

Immediate College Enrollment Rate

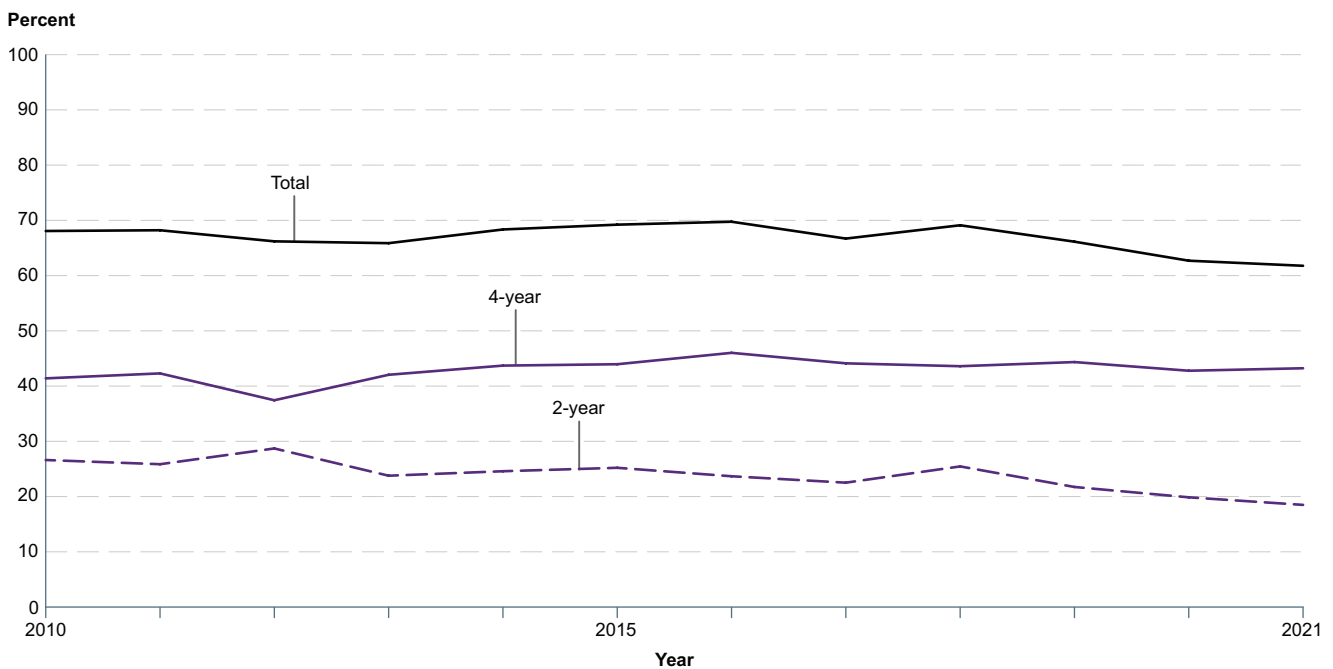
In 2021, a lower percentage of male high school completers immediately enrolled in college (55 percent) compared to female high school completers (70 percent). This was driven by a lower percentage of male students than of female students who immediately enrolled in 4-year institutions (36 vs. 51 percent).

Of the 2.7 million high school completers¹ who graduated in the first 9 months of 2021, some 1.7 million (or 62 percent) were enrolled in college in October 2021. 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 2021

was lower than the rate in 2010 (68 percent). Specifically, although *immediate college enrollment rates* showed no consistent trend over the first two-thirds of this period (2010 to 2018), they declined over the latter third (from 2018 to 2021). There was no measurable difference in the overall immediate college enrollment rate in 2021 compared to 2020.

Overall Immediate College Enrollment Rates

Figure 1. Immediate college enrollment rate of high school completers, by level of institution: 2010 through 2021



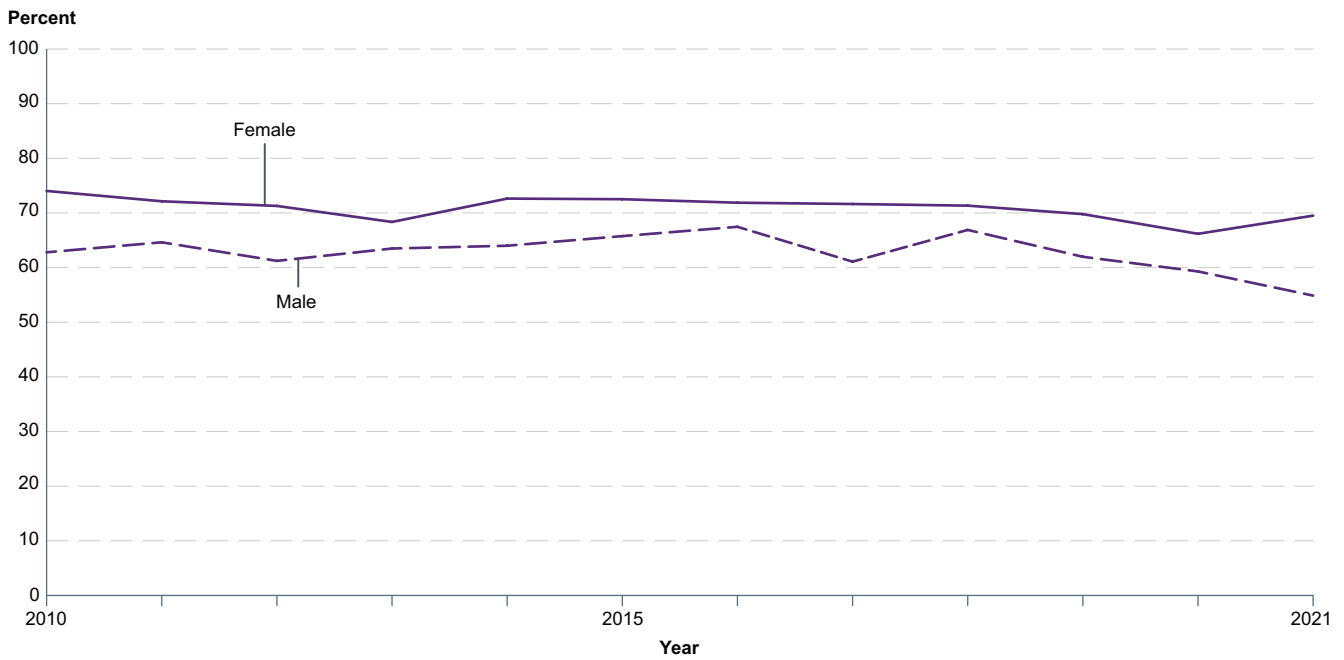
NOTE: *Immediate college enrollment rate* is defined as the annual percentage of high school completers who are enrolled in 2- or 4-year institutions in the October immediately following high school completion. High school completers include 16- to 24-year-olds who graduated with a high school diploma 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 2021. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2022*, table 302.10.

In every year from 2010 to 2021, higher percentages of high school completers immediately enrolled in 4-year institutions than in 2-year institutions. In 2021, about 43 percent of high school completers immediately enrolled in 4-year institutions and 19 percent immediately enrolled

in 2-year institutions. The immediate college enrollment rate for 4-year institutions in 2021 was not measurably different from the rate in 2010. However, the rate for 2-year institutions decreased between 2010 (27 percent) and 2021.

Immediate College Enrollment Rates by Student Demographics

Figure 2. Immediate college enrollment rate of high school completers, by sex: 2010 through 2021

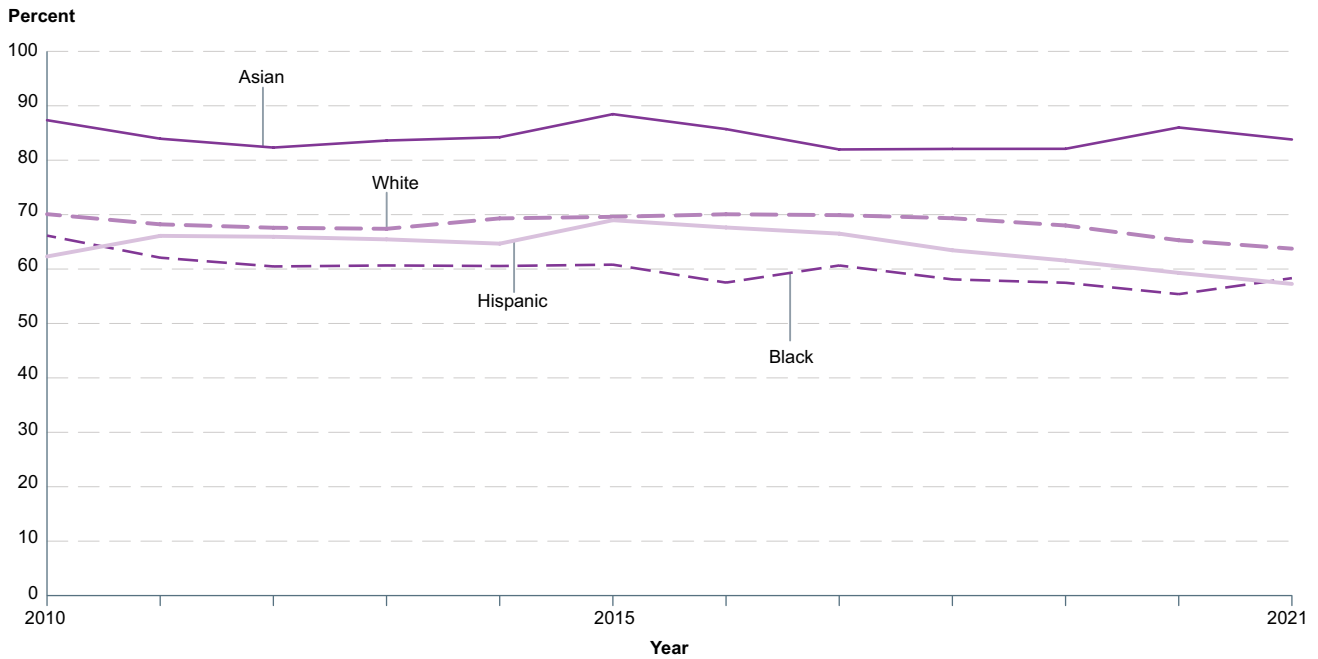


NOTE: *Immediate college enrollment rate* is defined as the annual percentage of high school completers who are enrolled in 2- or 4-year institutions in the October immediately following high school completion. High school completers include 16- to 24-year-olds who graduated with a high school diploma 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 2021. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2022*, table 302.10.

Immediate college enrollment rates differ by sex. In 2021, the overall rate for male students² who immediately enrolled in college (55 percent) was lower than the rate for female students (70 percent). This was driven by a lower percentage of male students than of female students who immediately enrolled in 4-year institutions (36 vs. 51 percent). The percentages of male students and female

students who immediately enrolled in 2-year institutions did not measurably differ. Patterns of enrollment over time differed between male and female students. While the immediate college enrollment rate for male students was lower in 2021 than in 2010 (55 vs. 63 percent), the rates for female students in these two years were not measurably different from each other.

Figure 3. Immediate college enrollment rate of high school completers, using 3-year moving averages, by race/ethnicity: 2010 through 2021



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 2021 were calculated based on a 2-year moving average (an average of 2020 and 2021). A 3-year moving average is a weighted average of the year indicated, the year immediately preceding, and the year immediately following. 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 2021. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2022*, table 302.20.

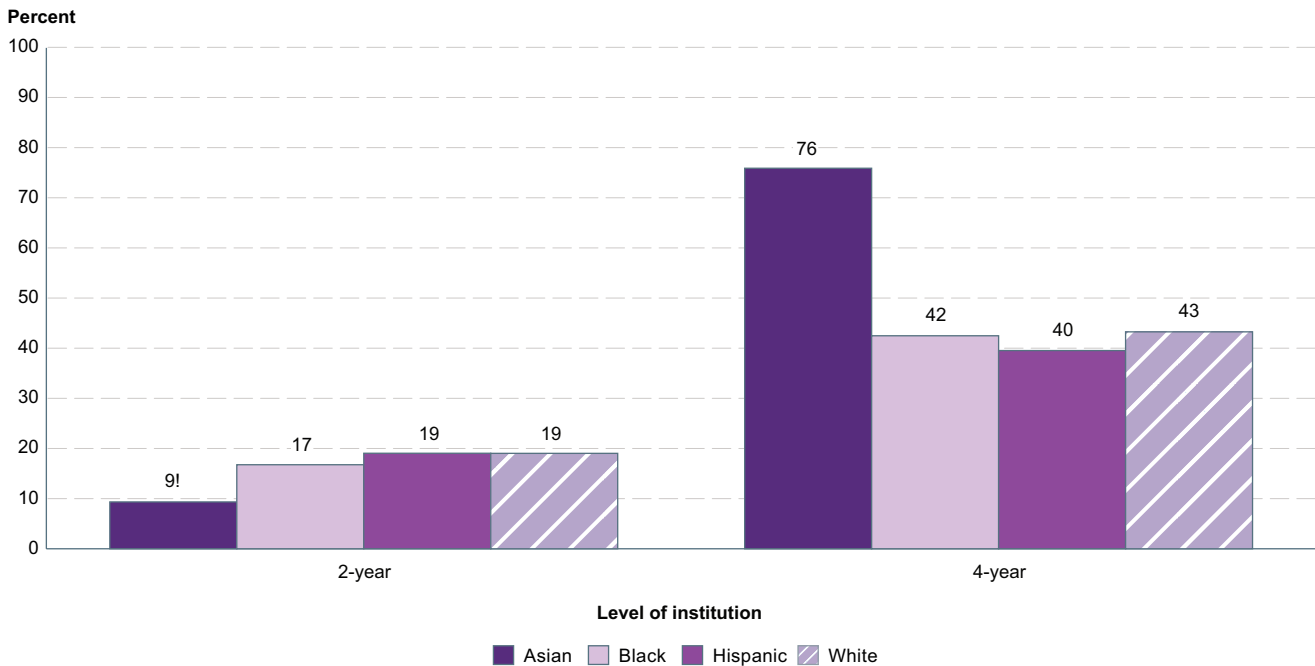
Immediate college enrollment rates also differ by student race/ethnicity. In 2021, the immediate college enrollment rate for Asian students (84 percent) was higher than the rates for White (64 percent), Black (58 percent), and Hispanic (57 percent) students.³ This pattern held throughout the period from 2010 to 2021. In 2021, the rate for White students was also higher than the rate for Hispanic students. In about half of the years throughout the period between 2010 to 2021, however, there were no measurable differences between White and Hispanic students. In contrast, the enrollment rate for White students was higher

than the rate for Black students for most of the period, but was not measurably different in 2021.

Compared to 2010, the immediate college enrollment rate in 2021 was

- not measurably different for Asian students;
- not measurably different for Black students;
- not measurably different for Hispanic students; and
- lower for White students (64 percent in 2021 vs. 70 percent in 2010).

Figure 4. Immediate college enrollment rate of high school completers, by level of institution and race/ethnicity: 2021



! Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 and 50 percent.
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. Other racial/ethnic groups are not shown separately. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October Supplement, 2010 through 2021. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2022*, table 302.20.

In 2021, similar to the pattern observed for high school completers overall, higher percentages of students immediately enrolled in 4-year institutions than immediately enrolled in 2-year institutions for

- Asian students (76 vs. 9 percent);
- White students (43 vs. 19 percent);
- Black students (42 vs. 17 percent); and
- Hispanic students (40 vs. 19 percent).⁴

Asian students had higher immediate enrollment rates in 4-year institutions than White, Black, and Hispanic students.

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 2021, about 94 percent of those who completed high school in the first 9 months of 2021 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 discussed

here were calculated based on 3-year moving averages, with the following exception: the percentages for 2021 were calculated based on a 2-year moving average (an average of 2020 and 2021). Other racial/ethnic groups are not discussed separately. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.
⁴ Estimates in this paragraph reflect annual data rather than 3-year moving averages.

Reference tables: *Digest of Education Statistics 2022*, 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 Subgroups*]; [Status Dropout Rates](#); [Undergraduate Enrollment](#); [Young Adult Educational and Employment Outcomes by Family Socioeconomic Status](#) [*The Condition of Education 2019 Spotlight*]

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