

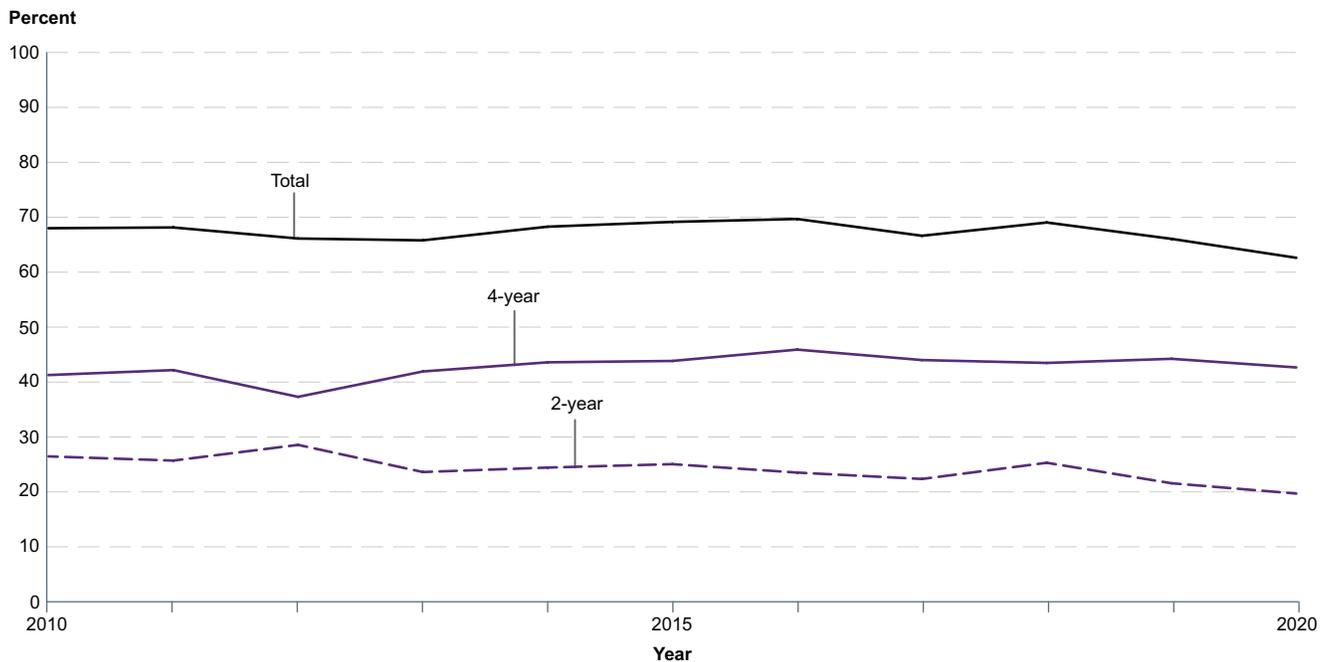
Immediate College Enrollment Rate

In 2020, about 43 percent of high school completers immediately enrolled in 4-year institutions and 20 percent immediately enrolled in 2-year institutions. The immediate college enrollment rate for 4-year institutions in 2020 was not measurably different from the rate in 2010. However, the rate for 2-year institutions decreased between 2010 (27 percent) and 2020.

Of the 3.1 million high school completers¹ who graduated in the first 9 months of 2020, some 2.0 million (or 63 percent) were enrolled in college in October 2020. This annual percentage of high school completers who are enrolled in 2- or 4-year institutions within

the specified time frame is known as *the immediate college enrollment rate*. The overall immediate college enrollment rate in 2020 was lower than the rate in 2010 (68 percent).

Figure 1. Immediate college enrollment rate of high school completers, by level of institution: 2010 through 2020

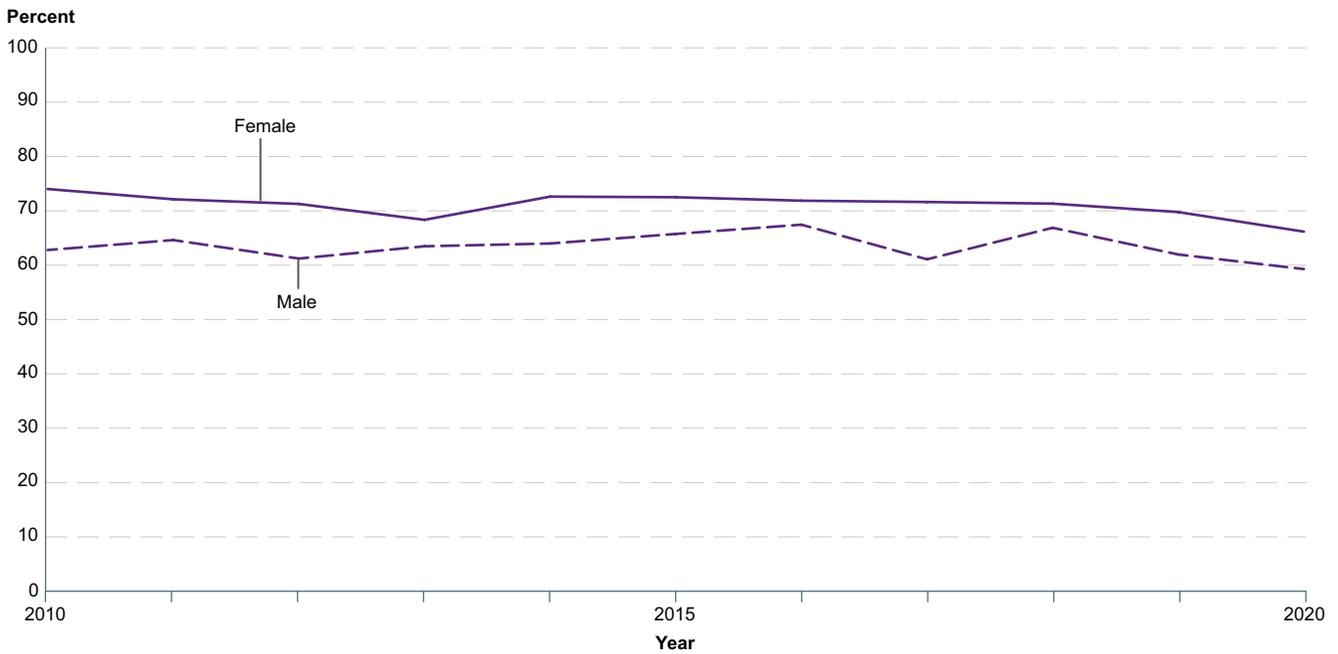


NOTE: *Immediate college enrollment rate* is defined as the annual percentage of high school completers who are enrolled in 2- or 4-year institutions in the October immediately following high school completion. High school completers include 16- to 24-year-olds who graduated with a high school diploma as well as those who completed a GED or other high school equivalency credential.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October Supplement, 2010 through 2020. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2021*, table 302.10.

In every year from 2010 to 2020, higher percentages of high school completers immediately enrolled in 4-year institutions than in 2-year institutions. In 2020, about 43 percent of high school completers immediately enrolled in 4-year institutions and 20 percent immediately enrolled

in 2-year institutions. The immediate college enrollment rate for 4-year institutions in 2020 was not measurably different from the rate in 2010. However, the rate for 2-year institutions decreased between 2010 (27 percent) and 2020.

Figure 2. Immediate college enrollment rate of high school completers, by sex: 2010 through 2020

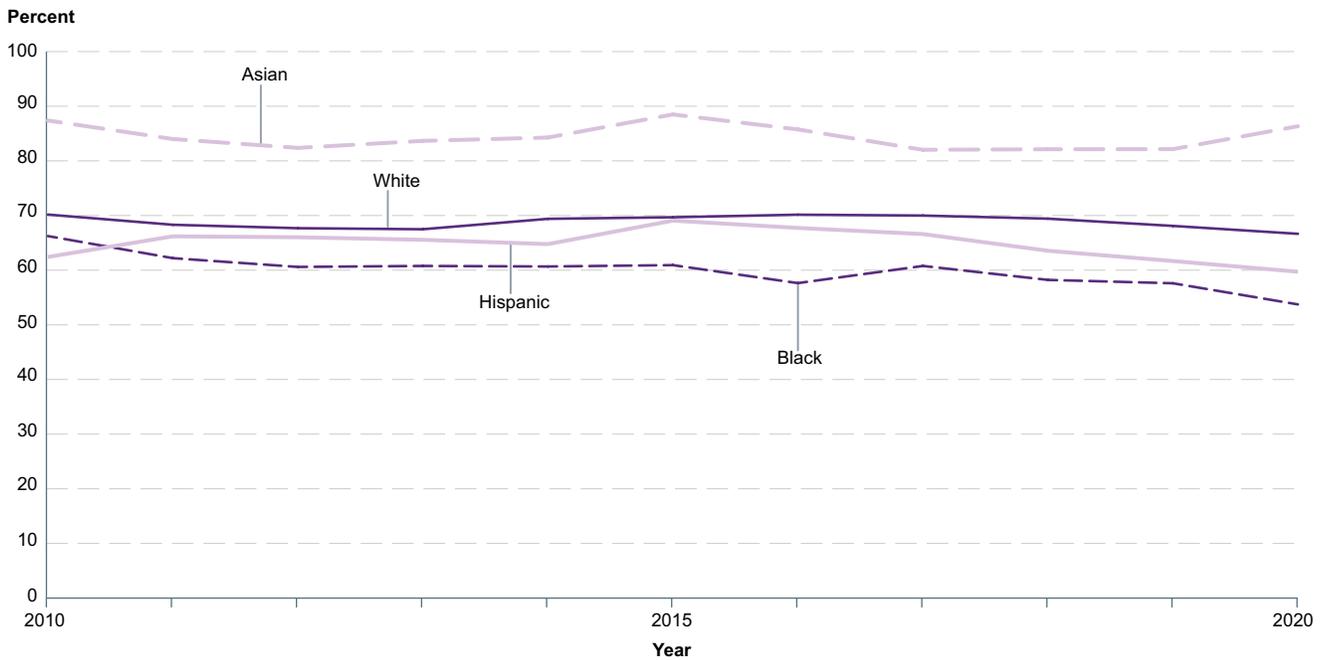


NOTE: *Immediate college enrollment rate* is defined as the annual percentage of high school completers who are enrolled in 2- or 4-year institutions in the October immediately following high school completion. High school completers include 16- to 24-year-olds who graduated with a high school diploma as well as those who completed a GED or other high school equivalency credential.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October Supplement, 2010 through 2020. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2021*, table 302.10.

Immediate college enrollment rates differ by sex. In 2020, the rate for male students² (59 percent) was lower than the rate for female students (66 percent). However, there were no measurable differences when considering these rates by level of institution attended. The percentage of students who immediately enrolled in 4-year institutions was not measurably different for male and female students

(40 vs. 46 percent) in 2020. Similarly, there was no measurable difference between male and female students in the percentage who immediately enrolled in 2-year institutions (19 vs. 21 percent). The overall 2020 rate for female students was lower than the corresponding rate in 2010 (74 percent). However, the rate for male students was not measurably different between 2020 and 2010.

Figure 3. Immediate college enrollment rate of high school completers, by race/ethnicity: 2010 through 2020



NOTE: Immediate college enrollment rate is defined as the annual percentage of high school completers who are enrolled in 2- or 4-year institutions in the October immediately following high school completion. High school completers include 16- to 24-year-olds who graduated with a high school diploma as well as those who completed a GED or other high school equivalency credential. Due to some short-term data fluctuations associated with small sample sizes, percentages for racial/ethnic groups shown were calculated based on 3-year moving averages, with the following exception: the percentages for 2020 were calculated based on a 2-year moving average (an average of 2019 and 2020). Other racial/ethnic groups are not shown separately. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October Supplement, 2010 through 2020. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2021*, table 302.20.

Immediate college enrollment rates also differ by student race/ethnicity. In 2020, the immediate college enrollment rate for Asian students (86 percent) was higher than the rates for White (67 percent), Hispanic (60 percent), and Black (54 percent) students. The rate for White students was also higher than the rates for Hispanic and Black students.³ For Asian, White, and Hispanic students, the immediate college enrollment rates were not measurably different between 2020 and 2010. However, for Black students, the immediate college enrollment rate decreased from 2010 (66 percent) to 2020 (54 percent).

In every year from 2010 to 2020, the immediate college enrollment rate for Asian students was higher than the rates for White, Black, and Hispanic students. In addition, the immediate college enrollment rate for White students was higher than the rate for Black students in every year since 2011. There was no measurable difference between these two rates in 2010. The immediate college enrollment rate for White students was higher than the rate for Hispanic students in 2010 and each year from 2018 to 2020. There was no measurable difference between these two rates from 2011 to 2017.

Endnotes:

¹ In this indicator, “high school completers” refers to individuals ages 16 to 24 who graduated from high school or completed a GED or other high school equivalency credential. In 2020, about 95 percent of those who completed high school in the first 9 months of 2020 were between 16 and 24 years old.

² The terms “high school completers” and “students” are used interchangeably throughout the indicator.

³ Due to some short-term data fluctuations associated with small sample sizes, estimates for the racial/ethnic groups shown were calculated based on 3-year moving averages, with the following exception: the percentages for 2020 were calculated based on a 2-year moving average (an average of 2019 and 2020). Other racial/ethnic groups are not discussed separately. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.

Reference tables: *Digest of Education Statistics 2021*, tables 302.10 and 302.20

Related indicators and resources: [College Enrollment Rates](#); [College Participation Rates \[Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups\]](#); [Public High School Graduation Rates](#); [Snapshot: College Participation Rates for Racial/Ethnic Subgroups \[Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups\]](#); [Status Dropout Rates](#); [Undergraduate Enrollment](#); [Young Adult Educational and Employment Outcomes by Family Socioeconomic Status \[The Condition of Education 2019 Spotlight\]](#)

Glossary: College; Enrollment; High school completer; Postsecondary institutions (basic classification by level); Racial/ethnic group