generally rounded to whole numbers (with any value of 0.50 or above rounded to the next highest whole number). Due to rounding, cumulative percentages may sometimes equal 99 or 101 percent rather than 100 percent.

Indicators in this volume that use the Current Price Index (CPI) use a base academic year of 2009–10 and a base calendar year of 2009 for constant dollar calculations. For more information on the CPI, see *supplemental note 10*.

## Race and ethnicity

The categories denoting race and ethnicity in *The Condition of Education* are in accordance with the 1997 Office of Management and Budget (OMB) standard classification scheme. These classifications are based primarily on the respondent's self-identification, as is the case with data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau, or, in rare instances, on observer identification. Under the OMB standards, race and ethnicity are considered separate concepts. "Hispanic or Latino" is an ethnicity category, not a racial category. Race categories presented in *The Condition of Education 2011* exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity; thus, the race/ethnicity categories are mutually exclusive.

Ethnicity is categorized as follows:

- *Hispanic or Latino*: A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.

Racial groupings are as follows:

- *American Indian or Alaska Native*: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.

- *Asian*: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, and the Indian subcontinent: for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- *Black*: A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.
- *Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander*: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.
- *White*: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East.
- *Two or more races*: A person who selected two or more of the following racial categories when offered the option of selecting one or more racial designations: White, Black, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, or American Indian or Alaska Native.

In *The Condition of Education*, the following terms are typically used to represent the above categories: White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Two or more races. Not all categories are shown in all indicators. For more information on race/ethnicity, see *supplemental note 1*.

## Symbols

In accordance with the NCES Statistical Standards, many tables in this volume use a series of symbols to alert the reader to special statistical notes. These symbols, and their meanings, are as follows:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| — | Not available.  |
| † | Not applicable.   |
| # | Rounds to zero.   |
| ! | Interpret data with caution. The standard error of the estimate is equal to 30 percent or more of the estimate's value. |
| ‡ | Reporting standards not met.  |
| * | $p < .05$ Significance level.   |

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# Introduction

To ensure reliable, accurate, and timely data, which are necessary to monitor the progress of education in the United States, Congress has mandated that the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) produce an annual report, *The Condition of Education*. This year's report presents 50 indicators of important developments and trends in U.S. education. These indicators focus on participation and persistence in education, student performance and other measures of achievement, the environment for learning, and resources for education.

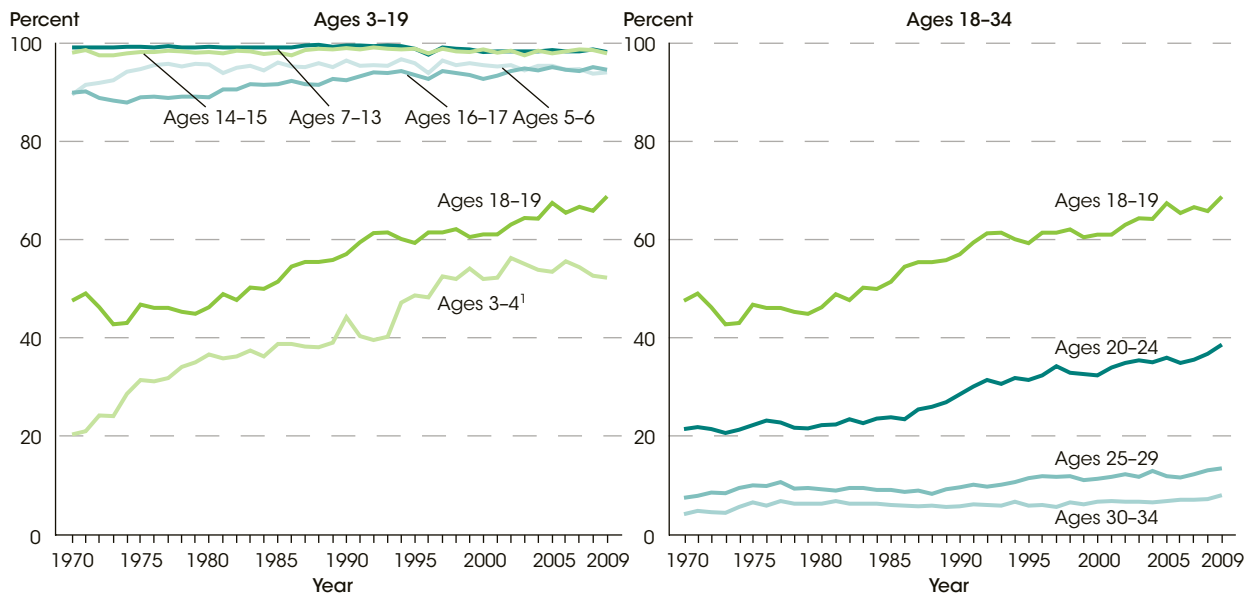
This introduction features an Overview and a Closer Look. The Overview summarizes each section of the volume by highlighting each indicator, which is referenced by its number (e.g., *indicator 19*). Each figure in the Overview can also be found in an indicator in the volume. For indicators with figures highlighted in the Overview, the indicator figure number will follow the Overview figure number in its reference (i.e., figure 3 is figure 19-1). The Closer Look examines a subset of indicators on postsecondary education, using figures and tables from the full indicators. The relevant figures are included and referenced tables can be found in Appendix A: Supplemental Tables.

## Overview

### Section 1: Participation in Education

- Between 2000 and 2009, enrollment rates increased for young adults ages 18–19 and adults ages 20–24, 25–29, and 30–34; students in these age groups are typically enrolled in college or graduate school (*indicator 1*). See figure 1 below (figure 1-1, page 21).
- From 2008–09 through 2020–21, public elementary and secondary school enrollment is projected to increase from 49.3 to 52.7 million students, but with differences across states (*indicator 2*).
- From 1999–2000 to 2008–09, the number of students enrolled in public charter schools more than tripled from 340,000 to 1.4 million students. In 2008–09, some 5 percent of all public schools were charter schools (*indicator 3*).
- Private school enrollment in prekindergarten through grade 12 increased from 5.9 million in 1995–96 to 6.3 million in 2001–02, and then decreased to 5.5 million in 2009–10. Some 10 percent of all elementary and secondary school students were in private schools in 2009–10 (*indicator 4*).

**Figure 1. (Figure 1-1) Percentage of the population ages 3–34 enrolled in school, by age group: October 1970–2009**



<sup>1</sup> Beginning in 1994, new procedures were used to collect enrollment data on children ages 3–4. As a result, pre-1994 data may not be comparable to data from 1994 or later.

NOTE: Includes enrollment in any type of graded public, parochial, or other private schools. Includes nursery schools, kindergartens, elementary schools, high schools, colleges, universities, and professional schools. Attendance may be on either a full-time or part-time basis and during the day or night. Excluded are enrollments in schools or classes that do not advance students to regular school degrees, such as trade schools, business colleges, or vocational schools. For more information on the Current Population Survey (CPS), see *supplemental note 2*.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October Supplement, 1970–2009.

# Introduction

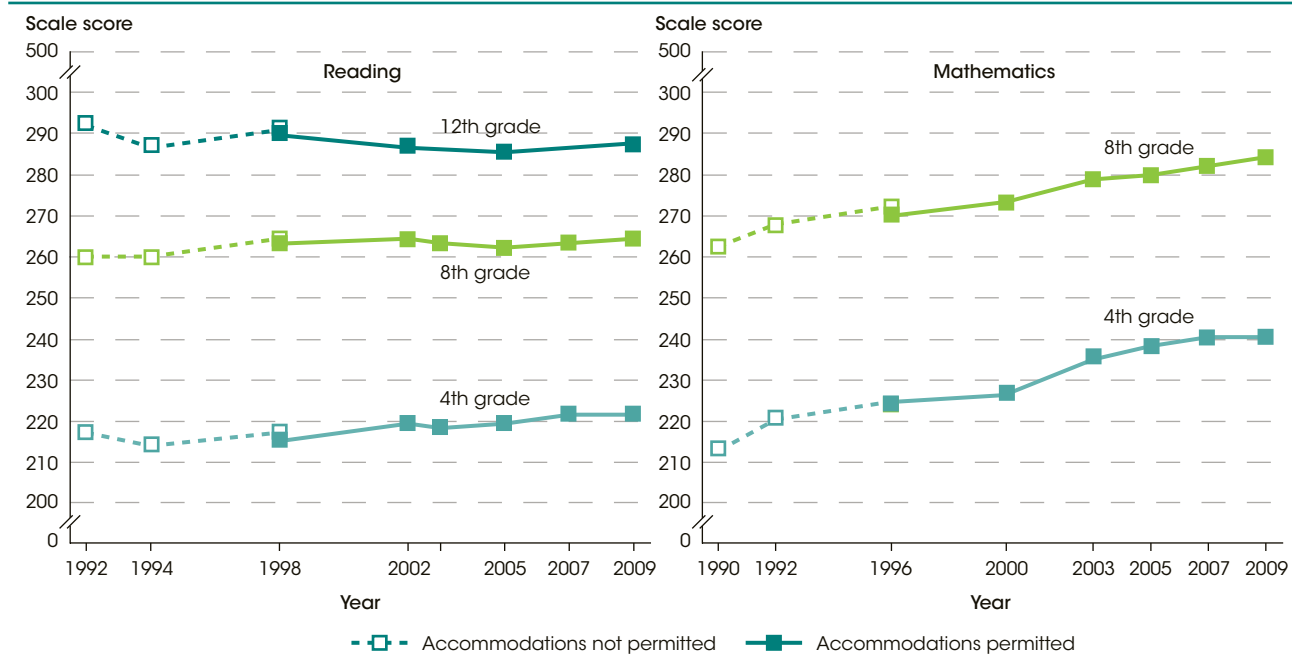
- Between 1989 and 2009, the percentage of public school students who were White decreased from 68 to 55 percent, and the percentage of those who were Hispanic doubled from 11 to 22 percent (*indicator 5*).
- In 2009, some 21 percent of children ages 5–17 (or 11.2 million) spoke a language other than English at home, and 5 percent (or 2.7 million) spoke English with difficulty. Seventy-three percent of those who spoke English with difficulty spoke Spanish (*indicator 6*).
- The number of children and youth ages 3–21 receiving special education services was 6.5 million in 2008–09, corresponding to about 13 percent of all public school enrollment (*indicator 7*).
- Between 2000 and 2009, undergraduate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions increased by 34 percent, from 13.2 to 17.6 million students. Projections indicate that it will continue to increase, reaching 19.6 million students in 2020 (*indicator 8*).
- Postbaccalaureate enrollment has increased every year since 1983, reaching 2.9 million students in 2009. In each year since 1988, women have made up more than half of postbaccalaureate enrollment.

In 2009, postbaccalaureate enrollment was 59 percent female (*indicator 9*).

## Section 2: Learner Outcomes

- Between 2007 and 2009, there was no measurable change in the average grade 4 reading score on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP); the average grade 8 reading score, however, increased 1 point. At grade 12, the average reading score increased by 2 points between 2005 and 2009 (*indicator 10*). See figure 2 below (figure 10-1, page 43, for reading scale scores).
- In 2009, White students at grade 12 scored 27 points higher in NAEP reading than Black students and 22 points higher than Hispanic students. Neither score gap was significantly different from the respective score gaps in previous assessment years (*indicator 11*).
- From 1990 to 2009, average grade 4 NAEP mathematics scores increased by 27 points and average grade 8 scores increased by 20 points. At grade 12, average scores increased by 3 points between 2005 and 2009 (*indicator 12*). See figure 2 below (figure 12-1, page 47, for mathematics scale scores).

**Figure 2. (Figures 10-1 and 12-1) Average reading and mathematics scale scores of 4th-, 8th-, and 12th-grade students: Selected years, 1990–2009**



NOTE: The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading and mathematics scales range from 0 to 500. Student assessments are not designed to permit comparisons across subjects or grades. Testing accommodations (e.g., extended time, small group testing) for children with disabilities and limited-English-proficient students were not permitted in 1990, 1992, and 1994; students were tested with and without accommodations in 1996 for mathematics and in 1998 for reading. The 12th-grade NAEP reading assessment was not administered in 2003 or 2007. For more information on NAEP, see *supplemental note 4*.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), selected years, 1992–2009 Reading Assessments and 1990–2009 Mathematics Assessments, NAEP Data Explorer.



# Introduction

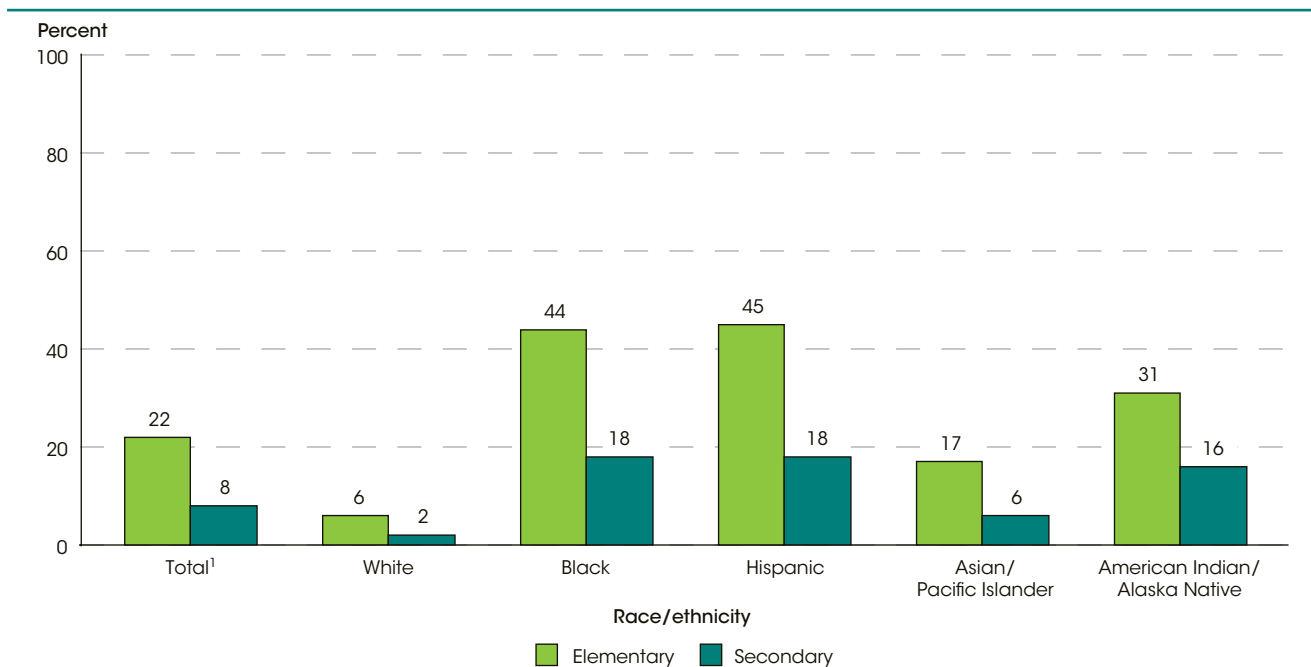
- The immediate college enrollment rate after high school increased from 1975 to 1997 (51 to 67 percent), declined from 1997 to 2001 (to 62 percent), then increased from 2001 to 2009 (70 percent). Gaps in immediate enrollment rates by family income, race/ethnicity, and sex have persisted over time (*indicator 21*).
- In 2007–08, about 36 percent of undergraduate students considered to be in their first year reported having ever taken a remedial course, while 20 percent had actually taken one in that same year. At public 2-year institutions, about 42 percent of students had ever taken a remedial course (*indicator 22*).
- About 54 percent of male and 60 percent of female first-time students who sought a bachelor’s degree and enrolled at a 4-year institution full time in fall 2002 completed a bachelor’s degree at that institution within 6 years (*indicator 23*).
- In 2010, some 32 percent of 25- to 29-year-olds had completed at least a bachelor’s degree. Between 1975 and 2010, the gap in bachelor’s degree attainment between Whites and Hispanics widened from 15 to 25 percentage points, and the gap between Whites and Blacks widened from 13 to 19 percentage points (*indicator 24*).
- Greater percentages of the population ages 25 to 64 had earned a bachelor’s degree or higher in all reporting OECD countries in 2008 than in 2001 (21 vs. 15 percent). The percentage of the U.S. population with a bachelor’s degree or higher was 32 percent in 2008, compared with 28 percent in 2001 (*indicator 25*).
- Between 1998–99 and 2008–09, the number of degrees earned increased by 41 percent for associate’s degrees, by 33 percent for bachelor’s degrees, and by 49 percent for master’s degrees. In 2008–09, females earned the majority of all associate’s, bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degrees awarded (*indicator 26*).
- In 2008–09, greater percentages of Black, Hispanic, and American Indian/Alaska Native students attended high-poverty elementary and secondary public schools than did White or Asian/Pacific Islander students (*indicator 28*). See figure 4 on the following page (figure 28-1, page 87).
- In 2009, some 19 percent of 5- to 17-year-olds were in families living in poverty, compared with 15 percent in 2000 and 17 percent in 1990 (*indicator 29*).
- From 1992 to 2008, the rate of nonfatal incidents of crime against students ages 12–18 at school declined from 144 to 47 crimes per 1,000 students, and for students away from school the rate declined from 138 to 38 crimes per 1,000 students (*indicator 30*).
- A larger percentage of full-time teachers held a postbaccalaureate degree in 2007–08 than in 1999–2000. Forty-nine percent of elementary school teachers and 54 percent of secondary school teachers held a postbaccalaureate degree in 2007–08, compared with 43 percent and 50 percent, respectively, in 1999–2000 (*indicator 31*).
- In 2008–09, some 8 percent of public school teachers left the teaching profession compared with 16 percent of private school teachers. Another 7 percent of all teachers moved from their 2007–08 school to a different school (*indicator 32*).
- From 1999–2000 to 2007–08, the percentage of principals who were female increased from 52 to 59 percent at public elementary schools and from 22 to 29 percent at public secondary schools (*indicator 33*).
- In 2008–09, some 12 percent of all principals left the profession. In addition to principals who left the profession, another 6 percent of all principals moved from their 2007–08 school to a different school for the 2008–09 school year (*indicator 34*).
- From 1989–90 through 2007–08, total elementary and secondary public school revenues increased from \$356 billion to \$599 billion (in constant 2009–10 dollars), a 68 percent increase after adjusting for inflation (*indicator 35*).
- Total expenditures per student in public elementary and secondary schools rose 39 percent in constant dollars from 1989–90 through 2007–08, with interest on school debt increasing faster than current expenditures or capital outlay (*indicator 36*).

## Section 4: Contexts of Elementary and Secondary Education

- In 2008–09, charter schools and schools with a magnet program each composed a higher percentage of all public schools than they did in 1998–99 (5 vs. 1 percent for charter schools and 3 vs. 1 percent for schools with a magnet program) (*indicator 27*).



**Figure 4. (Figure 28-1) Percentage of public school students in high-poverty schools, by race/ethnicity and school level: School year 2008–09**



<sup>1</sup> Includes students whose racial/ethnic group was not reported.

NOTE: The National School Lunch Program is a federally assisted meal program. To be eligible, a student must be from a household with an income at or below 130 percent of the poverty threshold for free lunch, or between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty threshold for reduced-price lunch. High-poverty schools are public schools where more than 75 percent of the students are eligible for the free or reduced-price lunch program. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Persons with unknown race/ethnicity are not shown. For more information on race/ethnicity and poverty, see *supplemental note 1*. For more information on the Common Core of Data (CCD), see *supplemental note 3*.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2008–09.

- Total variation in instruction expenditures per student has increased among public school districts since 1997–98, primarily due to an increase in the variation between states (*indicator 37*).
- In 2007, the United States spent \$10,768 per student on elementary and secondary education, which was 45 percent higher than the OECD average of \$7,401. At the postsecondary level, U.S. expenditures per student were \$27,010, more than twice as high as the OECD average of \$12,471 (*indicator 38*).

## Section 5: Contexts of Postsecondary Education

- In fall 2009, some 11 percent of all full-time undergraduate students attended private for-profit institutions. About 38 percent of full-time students age 35 and over attended private for-profit institutions, compared with 5 percent of full-time students under the age of 25 (*indicator 39*).
- In 2008–09, more than half of the 1.6 million bachelor's degrees awarded were in five fields: business (22 percent), social sciences and history

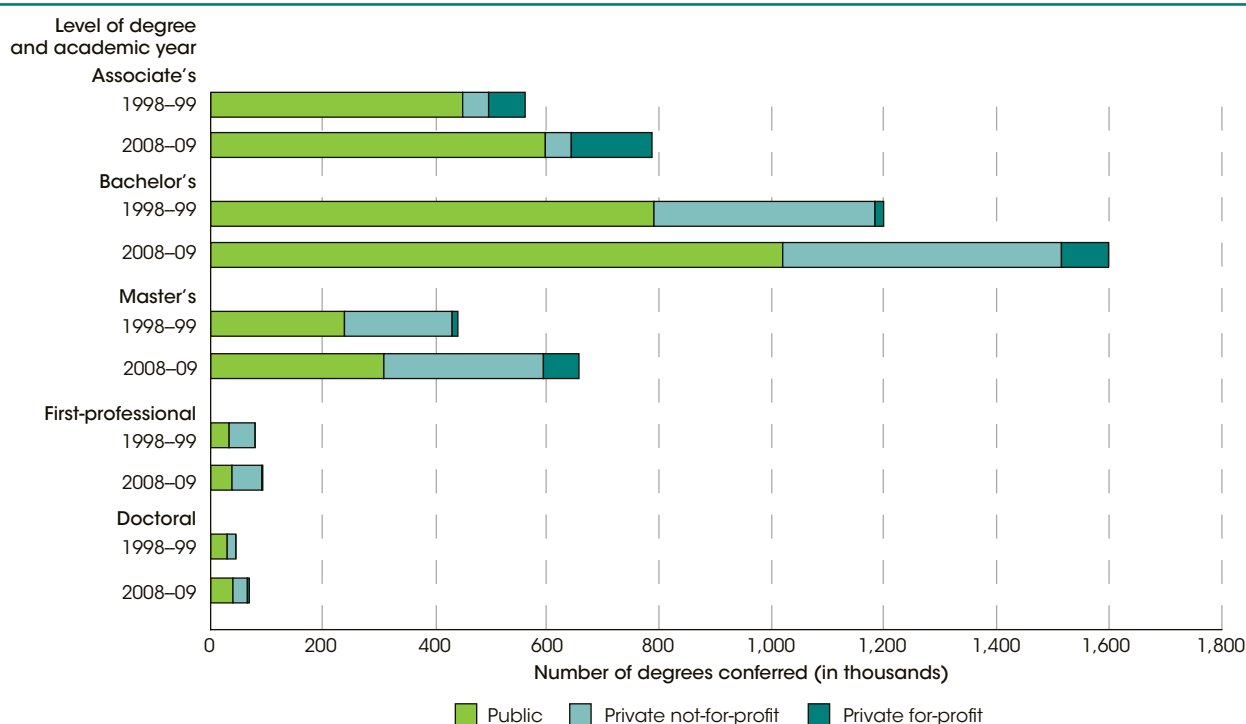
(11 percent), health professions and related clinical sciences (8 percent), education (6 percent), and psychology (6 percent) (*indicator 40*).

- Overall, 656,800 master's degrees and 67,700 doctoral degrees were awarded in 2008–09; these numbers represent increases of 49 and 54 percent, respectively, over the numbers awarded in 1998–99. In 2008–09, females earned 60 percent of master's degrees and 52 percent of doctoral degrees awarded (*indicator 41*).
- Between 1998–99 and 2008–09, the number of degrees conferred by private for-profit institutions increased by a larger percentage than the number conferred by public institutions and private not-for-profit institutions; this was true for all levels of degrees (*indicator 42*). See figure 5 on the following page (figure 42-1, page 119).
- In 2007–08, about 4.3 million undergraduate students, or 20 percent of all undergraduates, took at least one distance education course. About 0.8 million, or 4 percent of all undergraduates, took their entire program through distance education (*indicator 43*).

# Introduction

- After increasing by 14 percent during the 1980s and by 5 percent during the 1990s, average salaries for full-time faculty were 4 percent higher in 2009–10 than they were in 1999–2000, after adjusting for inflation (*indicator 44*).
- In 2009, about 41 percent of full-time and 76 percent of part-time college students ages 16–24 were employed (*indicator 45*).
- From 1999–2000 to 2007–08, the percentage of full-time, full-year undergraduates receiving federal loans increased from 43 to 49 percent. Over the same period, the average federal grant increased from \$3,300 to \$3,800 (in constant 2009–10 dollars) (*indicator 46*).
- The net price of education was higher in 2007–08 than in 1999–2000 for full-time, full-year, dependent undergraduates at all family income levels (*indicator 47*).
- About 9 out of 10 full-time graduate students received financial aid in 2007–08. The average total price of attending was greater in 2007–08 than in 2003–04 for students in master’s or first-professional degree programs at public universities, as well as for students in first-professional degree programs at private not-for-profit universities (*indicator 48*).
- In 2008–09, average tuition and fees, in constant 2009–10 dollars, at 4-year postsecondary institutions were \$12,100. At public 4-year institutions, average tuition and fees were \$6,400, compared with \$15,300 at private for-profit institutions and \$24,900 at private not-for-profit institutions (*indicator 49*).
- In 2008–09, instruction was the largest per-student expense at public (\$7,534) and private not-for-profit institutions (\$15,215). At private for-profit institutions, instruction was the second largest per-student expense category, with \$3,069 spent per student (*indicator 50*).

**Figure 5. (Figure 42-1) Number of degrees conferred by degree-granting institutions, by level of degree and control of institution: Academic years 1998–99 and 2008–09**



NOTE: Includes only institutions that participated in Title IV federal financial aid programs. For more information on the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and IPEDS classification of institutions, see *supplemental notes 3 and 8*. See the glossary for definitions of first-professional degree and doctoral degree.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1998–99 and 2008–09 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), “Completions Survey” (IPEDS-C:99) and Fall 2009.

## A Closer Look at Postsecondary Education by Institution Level and Control

Increasing participation in postsecondary education in the United States has become an issue of vital importance to policymakers. Several indicators in this volume describe the current state of postsecondary education and others describe how it has been changing in recent decades. In this section, we take a closer look at postsecondary education in the United States by examining these indicators by institution level and control, primarily for undergraduate students. These institutional characteristics were selected because postsecondary education in the U.S. has been undergoing changes along these dimensions. Specifically, postsecondary education has traditionally been divided into public and private not-for-profit institutions, but in recent years private for-profit institutions have entered the marketplace in growing numbers. This has created additional opportunities for students seeking a postsecondary education, but it has also brought to light differences in how students pursue and pay for that education.

### Enrollment and Degrees Conferred

The past three decades have experienced growth in postsecondary enrollments, primarily in the public sector, and most recently, in the private for-profit sector as well. Between 1980 and 1990, undergraduate enrollment in degree-granting institutions grew from 10.5 to 12.0 million students, an increase of 1.5 million students (see table A-8-2). Eighty-five percent of this increase (representing 1.3 million students) occurred at public institutions; 8 percent, at private not-for-profit institutions; and 7 percent, at private for-profit institutions. Between 1990 and 2000, undergraduate enrollment increased by 1.2 million students; 69 percent of this increase occurred at public institutions; 14 percent, at private not-for-profit institutions; and 16 percent, at private for-profit institutions. The greatest increase was seen in the most recent decade: from 2000 to 2009, undergraduate enrollment at degree-granting institutions increased by 4.4 million students. Of this increase, 65 percent occurred at public institutions, 9 percent at private not-for-profit institutions, and 27 percent (representing 1.2 million students) at private for-profit institutions. Undergraduate enrollment at

private for-profit 4-year institutions increased from 23,000 students in 1980 to 1.2 million students in 2009. During the same period, undergraduate enrollment at private for-profit 2-year institutions increased from 0.1 million to 0.4 million students.

The changes in enrollment numbers are similar to the changes in the number of degrees conferred: the number of undergraduate degrees has increased in the last decade, and changes in the percentage distribution of degrees conferred have differed depending on institution control. Between 1998–99 and 2008–09, there was a 41 percent increase in the number of associate’s degrees conferred and a 33 percent increase in the number of bachelor’s degrees conferred (see tables CL-1 and A-42-1).

Although most associate’s degrees (76 percent in 2008–09) are conferred by public institutions, this percentage has decreased since 1998–99, when 80 percent of associate’s degrees were conferred by public institutions; the percentage conferred by private for-profit institutions has increased from 11 to 18 percent over the same period. In 2008–09, degree-granting institutions conferred 787,300 associate’s degrees, an increase of 227,400 from the number conferred in 1998–99. Of the additional 227,400 degrees, approximately two-thirds were conferred by public institutions and about one-third were conferred by private for-profit institutions. (Private not-for-profit institutions conferred slightly fewer associate’s degrees in 2008–09 than they did in 1998–99.)

At the bachelor’s level, the number of degrees conferred by private for-profit institutions more than quadrupled from 1998–99 to 2008–09, from about 16,000 to 85,000. In 1998–99, some 66 percent of bachelor’s degrees were conferred by public institutions, compared with 33 percent conferred by private not-for-profit institutions and about 1 percent conferred by private for-profit institutions. By 2008–09, the distribution had changed somewhat: 64 percent of bachelor’s degrees were conferred by public institutions; 31 percent by private not-for-profit institutions; and 5 percent by private for-profit institutions.

# Introduction

**Table CL-1. Number of degrees conferred by degree-granting institutions and percent change, by control of institution and level of degree: Academic years 1998–99 and 2008–09**

| Level of degree and academic year | Total     | Public    | Private |                |            |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|---------|----------------|------------|
|                                   |           |           | Total   | Not-for-profit | For-profit |
| <b>Associate's</b>                |           |           |         |                |            |
| 1998–99                           | 559,954   | 448,334   | 111,620 | 47,611         | 64,009     |
| 2008–09                           | 787,325   | 596,098   | 191,227 | 46,929         | 144,298    |
| Percent change                    | 40.6      | 33.0      | 71.3    | -1.4           | 125.4      |
| <b>Bachelor's</b>                 |           |           |         |                |            |
| 1998–99                           | 1,200,303 | 790,287   | 410,016 | 393,680        | 16,336     |
| 2008–09                           | 1,601,368 | 1,020,435 | 580,933 | 496,260        | 84,673     |
| Percent change                    | 33.4      | 29.1      | 41.7    | 26.1           | 418.3      |
| <b>Master's</b>                   |           |           |         |                |            |
| 1998–99                           | 439,986   | 238,501   | 201,485 | 192,152        | 9,333      |
| 2008–09                           | 656,784   | 308,206   | 348,578 | 285,098        | 63,480     |
| Percent change                    | 49.3      | 29.2      | 73.0    | 48.4           | 580.2      |
| <b>First-professional</b>         |           |           |         |                |            |
| 1998–99                           | 78,439    | 31,693    | 46,746  | 46,315         | 431        |
| 2008–09                           | 92,004    | 37,357    | 54,647  | 53,572         | 1,075      |
| Percent change                    | 17.3      | 17.9      | 16.9    | 15.7           | 149.4      |
| <b>Doctoral</b>                   |           |           |         |                |            |
| 1998–99                           | 44,077    | 28,134    | 15,943  | 15,501         | 442        |
| 2008–09                           | 67,716    | 39,911    | 27,805  | 25,169         | 2,636      |
| Percent change                    | 53.6      | 41.9      | 74.4    | 62.4           | 496.4      |

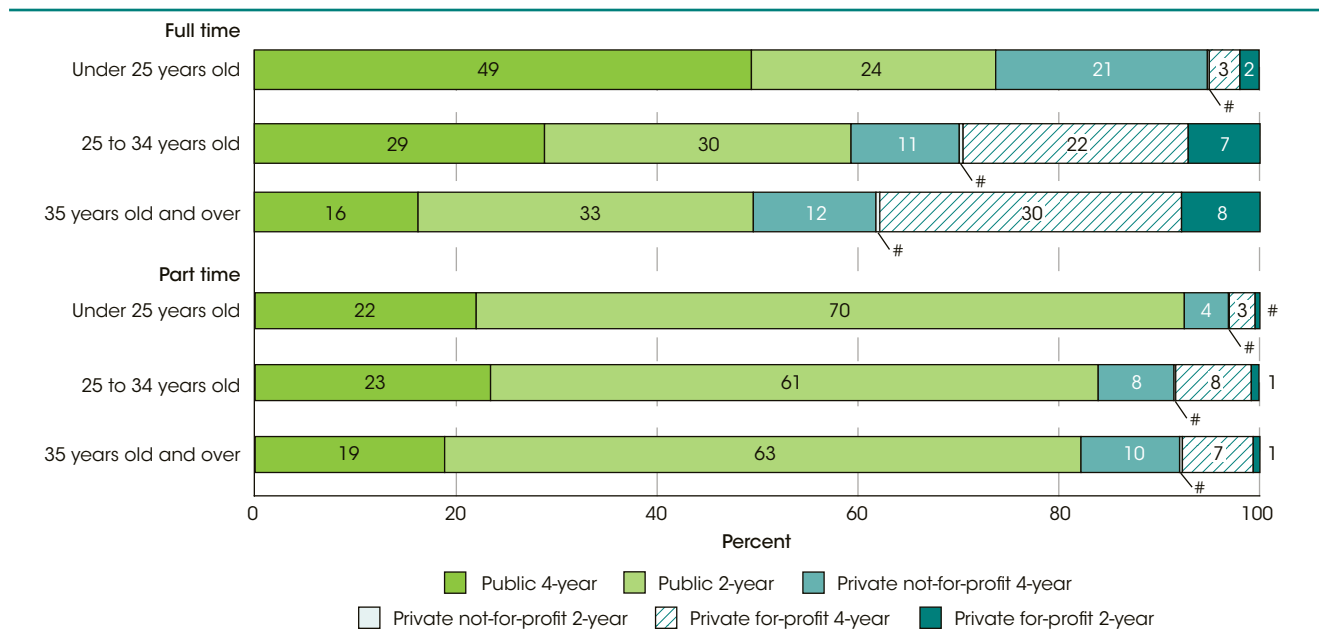
NOTE: Includes only institutions that participated in Title IV federal financial aid programs. For more information on the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and IPEDS classification of institutions, see *supplemental notes 3 and 8*. See the glossary for definitions of first-professional degree and doctoral degree.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1998–99 and 2008–09 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), "Completions Survey" (IPEDS-C:99) and Fall 2009.

Of the 17.6 million undergraduate students enrolled in degree-granting institutions in fall 2009, some 36 percent attended public 4-year institutions, 40 percent attended public 2-year institutions, 15 percent attended private not-for-profit 4-year institutions, less than 1 percent attended private not-for-profit 2-year institutions, 7 percent attended private for-profit 4-year institutions, and 2 percent attended private for-profit 2-year institutions, (see table A-39-1). This pattern varied by race/ethnicity. For example, 38 percent of White students attended public 2-year institutions, compared with 40 percent of Black students, 42 percent of Asian/Pacific Islander students, 45 percent of American Indian/Alaska Native students, and 52 percent of Hispanic students. In addition, 17 percent of Black undergraduate students attended private for-profit institutions in 2009, compared with 10 percent of Hispanic students, 9 percent of nonresident alien students, 7 percent of White students, and 5 percent (each) of Asian/Pacific Islander and American Indian/Alaska Native students.

Forty-four percent of full-time undergraduate students who enrolled in degree-granting institutions in fall 2009 attended public 4-year institutions, while 26 percent attended public 2-year institutions, 19 percent attended private not-for-profit 4-year institutions, less than one percent attended private not-for-profit 2-year institutions, 8 percent attended private for-profit 4-year institutions, and 3 percent attended private for-profit 2-year institutions (see figure CL-1). However, 30 percent of full-time students ages 35 and over attended private for-profit 4-year institutions, compared with 3 percent of full-time students under the age of 25. In 2009, some 66 percent of part-time undergraduate students enrolled in public 2-year institutions, 22 percent enrolled in public 4-year institutions, 7 percent enrolled in private not-for-profit 4-year institutions, and 5 percent enrolled in private for-profit 4-year institutions (less than one percent each enrolled in private not-for-profit and private for-profit 2-year institutions). Some 70 percent of part-time students under the age of 25 enrolled in public 2-year institutions, compared with 24 percent of full-time students under the age of 25.

**Figure CL-1. Percentage distribution of fall undergraduate enrollment in degree-granting institutions, by student attendance status, age, and control and level of institution: Fall 2009**



# Rounds to zero.  
 NOTE: Degree-granting institutions grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. For more information on IPEDS, see *supplemental note 3*. Institutions in this indicator are classified based on the highest degree offered. For more information on the classification of postsecondary institutions, see *supplemental note 8*.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2009 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2010.

## Use of Resources

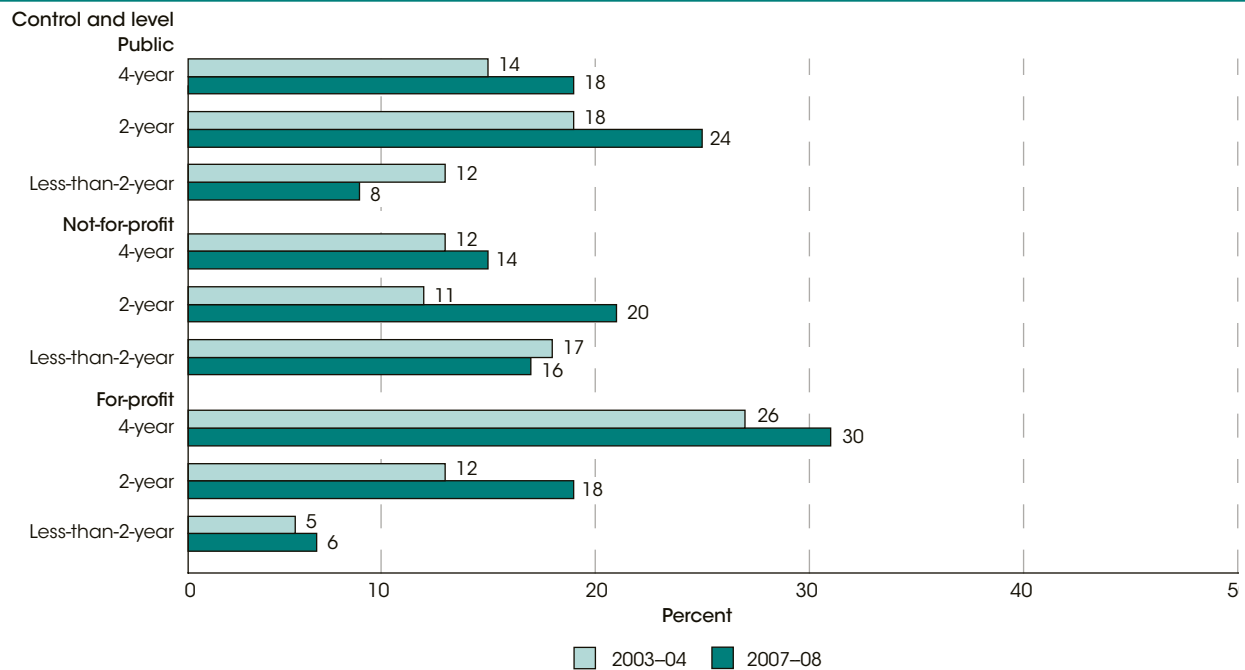
The changes in postsecondary undergraduate enrollment by institution level and control have been accompanied by changes in how coursework is delivered. Distance education courses, including those delivered by live, interactive audio or videoconferencing; pre-recorded instructional videos; webcasts; CD-ROM or DVD; and computer-based systems delivered over the Internet, can provide flexible learning opportunities for students. In 2007–08, about one in five undergraduate students, or 4.3 million, took at least one distance education course (see table A-43-1). However, in that year there were differences between institution controls in the percentages of students taking distance education courses and in the percentages who were completing their entire program through distance education. A lower percentage of students at private not-for-profit institutions (14 percent) took distance education courses than did students at public institutions (22 percent) and private for-profit institutions (21 percent) (see figure CL-2). In addition, at private for-profit institutions, 12 percent of students took their entire program through distance education, which was higher than the percentage who did

so at both public and private not-for-profit institutions (3 percent each). Students at private for-profit 4-year institutions had the highest rate of distance course taking (30 percent) of all the institution levels and controls, as well as the highest rate taking their entire program through distance education (19 percent).

Differences in the delivery of education can be associated with how institutions distribute their resources. In 2008–09, total expenses for degree-granting institutions were \$273 billion at public institutions, \$141 billion at private not-for-profit institutions, and \$16 billion at private for-profit institutions (see table A-50-3). Expenses for instruction were 28, 33, and 24 percent of total expenses, respectively, for public, private not-for-profit, and private for-profit institutions (with per FTE student spending in constant 2009–10 dollars of \$9,418, \$15,289, and \$2,659, respectively) (see figure CL-3). Student services, academic support and institutional support expenses were 20, 30, and 67 percent of total expenses for public, private not-for-profit and private for-profit institutions (with per FTE student spending of \$6,647, \$14,118, and \$9,101, respectively).

# Introduction

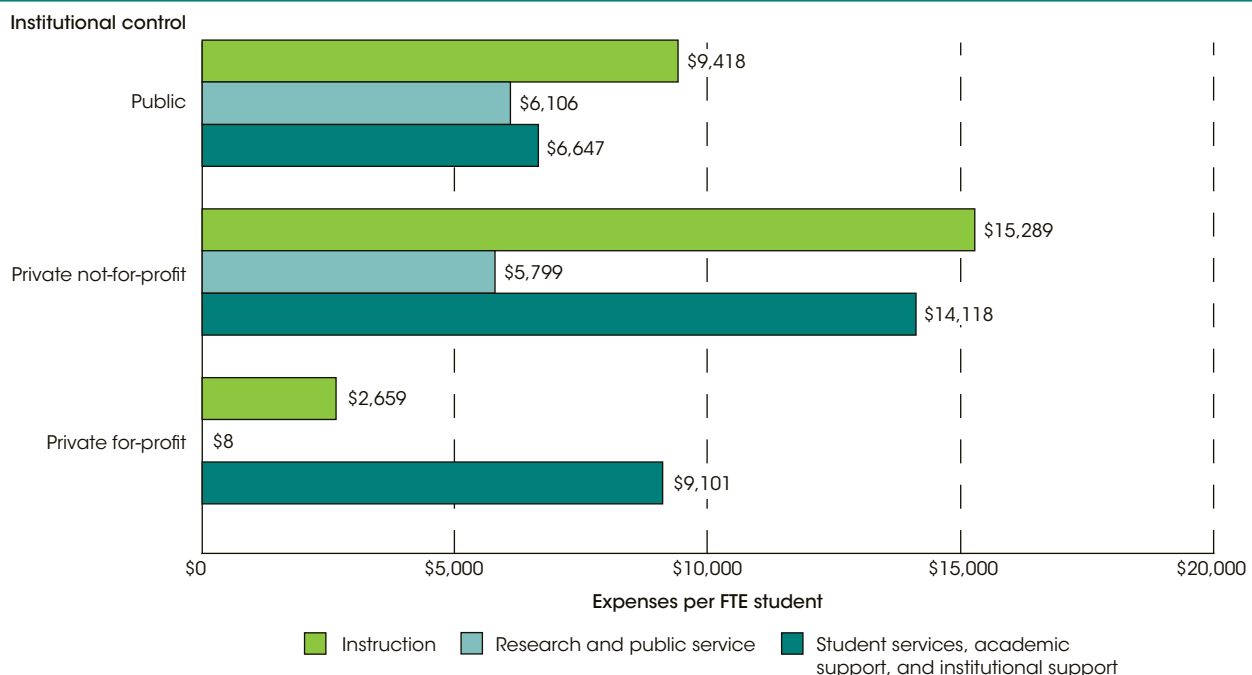
**Figure CL-2. Percentage of undergraduate students in postsecondary institutions taking distance education courses, by control and level of institution: 2003-04 and 2007-08**



NOTE: Estimates pertain to all postsecondary students who enrolled at any time during the school year at an institution participating in Title IV programs. Distance education participation includes participation at any institution for students attending more than one institution during the school year. Data include Puerto Rico. For more information on the National Postsecondary Student Financial Aid Study (NPSAS), see *supplemental note 3*. For more information on the classification of postsecondary education institutions, see *supplemental note 8*. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003-04 and 2007-08 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:04 and NPSAS:08).

**Figure CL-3. Expenses per student at 4-year degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by institutional control and purpose: Academic year 2008-09**

[In constant 2009-10 dollars]



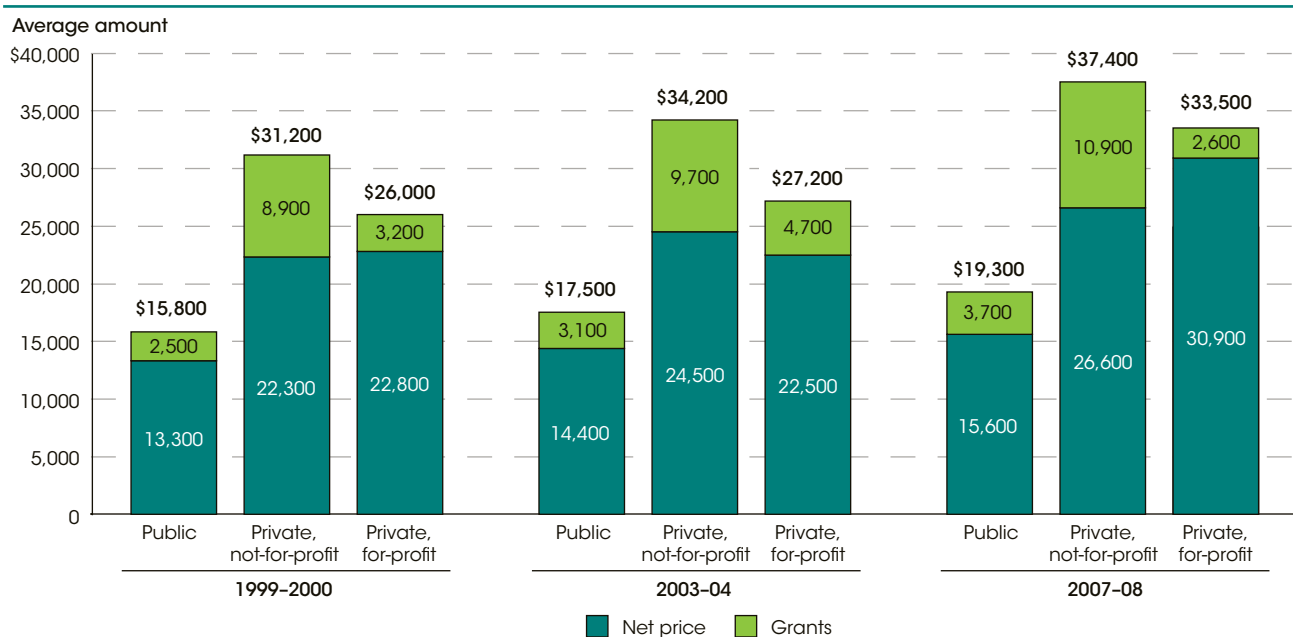
NOTE: Full-time-equivalent (FTE) enrollment includes full-time students plus the full-time equivalent of part-time students. Data are adjusted by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) to constant 2009-10 dollars. For more information on the CPI, see *supplemental note 10*. For more information on the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), see *supplemental note 3*. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2008-09 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Spring 2010.

## Student Financing

One major concern for students pursuing postsecondary education is how to pay for it. The total price of attending a postsecondary institution includes tuition and fees, books and materials, and living expenses. In 2007–08, the average total price of attendance (in constant 2009–10 dollars) for students—that is, full-time, full-year, dependent undergraduates who attended only one

institution during the year—was \$19,300 at public 4-year institutions and \$12,100 at public 2-year institutions (see table A-47-1). At private institutions, the total price was \$37,400 at not-for-profit 4-year institutions \$23,800 at not-for-profit 2-year institutions, \$33,500 at for-profit 4-year institutions and, \$27,900 at for-profit 2-year institutions.

**Figure CL-4. Average total price, grants, and net price for full-time, full-year, dependent undergraduates at 4-year institutions, by institution control: Academic years 1999–2000, 2003–04, and 2007–08**  
[In constant 2009–10 dollars]



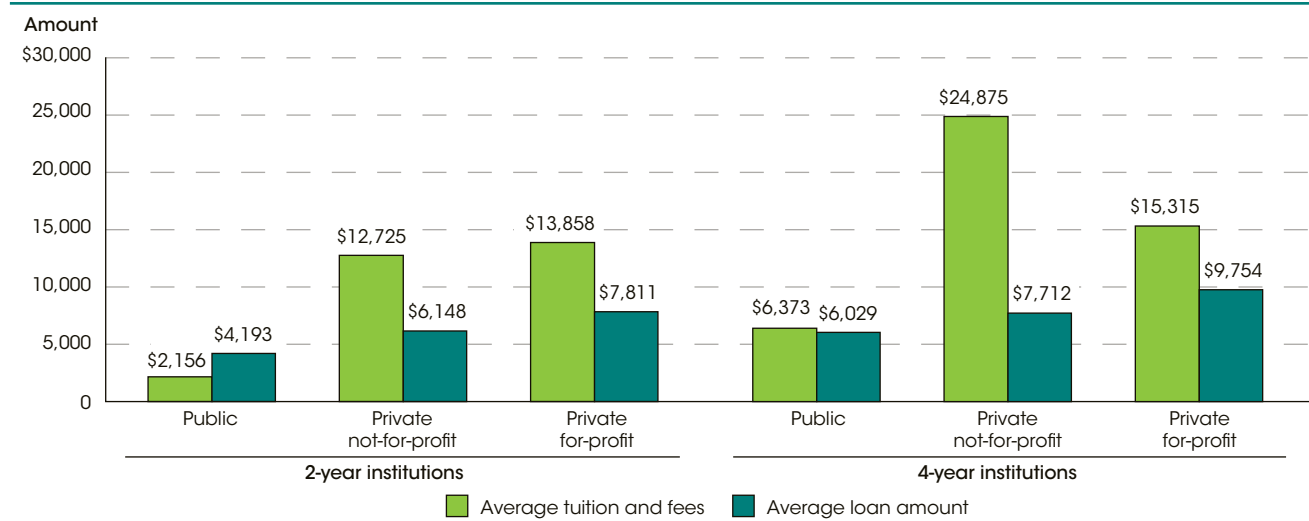
NOTE: *Full time* refers to students who attended full time (as defined by the institution) for the full year (at least 9 months). *Net price* is an estimate of the cash outlay that students and their families need to make in a given year to cover educational expenses. Averages were computed for all students, including those who did not receive financial aid. Data were adjusted by the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) to constant 2009–10 dollars. For more information on the CPI-U, see *supplemental note 10*. Estimates exclude students who were not U.S. citizens or permanent residents and therefore ineligible for federal student aid and students who attended more than one institution in a year, due to the difficulty of matching information on price and aid. Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding.  
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999–2000, 2003–04, and 2007–08 National Postsecondary Student Aid Studies (NPSAS:2000, NPSAS:04, and NPSAS:08).

Grants and loans are the major forms of federal financial support for postsecondary students. Federal grants (e.g., Pell grants), do not need to be repaid, and are available only to undergraduates who qualify by economic need, whereas loans are available to all students. In addition to federal financial aid, there are also grants from state and local governments, institutions, and private sources. In 2007–08, about two-thirds (65 percent) of full-time, full-year undergraduates received a grant from any source and one-third (33 percent) received a federal grant (see figure

CL-4 and table A-46-1). At public 4-year institutions, some 29 percent of full-time, full-year undergraduates received federal grants in 2007–08, compared with 28 percent of undergraduates at private not-for-profit institutions and 56 percent of undergraduates at private for-profit 4-year institutions. At 2-year institutions, some 37 percent of students at public institutions, 52 percent of students at private not-for-profit institutions, and nearly three-quarters (74 percent) of student at private for-profit institutions received federal grants in 2007–08.

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**Figure CL-5. Average tuition and fees and average loan amounts at postsecondary institutions, by level and control of institution: 2008–09**



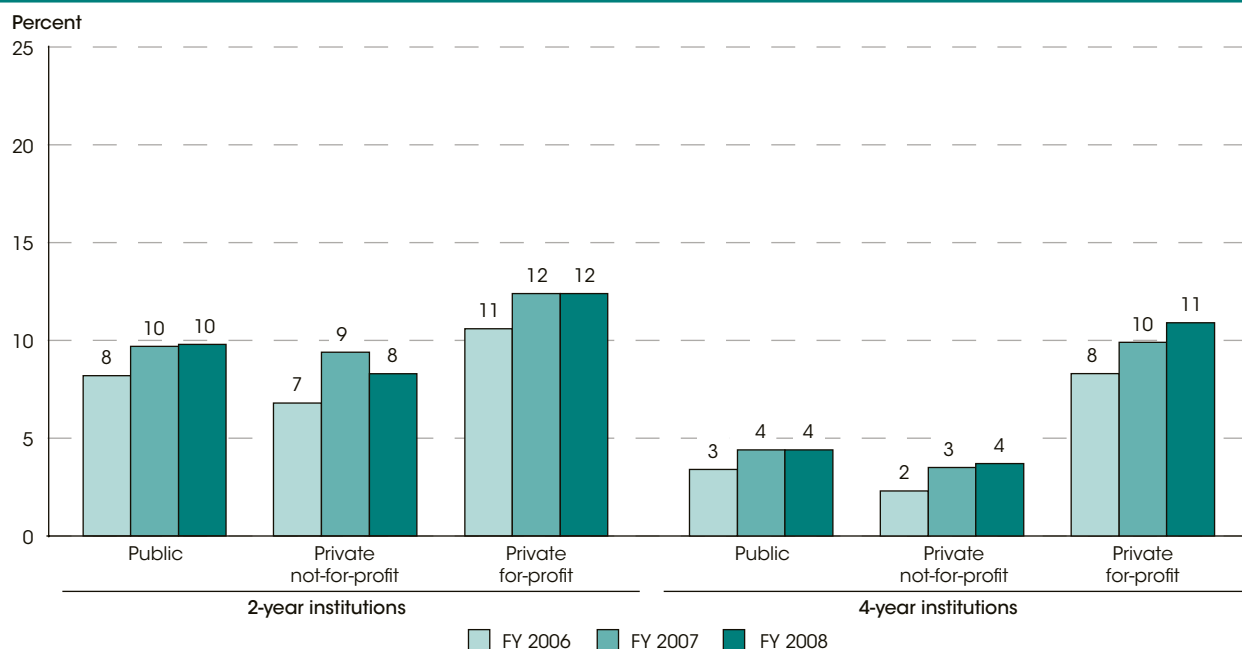
NOTE: Degree-granting institutions grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Tuition and fees amounts for public institutions are the averages for in-state students. Tuition and fee data are collected in the fall and loan data are collected in the spring. For more information on the Integrated Postsecondary Data System (IPEDS) and IPEDS classification of institutions, see *supplemental notes 3 and 8*. Data were adjusted to constant 2009–10 dollars using the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U). For more information on the CPI-U, see *supplemental note 10*.  
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2009–10 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2009.

Forty-nine percent of first-time, full-time students at degree-granting institutions had a student loan in 2008–09 (see table A-49-1). At public 4-year institutions, some 47 percent of these students had student loans and the average loan amount was \$6,000 (in constant 2009–10 dollars) (see figure CL-5). At private not-for-profit 4-year institutions, some 61 percent of first-time, full-time students had loans and the average loan amount was \$7,700. At private for-profit 4-year institutions, 81

percent of these students had loans, and the average loan amount was \$9,800. Looking at 2-year institutions, some 21 percent of first-time, full-time students at public institutions had loans in 2008–09, with an average loan amount of \$4,200; in contrast, 58 percent of these students at private not-for-profit institutions had a loan, with an average loan amount of \$6,100, and 78 percent of these students at private for-profit institutions had a loan, with an average loan amount of \$7,800.



**Figure CL-6. Two-year student loan cohort default rates at degree-granting institutions, by level and control of institution: Fiscal years 2006–2008**



NOTE: Includes undergraduate and postbaccalaureate students. Degree-granting institutions grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. The 2-year cohort default rate is the percentage of borrowers who enter repayment on certain Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program or William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan (Direct Loan) Program loans during a particular federal fiscal year (a fiscal year runs from October 1 to September 30) and default or meet other specified conditions within the cohort default period. The cohort default period is the two-year period that begins on October 1 of the fiscal year when the borrower enters repayment and ends on September 30 of the following fiscal year. For more information on the Integrated Postsecondary Data System (IPEDS) and IPEDS classification of institutions, see *supplemental notes 3 and 8*.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Federal Student Aid, Direct Loan and Federal Family Education Loan Programs, Cohort Default Rate Database, retrieved November 5, 2010, from <http://www2.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/defaultmanagement/cdr.html>.

Approximately 3.2 million students entered the repayment phase of their student loans in fiscal year (FY) 2008, meaning their students loans became due between September 30, 2007 and October 1, 2008 (see table A-49-2). Of those students, 7 percent defaulted within 2 years, or by October 1, 2010 (see figure CL-6). The default rates for the FY 2008 cohort were highest at private for-profit 4-year institutions (11 percent) and private for-profit 2-year institutions (12 percent). The lowest default rates for that same cohort were at public and private not-for-profit 4-year institutions (4 percent each).

## Persistence and Outcomes

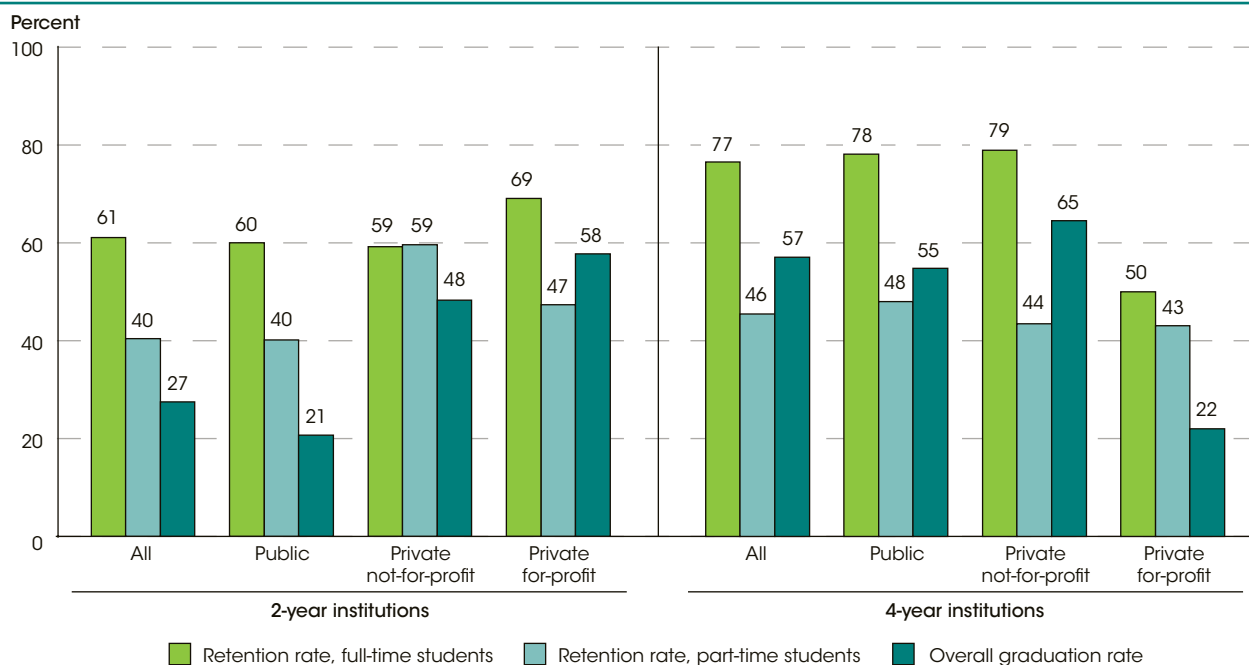
Finally, we turn to persistence and outcomes in postsecondary education. One measure of persistence is the retention rate, defined as the percentage of students who enrolled in an institution in the fall and returned to that same institution the following year to continue their studies (see figure CL-7). Some 77 percent of full-time students and 46 percent of part-time students who entered 4-year institutions in 2008 returned the following year to continue their studies (see table A-39-2). Seventy-eight percent of full-time and 48 percent

of part-time students who enrolled in public 4-year institutions in 2008 returned the following year; 79 percent of full-time and 44 percent of part-time students did so at private not-for-profit 4-year institutions; and 50 percent of full-time and 43 percent of part-time students did so at private for-profit 4-year institutions. At 2-year institutions, the retention rates for those who entered school in 2008 were the following: 59 percent of full-time and 40 percent of part-time students at public institutions, 59 percent of full-time and 60 percent of part-time students at private not-for-profit institutions, and 69 percent of full-time and 47 percent of students at private for-profit institutions.

Turning to outcomes, the bachelor's degree completion rates of students who began seeking a bachelor's degree at 4-year institutions in fall 2002 and did not transfer to another institution varied by the control of institution. Graduation rates were highest at private not-for-profit institutions, followed by public institutions and private for-profit institutions. For example, the 6-year graduation rate at private not-for-profit institutions was 65 percent, compared with 55 percent at public institutions and 22 percent at private for-profit institutions (see table A-23-1).

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**Figure CL-7. Overall annual retention rates and graduation rates within 150 percent of normal time at degree-granting institutions, by level and control of institution and student attendance status: Fall 2009**



NOTE: Degree-granting institutions grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. The retention rate is the percentage of first-time, bachelor's degree-seeking students who return to the institution to continue their studies the following year, in this case Fall 2009. The overall graduation rate is the percentage of full-time, first-time students who graduated within 150 percent of normal program completion time, in this case by Fall 2008 for the cohort that enrolled in 4-year institutions in Fall 2002 and for the students that enrolled in 2-year institutions in Fall 2005. For more information on IPEDS, see *supplemental note 3*. Institutions in this indicator are based on the highest degree offered. For more information on the classification of postsecondary institutions, see *supplemental note 8*. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2009 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2010.

At both public and private not-for-profit 4-year institutions, the 6-year graduation rates for both males and females who began seeking a bachelor's degree in fall 2002 varied by the acceptance rate of the institution. For example, at public 4-year institutions with open admissions policies, 27 percent of males and 34 percent of females completed a bachelor's degree or its equivalent within 6 years (see table A-23-2). At public 4-year institutions where the acceptance rate was less than 25 percent of applicants, however, the 6-year graduation rate for males was 73 percent and for females, 72 percent.

At 2-year institutions, about 27 percent of first-time, full-time students who enrolled in fall 2005 completed a certificate or associate's degree within 150 percent of the normal time required to complete such a degree (see table A-23-3). For the cohort who enrolled in 1999, the completion rate was 29 percent. The certificate

or associate's degree completion rate of students who enrolled in fall 2005 at 2-year institutions varied by institution control. Twenty-one percent of students graduated within 150 percent of the normal time at public 2-year institutions, 48 percent did so at private not-for-profit institutions, and 58 percent did so at private for-profit public institutions

This Closer Look provides a snapshot on what postsecondary education looks like today, particularly the differences in enrollment, resource use, student financing and outcomes by institution level and control. It is projected that by 2020, there will be nearly 20 million students enrolled in undergraduate institutions (see table A-8-1). The dynamic nature of this sector suggests that these factors may look quite different for those 20 million students.

## Technical Notes

When looking at these data it is important to understand who, specifically, they apply to. Undergraduate students are the focus of this Closer Look. However, the indicators on expenses per student and on two-year cohort default rates apply to all postsecondary students. In addition, some indicators, such as the percentage distribution in degree-granting institutions, separate students into full-time and part-time subgroups. Other indicators, such as postsecondary graduation rates and the average total price of attendance, pertain only to full-time (as defined by the institution), full-year (attending at least 9 months out of the year) students who attended only one institution during the year. (The indicator that discusses average total price, grants, and net price is further limited to dependent students.)

Postsecondary education is a term that encompasses a wide range of academic options for students beyond high school, ranging from certificates to advanced degrees. The term postsecondary institution is the category used to refer to institutions with formal instructional programs and a curriculum designed primarily for students who have completed the requirements for a high school diploma or its equivalent. Institutions are characterized by type of financial control—public, private not-for-profit, and private for-profit, as well as by

level—4-year-and-above (4-year), 2-year but less-than-4-year (2-year), and less-than-2-year. For more information on the classification of postsecondary institutions, see *supplemental note 8*.

The postsecondary data used in this Closer Look are from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS), and the Federal Student Aid Direct Loan and Federal Family Education Loan Programs Cohort Default Rate database. IPEDS data are collected at the institution level and participation in the data collection is a requirement for institutions that participate in Title IV federal student financial aid programs, such as Pell grants or Stafford loans. NPSAS data are based on a representative sample of all students in postsecondary education institutions that are eligible to participate in the federal financial aid programs under Title IV. The Federal Student Aid Cohort Default Rate database encompasses all borrowers with Federal Family Education Loans (FFELs) or William D. Ford Federal Direct loans. FFELs include subsidized or unsubsidized Federal Stafford loans and Federal Supplemental Loans for Students (Federal SLS loans). For more information on IPEDS, NPSAS, or Federal Student Aid, see *supplemental note 3*.