



# Council of Graduate Schools

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Growth in International Graduate Applications Slows Even More Majority of schools still receiving fewer applications than they did in 2003**

The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) is reporting that applications from prospective international graduate students have increased 3% from 2007 to 2008, following growth of 9% last year and 12% in 2006.

The initial snapshot of applications for fall 2008, being released today, shows that 65% of schools that have participated in the CGS survey since it began in 2004 still have not reversed the declines they suffered that year and in 2005. Among all consistent respondents, the total number of international applications is down 16% since 2003.

Moreover, the 3% overall increase masks great variance among graduate schools: 62% of institutions reported increases in applications; applications to these schools are up 9%. But 38% reported declines, with a total decrease of 13% at those institutions.

“A third consecutive year of gains in international applications, after several years of sharp declines, should be good news,” remarked CGS President Debra W. Stewart. “However, the slowdown in growth is a concern. And given that international competition for the world’s most talented students continues to grow, we may not be able to return to the levels we saw in past years,” she added.

#### **Application trends by country and field of study**

There are differences in applications between countries and regions analyzed in the report. There is strong growth, 12%, in applications to CGS U.S. member institutions from both China and the Middle East, but these compare to gains of 19% and 17% last year, respectively. Additionally, there is no growth in applications from India after a 12% increase last year. China and India are the two countries that annually send the most graduate students to the U.S.

In terms of fields of study, applications to sciences and engineering, fields critical to maintaining U.S. economic competitiveness, are experiencing steeply decelerating rates of growth. Physical sciences applications have increased 7%, compared to 19% last year; engineering is up just 1%, vs. 11% in 2007, and there is only 2% growth in life sciences, compared to 17% last year. There is some good news, however: applications to social sciences are up 10% after a 2% decline in 2007.

[more]

**Council of Graduate Schools**

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## **Application trends by type of institution**

For the first time, CGS analyzed changes in international applications by type of institution (public or private, and master's-level or doctoral-granting). There are some notable differences between them. For example, there is a 5% increase overall at public institutions but a 1% decline at those that are private. There is 4% growth in applications to master's-level institutions and 3% growth at the largest doctorate-granting universities, but an 11% decline at smaller doctoral universities.

The survey report also addresses application trends by the size of respondents' international graduate student enrollment. There is little overall difference between institutions grouped by enrollment size, but there are noticeable variations between the groups in terms of country and field of study. At the 50 largest schools, applications from China are up 8%, compared to 17% growth at schools below the 50 largest. There is also a marked difference from India: applications are up 3% at the 50 largest institutions, but at smaller schools there is a 7% decline. In the field of life sciences, there is a decline of 2% at the 50 largest universities, compared to an 8% increase at smaller institutions.

## **About the report**

***Findings from the 2008 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. The analysis includes responses from 157 schools, including all of the ten institutions with the largest international graduate student enrollments and 84% of the 25 largest.

The full report is available at the CGS website [www.cgsnet.org](http://www.cgsnet.org).

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*The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) is an organization of 500 institutions of higher education in the United States and Canada engaged in graduate education, research and the preparation of candidates for advanced degrees. CGS member institutions award 94% of the doctoral degrees and 80% of the master's degrees in the U.S.\* 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.*

\* *Graduate Enrollment and Degrees: 1996-2006* (Council of Graduate Schools, 2007)