

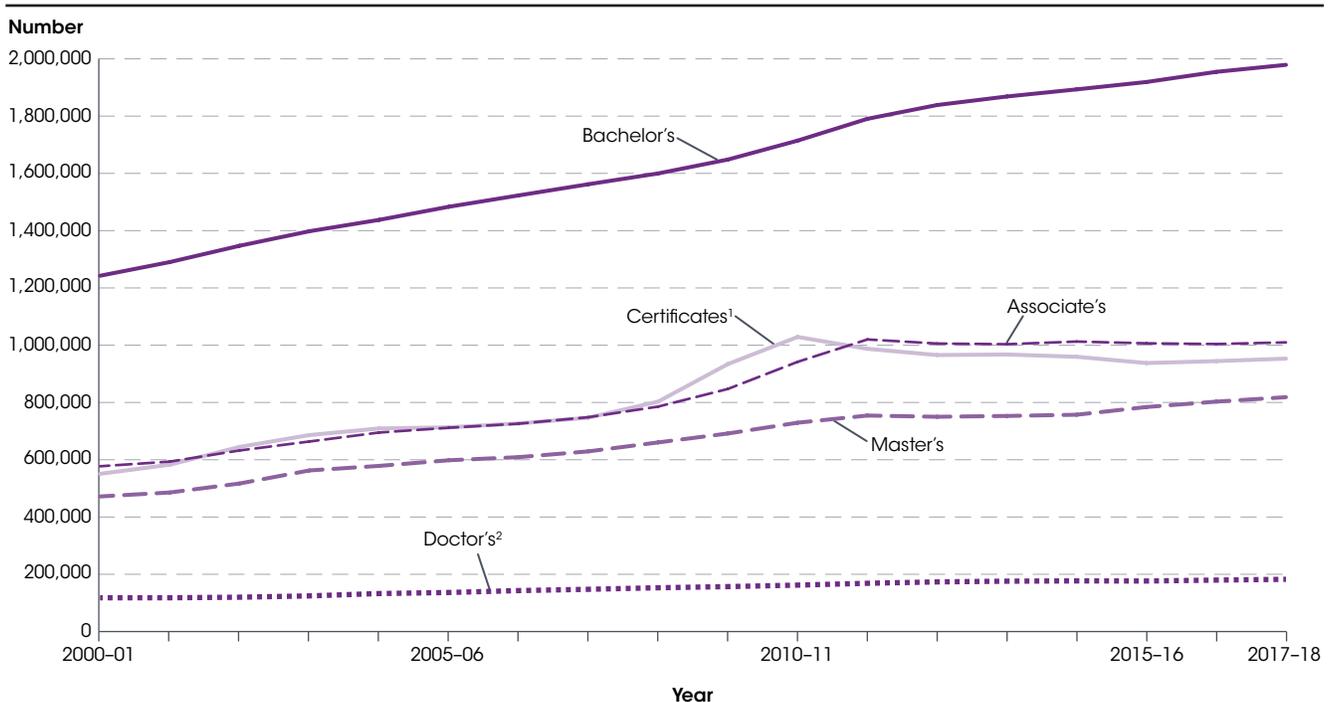
Postsecondary Certificates and Degrees Conferred

While the public sector confers far more degrees than the private for-profit sector, from 2000–01 to 2017–18 the private for-profit sector increased the number of bachelor’s degrees conferred by 328 percent, number of master’s degrees by 451 percent, and the number of doctorates by 603 percent. In contrast, public institutions increased their numbers of degrees by 61 percent for bachelor’s, 56 percent for master’s, and 53 percent for doctorates.

In academic year 2017–18, postsecondary institutions conferred 955,000 certificates¹ below the associate’s level, 1.0 million associate’s degrees, 2.0 million bachelor’s degrees, 820,000 master’s degrees, and 184,000 doctor’s

degrees. The number of postsecondary certificates and degrees conferred at each award level increased between 2000–01 and 2017–18.

Figure 1. Number of certificates and degrees conferred by postsecondary institutions: Academic years 2000–01 through 2017–18



¹ Data are for certificates below the associate’s degree level.

² Includes Ph.D., Ed.D., and comparable degrees at the doctoral levels. Includes most degrees formerly classified as first-professional, such as M.D., D.D.S., and law degrees.

NOTE: Data are for postsecondary institutions participating 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), Fall 2001 through Fall 2018, Completions component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 318.40.

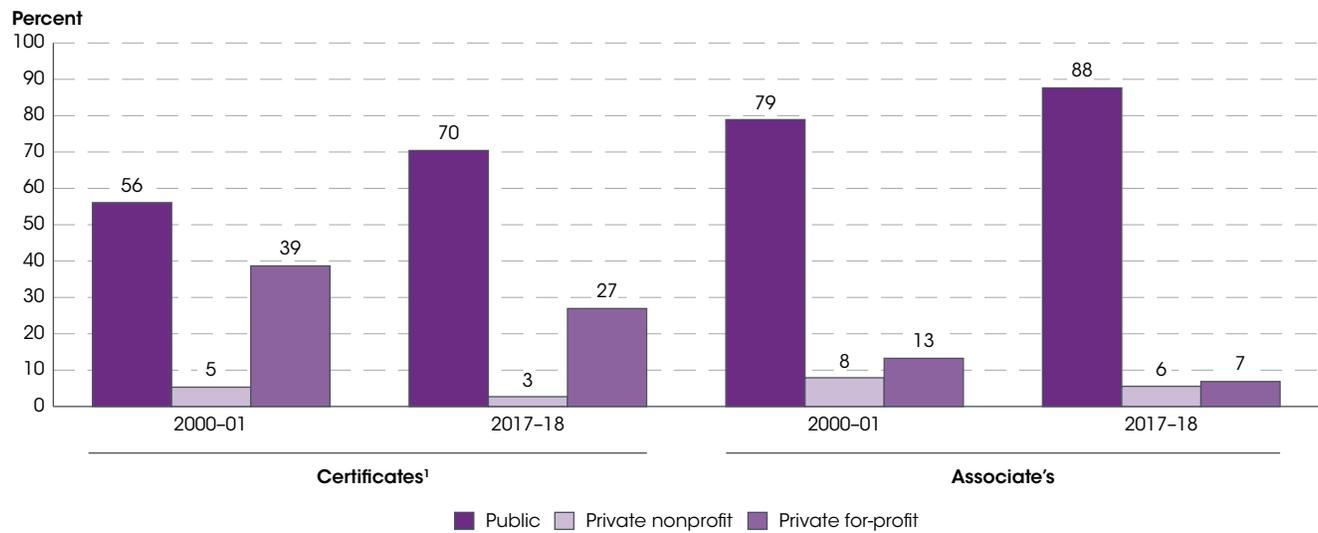
The number of certificates conferred below the associate’s level increased by 87 percent between 2000–01 and 2010–11, from 553,000 to a peak of 1.0 million. Between 2010–11 and 2017–18, the number of certificates conferred decreased by 7 percent (from 1.0 million to 955,000). The number of associate’s degrees conferred peaked in 2011–12, which was 1 year later than the peak in the number of certificates conferred. Between

2000–01 and 2011–12 the number of associate’s degrees conferred increased by 77 percent, from 579,000 to 1.0 million. The number of associate’s degrees conferred has fluctuated since 2011 with single year changes of 1 percent or less from 2011–12 to 2017–18. The number of bachelor’s degrees conferred increased by 59 percent (from 1.2 million to 2.0 million) between 2000–01 and 2017–18.

Between 2000–01 and 2011–12, the number of master’s degrees conferred increased by 60 percent (from 474,000 to 756,000), but the number has increased by only 8 percent (from 756,000 to 820,000) between 2011–12

and 2017–18. The number of doctor’s degrees conferred increased by 54 percent (from 120,000 to 184,000) between 2000–01 and 2017–18.

Figure 2. Percentage distribution of certificates and associate’s degrees conferred by postsecondary institutions, by control of institution: Academic years 2000–01 and 2017–18



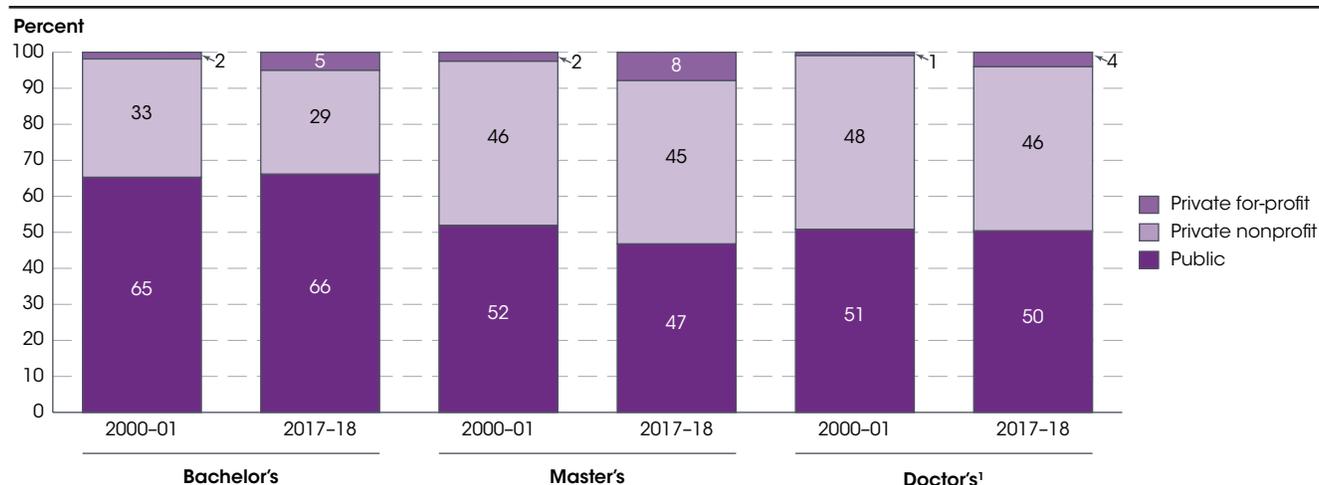
¹ Data are for certificates below the associate’s degree level.

NOTE: Data are for postsecondary institutions participating in Title IV federal financial aid programs. 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), Fall 2001 and Fall 2018, Completions component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 318.40.

Between 2000–01 and 2017–18, the number of certificates below the associate’s level conferred by public institutions increased by 117 percent (from 310,000 to 672,000). The number of certificates conferred by private nonprofit institutions was 12 percent lower in 2017–18 (26,000) than in 2000–01 (29,000) but showed no consistent trend during this period. The number of certificates conferred by private for-profit institutions increased by 122 percent between 2000–01 and 2010–11 (from 214,000 to 474,000) and then decreased by 46 percent between 2010–11 and 2017–18 (from 474,000 to 257,000). Between 2000–01 and 2017–18, the proportion of certificates conferred by public institutions increased from 56 to 70 percent, the proportion conferred by private nonprofit institutions decreased from 5 to 3 percent, and the proportion conferred by private for-profit institutions decreased from 39 to 27 percent.

The number of associate’s degrees conferred increased between 2000–01 and 2017–18 by 94 percent at public institutions (from 456,000 to 886,000) and by 23 percent at private nonprofit institutions (from 46,000 to 56,000). The number of associate’s degrees conferred by private for-profit institutions increased by 175 percent between 2000–01 and 2011–12 (from 77,000 to 211,000) and then decreased by 67 percent between 2011–12 and 2017–18 (from 211,000 to 69,000), reaching its lowest point since 2000–01. The proportion of associate’s degrees conferred by public institutions was higher in 2017–18 (88 percent) than in 2000–01 (79 percent). By contrast, the proportion of associate’s degrees conferred by private nonprofit institutions was lower in 2017–18 (6 percent) than in 2000–01 (8 percent), as was the proportion conferred by private for-profit institutions (7 percent in 2017–18 vs. 13 percent in 2000–01).

Figure 3. Percentage distribution of bachelor's, master's, and doctor's degrees conferred by postsecondary institutions, by control of institution: Academic years 2000–01 and 2017–18



¹ Includes Ph.D., Ed.D., and comparable degrees at the doctoral level. Includes most degrees formerly classified as first-professional, such as M.D., D.D.S., and law degrees.

NOTE: Data are for degree-granting postsecondary institutions participating in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. 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), Fall 2001 and Fall 2018, Completions component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 318.40.

Between 2000–01 and 2017–18, the number of bachelor's degrees conferred by public institutions increased by 61 percent (from 812,000 to 1.3 million), the number conferred by private nonprofit institutions increased by 40 percent (from 409,000 to 571,000), and the number conferred by private for-profit institutions increased by 328 percent (from 23,000 to 99,000). The proportion of bachelor's degrees conferred by private nonprofit institutions decreased (from 33 to 29 percent), and the proportion conferred by private for-profit institutions increased (from 2 to 5 percent). The proportion conferred by public institutions changed very little between 2000–01 and 2017–18.

The number of master's degrees conferred between 2000–01 and 2017–18 increased by 56 percent at public institutions (from 246,000 to 384,000), by 72 percent at private nonprofit institutions (from 216,000 to 372,000),

and by 451 percent at private for-profit institutions (from 12,000 to 64,000). Over this period, the proportion of master's degrees conferred by public institutions (from 52 to 47 percent) and private nonprofit institutions (from 46 to 45 percent) decreased. The difference was made up by private for-profit institutions which increased their proportion of master's degrees between 2000–01 and 2017–18 (from 2 to 8 percent).

Between 2000–01 and 2017–18, the number of doctor's degrees conferred increased by 53 percent at public institutions (from 61,000 to 93,000), by 45 percent at private nonprofit institutions (from 58,000 to 84,000), and by 603 percent at private for-profit institutions (from 1,000 to 7,000). There were small shifts in the proportion of doctor's degrees conferred with the proportion conferred by private for-profit institutions increasing from 1 to 4 percent.

Endnotes:

¹ A certificate is a recognized postsecondary credential certifying the satisfactory completion of a postsecondary education program.

Reference tables: *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 318.40

Related indicators and resources: [Degrees Awarded \[Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups\]](#); [Graduate Degree Fields](#); [Postsecondary Outcomes for Nontraditional Undergraduate Students \[The Condition of Education 2017 Spotlight\]](#); [Trends in Student Loan Debt for Graduate School Completers \[The Condition of Education 2018 Spotlight\]](#); [Undergraduate Degree Fields](#); [Undergraduate Retention and Graduation Rates](#)

Glossary: Associate's degree; Bachelor's degree; Certificate; Control of institutions; Doctor's degree; Master's degree; Private institution; Public school or institution