

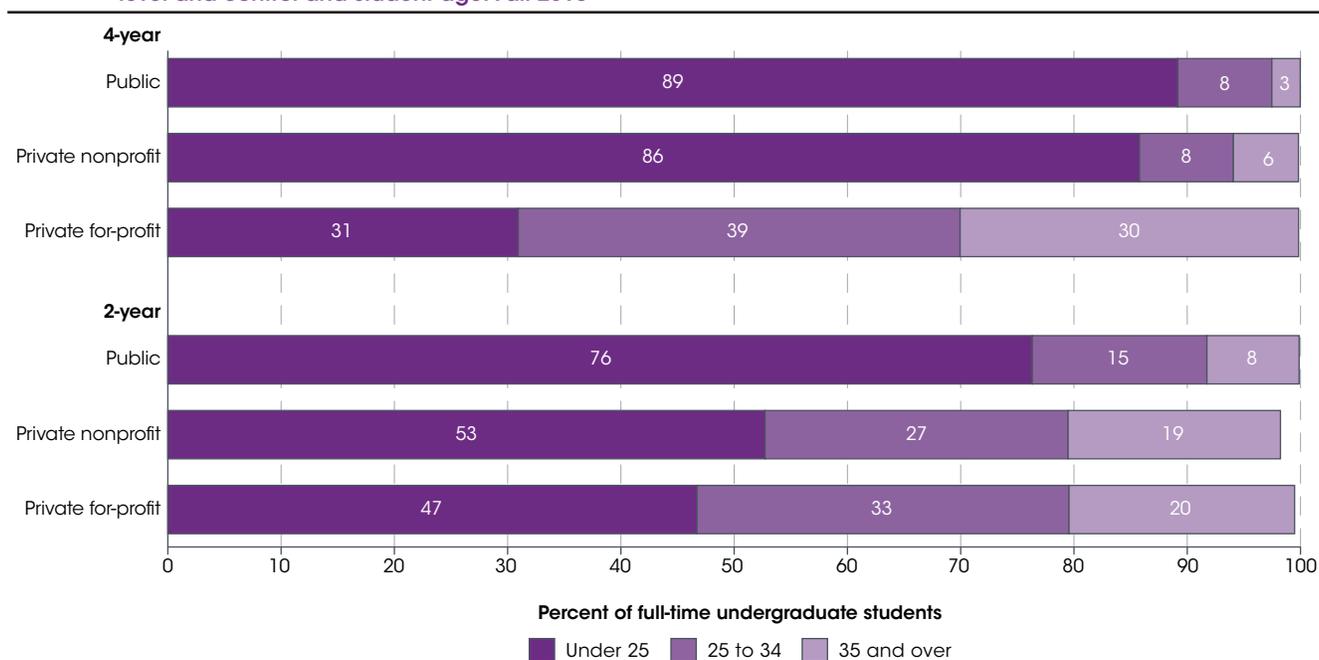
Characteristics of Postsecondary Students

In fall 2015, some 77 percent of the 10.5 million undergraduate students at 4-year institutions were enrolled full time, compared with 39 percent of the 6.5 million undergraduate students at 2-year institutions.

In fall 2015,¹ there were 17.0 million undergraduate students and 2.9 million postbaccalaureate (graduate) students attending degree-granting postsecondary institutions in the United States.² The characteristics of students, such as their age and race or ethnicity, varied between public, private nonprofit, and private for-profit 2- and 4-year institutions in fall 2015.

Some 10.5 million undergraduate students (62 percent) attended 4-year institutions, and 6.5 million (38 percent) attended 2-year institutions. Of the undergraduate students at 4-year institutions, 8.1 million (77 percent) attended full time and 2.5 million (23 percent) attended part time. Of the undergraduate students at 2-year institutions, 2.5 million (39 percent) attended full time and 4.0 million (61 percent) attended part time.

Figure 1. Percentage of full-time undergraduate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by institutional level and control and student age: Fall 2015

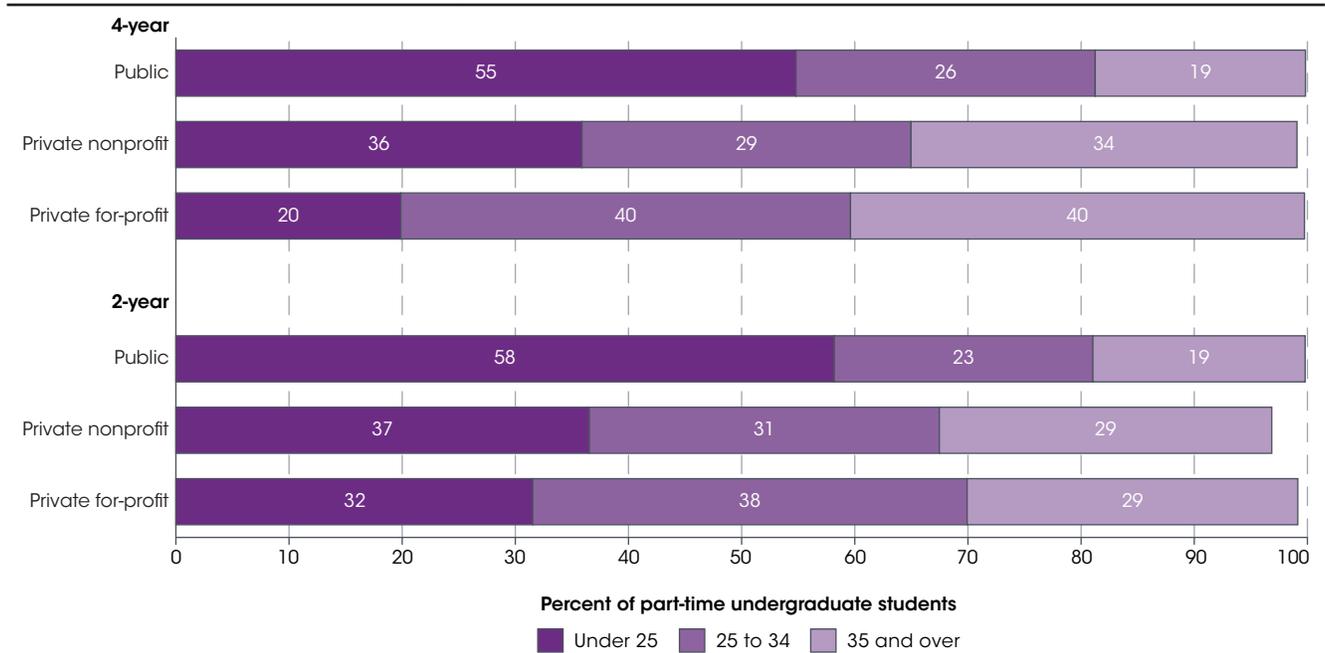


NOTE: Degree-granting institutions grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding and the exclusion of students whose ages were unknown.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2016, Fall Enrollment component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*, table 303.50.

At 4-year institutions, the percentage of full-time undergraduate students in fall 2015 who were under age 25 was higher at public institutions (89 percent) and private nonprofit institutions (86 percent) than at private for-profit institutions (31 percent). At both public and private nonprofit 4-year institutions, 8 percent of full-time undergraduate students were ages 25 to 34. In contrast, at private for-profit 4-year institutions, undergraduate students age 25 to 34 made up the largest age group of those enrolled full time (39 percent).

In 2015, the percentage of full-time undergraduates who were under age 25 was higher at public 2-year institutions (76 percent) than at private nonprofit (53 percent) and for-profit 2-year institutions (47 percent). On the other hand, lower percentages of full-time undergraduates were ages 35 and over at public 2-year institutions (8 percent) compared to private nonprofit (19 percent) and private for-profit (20 percent) 2-year institutions.

Figure 2. Percentage of part-time undergraduate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by institutional level and control and student age: Fall 2015

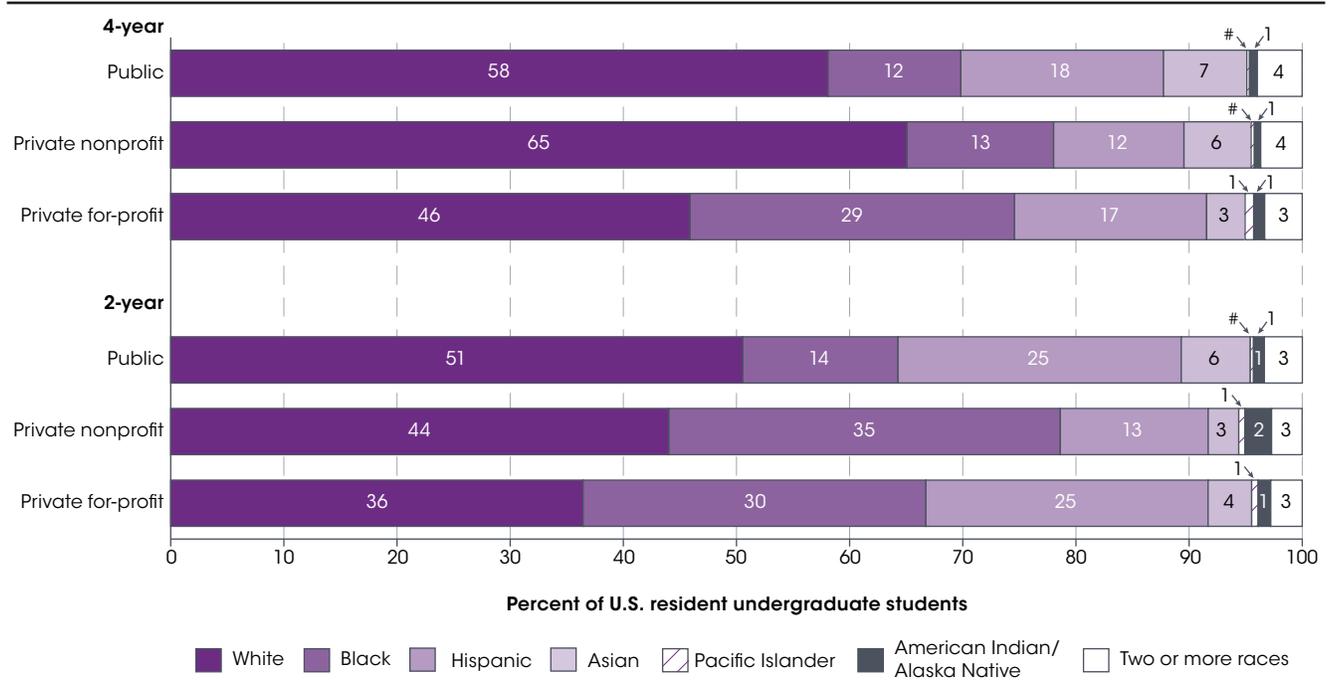


NOTE: Degree-granting institutions grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding and the exclusion of students whose ages were unknown.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2016, Fall Enrollment component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*, table 303.50.

At 4-year institutions, the percentage of part-time undergraduate students in fall 2015 who were under age 25 was higher at public institutions (55 percent) than at private nonprofit (36 percent) and for-profit institutions (20 percent). The percentage of part-time undergraduates who were ages 25 to 34 was lower at public (26 percent) and private nonprofit institutions (29 percent) than at for-profit institutions (40 percent). The percentage of part-time undergraduates who were ages 35 and over was lower at public institutions (19 percent) than at private nonprofit (34 percent) and private for-profit institutions (40 percent).

At 2-year institutions, the percentage of part-time students in fall 2015 who were under age 25 was higher at public institutions (58 percent) than at private nonprofit (37 percent) and private for-profit institutions (32 percent). The percentage of part-time students who were ages 25 to 34 was lower at public institutions (23 percent) than at private nonprofit (31 percent) and private for-profit institutions (38 percent). Similarly, the percentage of part-time students who were ages 35 and over was lower at public institutions (19 percent) than at private nonprofit and private for-profit institutions (29 percent each).

Figure 3. Percentage distribution of U.S. resident undergraduate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by institutional level and control and student race/ethnicity: Fall 2016



Rounds to zero.

NOTE: Degree-granting institutions grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

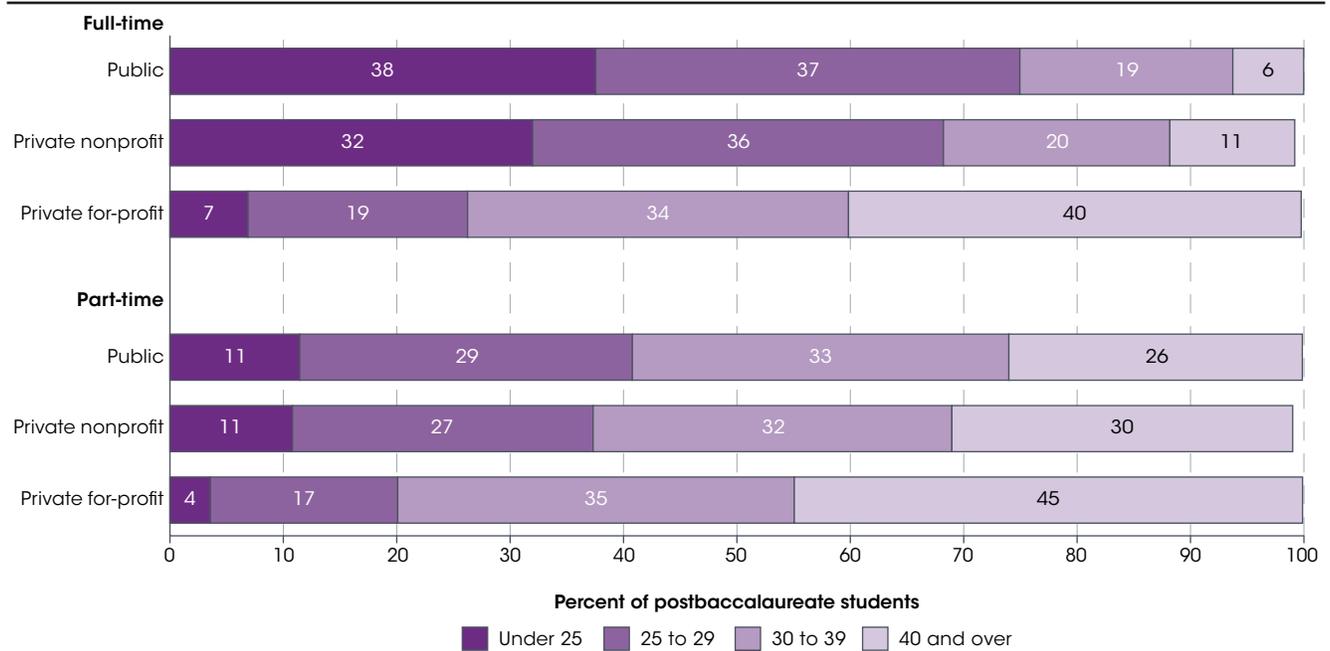
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2017, Fall Enrollment component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, table 306.50.

The distribution of U.S. resident undergraduate students (full and part time) by racial and ethnic groups varied among public, private nonprofit, and private for-profit institutions and between 2- and 4-year institutions.³ Sixty-five percent of undergraduate students at private nonprofit 4-year institutions in 2016 were White, which was higher than the percentages of White students at public 4-year institutions (58 percent) and at private for-profit 4-year institutions (46 percent). The percentage of students at private for-profit 4-year institutions who were Black (29 percent) was more than twice as high as the percentages at private nonprofit (13 percent) and public 4-year institutions (12 percent). The percentages of students at public 4-year institutions and private for-profit 4-year institutions who were Hispanic (18 and 17 percent, respectively) were higher than the percentage at private nonprofit 4-year institutions (12 percent). The percentages of undergraduate students at public 4-year institutions and

private nonprofit 4-year institutions who were Asian (7 and 6 percent, respectively) were higher than the percentage at private for-profit 4-year institutions (3 percent).

In fall 2016, the percentages of both White and Asian U.S. resident undergraduate students at public 2-year institutions (51 and 6 percent, respectively) were higher than the corresponding percentages at private nonprofit 2-year institutions (44 and 3 percent, respectively) and at private for-profit 2-year institutions (36 and 4 percent, respectively). In contrast, the percentage of students at private nonprofit 2-year institutions who were Black (35 percent) was higher than the corresponding percentages at private for-profit 2-year institutions and public 2-year institutions (30 and 14 percent, respectively). A higher percentage of students at public and private for-profit 2-year institutions were Hispanic (both 25 percent) than at private nonprofit 2-year institutions (13 percent).

Figure 4. Percentage of full-time and part-time postbaccalaureate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by attendance status, institutional control, and student age: Fall 2015

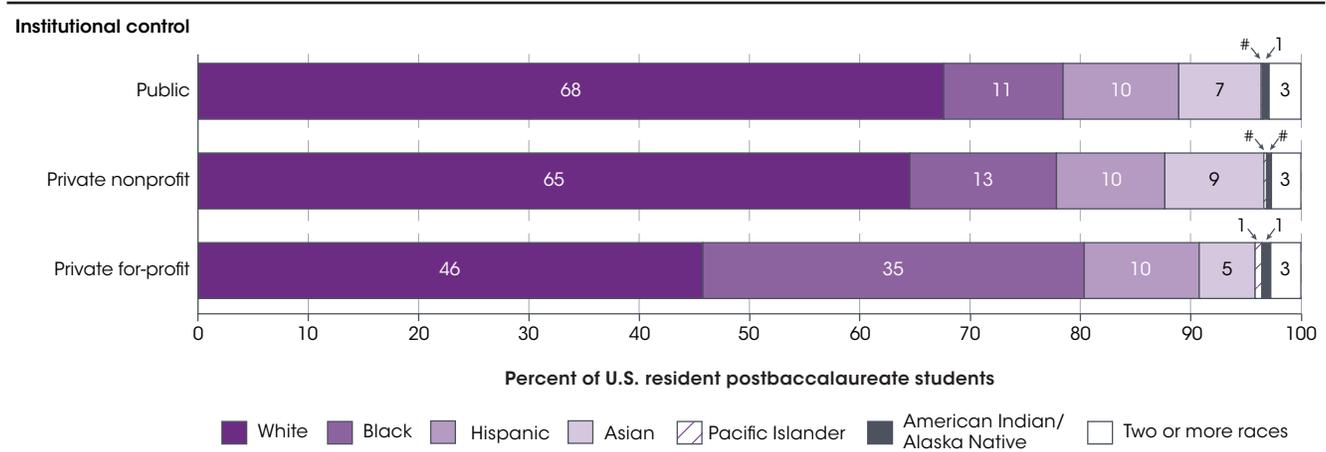


NOTE: Degree-granting institutions grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding and the exclusion of students whose ages were unknown.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2016, Fall Enrollment component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*, table 303.50.

In fall 2015, some 48 percent of all graduate students attended public institutions, 42 percent attended private nonprofit institutions, and 9 percent attended private for-profit institutions. The majority of full-time graduate students at public institutions were under age 30 (38 percent were under age 25 and 37 percent were ages 25 to 29); the same was true at private nonprofit institutions, where 32 percent were under age 25 and 36 percent were ages

25 to 29. In contrast, the majority of full-time graduate students at private for-profit institutions were older: 34 percent were ages 30 to 39 and 40 percent were ages 40 and over. Among part-time graduate students, 80 percent of students at private for-profit institutions were ages 30 and over, as were 62 percent at private nonprofit institutions and 59 percent at public institutions.

Figure 5. Percentage distribution of U.S. resident postbaccalaureate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by institutional control and student race/ethnicity: Fall 2016



Rounds to zero.

NOTE: Degree-granting institutions grant associate’s or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

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 306.50.

In fall 2016, approximately two-thirds of U.S. resident graduate students at both public and private nonprofit institutions were White, compared with less than one-half of students at private for-profit institutions. The percentage of graduate students who were Black was more than twice as high at private for-profit institutions (35 percent) as at private nonprofit institutions (13 percent) and public

institutions (11 percent). Hispanic students accounted for 10 percent of graduate enrollment at each type of institution—public, private nonprofit, and private for-profit. Asian students accounted for 9 percent of graduate enrollment at private nonprofit institutions, 7 percent at public institutions, and 5 percent at private for-profit institutions.

Endnotes:

¹ 2015 is the most recent year available for enrollment data by age group. 2016 is the most recent year available for enrollment data by racial/ethnic group.

² For more information on how postsecondary enrollment has changed over time, see indicators [Undergraduate Enrollment](#) and [Postbaccalaureate Enrollment](#).

³ Throughout this indicator, comparisons by race/ethnicity exclude nonresident alien students.

Reference tables: *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*, tables 303.50 and 306.50; *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, table 306.50

Related indicators and resources: [Postbaccalaureate Enrollment](#); [Undergraduate Enrollment](#)

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