

The Center for Distance Education Research

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Fall 2016 Enrollment Preliminary Data Analysis

The National Center for Education Statistics's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) recently released the 2016 fall enrollment survey data. This report is a quick summary of that fall enrollment data as we begin to work on our annual report that should be released in the next few weeks.

Annually, all institutions that participate in any federal assistance program authorized by Title IV of the Higher Education Act are mandated to submit the required data through the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) surveys. Information on distance education was included for the first time during the annual data collection for fall 2012. Institutions were required to report on the number of students enrolled in exclusively distance education courses and students enrolled in some but not all distance education courses.

Methodology

All data for this report were freely downloaded from the National Center for Education Statistics IPEDS Data Center. The data located at the IPEDS Data Center can change over time due to corrections of the data files, and it is important to note that for this report. The data have not been refreshed since they were originally downloaded, and therefore could have minor errors that should not be significant enough to change the outcomes of the data files. The data files for each year were last modified by IPEDS on the following dates: fall 2012, December 16, 2014; fall 2013, September 26, 2014; fall 2014, November 13, 2015; fall 2015, October 4, 2016; and fall 2016, September 27, 2017.

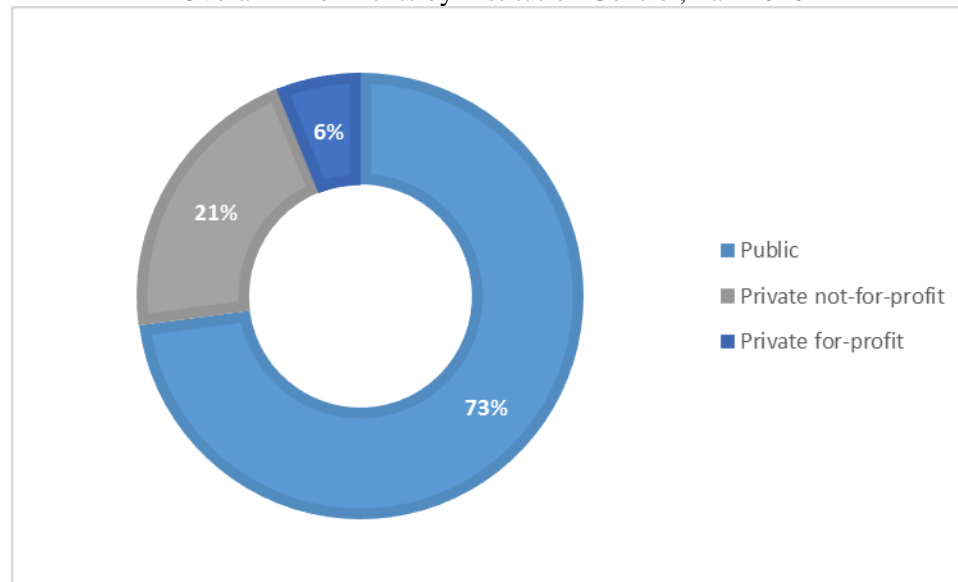
All results in this report utilized degree-granting institutions designated as such in the IPEDS data files. All non-degree granting institutions were excluded from the analysis.



Overall Enrollments at Degree Granting Institutions

Overall Enrollments by Institution Control

Overall Enrollments by Institution Control, Fall 2016



Overall Enrollments by Institution Control for 2012 to 2016

Institution Control	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	% Change 2012-2016
Public	14,970,361	14,830,334	14,739,839	14,655,639	14,673,374	-2%
Private not-for-profit	4,105,926	4,152,117	4,165,426	4,223,923	4,230,003	3%
Private for-profit	1,856,538	1,702,194	1,605,749	1,390,802	1,224,920	-34%
Total	20,932,825	20,684,645	20,511,014	20,270,364	20,128,297	-4%

Summary:

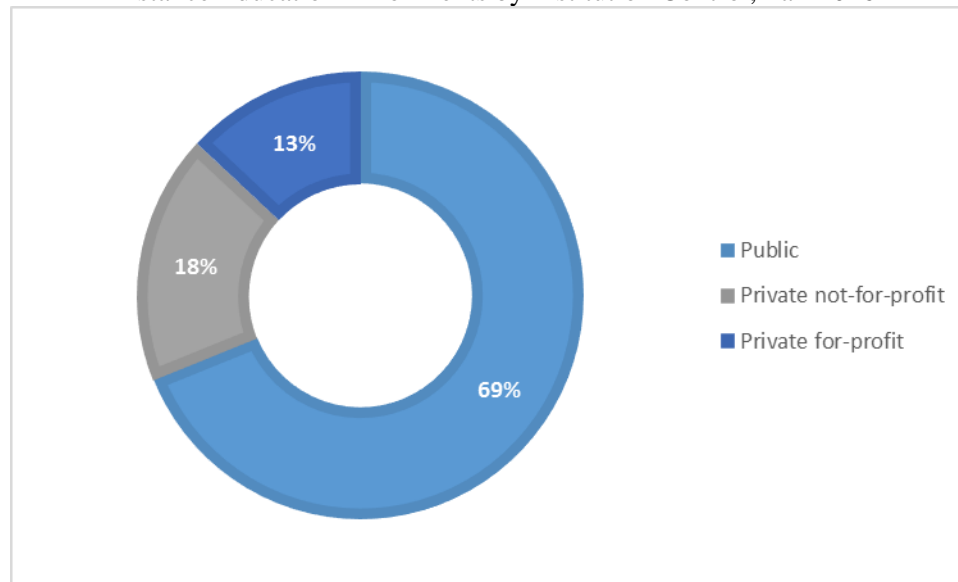
Since 2012, enrollments at private not-for-profit institutions increased by 3%, a gain of 124,077 students. As of fall 2016, public institutions comprised 73% of all enrollments, despite a 2% decrease in enrollments since 2012 and a small increase over 2015 (7%). Private for-profit institutions continued a five year decline by losing 165,882 students over the previous year or 34% of all enrollments over the past five years.



Distance Education Enrollments at Degree Granting Institutions

Distance Education Enrollments by Institution Control

Distance Education Enrollments by Institution Control, Fall 2016



Distance Education Enrollments by Institution Control for 2012 to 2016

Institution Control	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	% Change 2012-2016
Public	3,599,867	3,761,063	3,908,292	4,082,651	4,381,920	22%
Private not-for-profit	764,697	863,177	960,751	1,070,622	1,147,028	50%
Private for-profit	1,062,218	988,641	961,173	870,918	831,673	-22%
Total	5,426,782	5,612,881	5,830,216	6,024,191	6,360,621	17%

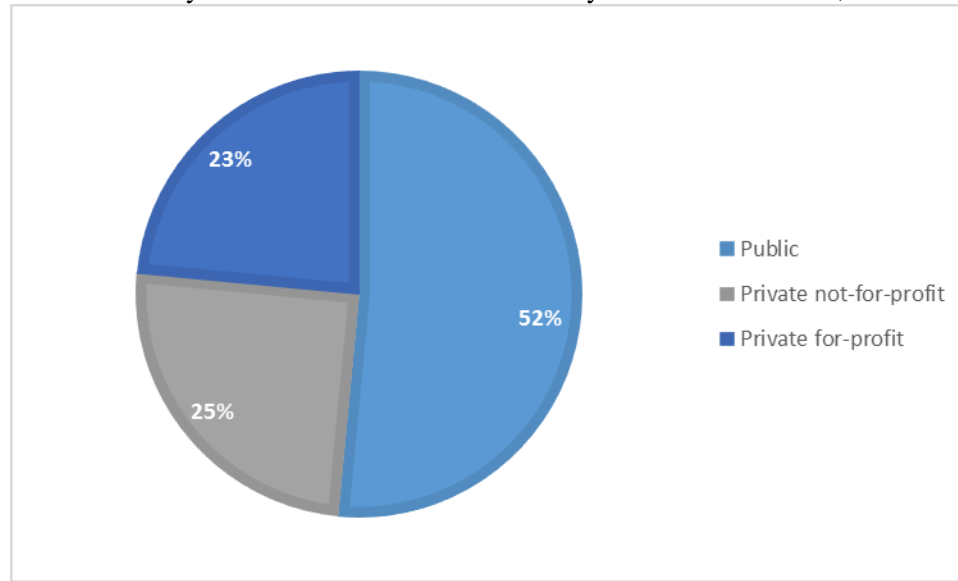
Summary:

As of fall 2016, public institutions comprised 69% of all distance education enrollments, followed by private not-for-profit at 18% and private for-profit with 13%. Private not-for-profits increased distance education enrollments by 50% (782,053) over the five year period. Public institutions also increased enrollments by 22% (382,331) since 2012. Private for-profits decreased 22% (230,545) since 2012.

IPEDS defines enrollment in distance education courses in two ways: 1) Students who are enrolled exclusively in courses that are considered distance education courses, and 2) Students who are enrolled some but not all courses that are considered distance education courses, but are not enrolled exclusively in distance education courses. In this section, and in each of the following sections, data will be provided for both of these areas, exclusively and some but not all, to better understand student enrollment patterns.



Enrollments by Institution Control in Exclusively Distance Education, Fall 2016



Enrollments by Institution Control in Exclusively Distance Education for 2012 to 2016

Institution Control	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	% Change 2012-2016
Public	1,233,192	1,283,983	1,384,262	1,458,051	1,547,662	26%
Private not-for-profit	473,800	556,434	632,341	692,714	750,651	58%
Private for-profit	927,899	862,563	843,579	753,346	706,188	-24%
Total	2,634,891	2,702,980	2,860,182	2,904,111	3,004,501	14%

Enrollments by Institution Control in Some But Not All Distance Education for 2012 to 2016

Institution Control	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	% Change 2012-2016
Public	2,366,675	2,477,080	2,524,030	2,624,600	2,834,258	20%
Private not-for-profit	290,897	306,743	328,410	377,908	396,377	36%
Private for-profit	134,319	126,078	117,594	117,572	125,485	-7%
Total	2,791,891	2,909,901	2,970,034	3,120,080	3,356,120	20%

Summary:

As of fall 2016, public institutions comprised 52% of exclusively distance education enrollments, a market share that has been steadily increasing since 2012. The private institutions, however, enrolled more of their students exclusively online: 65% in private not-for-profit and 85% in private for-profit. At 65%, a majority of student enrollments at public institutions are in some, but not all, distance education courses.

For the first time since the reporting of distance education began, private for-profit enrollments are below both public and private, not-for-profit institutions.



IPEDS Definitions

These definitions came directly from the IPEDS data files for fall 2016 from the Institutional Characteristics file (HD2016) and the Fall Enrollment file (EF2016A_DIST).

1. Control - A classification of whether an institution is operated by publicly elected or appointed officials or by privately elected or appointed officials and derives its major source of funds from private sources.
 - a) Public institution - An educational institution whose programs and activities are operated by publicly elected or appointed school officials and which is supported primarily by public funds.
 - b) Private not-for-profit institution - A private institution in which the individual(s) or agency in control receives no compensation, other than wages, rent, or other expenses for the assumption of risk. These include both independent not-for-profit schools and those affiliated with a religious organization.
 - c) Private for-profit institution - A private institution in which the individual(s) or agency in control receives compensation other than wages, rent, or other expenses for the assumption of risk.
2. Degree Granting - Degree-granting institutions offer an associate's, bachelor's, master's, doctor's or a first-professional degree. Nondegree-granting offers certificates or other formal awards.
3. Distance Education Course - A course in which the instructional content is delivered exclusively via distance education. Requirements for coming to campus for orientation, testing, or academic support services do not exclude a course from being classified as distance education.
4. Distance Education - Education that 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 students and the instructor synchronously or asynchronously. (This definition may also be referred to as DE in this report.)
 - a) Technologies used for instruction may include the following: 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 video cassette, DVDs, and CD-ROMs, if the cassette, DVDs, and CD-ROMs are used in a course in conjunction with the technologies listed above



Resource

U.S. Department of Education. Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. Institutional Characteristics file (HD2016) and the Fall Enrollment file (EF2016A_DIST)