

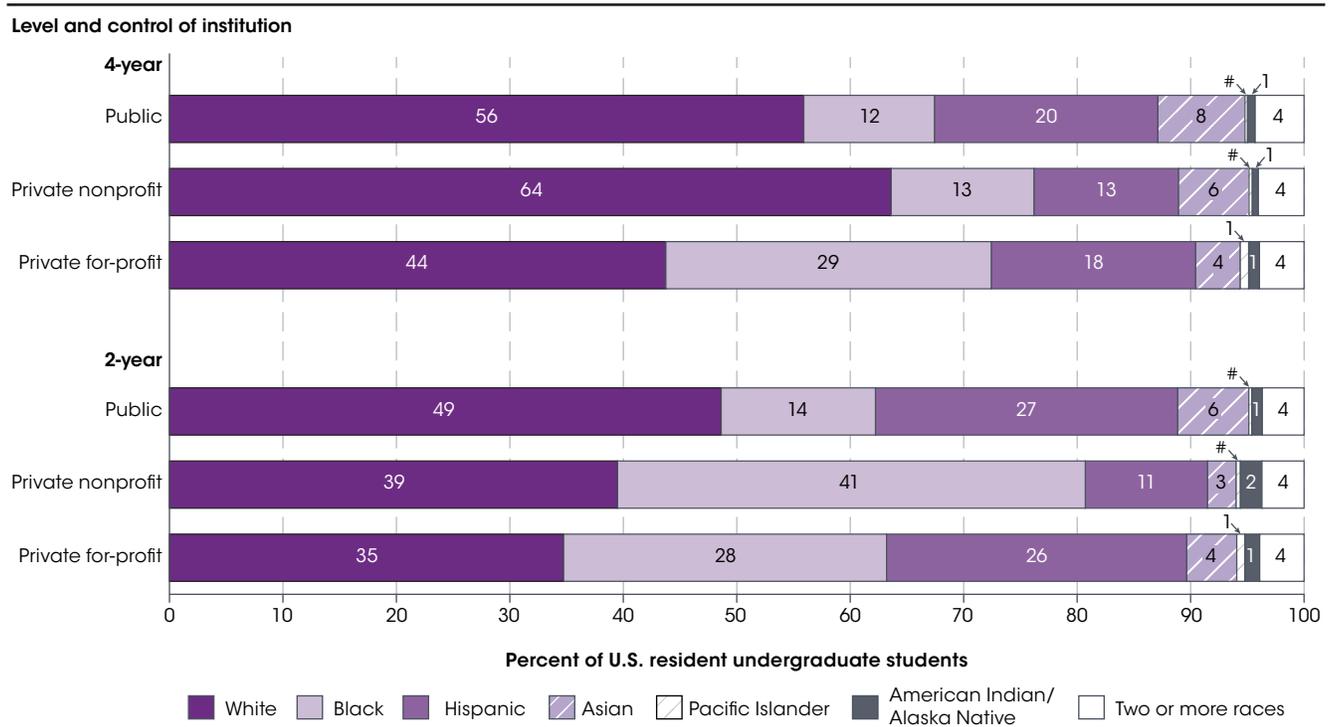
Characteristics of Postsecondary Students

In fall 2018, some 75 percent of the 10.9 million undergraduate students at 4-year institutions were enrolled full time, compared with 37 percent of the 5.7 million undergraduate students at 2-year institutions.

In fall 2018, there were 16.6 million undergraduate students and 3.0 million postbaccalaureate (graduate) students attending degree-granting postsecondary institutions in the United States.¹ Unless otherwise noted, enrollment includes both U.S. resident students and nonresident alien students. The characteristics of students, such as their age and race or ethnicity, varied among public, private nonprofit, and private for-profit 2- and 4-year institutions.

Approximately 10.9 million (65 percent) undergraduate students attended 4-year institutions, and 5.7 million (35 percent) attended 2-year institutions in fall 2018. Of the undergraduate students at 4-year institutions, 8.2 million (75 percent) attended full time and 2.7 million (25 percent) attended part time. Of the undergraduate students at 2-year institutions, 2.1 million (37 percent) attended full time and 3.6 million (63 percent) attended part time.

Figure 1. Percentage distribution of U.S. resident undergraduate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by level and control of institution and student race/ethnicity: Fall 2018



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. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data. 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 2019, Fall Enrollment component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 306.50.

In fall 2018,² the distribution of U.S. resident undergraduates (full- and part-time) by racial or ethnic groups varied among public, private nonprofit, and private for-profit institutions and between 2- and 4-year institutions.³ Sixty-four percent of undergraduate students at private nonprofit 4-year institutions in fall 2018 were White, which was higher than the percentages of

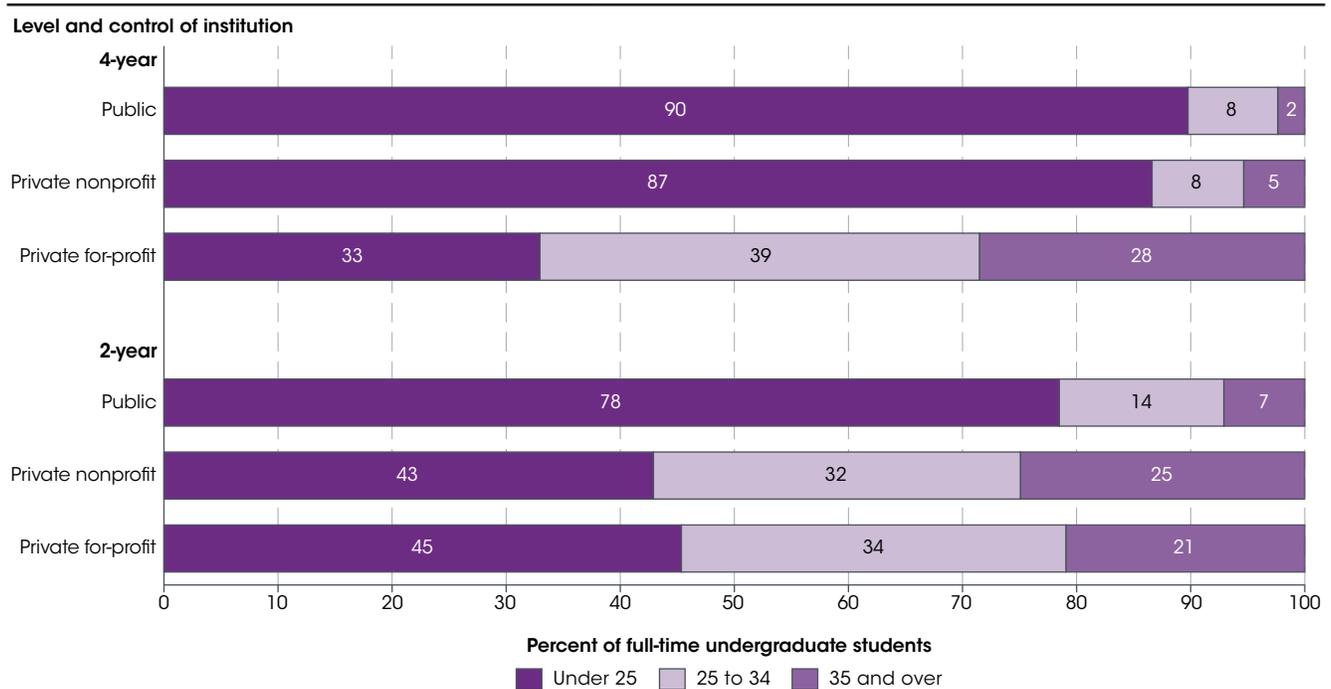
undergraduate students at public (56 percent) and private for-profit (44 percent) 4-year institutions who were White. The percentage of undergraduate students at private for-profit 4-year institutions who were Black (29 percent) was more than double the percentages at private nonprofit (13 percent) and public (12 percent) 4-year institutions. The percentage of undergraduate students who were

Hispanic was higher at public 4-year institutions (20 percent) than at private for-profit 4-year institutions (18 percent), which in turn was higher than the percentage at private nonprofit 4-year institutions (13 percent). The percentages of undergraduate students at public and private nonprofit 4-year institutions who were Asian (8 and 6 percent, respectively) were higher than the percentage at private for-profit 4-year institutions (4 percent).

The percentages of U.S. resident undergraduate students at public 2-year institutions in fall 2018 who were White or Asian (49 and 6 percent, respectively) were higher than

the corresponding percentages at private nonprofit (39 and 3 percent, respectively) and private for-profit (35 and 4 percent, respectively) 2-year institutions. In contrast, the percentage of undergraduate students at private nonprofit 2-year institutions who were Black (41 percent) was higher than the corresponding percentages at private for-profit and public 2-year institutions (28 and 14 percent, respectively). Higher percentages of undergraduate students at public and private for-profit 2-year institutions (27 and 26 percent, respectively) were Hispanic than at private nonprofit 2-year institutions (11 percent).

Figure 2. Percentage distribution of full-time undergraduate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by level and control of institution and student age: Fall 2017



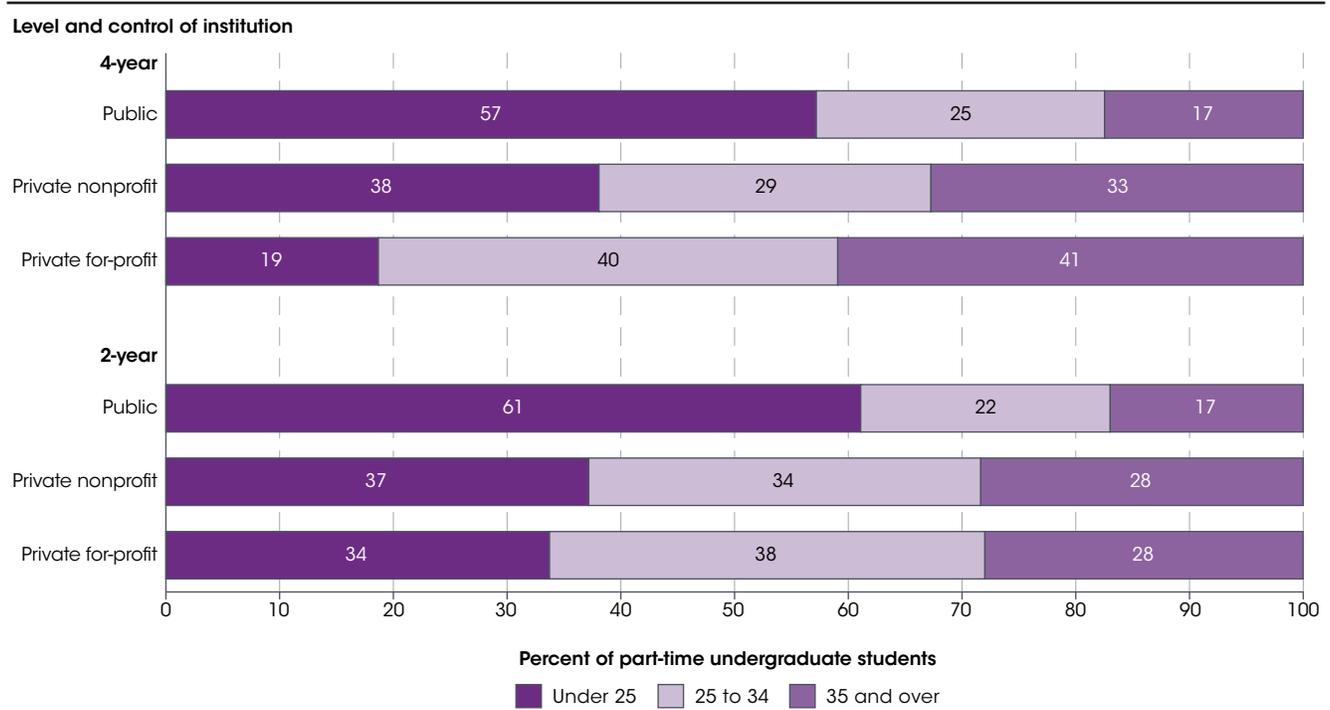
NOTE: Enrollment includes both U.S. resident students and nonresident alien students. Degree-granting institutions grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Percentage distributions exclude students whose age is unknown.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2018, Fall Enrollment component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 303.50.

In fall 2017, the percentage of full-time undergraduate students at 4-year institutions who were under age 25 was higher at public institutions (90 percent) and private nonprofit institutions (87 percent) than at private for-profit institutions (33 percent).⁴ At public and private nonprofit 4-year institutions, the percentages of full-time undergraduate students ages 25 to 34 were each 8 percent. In contrast, at private for-profit 4-year institutions, undergraduate students ages 25 to 34 made up the largest age group of those enrolled full time (39 percent).

At 2-year institutions, the percentage of full-time undergraduate students in fall 2017 who were under age 25 was higher at public institutions (78 percent) than at private for-profit (45 percent) and private nonprofit (43 percent) institutions. In contrast, lower percentages of full-time undergraduate students were age 35 and over at public 2-year institutions (7 percent) compared with private for-profit (21 percent) and private nonprofit (25 percent) 2-year institutions.

Figure 3. Percentage distribution of part-time undergraduate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by level and control of institution and student age: Fall 2017

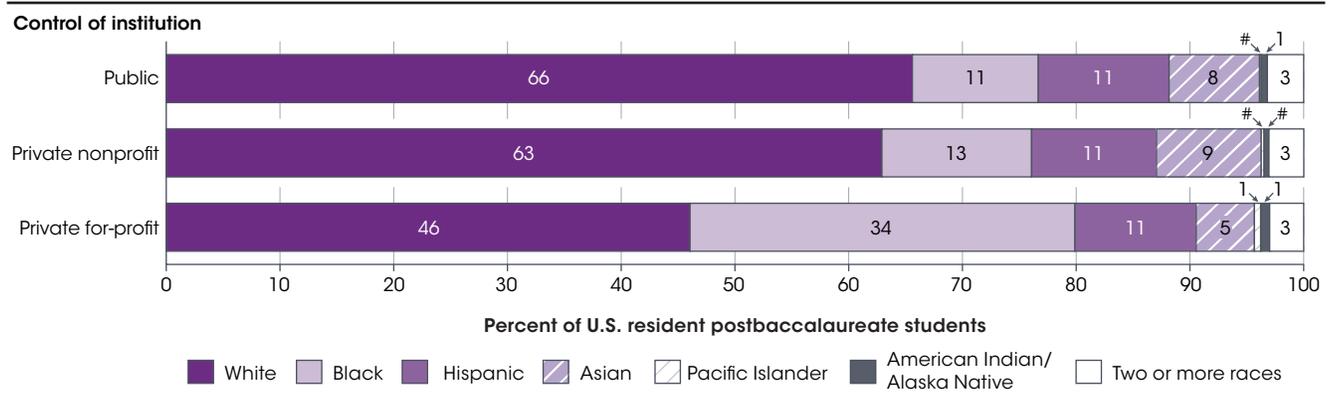


NOTE: Enrollment includes both U.S. resident students and nonresident alien students. Degree-granting institutions grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Percentage distributions exclude students whose age is unknown.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2018, Fall Enrollment component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 303.50.

In fall 2017, the percentage of part-time undergraduate students at public 4-year institutions who were under age 25 (57 percent) was higher than the percentages at private nonprofit (38 percent) and private for-profit (19 percent) 4-year institutions. The percentage of part-time undergraduate students who were ages 25 to 34 was lower at public (25 percent) and private nonprofit (29 percent) 4-year institutions than at private for-profit (40 percent) 4-year institutions. The percentage of part-time undergraduate students who were age 35 and over was lower at public 4-year institutions (17 percent) than at private nonprofit (33 percent) and private for-profit (41 percent) 4-year institutions.

At public 2-year institutions, the percentage of part-time undergraduate students who were under age 25 (61 percent) in fall 2017 was higher than at private nonprofit (37 percent) and private for-profit (34 percent) 2-year institutions. The percentage of part-time undergraduate students who were ages 25 to 34 was lower at public institutions (22 percent) than at private nonprofit (34 percent) and private for-profit (38 percent) 2-year institutions. Similarly, the percentage of part-time undergraduate students who were age 35 and over was lower at public institutions (17 percent) than at private nonprofit and private for-profit 2-year institutions (28 percent each).

Figure 4. Percentage distribution of U.S. resident postbaccalaureate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by control of institution and student race/ethnicity: Fall 2018



Rounds to zero.

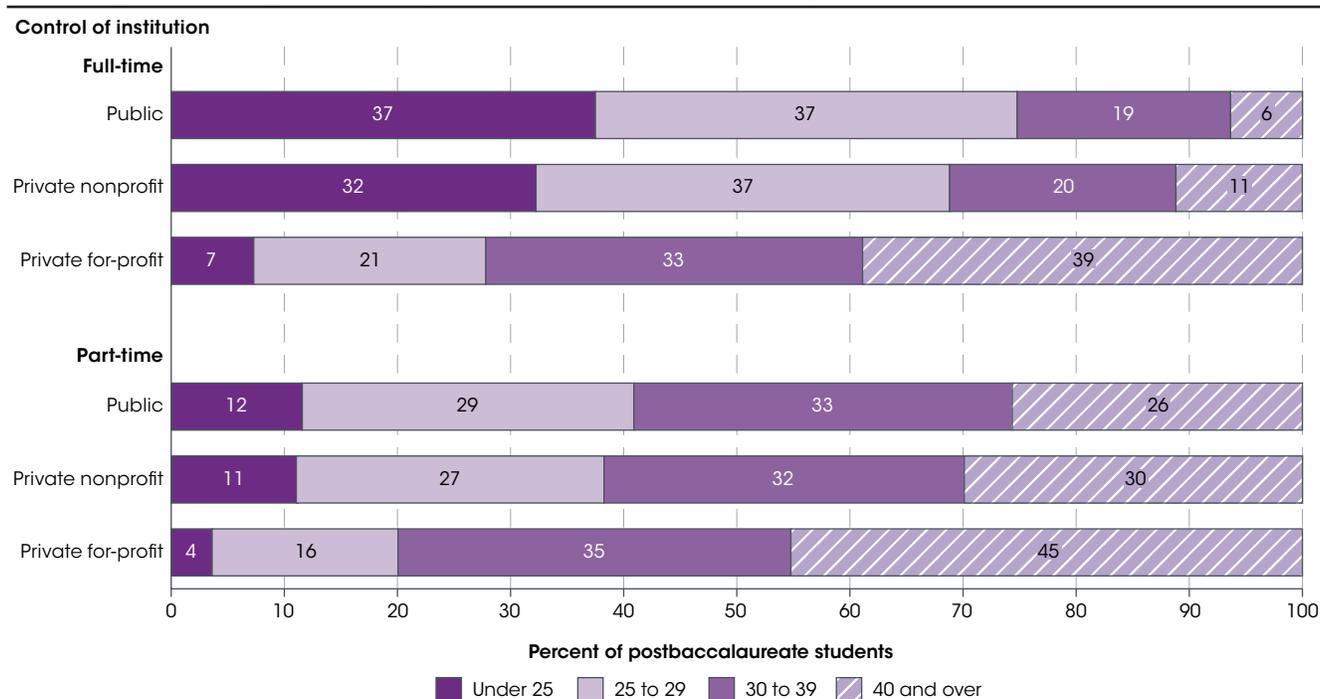
NOTE: Degree-granting institutions grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2019, Fall Enrollment component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 306.50.

In fall 2018, some 49 percent of all postbaccalaureate (graduate) students attended public institutions, 43 percent attended private nonprofit institutions, and 8 percent attended private for-profit institutions. Approximately two-thirds of U.S. resident graduate students at public institutions and private nonprofit institutions were White (66 and 63 percent, respectively), compared with less than one-half of students at private for-profit institutions (46 percent). The percentage of graduate students at

private for-profit institutions who were Black (34 percent) was higher than the percentages at private nonprofit institutions and public institutions (13 and 11 percent, respectively). Hispanic students accounted for 11 percent of graduate student enrollment each at public, private nonprofit, and private for-profit institutions. Asian students accounted for 9 percent of graduate student enrollment at private nonprofit institutions, 8 percent at public institutions, and 5 percent at private for-profit institutions.

Figure 5. Percentage distribution of full-time and part-time postbaccalaureate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by control of institution and student age: Fall 2017



NOTE: Enrollment includes both U.S. resident students and nonresident alien students. Degree-granting institutions grant associate's or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Percentage distributions exclude students whose age is unknown.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2018, Fall Enrollment component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 303.50.

In fall 2017, approximately three-quarters of full-time postbaccalaureate students at public institutions were under age 30, with 37 percent under age 25 and 37 percent ages 25 to 29. At private nonprofit institutions, the majority (69 percent) of full-time graduate students were under age 30, with 32 percent under age 25 and 37 percent ages 25 to 29. In contrast, the majority (72 percent) of

full-time graduate students at private for-profit institutions were age 30 and over, with 33 percent ages 30 to 39 and 39 percent age 40 and over. Among part-time graduate students, 80 percent were age 30 and over at private for-profit institutions, as were 62 percent at private nonprofit institutions and 59 percent at public institutions.

Endnotes:

¹ For more information on how postsecondary enrollment has changed over time, see indicators [Undergraduate Enrollment](#) and [Postbaccalaureate Enrollment](#).

² The most recent year available for enrollment data by age group is 2017. The most recent year available for enrollment data by racial/ethnic group is 2018.

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

⁴ Throughout this indicator, students of unknown ages are excluded from the age analysis.

Reference tables: *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, tables 303.50, 303.60, and 306.50; *Digest of Education Statistics 2018*, table 306.50

Related indicators and resources: [Characteristics of Degree-Granting Postsecondary Institutions](#); [Characteristics of Postsecondary Faculty](#); [Postbaccalaureate Enrollment](#); [Spotlight B: Characteristics of Postsecondary Institutions Serving Specific Minority Racial/Ethnic Groups](#) [*Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups*]; [Undergraduate Enrollment](#)

Glossary: College; Control of institutions; Enrollment; Full-time enrollment; Nonresident alien; Part-time enrollment; Postbaccalaureate enrollment; Postsecondary institutions (basic classification by level); Private institution; Public school or institution; Racial/ethnic group; Undergraduate students; U.S. resident