

PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Nate Thompson(202) 223-3791 / nthompson@cgs.nche.edu

International Graduate Applications Rebound in Preliminary Estimates for 2014

Shift in Sending Countries Continues as China Slows and India Surges

Washington, DC — The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) is reporting that the preliminary number of applications from prospective international students to U.S. graduate schools increased 7% in 2014, up from the 2% increase seen in 2013. This year's encouraging increase is more consistent with the growth trend in international graduate applications seen between 2006 and 2012, after a post-9/11 decrease.

The report, *CGS International Graduate Admissions Survey, Phase I: Applications*, collects data on all international graduate applications, with detailed information on international applications from seven countries (China, India, South Korea, Taiwan, Canada, Mexico, and Brazil) and three regions (the Middle East, Africa and Europe). China, India, South Korea, Taiwan and Canada are the top five countries of origin for international graduate students in the United States. Altogether, the seven countries and three regions highlighted in the CGS International Graduate Admissions Survey are home countries to about 86% of all international graduate students in the United States.

The moderate growth in overall international applications was achieved despite a one percent decline in applications from China, the source country of 33% of international graduate students at U.S. institutions. Chinese applicant declines were offset by a 32% increase in applications from India, which accounts for 18% of all international graduate students at U.S. institutions. Applications from Brazil increased by 33% in 2014, following a growth of 25% in 2013. Applications in 2014 also increased from Africa (6%) and the Middle East (7%). Applications from South Korea (-5%) and Taiwan (-4%) decreased for a third straight year, although more slowly than in 2013, when applications from South Korea fell 15% and applications from Taiwan fell by 13%.

CGS President Debra W. Stewart noted the 7% gain is a positive sign for U.S. graduate institutions, which collectively draw as 15% of their overall graduate enrollments from international students. Yet this year's increase is not necessarily a sign of ongoing stability in international graduate applications and enrollments, she added, especially since a large share of the growth appears to be driven by a single country.

"Historically, our ability to recruit the best and brightest international graduate students has enabled the U.S. to become a leader in ground-breaking research and innovations. International students stimulate the U.S. economy and research enterprise in many important ways, and we must develop policies that encourage strong, stable growth in international graduate applications and enrollments."

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Application trends by field of study

Preliminary increases in applications varied by broad field. The three most popular fields of study—engineering, physical and earth sciences, and business—which together account for 64% of all international students enrolled in U.S. graduate programs, were also the fastest growing, at 14%, 16%, and 7%, respectively. Gains in applications were also found in 2014 in arts and humanities (3%) and other fields (2%). Rates of international applications to social sciences and psychology programs were unchanged from the prior year. Applications in education declined 1% and life sciences fell 6%.

Application trends by institutional characteristics

CGS also analyzed changes in international applications by various institutional characteristics. On average, applications increased 8% among public institutions and by 4% at private, not-for-profit institutions in 2014. Additionally, applications from prospective international graduate students increased 19% on average at master's-focused institutions and by an average 7% at doctoral institutions in 2014.

Just over half (55%) of responding institutions reported an increase in applications over last year with an average increase of 15%, while 44% reported a decrease, averaging 13%.

About the report

Findings from the 2014 *CGS International Graduate Admissions Survey, Phase I: Applications* is based on the first phase of a three-part annual survey of international graduate student applications, admissions, and enrollment among CGS U.S. member institutions. Some responding institutions may continue to receive international applications after the completion of the Phase I report—for this reason the Phase I figures are preliminary. Final application figures are reported in the Phase II report each August. Final application numbers have traditionally tracked very closely to the preliminary numbers. Analysis from the 2014 Phase I report includes responses from 308 schools, including 88% of the 25 institutions that award the largest number of degrees to international graduate students, and 90% of the top 50 institutions. Collectively, the 308 respondents to this year's survey award about 67% of the degrees granted to international graduate students in the U.S. The report is available at http://cgsnet.org/ckfinder/userfiles/files/Intl_I_2014_report_final.pdf.

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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*