ENROLLMENT

FALL ENROLLMENT: UNITED STATES

Students enrolled in the United States Community Colleges in fall terms

What Is Measured?
Number of students enrolled in the fall term of a given year in the United States.

Who Is Counted?
Students enrolled in the United States in courses creditable toward a degree or other formal award, including those enrolled in off-campus or extension centers and high school students taking regular college courses for credit. Full-time students taking remedial courses are also included if they are considered degree- or certificate-seeking for the purpose of determining financial aid.

NOTE: Comparable Pell Grant data are not available prior to 2009.
What It Tells Us
Some 6,458,558 students were enrolled in the United States Community Colleges in fall 2014. Also shown is the demographic composition of community college students and the increasingly smaller shares of students who are degree-seeking (including certificate-seeking); full-time; full-time degree-seeking; first-time degree-seeking; and first-time, full-time degree-seeking. The percentage of students who received a Pell Grant, an indication of low-income status, is shown for community colleges and for undergraduate students enrolled in other postsecondary institutions in the state.

Why It’s Important
Historically, fall enrollment is the traditional measure of student access to higher education. It represents the number of students enrolled in the fall at postsecondary institutions, and it is connected to national retention and graduation statistics, which are limited to first-time students who initially enroll in the fall term. Because community college students enroll year round, however, annual unduplicated enrollment may provide a more accurate picture of the number of students these institutions serve.

ABOUT THE DATA
Full-time student: a student enrolled for 12 or more semester credits, for 12 or more quarter credits, or for 24 or more contact hours a week each term.

First-time student: a student who has no prior postsecondary experience attending any institution for the first time at the undergraduate level. This category includes students enrolled in academic or occupational programs.

Degree- or certificate-seeking student: a student enrolled in for-credit courses and who is recognized by the institution as seeking a degree, certificate, or other formal award. The formal definition of “degree-seeking” or “certificate-seeking” varies by state.

Data from the most recent year may not be final and are subject to revision.

DATA SOURCE