



# Council of Graduate Schools

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **First-Time Enrollment Flat for International Graduate Students**

#### **U.S. first-time enrollment up 6%**

The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) is reporting today that there was no growth in first-time enrollment of international students at U.S. graduate schools from 2008 to 2009. The zero percent change follows four years of growth.

The survey report on Fall 2009 enrollment shows that, after peaking at 12% in 2006, the rate of change in international first-time enrollment has slowed for the past three years, mirroring the trend in applications CGS first reported in April. Total enrollment of international graduate students rose 2%. (First-time and total enrollment trends differ due to the varying length of time required to complete graduate degrees, particularly doctorates.)

Changes in first-time enrollment vary widely by country of origin. First-time enrollment of students from China, one of the two countries that send the most graduate students to the U.S., increased by 16%, and there was 22% growth from the Middle East. However, there was a 16% *decline* from India, the other largest sending country. South Korea also experienced a large decline, 13%.

The report additionally includes findings on domestic student enrollment. In contrast to the international trends, first-time enrollment of U.S. graduate students grew 6%, though the overall number masks a significant split: 68% of respondents reported an increase, averaging 11%, but 32% of schools reported a decline, averaging 7%.

“The strong growth in first-time enrollment of U.S. students shows that they recognize the value of graduate education, especially in a tight job market,” said Debra W. Stewart, CGS President. “However, the lack of growth in first-time international enrollment raises questions about the future of our nation’s share of the global student market,” she added.

#### **Enrollment trends by field of study and institution type**

The changes in international first-time graduate enrollment vary by field of study and institution type, though not as dramatically as by country. There was either a decline or no growth in five of eight broad fields. First-time enrollment fell by 4% in physical & earth

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sciences, one of the three largest fields for international students, and remained flat in the other two, business and engineering. The fastest growth was a 6% gain in “other fields.”

The survey also reports changes by the size of respondents’ graduate student enrollment. Overall, the largest increases in first-time international enrollment were at institutions with the largest international enrollments. There was 7% growth at the 10 institutions with the most international students, compared to a 1% decline at the schools outside the 100 largest. This trend generally held true for enrollment by country/region of origin, though not for all fields of study.

Finally, the picture was mixed for institutions that responded both this year and in 2004, the year CGS initiated the survey. Although 28% of institutions reported that they have fewer first-time international graduate students in 2009 than they did in 2003, overall first-time international enrollment is 15% higher this year than it was in 2003.

### **About the report**

***Findings from the 2009 CGS International Graduate Admissions Survey, Phase III: Final Offers of Admissions and Enrollment*** is based on the final phase of a three-part annual survey of international graduate student applications, admissions, and enrollment among CGS U.S. member institutions. The survey had a response rate of over 50%, including 83 of the 100 institutions with the largest international graduate student enrollments.

The report is available at [www.cgsnet.org](http://www.cgsnet.org).

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*The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) is an organization of over 500 institutions of higher education in the United States and Canada engaged in graduate education, research, and the preparation of candidates for advanced degrees. Among U.S. institutions, CGS members award 95% of the doctoral degrees and 78% of the master’s degrees.\* The organization’s mission is to improve and advance graduate education, which it accomplishes through advocacy in the federal policy arena, research, and the development and dissemination of best practices.*

\* Based on data from the 2008 CGS/GRE Survey of Graduate Enrollment and Degrees