

PRESS RELEASE

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First-Time Enrollment of International Graduate Students Up 10% India surges 40% while growth from China slows to 5%

Washington, DC — The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) today reported a 10% increase in the first-time enrollment of international graduate students from 2012 to 2013, a growth that adds to 8% increases in this figure in each of the last two years. Total enrollment of international graduate students among responding institutions reached 220,000 in 2013. The findings were part of the *2013 CGS International Graduate Admissions Survey, Phase III: Final Offers of Admission and Enrollment*.

Earlier phases of this year's survey pointed to a slow-down in the growth of applications submitted by international students, which rose only 2% in 2013 and was the lowest increase in eight years.

Considering the slowed momentum in international applications, CGS President Debra W. Stewart noted that the strong growth in offers of admission and in enrollment reported by the *Phase III* study are encouraging signs to U.S. graduate schools. "There is no doubt that international students are eager to take advantage of the extraordinary quality of U.S. graduate institutions. The continued growth in first-time enrollment is a sign that decreasing applications have not yet damaged the strong pipeline of international graduate students."

The survey results corroborate findings from another recent CGS report, *Graduate Enrollment & Degrees: 2002-2012*, which reported an 8% increase in first-time graduate enrollments among international students from fall 2011 to fall 2012 and a widening gap between U.S. and international enrollments in a number of key fields. International students now account for 15 percent of the nation's total graduate enrollment.

Trends by country/region of origin

Substantial variations in growth were found among the sending countries and regions analyzed in the study:

- The overall trend in first-time enrollment of international graduate students for 2013 was driven in large part by students from India. The number of first-time enrollees from India increased 40% this year, substantially more than the 1% increase in 2012 and 2% increase in 2011.
- First-time enrollment among students from China increased 5% in 2013, a substantially smaller increase than the 22% surge in 2012 and 21% increase in 2011. This new finding marks the end of seven consecutive years of double-digit growth in first-time graduate enrollment of students from China. However, China continues to be the largest source of international graduate students, representing 34% of all international graduate students in the United States, according to survey respondents.
- First-time enrollment of students from Brazil increased 17% in 2013, following a 14% increase in 2012.

- By region, the first-time enrollment among students from the Middle East grew at 10%, a smaller increase than the 18% increase in 2012.
- First-time enrollment of South Korean students dipped 12% between 2012 and 2013. South Korea continues to be a leading source of international graduate students in the U.S., behind only China and India.
- According to survey respondents, students from Europe constitute 7% of all first-time enrollments among international students in 2013, while students from Africa constitute 3%, and students from the Middle East constitute 6%.

Commenting on the trends in sending countries, Dr. Stewart said that it will be particularly important to monitor the enrollment patterns of students from the countries that send the largest number of international students to U.S. graduate schools—China, India, and South Korea. “While the substantial increase in first-time enrollments of Indian students is positive, the fluctuation in India enrollment in recent years makes it difficult to confirm a definite trend. Taken with slowed growth in first-time enrollments from China, and the persistent declines in first-time enrollments of South Korean students, I don’t think we can count on any single country to sustain the strong participation of international students that U.S. graduate schools have enjoyed in the past.”

Trends by broad field of study

International graduate students continue to enroll in fields that have been traditionally popular among this population. The two most popular fields among international students are physical and earth sciences, which includes mathematics and computer sciences, and engineering: together they comprised 47 percent of all international graduate student enrollment in 2013, according to survey respondents. Changes in first-time enrollment by field are shown in the table below.

| Field | Increases in International First-Time Enrollment, 2012 to 2013 |
|------------------------------|---|
| Arts & Humanities | 9% |
| Business | 6% |
| Education | 3% |
| Engineering | 17% |
| Life Sciences | -3% |
| Physical & Earth Sciences* | 18% |
| Social Sciences & Psychology | 1% |
| Other Fields | 7% |

*includes Mathematics and Computer Sciences

Trends by location of study and institution type

International first-time graduate enrollment increased at public institutions (11%) as well as private, not-for-profit institutions (8%) in 2013. All four major regions of the United States saw growth in first-time graduate enrollment in 2013, with increases of 17% in the West, 12% in the Midwest, 9% in the Northeast, and 7% in the South.

Institutions awarding larger numbers of graduate degrees to international students were less likely to experience increases in international first-time graduate enrollment in 2013 than institutions awarding smaller numbers of graduate degrees to international students. This is a reversal from 2012, in which first-time enrollment among international graduate students was larger at institutions awarding larger numbers of graduate degrees to international students than

institutions awarding smaller numbers of graduate degrees to international students. First-time enrollment increased an average of 9% at the responding institutions among the 100 largest in terms of graduate degrees awarded to international students, compared with a 14% average increase at the institutions outside the largest 100.

About the report

Findings from the 2013 CGS International Graduate Admissions Survey, Phase III: Final Offers of Admission and Enrollment is based on the third phase of a three-part annual survey of international graduate student applications, admissions, and enrollment among U.S. member institutions. The survey had a response rate of 56%, including 76 of the 100 institutions that award the largest number of graduate degrees to international students. The report is posted at <http://www.cgsnet.org/benchmarking/international-graduate-admissions-survey>. Overall, the 285 institutions responding to the *Phase III* survey conferred 66% of the approximately 103,000 graduate degrees awarded to international students in the United States in 2010/11.

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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 92% 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 2012 CGS/GRE Survey of Graduate Enrollment and Degrees*