

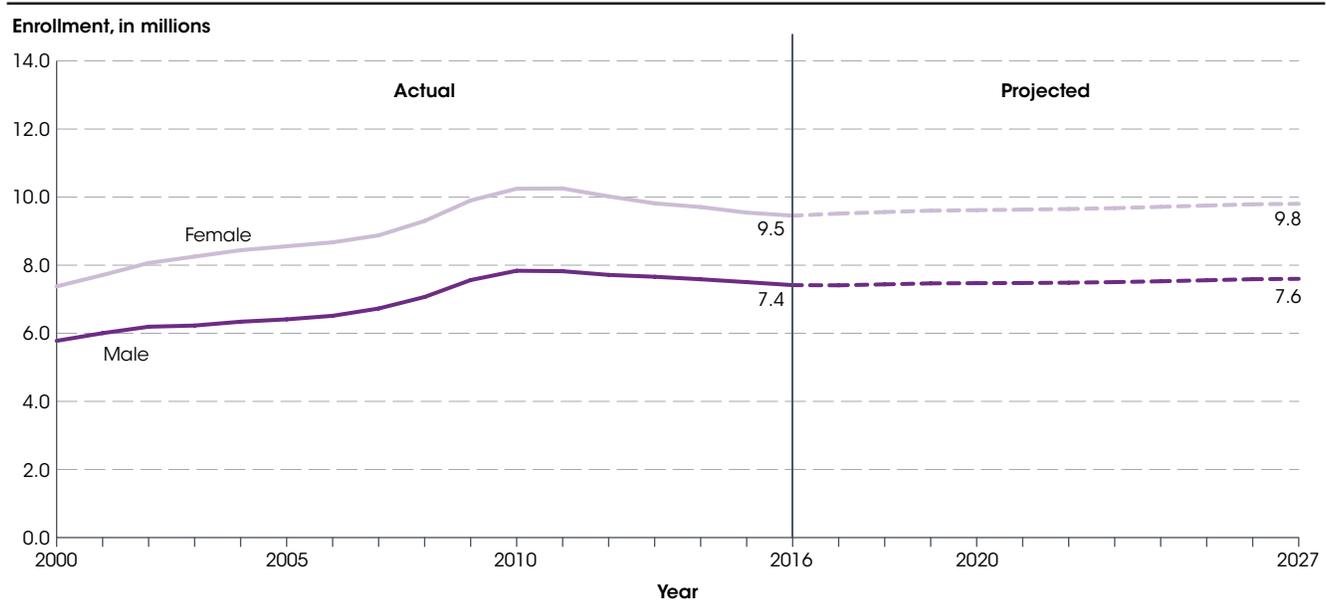
Undergraduate Enrollment

Between 2000 and 2016, total undergraduate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions increased by 28 percent (from 13.2 million to 16.9 million students). By 2027, total undergraduate enrollment is projected to increase to 17.4 million students.

In fall 2016, total undergraduate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions was 16.9 million students, an increase of 28 percent from 2000, when enrollment was 13.2 million students. While total undergraduate enrollment increased by 37 percent between 2000 and 2010 (from 13.2 million to

18.1 million students), enrollment decreased by 7 percent between 2010 and 2016 (from 18.1 million to 16.9 million students). Undergraduate enrollment is projected to increase by 3 percent (from 16.9 million to 17.4 million students) between 2016 and 2027.

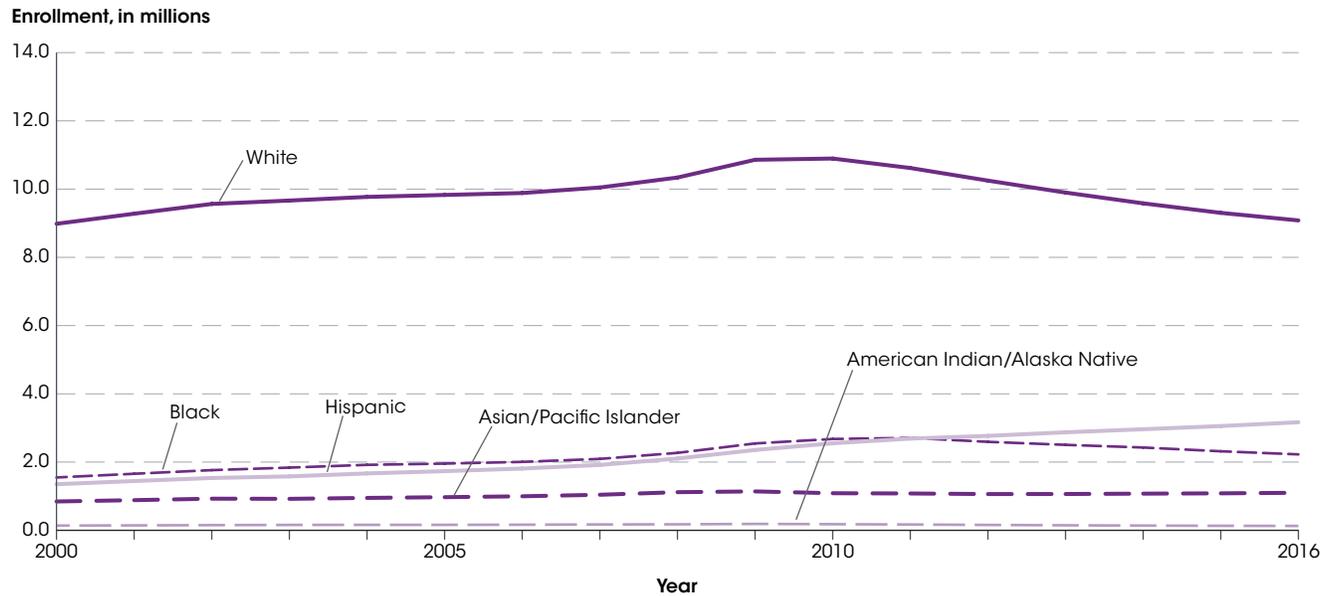
Figure 1. Actual and projected undergraduate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by sex: Fall 2000 through 2027



NOTE: Degree-granting institutions grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Projections are based on data through 2016. Some data have been revised from previously published figures.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2001 through Spring 2017, Fall Enrollment component; and Enrollment in Degree-Granting Institutions Projection Model, 2000 through 2027. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, table 303.70.

In fall 2016, female students made up 56 percent of total undergraduate enrollment (9.5 million students), and male students made up 44 percent (7.4 million students). Between 2000 and 2016, enrollment for both groups showed similar patterns of change: both female and male enrollment increased between 2000 and 2010 (by 39 percent and 36 percent, respectively) and then

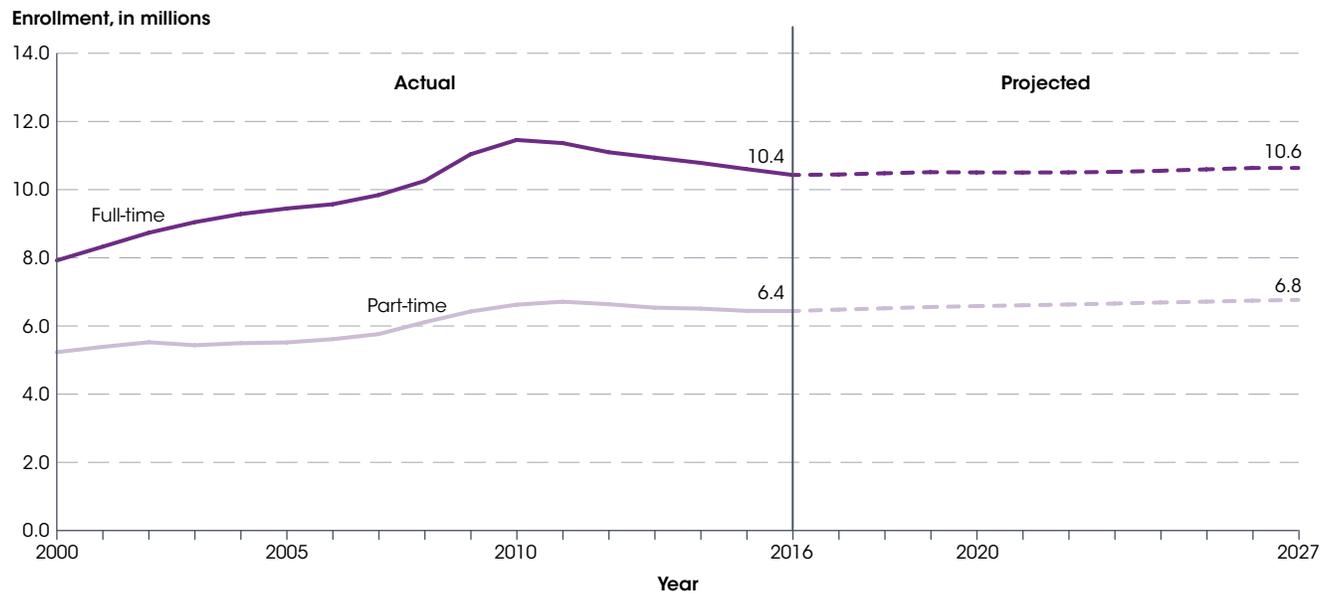
decreased between 2010 and 2016 (by 8 percent and 5 percent, respectively). Between 2016 and 2027, female enrollment is projected to increase by 4 percent (from 9.5 million to 9.8 million students), and male enrollment is projected to increase by 2 percent (from 7.4 million to 7.6 million students).

Figure 2. Undergraduate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by race/ethnicity: Fall 2000 through 2016

NOTE: Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Degree-granting institutions grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Some data have been revised from previously published figures. Race/ethnicity categories exclude nonresident aliens. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2001 through Spring 2017, Fall Enrollment component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2005*, table 205; *Digest of Education Statistics 2009*, table 226; *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 306.10; and *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, table 306.10.

Of the 16.9 million undergraduate students in fall 2016, some 9.1 million were White, 3.2 million were Hispanic, 2.2 million were Black, 1.1 million were Asian/Pacific Islander, and 129,000 were American Indian/Alaska Native. Hispanic enrollment increased in each year between 2000 and 2016, more than doubling during this period (from 1.4 million to 3.2 million students, a 134 percent increase). In contrast, enrollment trends for other racial/ethnic groups varied over time. Between 2000 and 2010, Black enrollment increased by 73 percent (from 1.5 million to 2.7 million students), Asian/Pacific Islander enrollment increased by 29 percent (from

846,000 to 1.1 million students), American Indian/Alaska Native enrollment increased by 29 percent (from 139,000 to 179,000 students), and White enrollment increased by 21 percent (from 9.0 million to 10.9 million students). However, between 2010 and 2016, American Indian/Alaska Native enrollment decreased by 28 percent (from 179,000 to 129,000 students), Black enrollment decreased by 17 percent (from 2.7 million to 2.2 million students), White enrollment decreased by 17 percent (from 10.9 million to 9.1 million students), and Asian/Pacific Islander enrollment remained relatively unchanged (at 1.1 million students).

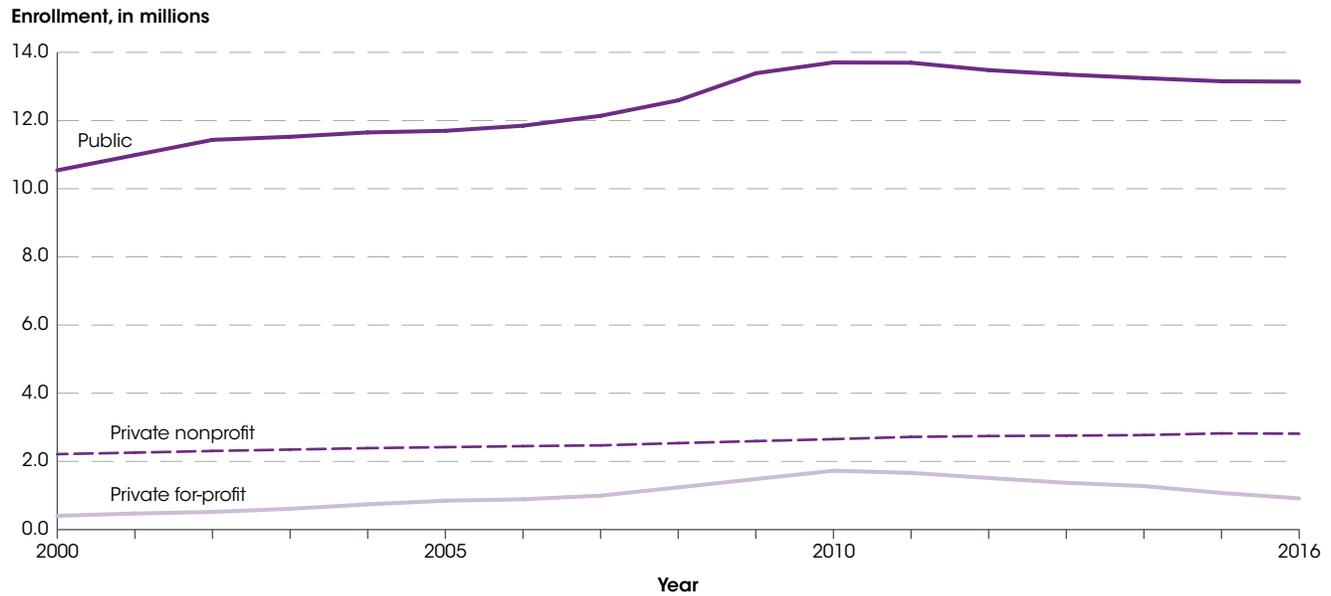
Figure 3. Actual and projected undergraduate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by attendance status: Fall 2000 through 2027

NOTE: Degree-granting institutions grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Projections are based on data through 2016. Some data have been revised from previously published figures.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2001 through Spring 2017, Fall Enrollment component; and Enrollment in Degree-Granting Institutions Projection Model, 2000 through 2027. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, table 303.70.

In fall 2016, there were 10.4 million full-time and 6.4 million part-time undergraduate students. Enrollment for both full- and part-time students has generally increased since 2000, particularly between 2000 and 2010, when full-time enrollment increased by 45 percent (from 7.9 million to 11.5 million students) and part-time enrollment increased by 27 percent (from 5.2 million to 6.6 million students). More recently, between 2010 and

2016, full-time enrollment decreased by 9 percent (from 11.5 million to 10.4 million students) and part-time enrollment decreased by 3 percent (from 6.6 million to 6.4 million students). Between 2016 and 2027, full-time enrollment is projected to increase by 2 percent (from 10.4 million to 10.6 million students) and part-time enrollment is projected to increase by 5 percent (from 6.4 million to 6.8 million students).

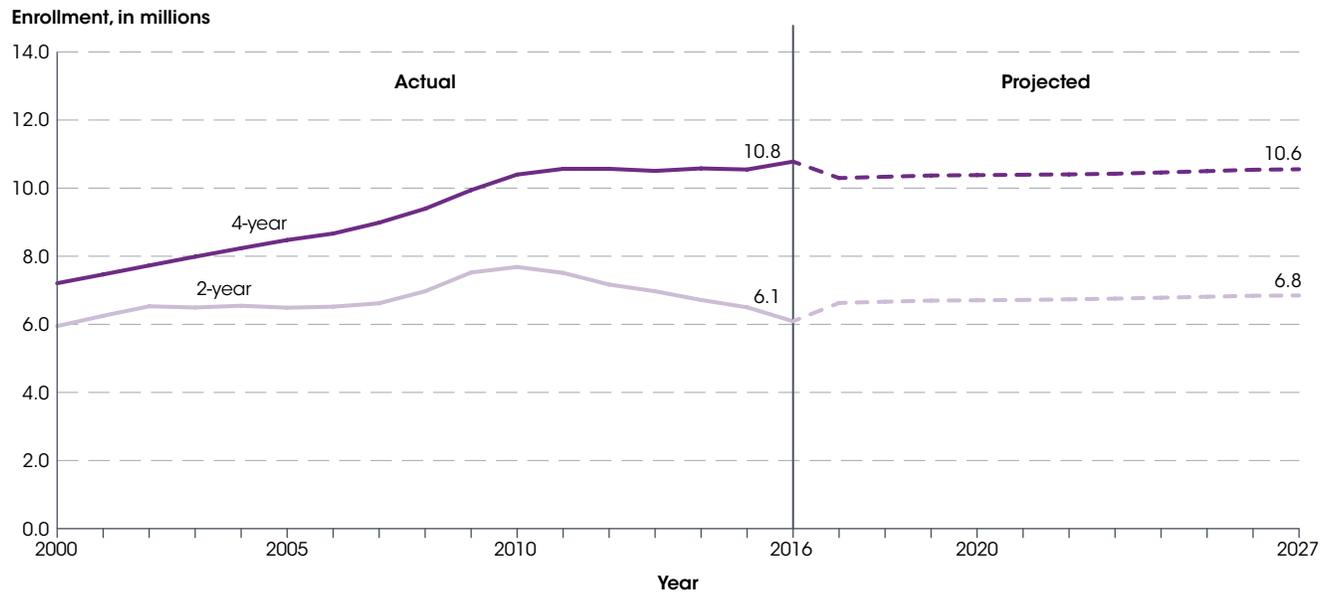
Figure 4. Undergraduate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by control of institution: Fall 2000 through 2016

NOTE: Degree-granting institutions grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Some data have been revised from previously published figures.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), IPEDS Spring 2001 through Spring 2017, Fall Enrollment component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, table 303.70.

Between fall 2000 and fall 2016, undergraduate enrollment increased at a greater rate at private for-profit institutions (127 percent) than at private nonprofit institutions (27 percent) and public institutions (25 percent), although in 2000, undergraduate enrollment at private for-profit institutions was relatively small (at 403,000 students). From 2000 to 2010, enrollment at private for-profit institutions increased by 329 percent (from 403,000 to 1.7 million students). In comparison, enrollment increased by 30 percent at public institutions (from 10.5 million to 13.7 million students) and by

20 percent at private nonprofit institutions (from 2.2 million to 2.7 million students) during this period. However, after peaking in 2010, enrollment at private for-profit institutions decreased by 47 percent (from 1.7 million to 915,000 students) between 2010 and 2016. During this period, enrollment at public institutions decreased by 4 percent (from 13.7 million to 13.1 million students), while enrollment at private nonprofit institutions increased by 6 percent (from 2.7 million to 2.8 million students).

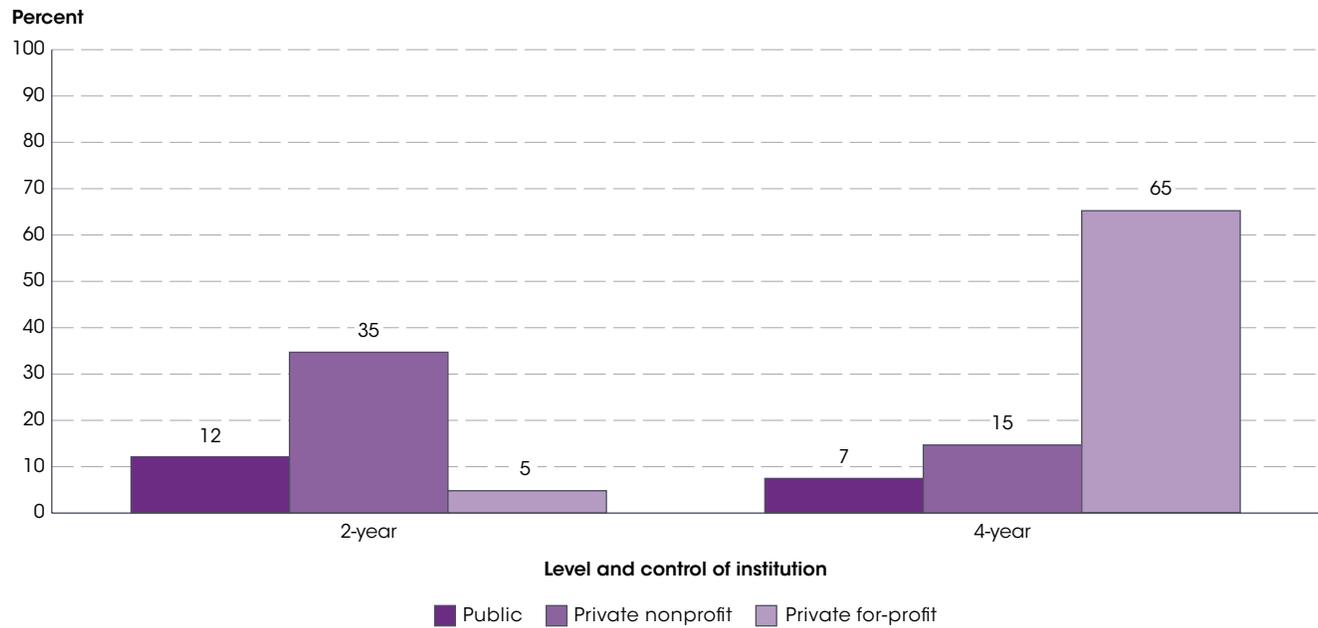
Figure 5. Actual and projected undergraduate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by level of institution: Fall 2000 through 2027

NOTE: Degree-granting institutions grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Projections are based on data through 2016. Some data have been revised from previously published figures.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), IPEDS Spring 2001 through Spring 2017, Fall Enrollment component; and Enrollment in Degree-Granting Institutions Projection Model, 2000 through 2027. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, table 303.70.

In fall 2016, the 10.8 million students at 4-year institutions made up 64 percent of total undergraduate enrollment; the remaining 36 percent (6.1 million students) were enrolled at 2-year institutions. Between 2000 and 2010, enrollment increased by 44 percent at 4-year institutions (from 7.2 million to 10.4 million students) and by 29 percent at 2-year institutions (from 5.9 million to 7.7 million students). However, between 2010 and 2016, enrollment increased by

4 percent at 4-year institutions (from 10.4 million to 10.8 million students) and decreased by 21 percent at 2-year institutions (from 7.7 million to 6.1 million students).¹ Between 2016 and 2027, undergraduate enrollment at 2-year institutions is projected to increase by 12 percent (from 6.1 million to 6.8 million students), while enrollment at 4-year institutions is projected to be 2 percent lower in 2027 than in 2016 (10.6 million students compared with 10.8 million students).

Figure 6. Percentage of undergraduate students at degree-granting postsecondary institutions who enrolled exclusively in distance education courses, by level and control of institution: Fall 2016

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

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2017, Fall Enrollment component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, table 311.15.

Distance education² courses and programs provide students with flexible learning opportunities. In fall 2016, nearly one-third of undergraduate students (5.2 million) participated in distance education, with 2.2 million students, or 13 percent of total undergraduate enrollment, exclusively taking distance education courses. Of the 2.2 million undergraduate students who exclusively took distance education courses, 1.3 million were enrolled at institutions located in the same state in which they resided, and 774,000 were enrolled at institutions in a different state.

The percentage of undergraduate students enrolled exclusively in distance education courses varied by institutional level and control. In fall 2016, the percentage of students at private for-profit institutions who exclusively

took distance education courses (52 percent) was more than three times that of students at private nonprofit institutions (15 percent) and more than five times that of students at public institutions (10 percent). In particular, the percentage of students at private for-profit 4-year institutions who exclusively took distance education courses (65 percent) is larger than the percentages of students at 2-year institutions who exclusively took distance education courses (percentages at these institutions ranged from 5 percent at private for-profit 2-year institutions to 35 percent at private nonprofit 2-year institutions) and also larger than the percentages of students at public 4-year institutions (7 percent) and private nonprofit 4-year institutions (15 percent) who exclusively took distance education courses.³

Endnotes:

¹ Some of the shift in enrollment patterns for 2-year and 4-year institutions between 2010 and 2016 may have been impacted by 2-year institutions beginning to offer 4-year programs, causing their classification to change. In 2016, some 499,000 undergraduate students were enrolled at 4-year institutions that in 2010 were classified as 2-year institutions.

² Distance education uses one or more technologies to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the student and the instructor synchronously or asynchronously. Technologies used for instruction may include the following:

the Internet; one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcasts, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communication devices; audio conferencing; and videocassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs, only if the videocassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs are used in a course in conjunction with the technologies listed above.

³ The increase in comparison to fall 2015 in the percentage of students at nonprofit 2-year institutions who enrolled exclusively in distance education courses was related to one larger institution in which students primarily enroll in distance education.

Reference tables: *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, tables 303.70, 306.10, and 311.15

Related indicators and resources: [Characteristics of Degree-Granting Postsecondary Institutions](#); [College Enrollment Rates](#); [Differences in Postsecondary Enrollment Among Recent High School Completers](#) [*The Condition of Education 2016 Spotlight*]; [Immediate College Enrollment Rate](#); [Postbaccalaureate Enrollment](#); [STEM Degrees](#) [*Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups*]; [Undergraduate and Postbaccalaureate Enrollment](#) [*Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups*]

Glossary: Control of institutions, Degree-granting institution, Distance education, Enrollment, Full-time enrollment, Part-time enrollment, Postsecondary institutions (basic classification by level), Private institution, Public school or institution, Racial/ethnic group, Undergraduate students