Characteristics of Degree-Granting Postsecondary Institutions

In 2013–14, some 29 percent of 4-year institutions had open admissions policies, 26 percent accepted three-quarters or more of their applicants, 32 percent accepted from one-half to less than three-quarters of their applicants, and 13 percent accepted less than one-half of their applicants.

Figure 1. Number of degree-granting institutions with first-year undergraduates, by level and control of institution: Academic years 2000–01 and 2013–14

In 2013–14, there were 4,294 degree-granting institutions with first-year undergraduates, including 2,634 4-year institutions offering programs at the bachelor’s or higher degree level and 1,660 2-year institutions offering associate’s degrees. These institutions may be governed by publicly appointed or elected officials, with major support from public funds (public control), or by privately elected or appointed officials, with major support from private sources (private control). Private institutions may be operated on a nonprofit or for-profit basis. All institutions in this analysis enroll first-year undergraduates in degree-granting programs. The number of private nonprofit institutions in 2013–14 (1,365) was 1 percent lower than in 2000–01 (1,383), and the number of public institutions in 2013–14 (1,584) was 4 percent lower than in 2000–01 (1,647). In contrast, the number of private for-profit institutions nearly doubled (from 687 to 1,345) between 2000–01 and 2013–14.
Figure 2. Percentage distribution of 4-year degree-granting institutions with first-year undergraduates, by application acceptance rate and control of institution: Academic year 2013–14

In 2013–14, approximately 29 percent of 4-year institutions with first-year undergraduates had open admissions policies (accepted all applicants). A higher percentage of private for-profit 4-year institutions (65 percent) than private nonprofit (15 percent) and public (18 percent) 4-year institutions had open admissions policies in 2013–14. Among 4-year institutions, 26 percent accepted three-quarters or more of their applicants, 32 percent accepted from one-half to less than three-quarters of their applicants, and 13 percent accepted less than one-half of their applicants.
In 2013–14, some 90 percent of 2-year institutions had open admissions. Almost all public 2-year institutions had open admissions (98 percent), while 84 percent of private for-profit 2-year and 54 percent of private nonprofit 2-year institutions had open admissions. Among 2-year institutions, 6 percent accepted three-quarters or more of their applicants, 2 percent accepted from one-half to less than three-quarters of applicants, and 1 percent accepted less than one-half of their applicants.
In 2013–14, some 71 percent of 4-year and 9 percent of 2-year institutions had admission requirements for applicants. Admission requirements include the submission of information, such as secondary school administrative records, Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores, secondary school grades, admission test (such as the SAT or ACT) scores, recommendations, and college preparatory program information. Among 4-year institutions, the percentages of public and private nonprofit institutions that required secondary school records for admission (78 and 77 percent, respectively) were more than twice the percentage of private for-profit institutions requiring them (32 percent). The percentages of 4-year public and private nonprofit institutions that required TOEFL scores (71 and 67 percent, respectively) were more than twice the percentage of 4-year private for-profit institutions requiring them (29 percent). Some 69 percent of public 4-year institutions and 69 percent of private nonprofit 4-year institutions required secondary grades, more than 8 times the percentage of private for-profit 4-year institutions requiring them (8 percent). Among 4-year institutions, some 76 percent of public institutions required admission tests such as the SAT or ACT, compared with 61 percent of private nonprofit and 1 percent of private for-profit institutions.

Reference tables: Digest of Education Statistics 2014, tables 305.30 and 305.40
Related indicators: Undergraduate Enrollment (indicator 14), Postbaccalaureate Enrollment (indicator 15), Postsecondary Revenues by Source (indicator 37), Expenses of Postsecondary Institutions (indicator 38), Characteristics of Postsecondary Faculty (indicator 39), Community Colleges [The Condition of Education 2008 Special Analysis]

Glossary: Degree-granting institutions, For-profit institution, Nonprofit institution