

The Condition of Education 2009

Indicator 39

International Students in the United States

The indicator and corresponding tables are taken directly from *The Condition of Education 2009*. Therefore, the page numbers may not be sequential.

Additional information about the survey data and supplementary notes can be found in the full report. For a copy of *The Condition of Education 2009*, visit the NCES website (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2009081>) or contact ED PUBS at 1-877-4ED-PUBS.

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International Students in the United States

In 2007–08, approximately 624,000 international students were enrolled in postsecondary institutions in the United States. These students accounted for 3 percent of the total enrollment in U.S. postsecondary institutions.

In the 1969–70 academic year, 135,000 students from other countries were enrolled in postsecondary institutions in the United States (see table A-39-1). International student enrollment increased each year through 2002–03 to 586,000 students, declined over the next few years to 565,000 in 2005–06, increased again to 583,000 in 2006–07 and to 624,000 in 2007–08. International students accounted for 3 percent of students at the postsecondary level in 2007–08; this percentage has remained between 3 and 4 percent since 1992–93. International student enrollment in U.S. institutions has varied by academic level over time, with a greater share of enrollment at the graduate level. For example, in 2007–08, international graduate students accounted for 10 percent of total graduate enrollment while international undergraduate students accounted for 2 percent of total undergraduate enrollment.

India, China, and South Korea were the top three countries of origin for international students studying in the U.S. in 2007–08. Of the 624,000 international students who were enrolled in postsecondary institutions in the U.S. in that year, 94,600 (or 15 percent) had come from India, 81,100 (or 13 percent) had come from China, and 69,100 (or 11 percent) had come from South Korea. Other leading countries of origin for international students included Japan, Canada, and Taiwan (5 percent each). Students from these six countries accounted for over half of international student enrollment in 2007–08.

Nearly 40 percent of all international students who were enrolled in U.S. postsecondary institutions in 2007–08 studied in either the field of business and management (20 percent) or in engineering (17 percent) (see table

A-39-2). Other leading fields of study for international students included physical and life sciences (9 percent), social sciences (9 percent), and math and computer science (8 percent). There were also differences in enrollment in specific fields of study by academic level in 2007–08. For example, a greater percentage of undergraduate students were enrolled in business and management than graduate students (26 vs. 16 percent), while a lower percentage of undergraduate students were enrolled in engineering than graduate students (12 vs. 23 percent).

In addition, enrollment in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields was prevalent among international students in 2007–08, particularly among international graduate students. For the purposes of this indicator, STEM fields include the fields of engineering, physical and life sciences, math and computer science, and health professions. About 53 percent of international graduate students were studying in a STEM field, compared with 30 percent of international undergraduate students.



For more information: *Tables A-39-1 and A-39-2; Indicators 40 and 41*

Glossary: *Postsecondary education, STEM fields*
Open Doors 1948–2004: Report on International Educational Exchange. (2005)

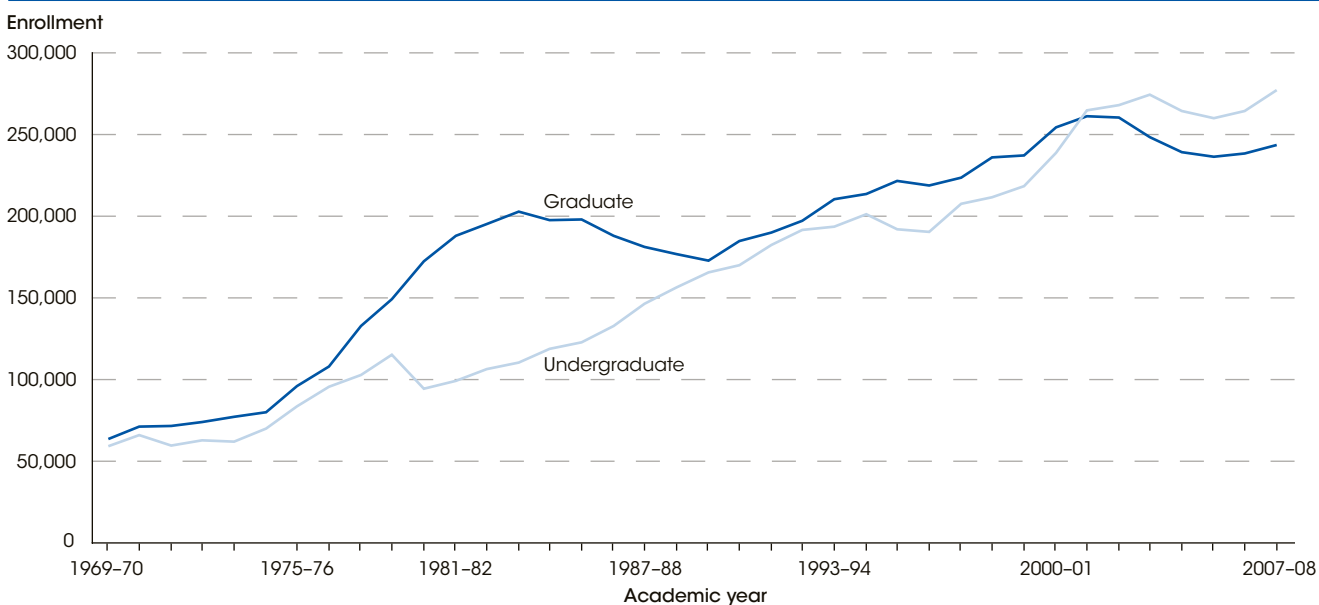
Open Doors 2008: Report on International Educational Exchange. (2008)

Technical Notes

The data collection process changed in 1974–75, thus refugees were counted from 1975–76 to 1990–91. While this indicator focuses on aggregated data for undergraduate and graduate education, *Open Doors* also features disaggregated information on academic programs at the associate's, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels, as well as information on international scholars and intensive English programs. Undergraduate estimates include associate's and bachelor's enrollments.

Graduate estimates include master's, doctoral, professional training, and unspecified enrollments. Estimates from *Open Doors* may differ from those derived from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) because of differences in data collection and categorization procedures. For more information on the *Open Doors* International Student Census and IPEDS, see *supplemental note 3*.

Figure 39-1. Number of international students enrolled in U.S. postsecondary institutions, by academic level: Academic years 1969–70 through 2007–08



NOTE: Undergraduate estimates include associate's and bachelor's enrollments. Graduate estimates include master's, doctoral, professional training, and unspecified enrollments. The data collection process changed in 1974–75; thus, refugees were counted from 1975–76 to 1990–91. After 1990–91, refugees were no longer counted. For more information on the *Open Doors* International Student Census and on the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), see *supplemental note 3*.

SOURCE: *Open Doors: Report on International Educational Exchange*. New York: Institute of International Education, selected years, 1969–70 through 2007–08.

Table 39-1. Number and percentage of international students enrolled in U.S. postsecondary institutions, by selected countries of origin: Academic year 2007–08

Country of origin	Total	Percentage of international student total	Country of origin	Total	Percentage of international student total
World total	623,805	100.0			
India	94,563	15.2	Nepal	8,936	1.4
China	81,127	13.0	Germany	8,907	1.4
South Korea	69,124	11.1	Vietnam	8,769	1.4
Japan	33,974	5.4	United Kingdom	8,367	1.3
Canada	29,051	4.7	Hong Kong	8,286	1.3
Taiwan	29,001	4.6	Indonesia	7,692	1.2
Mexico	14,837	2.4	Brazil	7,578	1.2
Turkey	12,030	1.9	France	7,050	1.1
Saudi Arabia	9,873	1.6	Colombia	6,662	1.1
Thailand	9,004	1.4	Nigeria	6,222	1.0

NOTE: Only the top 20 countries of origin are featured here. For more information on the *Open Doors* International Student Census, see *supplemental note 3*.

SOURCE: Bhandari, R., and Chow, P. (2008). *Open Doors 2008: Report on International Educational Exchange*. New York: Institute of International Education.

International Students in the United States

Table A-39-1. Number and percentage of international students enrolled in U.S. postsecondary institutions, by academic level: Academic years 1969-70 through 2007-08

Academic year	Total		Undergraduate		Graduate	
	Number of international students	Percent of total postsecondary enrollment	Number of international students	Percent of total undergraduate enrollment	Number of international students	Percent of total graduate enrollment
1969-70	134,959	1.69	63,296	0.92	59,112	5.28
1970-71	144,708	1.69	71,213	0.97	65,859	5.43
1971-72	140,126	1.57	71,432	0.92	59,333	4.93
1972-73	146,097	1.59	73,968	0.93	62,624	4.92
1973-74	151,066	1.57	76,946	0.93	61,893	4.61
1974-75	—	—	—	—	—	—
1975-76 ¹	179,344	1.60	95,949	0.99	83,395	5.54
1976-77 ¹	203,070	1.84	107,720	1.14	95,350	6.04
1977-78 ¹	235,510	2.09	132,760	1.37	102,750	6.55
1978-79 ¹	263,940	2.34	149,030	1.54	114,910	7.29
1979-80 ¹	286,343	2.47	172,378	1.72	94,207	5.99
1980-81 ¹	311,880	2.58	187,660	1.79	99,110	6.11
1981-82 ¹	326,300	2.64	195,150	1.81	106,290	6.57
1982-83 ¹	336,990	2.71	202,760	1.87	110,270	6.89
1983-84 ¹	338,890	2.72	197,480	1.82	118,820	7.34
1984-85 ¹	342,113	2.79	197,741	1.86	122,476	7.54
1985-86 ¹	343,780	2.81	187,660	1.77	132,430	8.02
1986-87 ¹	349,610	2.80	181,230	1.68	146,100	8.57
1987-88 ¹	356,190	2.79	176,660	1.60	156,190	9.08
1988-89 ¹	366,350	2.81	172,470	1.52	165,380	9.51
1989-90 ¹	386,850	2.86	184,590	1.57	169,820	9.46
1990-91 ¹	407,529	2.95	189,900	1.59	182,130	9.79
1991-92	419,585	2.92	197,070	1.58	191,330	9.97
1992-93	438,618	3.03	210,080	1.68	193,330	9.92
1993-94	449,749	3.14	213,610	1.73	201,030	10.15
1994-95	452,635	3.17	221,500	1.81	191,738	9.51
1995-96	453,787	3.18	218,620	1.79	190,092	9.36
1996-97	457,984	3.19	218,743	1.77	190,244	9.32
1997-98	481,280	3.32	223,276	1.79	207,510	10.11
1998-99	490,933	3.38	235,802	1.90	211,426	10.21
1999-2000	514,723	3.48	237,211	1.87	218,219	10.34
2000-01	547,867	3.58	254,429	1.93	238,497	11.06
2001-02	582,996	3.66	261,079	1.90	264,749	11.97
2002-03	586,323	3.53	260,103	1.82	267,876	11.38
2003-04	572,509	3.39	248,200	1.71	274,310	11.28
2004-05	565,039	3.27	239,212	1.62	264,410	10.61
2005-06	564,766	3.23	236,342	1.58	259,717	10.29
2006-07	582,984	3.28	238,050	1.57	264,288	10.27
2007-08	623,805	3.42	243,360	1.56	276,842	10.47

— Not available.

¹ The data collection process changed in 1974-75; thus, refugees were counted from 1975-76 to 1990-91. After 1990-91, refugees were no longer counted.NOTE: This table uses data from both the *Open Doors* International Student Census and the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) for all years shown. Total estimates include enrollments for other academic programs that are not separately shown. Undergraduate estimates include associate's and bachelor's enrollments. Graduate estimates include master's, doctoral, professional training, and unspecified enrollments. For more information on the *Open Doors* International Student Census and on IPEDS, see *supplemental note 3*.SOURCE: *Open Doors: Report on International Educational Exchange*. New York: Institute of International Education, selected years, 1969-70 through 2007-08. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS), "Fall Enrollment in Colleges and Universities" surveys, 1969 through 1985, and Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, "Fall Enrollment Survey" (IPEDS-EF:86-99), and Spring 2001 through Spring 2008.

Table A-39-2. Percentage distribution of international students enrolled in U.S. postsecondary institutions, by academic level and field of study: Academic year 2007-08

Field of study	Total	Undergraduate	Graduate
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Business and management	19.6	26.0	16.3
Engineering	17.0	11.5	23.3
Physical and life sciences	9.3	6.6	12.9
Social sciences	8.7	9.1	9.2
Math and computer science	8.2	5.5	11.3
Fine and applied arts	5.6	7.6	4.6
Health professions	5.1	5.9	5.1
Intensive English language	4.6	0.5	0.0
Education	3.1	1.9	4.5
Humanities	3.1	1.9	4.3
Agriculture	1.6	0.8	2.0
Other fields of study ¹	10.8	16.9	6.3
Undeclared	3.4	5.8	0.2
Optional practical training ²	0.1	—	—

— Not available.

¹ Includes other fields of study not separately shown.

² Optional practical training (OPT), available to certain foreign students, is temporary employment that is directly related to the student's major area of study. For more information on OPT, see <http://www.uscis.gov/>.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Total estimates include enrollments for other academic programs that are not separately shown. Undergraduate estimates include associate's and bachelor's enrollments. Graduate estimates include master's, doctoral, professional training, and unspecified enrollments. For more information on fields of study and on the *Open Doors International Student Census*, see *supplemental note 3*.

SOURCE: Bhandari, R., and Chow, P. (2008). *Open Doors 2008: Report on International Educational Exchange*. New York: Institute of International Education.