

Grade Increase

Tracking Distance Education in the United States

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In 2016, higher ed distance enrollments increased for the fourteenth straight year, growing faster than they had for the past several years.

Patterns in overall enrollments

From 2002 to 2012 both distance and overall enrollments at degree-granting institutions grew annually. But since 2012, distance growth has continued its steady increase while overall enrollments have declined and the largest for-profit distance education institutions continue to face serious issues and lose their enrollments.

From 2012–2016

Distance enrollments have grown Students taking at least one distance education course

17.2%

While overall enrollments have declined 3.8% Total enrollments at degree-granting institutions

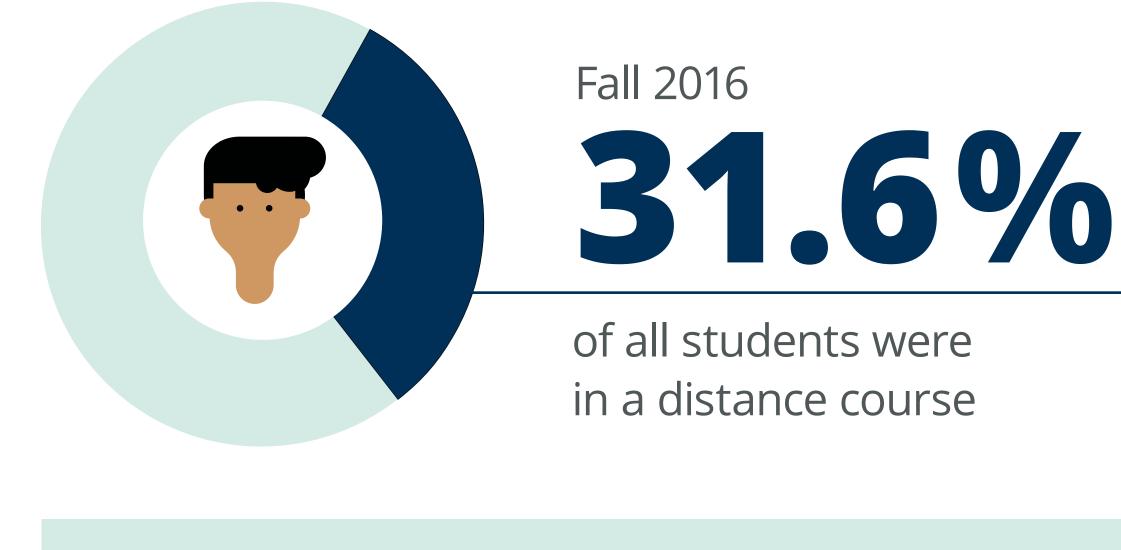
Total enrollment losses at degree-granting institutions 2012



Distance enrollments growth overall

6,359,121

Students taking at least one distance course, Fall 2016



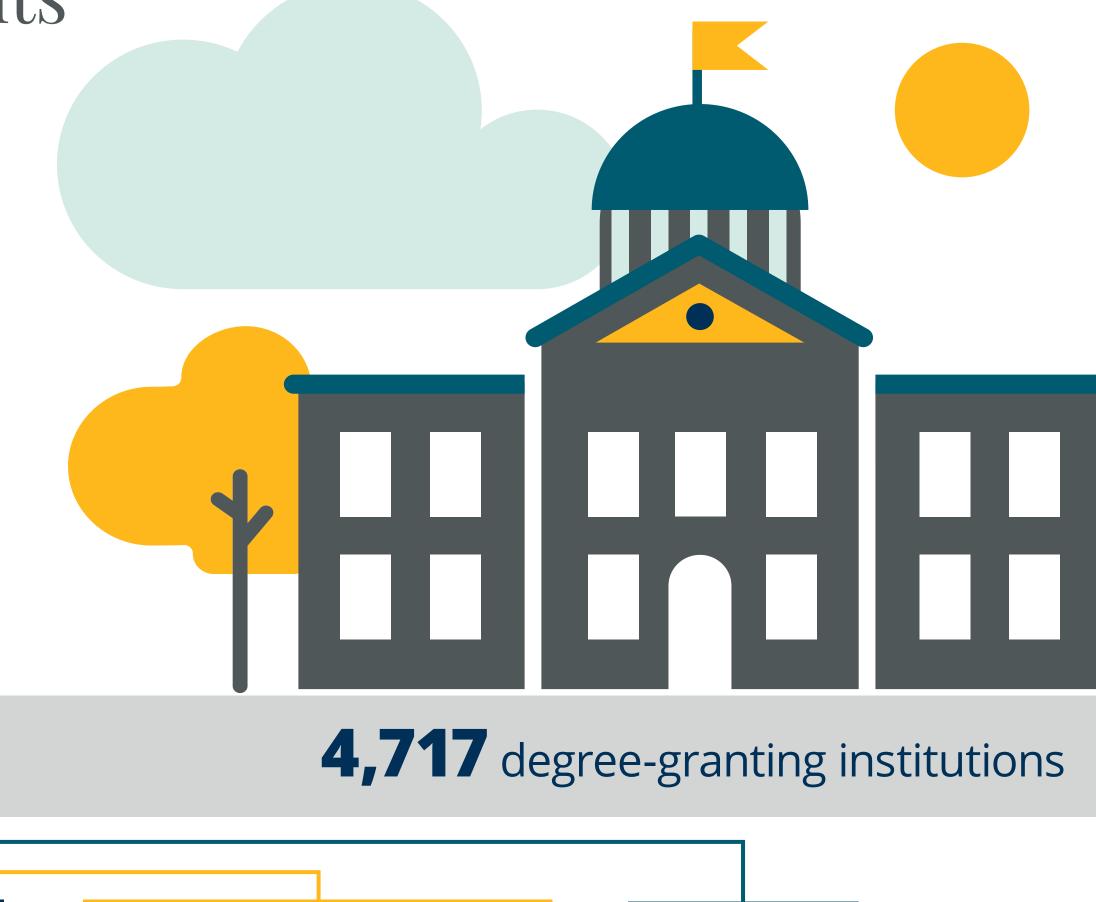
From Fall 2015 to Fall 2016, the number of distance education students grew by 5.6% 14.9% took exclusively

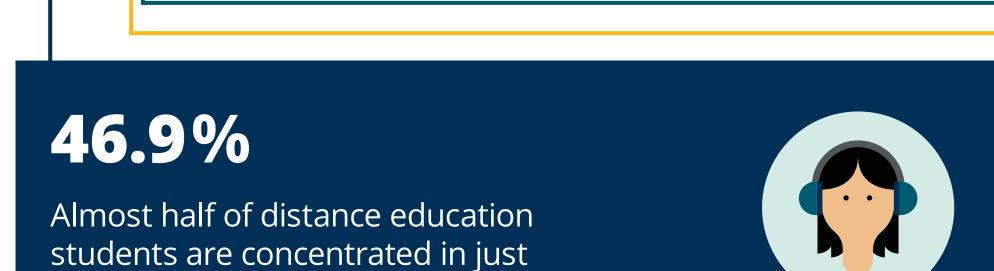
> distance courses 16.7% took both distance

and non-distance courses

Distance education enrollments are concentrated in a small number of institutions This report examines data from 4,717

degree-granting institutions that were active and open to the public in Fall 2016. Of these, 3,338 (70.8%) institutions reported having at least one distance education student. Distribution of distance education students





85.6% The vast majority of distance students in the for-profit sector are enrolled at the top 5% of institutions

10 institutions account for over 10% of all distance The top 47 institutions education enrollments, (just 1.0% of the total)

enroll over one-fifth of

all distance students

yet represent only 0.21%

of higher education

institutions

institutions are lower, while public institutions show very low levels of concentration.

The number of distance students at both the

undergraduate and graduate level increased

Concentration rates for private not-for-profit

Distance education students, Fall 2016

Distance learners by level

5,253,997 undergraduate

781,929

five percent of institutions

steadily each year from 2012 to 2016. 2012–13 2013–14 2015–16 2014–15 3.3% 3.4% 3.9%

5.6%

Distance enrollments continue to be very uneven between different higher education sectors, with continued steady growth for public institutions, similar levels of growth (albeit on a much smaller base)

Uneven distance enrollments

for the private non-profit sector, and the continuation of the decline in total enrollments for the private for-profit sector for the fourth year in a row. Change in distance enrollments at degree-granting institutions, 2012–2016

382,331

1,105,124

graduate

12.9% 11.4% 11.4%



distance courses who Only resided in the same state 0.7% as the institution at which

they were enrolled 2012 2016 50.3% 56.1%

on a campus has dropped by

Students taking exclusively

The number of students studying

of all distance students are located outside of the United States 1,173,805

(or 6.4%) between 2012 and 2016

proportion of exclusively distance learners that are resident students Highest Lowest Nevada West Virginia

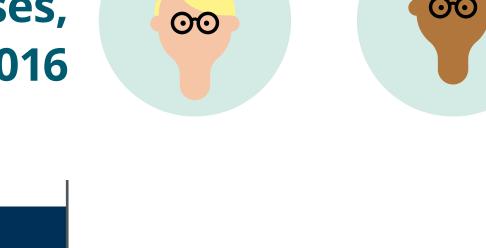
13.5%

States vary greatly in the

230,545

Percentage of those students taking exclusively distance courses located in the same state as the institution, 2016

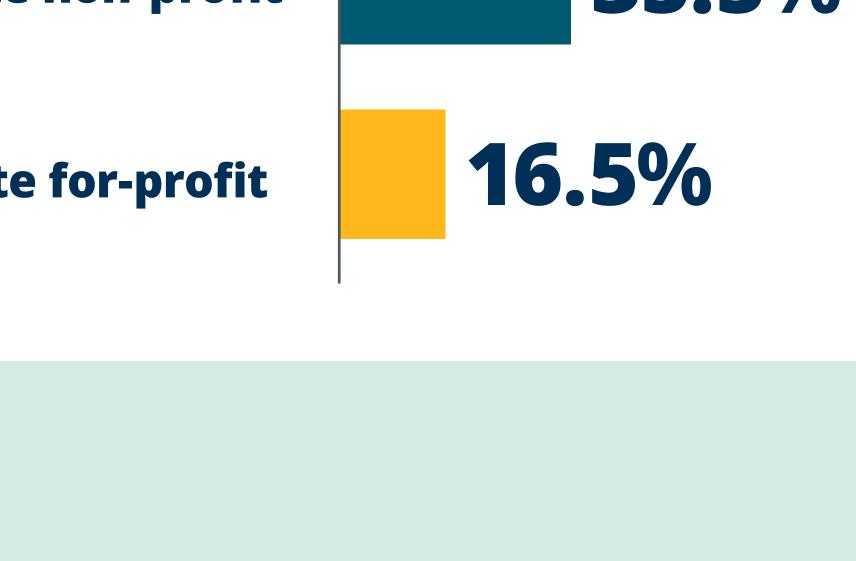
Percentage of students taking exclusively distance courses, Fall 2016





84.2% 35.5%

93.5%



17.7%

10.5%

57.7% Private for-profit Want to know more? Grade Increase: Tracking Distance Education in the United States is the 14th annual report on the state of

online learning in U.S. higher education. The analysis by the Babson Survey Research Group is based on data from the National Center for Education Statistics' Integrated Postsecondary Education Data

of distance education. Read the complete *Grade Increase* >>

System (IPEDS). This study is aimed at answering fundamental questions about the nature and extent





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