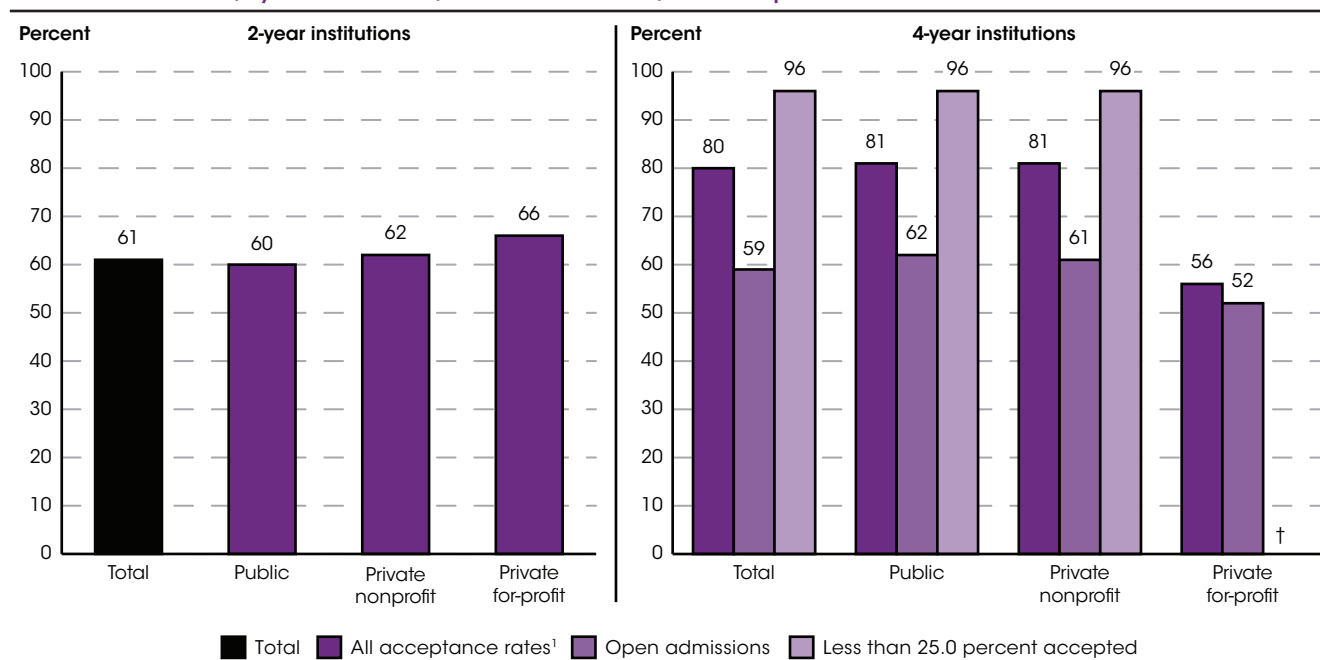


Undergraduate Retention and Graduation Rates

About 60 percent of students who began seeking a bachelor's degree at a 4-year institution in fall 2008 completed that degree within 6 years; the graduation rate was higher for females than males (62 percent vs. 57 percent).

Figure 1. Percentage of first-time, full-time degree-seeking undergraduates retained at 2- and 4-year degree-granting institutions, by institution level, control of institution, and acceptance rate: 2013 to 2014



† Not applicable.

¹ Includes institutions that have an open admission policy, institutions that have various applicant acceptance rates, and institutions for which no acceptance rate information is available.

NOTE: Degree-granting institutions grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Retained first-time undergraduates are those who returned to the institutions to continue their studies the following fall.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2015, Fall Enrollment component; and Fall 2013, Institutional Characteristics component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 326.30.

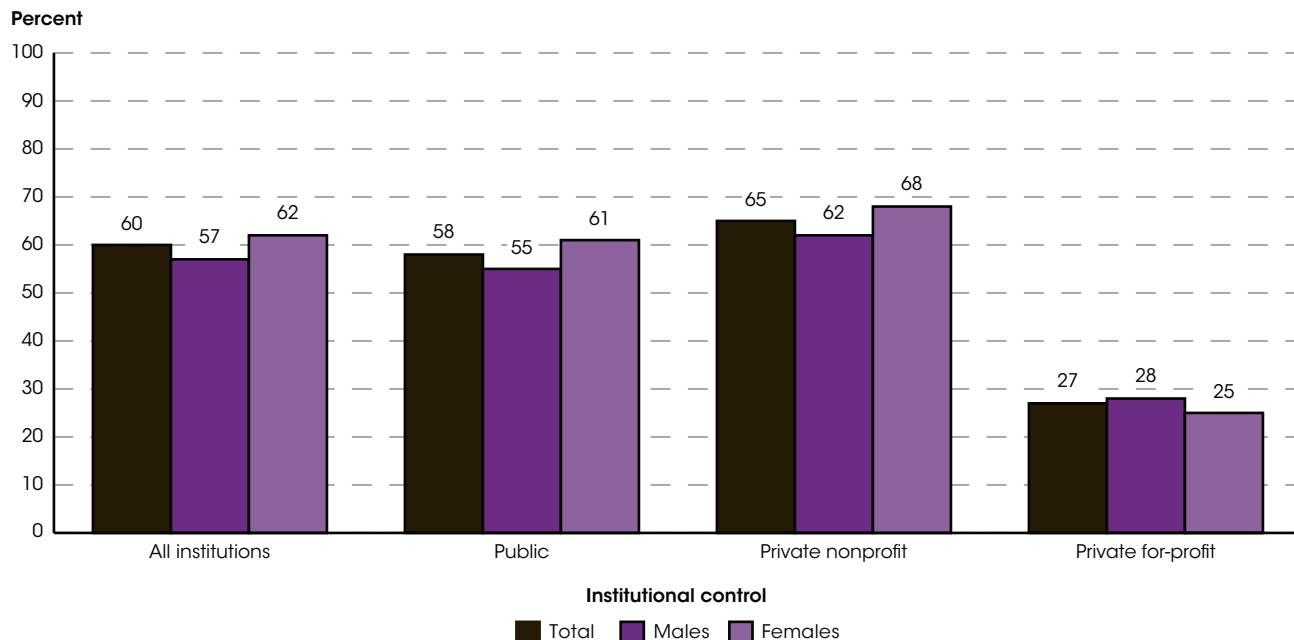
The retention rate (i.e., the percentage of students returning the following fall) among first-time, full-time degree-seeking students who enrolled at 4-year degree-granting institutions in 2013 was 80 percent. At public and private nonprofit 4-year institutions, retention rates were generally higher at more selective institutions. At public 4-year institutions, the overall retention rate was 81 percent; at the least selective institutions (those with open admissions) the retention rate was 62 percent, while at the most selective institutions (those that accept less than 25 percent of applicants) the retention rate was

96 percent. The overall retention rate was 81 percent at private nonprofit 4-year institutions (61 percent at the least selective institutions and 96 percent at the most selective). The overall retention rate for students at private for-profit 4-year institutions was 56 percent, and retention rates varied according to institutional selectivity as well. At 2-year institutions, the overall retention rate for students was 61 percent; at this institution level, the retention rate for private for-profit institutions (66 percent) was higher than for private nonprofit institutions (62 percent) and public institutions (60 percent).

The 1990 Student Right-to-Know Act requires postsecondary institutions to report the percentage of students who complete their program within 150 percent of the normal time for completion (e.g., within 6 years for students pursuing a bachelor’s degree). The graduation

rates in this indicator are calculated accordingly. Students who transfer without completing a degree and then complete a degree at another institution are not included as completers in the calculation of these rates.

Figure 2. Graduation rate (within 6 years) from first institution attended for first-time, full-time bachelor’s degree-seeking students at 4-year postsecondary institutions, by control of institution and sex: Cohort entry year 2008

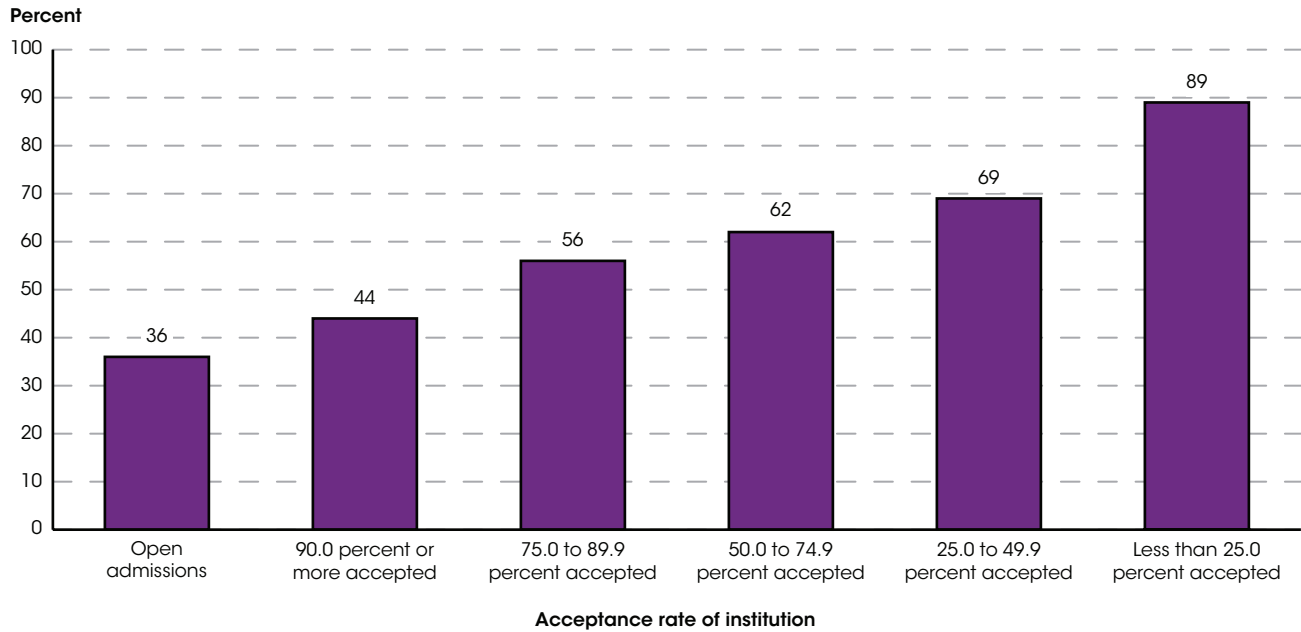


NOTE: Data are for 4-year degree-granting postsecondary institutions participating in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Graduation rates include students receiving bachelor’s degrees from their initial institution of attendance only.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Winter 2014–15 Graduation Rates component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 326.10.

The 6-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time undergraduate students who began their pursuit of a bachelor’s degree at a 4-year degree-granting institution in fall 2008 was 60 percent. That is, 60 percent of first-time, full-time students who began seeking a bachelor’s degree at a 4-year institution in fall 2008 completed the degree at that institution by 2014. The 6-year graduation rate was 58 percent at public institutions, 65 percent at private

nonprofit institutions, and 27 percent at private for-profit institutions. The 6-year graduation rate was 57 percent for males and 62 percent for females; it was higher for females than for males at both public (61 vs. 55 percent) and private nonprofit institutions (68 vs. 62 percent). However, at private for-profit institutions, males had a higher 6-year graduation rate than females (28 vs. 25 percent).

Figure 3. Graduation rate (within 6 years) from first institution attended for first-time, full-time bachelor's degree-seeking students at 4-year postsecondary institutions, by acceptance rate of institution: Cohort entry year 2008



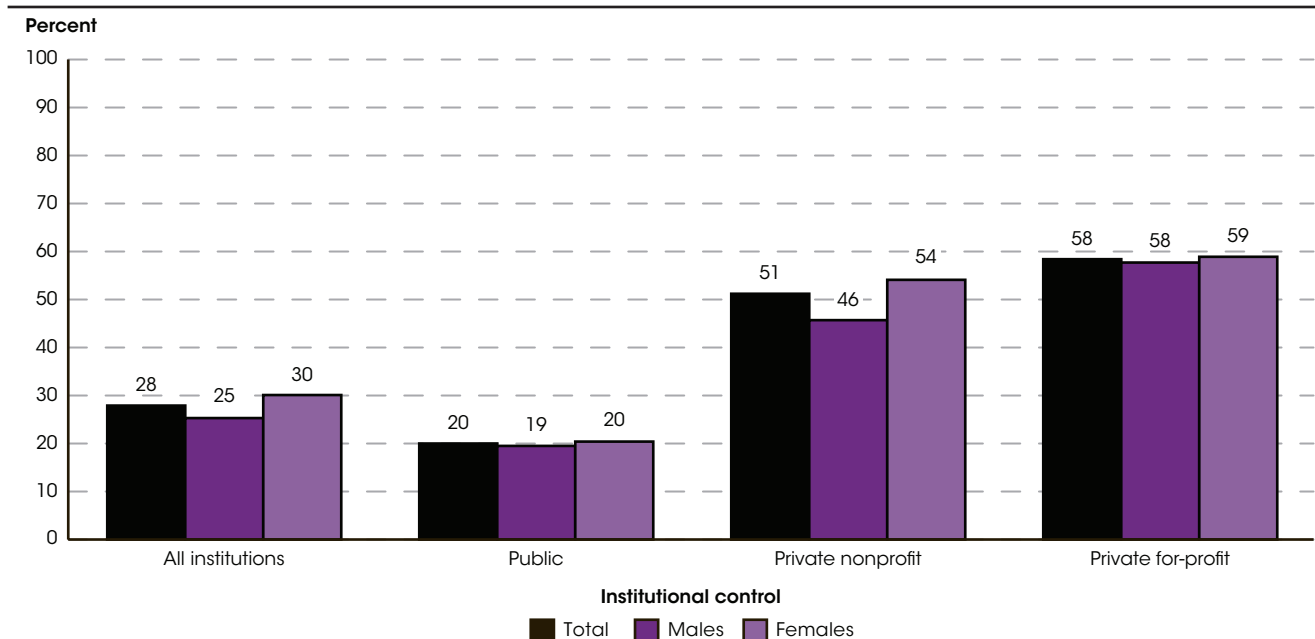
NOTE: Data are for 4-year degree-granting postsecondary institutions participating in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Graduation rates include students receiving bachelor's degrees from their initial institutions of attendance only.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Winter 2014–15 Graduation Rates component and Fall 2013, Institutional Characteristics component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 326.10.

Six-year graduation rates for first-time, full-time students who began seeking a bachelor's degree in fall 2008 varied according to institutional selectivity. In particular, 6-year graduation rates were highest at postsecondary degree-granting institutions that were the most selective (i.e., had the lowest admissions acceptance rates), and were lowest at institutions that were the least selective (i.e., had open admissions policies). For example, at 4-year institutions with open admissions policies, 36 percent of students completed a bachelor's degree within 6 years. At 4-year institutions where the acceptance rate was less than 25 percent of applicants, the 6-year graduation rate was 89 percent.

Between 2009 and 2014, the overall 6-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time students who began seeking

a bachelor's degree at 4-year degree-granting institutions increased by 2 percentage points, from 58 percent (for students who began their studies in 2003 and graduated within 6 years) to 60 percent (for students who began their studies in 2008 and graduated within 6 years). During this period, 6-year graduation rates were higher in 2014 than in 2009 at both public institutions (58 percent vs. 56 percent) and private for-profit institutions (27 percent vs. 24 percent), but did not change significantly for private nonprofit institutions (where the rates were both around 65 percent). In addition, 6-year graduation rates increased for both males (from 55 percent to 57 percent) and females (from 60 percent to 62 percent) during this period.

Figure 4. Graduation rate within 150 percent of normal time from first institution attended for first-time, full-time degree/certificate-seeking students at 2-year postsecondary institutions, by control of institution and sex: Cohort entry year 2011



NOTE: Data are for 2-year degree-granting postsecondary institutions participating in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Graduation rates include students receiving associate's degrees or certificates from their initial institutions of attendance only. An example of completing a credential within 150 percent of the normal time required to do so is taking 3 years to complete a 2-year degree.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Winter 2014–15 Graduation Rates component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 326.20.

At 2-year degree-granting institutions, 28 percent of first-time, full-time undergraduate students who began their pursuit of a certificate or associate's degree in fall 2011 attained it within 150 percent of the normal time required to do so (an example of completing a credential within 150 percent of the normal time is taking 3 years to complete a 2-year degree). This graduation rate was 20 percent at public 2-year institutions, 51 percent at private nonprofit 2-year institutions, and 58 percent

at private for-profit 2-year institutions. At 2-year institutions overall, as well as at public, private nonprofit, and private for-profit 2-year institutions, the graduation rates were higher for females than for males. At private nonprofit 2-year institutions, for example, 54 percent of females versus 46 percent of males who began pursuing a certificate or associate's degree in 2011 completed it within 150 percent of the normal time required.

Reference tables: *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, tables 326.10, 326.20, and 326.30

Related indicators: Educational Attainment of Young Adults

Glossary: Associate's degree, Bachelor's degree, Certificate, Degree-granting institution, For-profit institution, Full-time enrollment, Nonprofit institution, Postsecondary education, Postsecondary institutions (basic classification by level), Private institution, Public school or institution, Undergraduate students