

PRESS RELEASE

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First-Time Enrollment of International Graduate Students Up 8% Surge in Students from China, the Middle East, and Brazil

Washington, DC — The Council of Graduate Schools today reported an 8 percent increase in the first-time enrollment of international students from 2011 to 2012, matching the 8 percent increase between 2010 and 2011, and representing the third straight year of growth in first-time enrollments. Total enrollment of international graduate students among responding institutions reached 197,000 in 2012.

Where are graduate students coming from?

Growth was found in a broad range of sending countries and regions, with significant variations:

- China logged its seventh consecutive year of double-digit growth in first-time enrollment, adding another 22 percent for the 2011-2012 period. Chinese students now constitute 37 percent of all international graduate students in the United States, according to survey respondents.
- First-time graduate enrollment of students from Brazil grew a substantial 14 percent.
- Taken regionally, the Middle East accelerated growth in first-time enrollment to 18 percent, compared with its 14 percent increase from a year ago.
- First-time graduate enrollment of students from India increased 1%, an increase from previous years in which this number dropped by as much as 16% (between 2008 and 2009).
- Although total enrollment of South Korean students dipped 3% between 2011 and 2012, this period also marks the third year in which such decreases have become smaller.
- Similarly, total enrollment of students from India decreased by 3%, but this is an improvement from the 6% decreases in each of the two previous years.

These results corroborate findings from another recent CGS report, [Graduate Enrollment & Degrees: 2001-2011](#), showing that international students now account for 14.5 percent of the nation's total graduate enrollment.

CGS President Debra Stewart noted that the international survey results underscore the importance of international students to U.S. graduate schools. "The data show us that international students represent a growing percentage of overall graduate enrollment in the United States—a sign that graduate students, and in many cases, the countries that fund their studies, recognize the quality and return-on-investment provided by U.S. graduate degrees." Stewart added, "The stabilizing rates of growth in first-time enrollments for India and South Korea are also good news for U.S. graduate institutions."

In what fields are students pursuing degrees?

All of the broad fields of study reported in the survey experienced growth in first-time enrollment of international graduate students. The two most popular fields among internationals are business and engineering: together they comprised 47 percent of all international graduate student enrollment in 2012, according to survey respondents. Changes in first-time enrollment by field are shown in the table below.

Field	Increases in International First-Time Enrollment, 2011-12
Arts & Humanities	5%
Business	15%
Education	8%
Engineering	12%
Life Sciences	1%
Physical & Earth Sciences*	4%
Social Sciences & Psychology	9%
Other Fields	8%

*includes Mathematics and Computer Sciences

Locations of Study by Region and Institution Type

International first-time graduate enrollment increased in all four major regions of the United States in 2012: the Northeast saw the largest increase (11%), followed by the Midwest (8%), West (7%), and South (5%).

In terms of first-time enrollment, gains at private, not-for-profit institutions (9%) outpaced those at public institutions (8%) between 2011 and 2012. Doctoral institutions, both public and private, not-for-profit, grew at 9 percent. Master's-focused institutions reported negative rates of change in first-time international graduate enrollment; public master's-focused institutions saw a decrease of 9 percent, and private, not-for-profit master's-focused institutions increased by 9 percent.

Findings from the 2012 CGS International Graduate Admissions Survey, Phase III: Final Offers of Admissions and Enrollment is based on the final phase of a three-part annual survey of international graduate student applications, admissions, and enrollment among CGS U.S. member institutions. The survey had a response rate of 52%, including 79 of the 100 institutions that grant the largest numbers of graduate degrees to international students. Overall, the 265 institutions responding to the Phase III survey conferred about 64% of the nearly 97,000 graduate degrees awarded to international students in the United States in 2011/12.

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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 81% 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 2011 CGS/GRE Survey of Graduate Enrollment and Degrees