Results from the Fall 2020 CGS International Graduate Admissions Survey

Wednesday, February 24, 2021
Plan for Today

1. **Enyu Zhou & Janet Gao** both of the Council of Graduate Schools will share highlights from the recently released CGS report, *International Graduate Applications and Enrollment: Fall 2020* for about 25 minutes.

2. A moderated discussion with **K. Jill Barr** of University of Maryland, Baltimore County and **Scott Lanyon** of University of Minnesota for about 25-30 minutes on implications of enrollment decline and high-volume of deferred admissions.
Technical Support

Webinar recording and slides will be emailed to participants and posted on the CGS website.

- Please **submit questions** through the GoToWebinar control panel

Audio Troubleshooting

- Having trouble hearing us? Try switching to a different audio connection. You can change from Telephone to Mic & Speakers or vice versa without leaving the session.

- If you experience trouble with a telephone connection, click “Problem dialing in?” for an alternate phone number to dial.
Results from the Fall 2020 CGS International Graduate Admissions Survey

Wednesday, February 24, 2021

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About CGS International Graduate Admissions Survey

Conducted annually by the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) since 2004.

- Reports final application counts, numbers of offers of admission, first-time enrollment, and total enrollment of international graduate students for each fall admission cycle.

- The 2020 CGS International Graduate Admissions Survey was sent to 771 U.S. colleges and universities, which were CGS members or were members of CSGS, MAGS, NAGS, or WAGS.

- A total of 360 institutions, or 47% responded to the 2020 survey.
Special thanks to Harper Garfinkle for data visualization and report design, Katherine Hazelrigg for media relations for the release of this report, Matthew Linton for copyediting and preparation of the project website, as well as Suzanne T. Ortega for the feedback on earlier drafts.

Also thanks goes to the CGS Committee on Research and Information Services.

The authors thank NAGAP: The Association for Graduate Enrollment Management and Liaison International for their support with the 2020 NAGAP/CGS Survey of Graduate Enrollment Management Professionals.

Finally, and most importantly, much gratitude and appreciation to all institutions who completed the CGS International Graduate Admissions Survey this and every year.
Full Report

https://cgsnet.org/international-graduate-admissions-survey
International Graduate Applications and Enrollment: Fall 2020 - Downloadable Figures & Tables

Figures

Figure 1. Total International Graduate Applications by Degree Type, Fall 2017 to Fall 2020 (PDF, Image)
Figure 2. First-time International Graduate Enrollment by Degree Type, Fall 2017 to Fall 2020 (PDF, Image)
Figure 3. Factors Institutions Believe are Associated with Increased International Student Deferrals (PDF, Image)
Figure 4. First-time Enrollment & Deferred Admissions of Chinese and Indian Nationals, Fall 2020 (PDF, Image)
Figure 5. One-year Change in International Graduate Applications & First-time Enrollment by Selected Country & Region of Origin between Fall 2019 and Fall 2020 (PDF, Image)
Highlights

**Application**
The Largest Volume of International Graduate Applications

**First-time Enrollment**
Significant Decline in First-time Enrollment.

**Supplemental Surveys**
NAGAP/CGS Survey and International Graduate Admissions Supplemental Questionnaire.

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### Characteristics of Participating Institutions in the Fall 2020 CGS International Graduate Admissions Survey

#### Table D.1 Characteristics of Institutions with Valid Responses for Fall 2020 First-time Enrollment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution Type</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Private, not-for-profit</th>
<th>Private, for-profit</th>
<th>Midwest</th>
<th>Northeast</th>
<th>West</th>
<th>South</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Institutions</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Universities: Very High Research Activity</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Universities: High Research Activity</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral/Professional Universities</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s-focused Institutions</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other Institutions</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data Source: Council of Graduate Schools, International Graduate Admissions Survey 2020*
In 2019-2020, there was a 3% increase in international graduate applications, the same increase as between Fall 2018 and Fall 2019.

Data Source: Council of Graduate Schools, International Graduate Applications Enrollment, Fall 2020, Table A1.
Application increases were driven by increases at Doctoral Universities.

One-year Change in International Graduate Applications by Degree Objective and Institutional Type between Fall 2019 and Fall 2020

Master's & Certificate
- Doctoral Universities: Very High Research Activity
  - 4%

Doctorates
- Doctoral Universities: High Research Activity and Doctoral/Professional Universities
  - 4%

-1%
- Master's-focused Institutions and Other Institutions

Data Source: Council of Graduate Schools, International Graduate Admissions Survey, Fall 2019 & Fall 2020. Note: Not all institutions reported the final application numbers. Some percentages may not align due to rounding.
Applications in Biological & Agricultural Sciences, Mathematics & Computer Sciences and Physical & Earth Sciences continued robust growth.

One-year Change in International Graduate Applications by Field of Study between Fall 2019 and Fall 2020

- Biological & Agricultural Sciences: 10%
- Business: -1%
- Engineering: 0%
- Mathematics & Computer Sciences: 12%
- Physical & Earth Sciences: 17%

Data Source: Council of Graduate Schools, International Graduate Applications Enrollment, Fall 2020, Table A3.
There was significant decline in first-time graduate enrollment over the past year.

One-year Change in First-time International Graduate Enrollment, Fall 2015 to Fall 2020

- 2015/2016: +5%
- 2016/2017: -1%
- 2017/2018: -1%
- 2018/2019: +4%
- 2019/2020: -39%

Data Source: Council of Graduate Schools, International Graduate Applications Enrollment, Fall 2020, Table A2.
The decline of international first-time graduate enrollment was consistent across institutional types.

One-year Change in First-time International First-time Graduate Enrollment by Degree Objective and Institutional Type between Fall 2019 and Fall 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Objective and Institutional Type</th>
<th>Master's &amp; Certificate</th>
<th>Doctorates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Universities: Very High Research Activity</td>
<td>-46%</td>
<td>-23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Universities: High Research Activity and Doctoral/Professional Universities</td>
<td>-30%</td>
<td>-30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's-focused Institutions and Other Institutions</td>
<td>-22%</td>
<td>-41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: Council of Graduate Schools, International Graduate Admissions Survey, Fall 2019 & Fall 2020. Note: Not all institutions reported the final application numbers. Some percentages may not align due to rounding.
Although the decline in first-time enrollment was substantial, there were also many offers of admissions that have been deferred.
Graduate applications of Chinese nationals and Indian nationals both increased between Fall 2019 and Fall 2020.
Higher number of admissions deferrals by Indian nationals

Of the Chinese nationals who were offered admissions for doctoral programs, 32% enrolled and 6% deferred, while 31% of Indian nationals with admission offers enrolled and 12% deferred.

Of the Chinese nationals who were offered admissions for master’s/certificates programs, 16% enrolled and 6% deferred, while only 8% of Indian nationals with admission offers enrolled and 21% deferred.

Data Source: Council of Graduate Schools, International Graduate Admissions Survey, Fall 2019 & Fall 2020, Table B.4.
By region, Asian, Middle East & North Africa, and Sub-Saharan Africa had large shares of deferred offers at both the master’s and certificate and the doctoral levels.

**12% Deferred**
- Master's & Certificate

**10% Deferred**
- Doctorates

Data Source: Council of Graduate Schools, International Graduate Applications and Enrollment, Fall 2020, Table B4.
A large number of deferred offers across all fields at both the master’s and doctoral level

12% Deferred
Master's & Certificate

10% Deferred
Doctorates

Data Source: Council of Graduate Schools, International Graduate Applications and Enrollment, Fall 2020, Table C4.
Number of Newly Admitted International Graduate Students Who Deferred Enrollment in Fall 2020 vs Fall 2019

2020 CGS International Graduate Admissions Supplemental Survey (N=115)

• 80% REPORTED AN INCREASE

2020 NAGAP/CGS Survey of Graduate Enrollment Management (N=217)

• 82% REPORTED AN INCREASE

Data Source: Council of Graduate Schools, International Graduate Applications and Enrollment, Fall 2020.
Factors Institutions Believe are Associated with Increased International Student Deferrals

Data Source: Council of Graduate Schools, International Graduate Applications and Enrollment, Fall 2020, Figure 3.

Emails & Virtual Events as Top Actions to Stay in Touch with International Graduate Students Who Deferred Enrollment

**GEM Professionals**  
N=95

- Sending e-mail communications: 92.6%
- Hosting virtual events: 58.9%
- Sending direct mailers: 5.3%
- Sending university promotional items: 3.2%
- Other: 3.2%

**Graduate Deans**  
N=75

- Sending e-mail communications: 92.0%
- Hosting virtual events: 73.3%
- Sending university promotional items: 21.3%
- Other: 21.3%
- Sending direct mailers: 18.7%

Data Source: Council of Graduate Schools, International Graduate Applications and Enrollment, Fall 2020.

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Concluding Remarks

- Increased and the largest volume of international graduate applications
- High volume of deferred graduate admission offers and significant decline in first-time enrollment due to the COVID-19
- Had it not been for the global pandemic, higher international graduate students enrollment in fall 2020
Discussion

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