

PRESS RELEASE

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Graduate Schools Report Slower Growth in New Students for Fall 2013

**Enrollment of U.S. citizens fell 0.9%,
while enrollment of temporary residents rose 11.5%**

Washington, DC — The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) today reported a 1.0% increase in first-time enrollment between fall 2012 and fall 2013. More than 459,000 students enrolled for the first time in graduate certificate, education specialist, master's, or doctoral programs for the fall 2013 term, according to institutions responding to the CGS/GRE Survey of Graduate Enrollment and Degrees, an annual survey that has been conducted since 1986.

Despite the gains in first-time enrollment, total graduate enrollment fell 0.2% between fall 2012 and fall 2013 following a 2.3% decline in the previous year. Total graduate enrollment was about 1.7 million students in fall 2013.

The data show diverging trends by residency status. While first-time enrollment of U.S. citizens and permanent residents shrank by 0.9%, the increase of 11.5% in first-time enrollment of temporary residents was enough to push the overall rate of change into positive territory. Temporary residents represented one-in-five new graduate students at U.S. programs in fall 2013.

CGS President Suzanne T. Ortega pointed out that graduate enrollments are increasingly important to U.S. economic competitiveness. "People with graduate degrees are driving growth and innovation in our economy, and graduate-level skills are in higher demand every year. However, enrollments are not keeping pace with the projected growth in jobs requiring advanced degrees. We can't put more qualified American workers into these high-level jobs until we create more opportunities for them to earn graduate degrees. To meet the needs of our economy, we must invest in graduate education and better support the students who enroll in master's and PhD programs with more grants and fellowships to reduce their reliance on loans."

Ortega added that the strong growth in enrollments of international students was an encouraging trend. "International students are making vital contributions to graduate education and research. Welcoming more of the world's top talent will help our economy, especially if we allow more international graduates to stay and work in the U.S. after completing their degrees."

First-time enrollment for Hispanic/Latino students rose 5.7%. Such growth is important, as Hispanic/Latino students have long been underrepresented in graduate programs. However, other underrepresented groups lost some of the ground gained in previous years, as first-time enrollment fell 4.9% for American Indians/Alaska Natives and 0.1% for Blacks/African Americans between fall 2012 and fall 2013. Meanwhile, first-time enrollment of White students fell 2.1%. For Asian/Pacific Islander students, first-time enrollment grew 0.7%.

(more)

Other report findings include:

Trends by field

- The largest one-year changes in graduate applications between fall 2012 and fall 2013 occurred in mathematics and computer sciences (11.2%), health sciences (11.0%), and physical and earth sciences (-6.3%).
- Applications to graduate programs in business fell 0.9% between fall 2012 and fall 2013.
- First-time enrollment in education programs decreased 2.2% for fall 2013.
- The largest fields by total enrollment were education and business, respectively accounting for 19% and 16% of total graduate enrollment at responding institutions in fall 2013.

Trends by degree level

- About 73% of all graduate students in fall 2013 were enrolled in programs leading to a master's degree or a graduate certificate, according to survey respondents.
- Responding institutions awarded approximately 71,000 doctoral degrees, 522,000 master's degrees, and 34,000 graduate certificates in 2012-13.
- Between fall 2012 and fall 2013, first-time enrollment decreased by 4.0% at the doctoral-level and increased by 2.0% at the master's-level.

Student demographics

- About 57% of all first-time graduate students in fall 2013 were women, according to survey respondents.
- According to survey respondents, women earned nearly two-thirds (66.2%) of the graduate certificates, 59.2% of the master's degrees, and 52.2% of the doctorates. Academic year 2012-13 marked the fifth straight year women earned a majority of doctoral degrees.
- In fall 2013, 54% of all temporary resident graduate students were enrolled in biological and agricultural sciences, engineering, mathematics and computer sciences, physical and earth sciences. In contrast, only 16.0% of U.S. citizens/permanent residents were enrolled in these fields.

About the report

[Graduate Enrollment and Degrees: 2003 to 2013](#) presents the findings of an annual survey of U.S. graduate schools, co-sponsored by CGS and the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) Board. It is the only annual national survey that covers enrollment in all fields of graduate study and is the only source of national data on graduate applications. The report includes responses from 655 institutions, which collectively confer about 74% of the master's degrees and 93% of the doctorates awarded each year. The survey report presents statistics on graduate applications and enrollment for fall 2013, degrees conferred in 2012-13, and trend data for one-, five- and ten-year periods.

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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 91% of the doctoral degrees and 81% 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 2013 CGS/GRE Survey of Graduate Enrollment and Degrees*