

PRESS RELEASE

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First-Time Enrollment of International Graduate Students Continues to Rise

Shifts Emerge in Student Demographics, Fields of Study

Washington, DC — The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) today reported that first-time enrollment of international students at U.S. graduate institutions has grown for the fifth consecutive year. Between 2013 and 2014, first-time enrollment of international graduate students increased by 8%, while total graduate enrollment also increased by 8%. The findings are based on the [2014 CGS International Graduate Enrollment Survey, Phase III: Final Offers of Admission and Enrollment](#).

The new data indicate that U.S. graduate programs continue to be a destination of choice for many of the world's prospective graduate students, despite increasing global competition to attract top talent. This trend is consistent with a growth in applications from prospective international students, which has grown each year over the past nine years.

CGS President Suzanne Ortega noted that the growth trends may also reflect the fact that U.S. graduate institutions have become more strategic about recruiting international students to their campuses. "Given the growing international competition for top students, U.S. institutions have been developing new ways of communicating with prospective students and offering students who matriculate stronger support services after they arrive. Universities understand that they can't afford to lose the contributions of these talented students to research and innovation on their campuses."

Despite the general upward trend of first-time enrollments of international graduate students, survey findings also indicate emerging shifts in students' countries of origin and fields of study. For example, first-time enrollment of students from India increased 27%, marking the second year in a row of double-digit growth in first-time enrollments of students from that country. The increase in Indian enrollment offset a 1% dip in first-time enrollments of students from China in 2014, the first decline measured since the survey was initiated in 2004. This change in Chinese first-time enrollment concerns a relatively large number of students, since Chinese students constitute 33 percent of the total enrollment of international graduate students in the U.S.

The survey report also provides a glimpse of shifts in interest in various fields of study. Fields that have historically drawn a high proportion of graduate students, physical & earth sciences and engineering, showed the highest growth in first-time enrollment for 2014, at 20% and 11% respectively. On the other hand, arts and humanities programs, not traditionally associated with international graduate students, have shown modest but steady gains in first-time enrollment, increasing by 3% for 2014, and following gains of 9% for 2012-2013, 5% for 2011-2012, and 5% for 2010-2011. A 2% increase in first-time enrollment in business marks a slowing down of growth documented earlier in this field, which had seen an increase in first-time enrollment of 6% for 2012-2013, 15% for 2011-2012, and 9% for 2010-2011.

Trends by country/region of origin

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

- First-time enrollment of students from India increased 27% in 2014, following a 40% increase in first-time enrollment in 2013.

- First-time enrollment of Chinese students decreased 1% in 2014.
- First-time enrollment of students from Brazil increased 91% in 2014, following a 17% increase in 2013 and a 14% increase in 2012. It should be noted that these increases concern a relatively small number of students.
- First-time graduate enrollment of students from South Korea and Taiwan declined 7% and 8% respectively in 2014.
- Changes in first-time graduate enrollment of students from the Middle East were the largest among the three regions followed (8%), a trend that has been consistent for the past three years.

Trends by broad field of study

First-time enrollment of international graduate students increased in all but one of the fields for which the survey collects data. Survey data showed a 1% decrease in first-time enrollment of international students in education, although it is important to note that the number of international students pursuing graduate studies in this field is relatively small compared with other fields. The largest gains in enrollment occurred in physical and earth sciences (20%) and engineering (11%), followed by life sciences (7%), arts and humanities (3%), 'other' fields (2%), business (2%), and social sciences and psychology (2%). Changes in first-time enrollment by field are shown in the table below.

Field	Increases in International First-Time Enrollment, 2013 to 2014
Arts & Humanities	3%
Business	2%
Education	-1%
Engineering	11%
Life Sciences	7%
Physical & Earth Sciences*	20%
Social Sciences & Psychology	2%
Other Fields	2%

*includes Mathematics and Computer Sciences

Trends by location of study and institution type

International first-time graduate enrollment increased at both public institutions and private, not-for-profit institutions in 2014. At public institutions, international first-time graduate enrollment increased 9% in 2014 following an 11% gain in 2013, while at private not-for-profit institutions, international first-time graduate enrollment increased 6% in 2014 following an 8% increase in 2013.

About the report

Findings from the 2014 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 62%, including 80 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 308 institutions responding to the *Phase III* survey conferred 67% of the approximately 109,000 graduate degrees awarded to international students in the United States in 2011/12.

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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*