

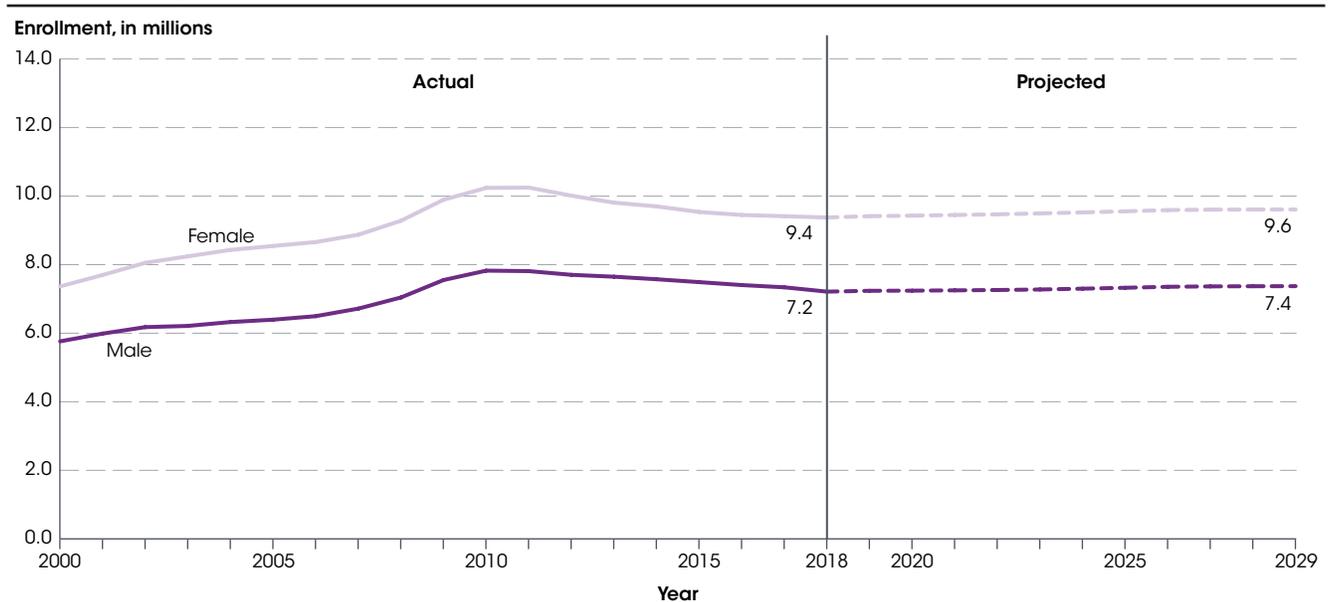
# Undergraduate Enrollment

*Between 2000 and 2018, total undergraduate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions increased by 26 percent (from 13.2 million to 16.6 million students). By 2029, total undergraduate enrollment is projected to increase to 17.0 million students.*

In fall 2018, total undergraduate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions was 16.6 million students, an increase of 26 percent from 2000, when enrollment was 13.2 million students. Total undergraduate enrollment increased by 37 percent (from 13.2 million to 18.1 million students) between 2000 and

2010, but decreased by 8 percent (from 18.1 million to 16.6 million students) between 2010 and 2018. Total undergraduate enrollment is projected to increase by 2 percent (from 16.6 million to 17.0 million students) between 2018 and 2029.

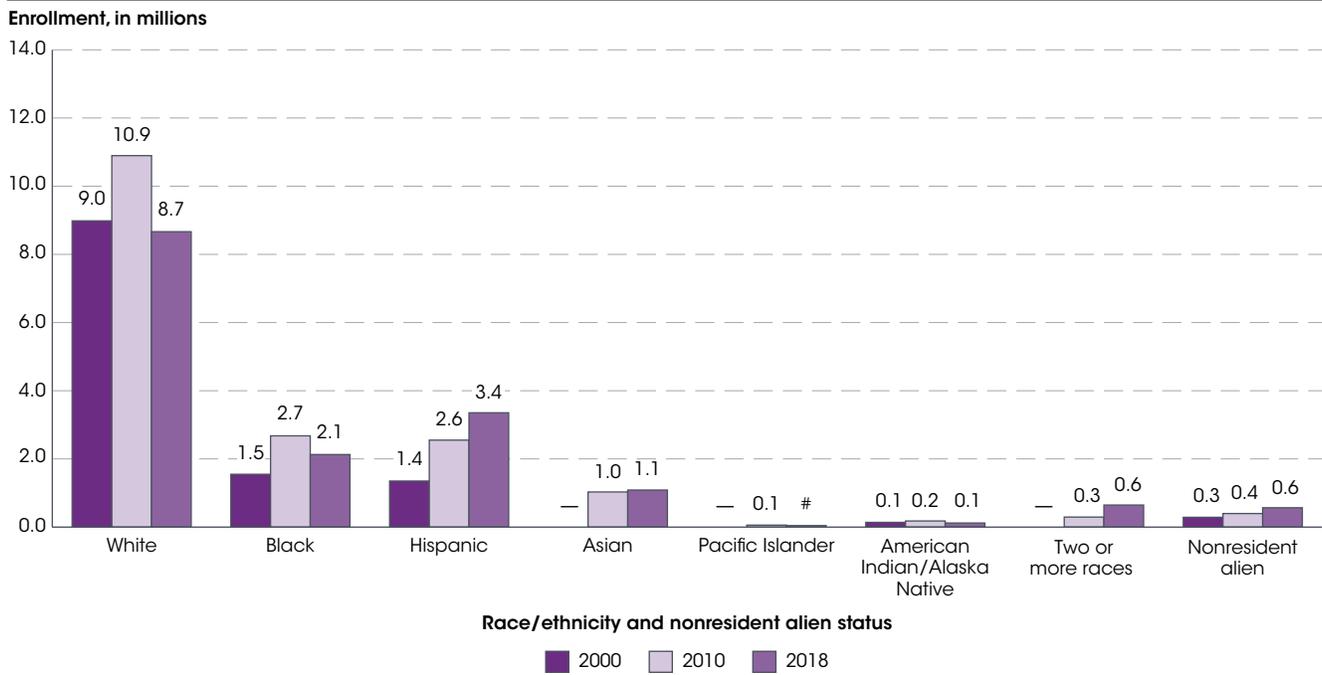
**Figure 1. Actual and projected undergraduate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by sex: Fall 2000 through 2029**



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 2018. 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 2019, Fall Enrollment component; and Enrollment in Degree-Granting Institutions Projection Model, 2000 through 2029. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 303.70.

In fall 2018, female students made up 56 percent of total undergraduate enrollment (9.4 million students), and male students made up 44 percent (7.2 million students). Enrollment patterns for female and male students exhibited similar trends between 2000 and 2018. Between 2000 and 2010, female and male enrollments increased

by 39 percent and 36 percent, respectively; between 2010 and 2018, female and male enrollments both decreased by 8 percent. Between 2018 and 2029, female and male enrollments are projected to increase by 2 percent each (from 9.4 million to 9.6 million students and from 7.2 million to 7.4 million students, respectively).

**Figure 2. Undergraduate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by race/ethnicity and nonresident alien status: Fall 2000, 2010, and 2018**

— Not available.

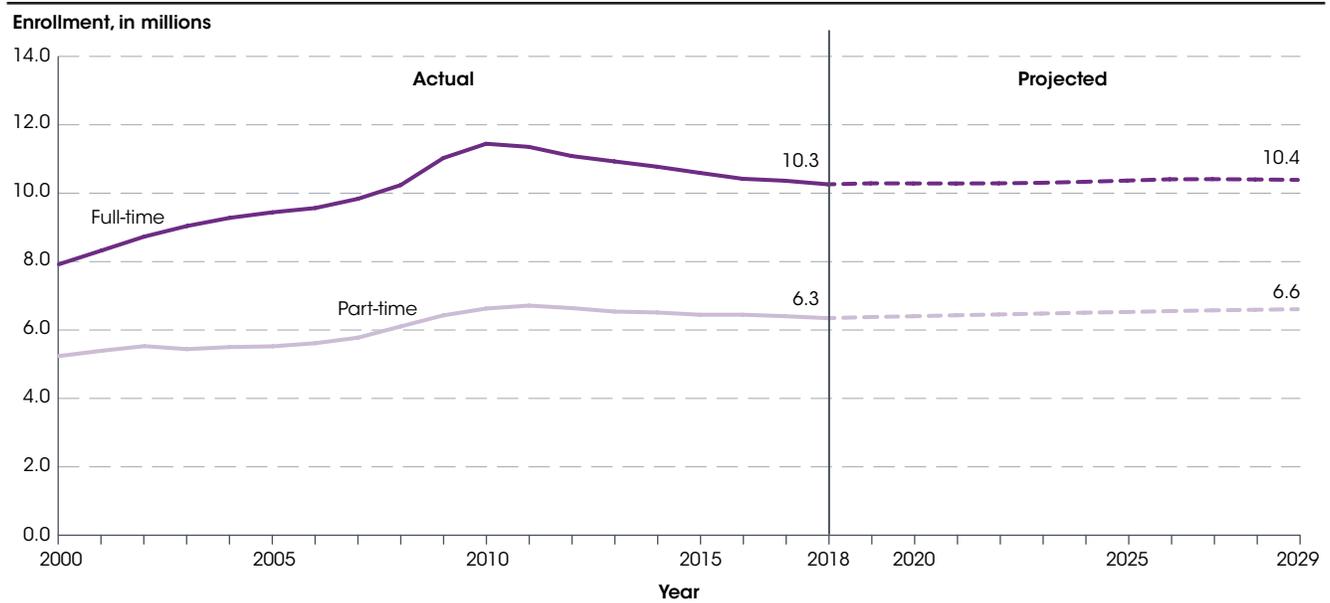
# Rounds to zero.

NOTE: Prior to 2010, separate data on Asian students, Pacific Islander students, and students of Two or more races were not available. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Race/ethnicity categories exclude nonresident aliens. 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. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2001, Spring 2011, and Spring 2019, Fall Enrollment component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 306.10.

Of the 16.6 million undergraduate students enrolled in fall 2018, some 8.7 million were White, 3.4 million were Hispanic, 2.1 million were Black, 1.1 million were Asian, 647,000 were of Two or more races, 120,000 were American Indian/Alaska Native, and 45,000 were Pacific Islander. Hispanic enrollment increased in each year between 2000 and 2018, increasing by 148 percent during this period (from 1.4 million to 3.4 million students). Enrollment trends for other racial/ethnic groups with available data varied from 2000 to 2018.<sup>1</sup> Between 2000 and 2010, White enrollment increased by 21 percent (from 9.0 million to 10.9 million students), Black enrollment increased by 73 percent (from 1.5 million to 2.7 million students), and American Indian/Alaska Native enrollment increased by 29 percent (from 139,000 to 179,000 students). However, between 2010 and 2018, White enrollment decreased by 20 percent (from 10.9 million to

8.7 million students), Black enrollment decreased by 21 percent (from 2.7 million to 2.1 million students), and American Indian/Alaska Native enrollment decreased by 33 percent (from 179,000 to 120,000 students). Similarly, between 2010 and 2018, Pacific Islander enrollment decreased by 22 percent (from 58,000 to 45,000 students). In contrast, between 2010 and 2018, the enrollment of individuals who were of Two or more races increased by 120 percent (from 294,000 to 647,000 students), and Asian enrollment increased by 6 percent (from 1.0 million to 1.1 million students). In fall 2018, degree-granting postsecondary institutions enrolled 567,000 nonresident alien<sup>2</sup> undergraduate students. The number of nonresident alien undergraduate students increased by 38 percent (from 288,000 to 398,000 students) between 2000 and 2010 and increased by 42 percent (from 398,000 to 567,000 students) between 2010 and 2018.

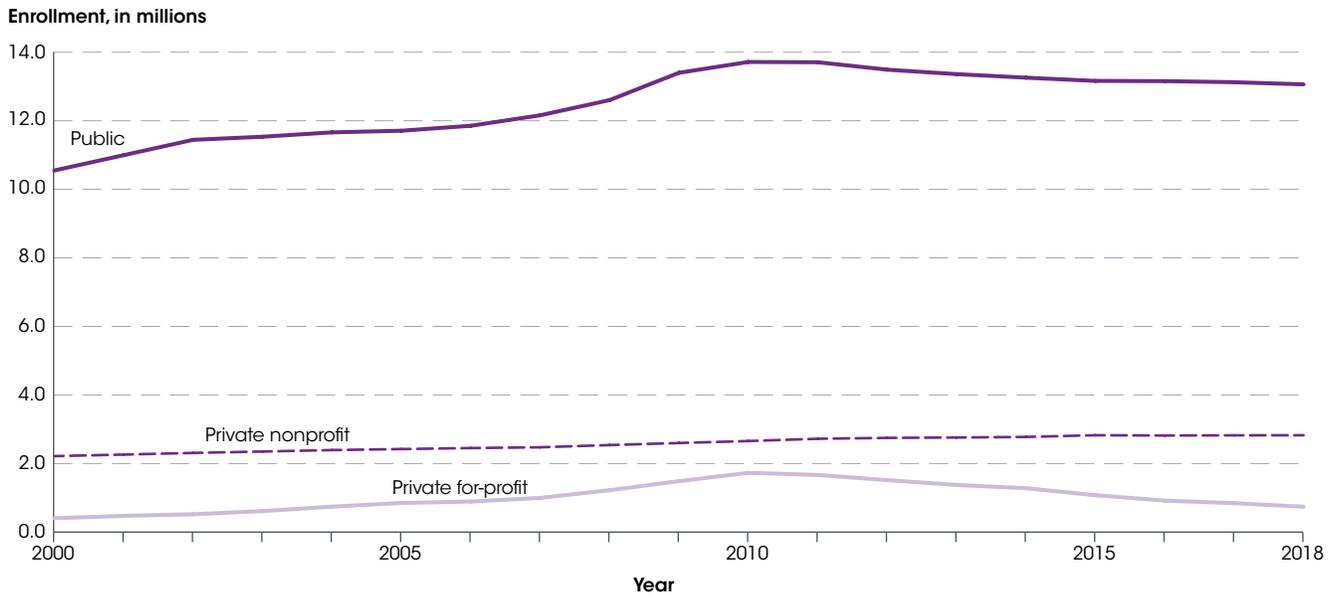
**Figure 3. Actual and projected undergraduate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by attendance status: Fall 2000 through 2029**

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 2018. 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 2019, Fall Enrollment component; and Enrollment in Degree-Granting Institutions Projection Model, 2000 through 2029. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 303.70.

In fall 2018, degree-granting postsecondary institutions enrolled 10.3 million full-time and 6.3 million part-time undergraduate students. Between 2000 and 2018, both full- and part-time enrollment increased overall, most notably between 2000 and 2010. Between 2000 and 2010, 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 2018, full-time enrollment decreased by 10 percent (from 11.5 million to 10.3 million students) and part-time enrollment decreased by 4 percent (from 6.6 million to 6.3 million students). Between 2018 and 2029, full-time enrollment is projected to increase by 1 percent (from 10.3 million to 10.4 million students) and part-time enrollment is projected to increase by 4 percent (from 6.3 million to 6.6 million students).

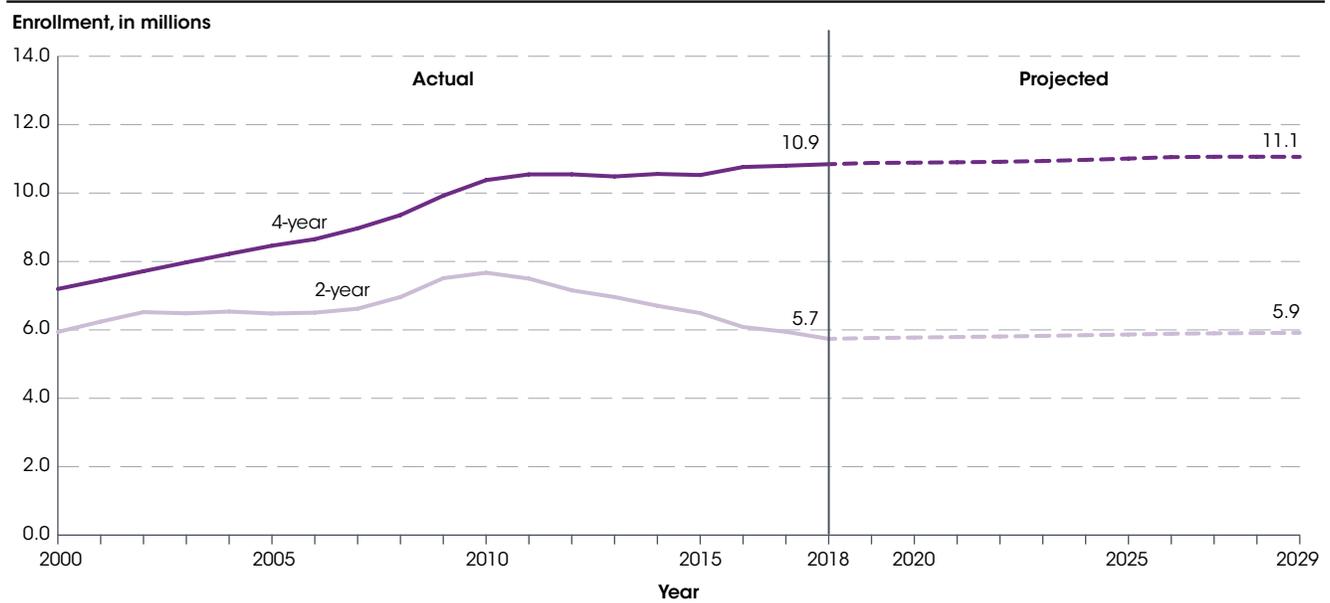
**Figure 4. Undergraduate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by control of institution: Fall 2000 through 2018**

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), Spring 2001 through Spring 2019, Fall Enrollment component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 303.70.

Between fall 2000 and fall 2018, undergraduate enrollment increased by 83 percent (from 403,000 to 739,000 students) at private for-profit institutions, compared with increases of 27 percent (from 2.2 million to 2.8 million students) at private nonprofit institutions and 24 percent (from 10.5 million to 13.0 million students) at public institutions. Between 2000 and 2010, enrollment in 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. Enrollment in private for-profit institutions peaked in 2010 and then decreased by 57 percent (from 1.7 million to 739,000 students) between 2010 and 2018. During this period, enrollment in public institutions decreased by 5 percent (from 13.7 million to 13.0 million students), whereas enrollment in private nonprofit institutions increased by 6 percent (from 2.7 million to 2.8 million students).<sup>3</sup>

**Figure 5. Actual and projected undergraduate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by level of institution: Fall 2000 through 2029**

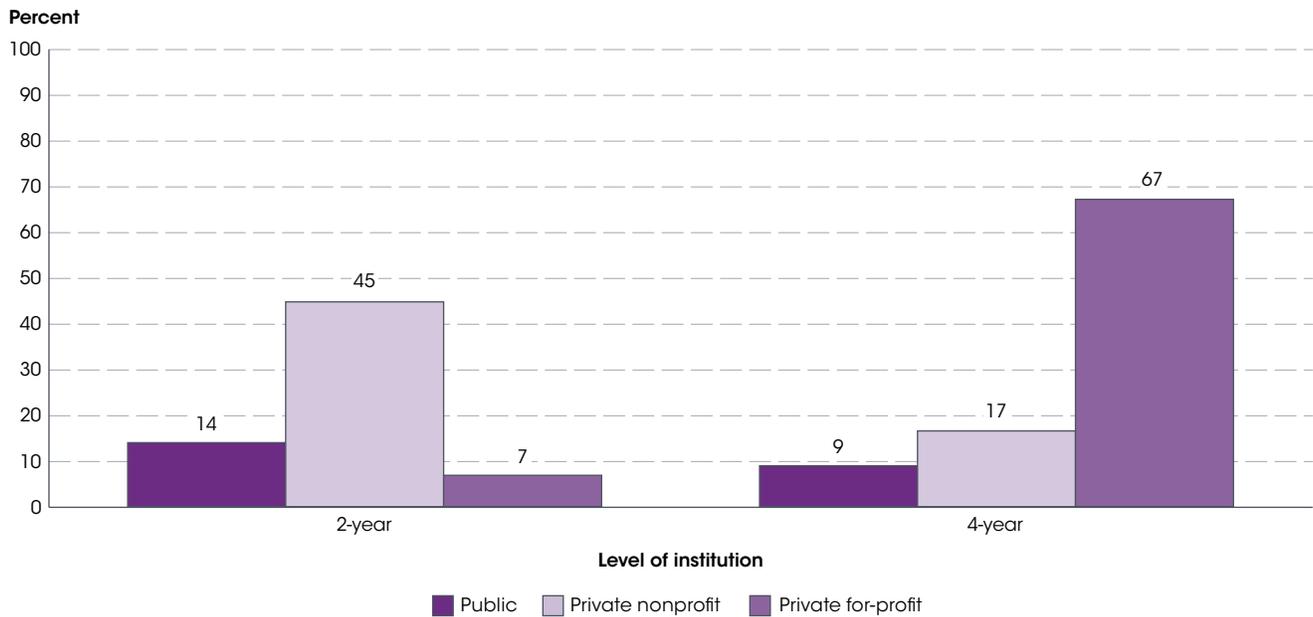
NOTE: Degree-granting institutions grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Projections are based on data through 2018. Some data have been revised from previously published figures.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2001 through Spring 2019, Fall Enrollment component; and Enrollment in Degree-Granting Institutions Projection Model, 2000 through 2029. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 303.70.

In fall 2018, the 10.9 million students at 4-year institutions made up 65 percent of total undergraduate enrollment; the remaining 35 percent (5.7 million students) were enrolled in 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 2018, enrollment increased by 4 percent at 4-year institutions (from 10.4 million to 10.9 million students) and decreased by 25 percent at 2-year institutions (from 7.7 million to 5.7 million

students). Some of the shift in enrollment patterns for 2-year and 4-year institutions during this period is likely explained by 2-year institutions' beginning to offer 4-year degree programs, which caused their classification to change. In 2018, some 695,000 undergraduate students were enrolled in 4-year institutions that were classified as 2-year institutions in 2010. Between 2018 and 2029, undergraduate enrollment in 4-year institutions is projected to increase by 2 percent (from 10.9 to 11.1 million students) and enrollment in 2-year institutions is projected to increase by 3 percent (from 5.7 million to 5.9 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 2018**



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 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.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2019, Fall Enrollment component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 311.15.

Distance education<sup>4</sup> courses and programs provide students with flexible learning opportunities. In fall 2018, some 34 percent (5.7 million) of all undergraduate students participated in distance education. Some 2.3 million students, or 14 percent of total undergraduate enrollment, exclusively took distance education courses. Among undergraduate students who took distance education courses exclusively, 1.5 million were enrolled in institutions located in the same state in which they resided, and 799,000 were enrolled in institutions in a different state.<sup>5</sup>

In fall 2018, the percentage of students at private for-profit institutions who took distance education courses exclusively (55 percent) was more than three times that

of students at private nonprofit institutions (17 percent) and five times that of students at public institutions (11 percent). In particular, the percentage of students at private for-profit 4-year institutions who took distance education courses exclusively (67 percent) was larger than the percentages of students at 2-year institutions who took distance education courses exclusively (percentages at these institutions ranged from 7 percent at private for-profit 2-year institutions to 45 percent at private nonprofit 2-year institutions) and also larger than the percentages of students at public 4-year institutions (9 percent) and private nonprofit 4-year institutions (17 percent) who took distance education courses exclusively.

**Endnotes:**

<sup>1</sup> Prior to 2010, separate data on Asian students, Pacific Islander students, and students of Two or more races were not available.

<sup>2</sup> In the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), racial/ethnic data were not collected for nonresident alien students, and their data were compiled as a separate group.

<sup>3</sup> In addition, in 2018, some 55,000 undergraduate students were enrolled in nonprofit institutions that were classified as for-profit institutions in 2010.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> Not all students taking distance education courses exclusively are specified separately in this comparison; for instance, students residing outside the United States or those whose location is unknown are not specified separately.

**Reference tables:** *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, 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 Enrollment](#) [*Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups*]; [Young Adult Educational and Employment Outcomes by Family Socioeconomic Status](#) [*The Condition of Education 2019 Spotlight*]

**Glossary:** Control of institutions; Degree-granting institutions; 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