



INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE APPLICATIONS AND ENROLLMENT: FALL 2021

Enyu Zhou

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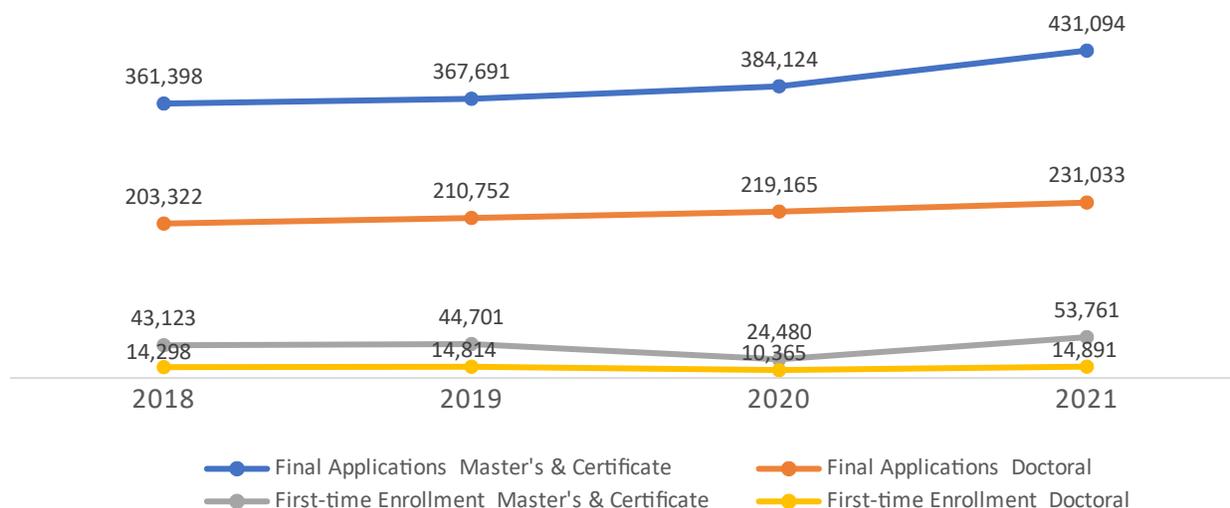
KEY TAKEAWAYS

More than two years has passed since the COVID-19 pandemic began, and with the easing of health, safety, and visa policies, the flow of international graduate students to the United States appears to be on the rebound. Data from the Council of Graduate Schools' *International Graduate Admissions Survey* indicate that, between Fall 2020 and Fall 2021, the number of applications from international students to U.S. graduate schools continued to grow, and first-time graduate enrollment among international students increased substantially.

International graduate applications and enrollment remains robust. U.S. graduate programs participating in the CGS *International Graduate Admissions Survey* received a total of 852,006 applications from prospective international students, extended 286,619 offers of admission to international graduate applicants, and enrolled 101,371 first-time international graduate students in the Fall of 2021. Institutions responding to the survey enrolled a total of 268,527 international graduate students in the fall of 2021 (Tables B.1, B.2, B.3, & B.5).

International graduate applications increased for the third year in a row. Between Fall 2020 and Fall 2021, the total number of international graduate applications received by U.S. degree-granting institutions participating in the CGS *International Graduate Admissions Survey* increased by 12% (Table A.1). This increase is particularly large compared with previous admission cycles and represents the third year in which the number of applications has increased. This level of growth is occurring regardless of degree objective. The number of applications for master's & certificate programs for Fall 2021 exceeded that for Fall 2018, the prior record high, and doctoral applications have also increased (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Total International Graduate Applications and First-Time Enrollment by Degree Type, 2018-2021



Data Source: Council of Graduate Schools, International Graduate Applications and Enrollment, 2018-2021. Note: Not all responding institutions provided valid data for all sections of the survey (i.e., final applications, offers of admission, first-time enrollment, and total enrollment). The number of institutions included in the analysis for master's and certificate applications was 212 and, for doctoral applications, was 165. The number of institutions included in the analysis for master's first-time enrollment was 195 and, for doctoral first-time enrollment, was 140.

First-time international graduate enrollment is on the rebound. Between Fall 2020 and Fall 2021, the number of students enrolled for the first-time in U.S.-based graduate programs increased by 92%. This stands in contrast to the 39% decline in first-time international graduate enrollment between Fall 2019 and Fall 2020 (Table A.2). First-time enrollments increased regardless of country, region of origin, field of study, or degree objective. The increase was driven largely by a significant increase in master's and certificate first-time enrollment, and a robust increase in doctoral first-time enrollment. After a significant decline during the pandemic, first-time international graduate enrollment in Fall 2021 is on the rebound back to Fall 2018 levels.

First-time enrollment is on the rebound regardless of field of study. First-time enrollment in the fields of Mathematics & Computer Sciences and Engineering, both of which traditionally enroll large numbers of international students, increased substantially between Fall 2020 and Fall 2021, at 189% and 129% respectively (Tables A.4). The smallest increase in first-time enrollment among international graduate students was in Social & Behavioral Sciences (28%). Despite the levels of growth, patterns in first-time enrollment remain consistent by degree objective. For example, the fields of Business (95%), Mathematics & Computer Sciences (90%), and Public Administration & Services (81%) had high concentrations of first-time international students in master's and certificate programs in Fall 2021. In contrast, the fields of Physical & Earth Sciences (72%) and Biological & Agricultural Sciences (49%) had high concentrations of first-time international doctoral students (Table C.3).

India surges in applications and first-time enrollment. China and India continue to send the largest numbers of international graduate students to the United States. In Fall 2021, however, the rate of increase of applications from India surpassed the rate of increase of applications from China for the first

time. This was because graduate applications from Chinese nationals decreased by 16% between Fall 2020 and Fall 2021, while applications from Indian nationals increased by 36% (Table A.1). Similarly, first-time enrollment among Chinese nationals increased 35% between Fall 2020 and Fall 2021, while first-time enrollment of Indian nationals increased by 430%. This stands in contrast to the previous year, between Fall 2019 and Fall 2020, when first-time enrollment of Chinese nationals and Indian nationals decreased by 37% and 66% respectively (Table A.2). A large share of Indian students are applying to master's and certificate programs which are growing much more quickly than doctoral applications. When comparing the sum of Indian student master's first-time enrollment between 2020 and 2021 (n=25,263) and the sum of Indian master's first-time enrollment between 2018 and 2019 (n=25,746), the average four-year change was not very large. The deferment of Indian master's and certificate admissions in Fall 2020 were likely to have enrolled in Fall 2021 driving the significant increase of Indian first-time enrollment. In Fall 2021, the first-time graduate enrollment from India was rebounding back to Fall 2018 levels, however, the first-time graduate enrollment from China was still lower than the pre-pandemic levels (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Graduate First-Time Enrollment from China and India by Degree Type, 2018-2021



Data Source: Council of Graduate Schools, International Graduate Applications and Enrollment, 2018-2021. Note: Not all responding institutions provided valid data for all sections of the survey (i.e., final applications, offers of admission, first-time enrollment, and total enrollment). The number of institutions included in the China analysis for master's and certificate first-time enrollment was 131 and, for doctoral first-time enrollment was 99. The number of institutions included in the India analysis for master's and certificate first-time enrollment was 127, and for doctoral first-time enrollment, was 104.

Fewer international students are deferring admissions. Deferred admissions contribute significantly to the large increases in first-time enrollment between Fall 2020 and Fall 2021. For example, the fact that

first-time enrollment of Indian nationals grew by 430% can be explained, at least in part, by the fact that 21% of Indian master's and certificate admissions, and 12% of Indian doctoral admissions were deferred in Fall 2020, the prior year. In the Fall of 2021, deferrals among Indian master's and certificate and doctoral admissions fell to 5% and 4% respectively (Table B.4).

Overall, results for the Fall 2021 admissions cycle indicate that, of 286,619 offers of admissions to prospective international graduate students in Fall 2021, 5% of master's and certificate offers of admissions and 6% of doctoral offers of admissions were deferred to future semesters in comparison to 12% and 10% in Fall 2020 (Table B.4).

Among other regions, Sub-Saharan Africa and Middle East & North Africa had large shares of deferred admissions at both the master's and certificate and the doctoral levels. For example, 13% of master's and certificate offers of admissions to Iranian graduate students in Fall 2021 were deferred. Furthermore, at the doctoral level, 18% of offers of admissions to graduate students in Iran were deferred, followed by Saudi Arabia (14%), and Sub-Saharan Africa (9%) (Table B.4).

About the CGS International Graduate Admissions Survey

In 2004, the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) launched an annual empirical examination of international graduate application, admission, and enrollment trends in response to member institutions' interest in changes in the enrollment of students from abroad seeking master's and doctoral degrees from U.S. colleges and universities. Broadly speaking, the survey is designed to capture information about application counts and offers of admission, as well as first-time and total graduate enrollment of international students for each fall admission cycle.

For the purpose of this survey, an international student is defined as a person who is not a citizen, national, or permanent resident of the United States and is in this country on a student visa, or on a temporary basis, and does not have the legal right to remain indefinitely. Undocumented students, individuals with deferred action status, and refugees are not included in this definition of international students.

Between September and November 2021, the survey was sent to 744 U.S. colleges and universities, which were CGS members as of January 2021, as well as other institutions that were members of Conference of Southern Graduate Schools (CSGS), the Midwestern Association of Graduate Schools (MAGS), the Northeastern Association of Graduate Schools (NAGS), or the Western Association of Graduate Schools (WAGS). A total of 361 institutions, or 48.5%, responded to the survey.

DATA TABLES

Annual Changes Between Fall 2015 and Fall 2021 Admission Cycles

Table A.1 Annual Changes in Final International Graduate Applications by Region/Country of Origin, Fall 2015 to Fall 2021 Admission Cycles

Table A.1 Annual Changes in Final International Graduate Applications by Region/Country of Origin, Fall 2015 to Fall 2021 Admission Cycles						
	Fall 2015 to Fall 2016	Fall 2016 to Fall 2017	Fall 2017 to Fall 2018	Fall 2018 to Fall 2019	Fall 2019 to Fall 2020	Fall 2020 to Fall 2021
Total	1%	-3%	-4%	3%	3%	12%
Asia	2%	-5%	-3%	3%	5%	5%
China	4%	-1%	0%	3%	6%	-16%
India	-1%	-15%	-12%	0%	5%	36%
Japan	-	-11%	-6%	13%	-1%	-4%
South Korea	-5%	-8%	0%	-6%	3%	3%
Taiwan	1%	0%	0%	3%	11%	-2%
Europe	0%	18%	-13%	0%	-12%	28%
Latin America & Caribbean	-3%	-4%	4%	-3%	-5%	23%
Brazil	-11%	9%	1%	-2%	-12%	20%
Mexico	2%	-14%	-4%	4%	12%	25%
Middle East & North Africa	-5%	-17%	-14%	-1%	-3%	35%
Iran	-	-18%	-27%	2%	8%	41%
Saudi Arabia	-20%	-21%	-6%	-5%	-21%	25%
North America (Canada only)	-12%	-9%	0%	3%	2%	15%
Oceania	-11%	-7%	-3%	3%	14%	4%
Sub-Saharan Africa	-9%	12%	28%	11%	7%	64%

Data Source: Council of Graduate Schools, International Graduate Admissions Survey

Note: Not all responding institutions provided valid data for country/region of origin, field of study, or degree objectives.

Between the Fall 2020 and Fall 2021 admission cycles, total applications from prospective international graduate students at responding institutions increased by 12%. Applications from prospective graduate students in the Sub-Saharan Africa (64%), Middle East & North African region (35%), and Europe (28%) all increased substantially. Additionally, graduate applications from Indian students increased (36%). However, Chinese nationals had declined in graduate application counts (-16%) between the Fall 2020 and Fall 2021 admission cycles. Graduate applications from prospective students in Japan and Taiwan declined (-4% and -2%, respectively) during the same period (Table A.1).

Table A.2 Annual Changes in First-time International Graduate Enrollment by Region/Country of Origin, Fall 2015 to Fall 2021 Admission Cycles

Table A.2 Annual Changes in First-time International Graduate Enrollment by Region/Country of Origin, Fall 2015 to Fall 2021 Admission Cycles						
	Fall 2015 to Fall	Fall 2016 to Fall	Fall 2017 to Fall 2018	Fall 2018 to Fall 2019	Fall 2019 to Fall 2020	Fall 2020 to Fall 2021
Total	5%	-1%	1%	4%	-39%	92%
Asia	8%	-2%	1%	6%	-47%	115%
<i>China</i>	0%	5%	1%	3%	-37%	35%
<i>India</i>	-7%	-13%	0%	1%	-66%	430%
<i>Japan</i>	-	3%	-17%	8%	-20%	29%
<i>South Korea</i>	10%	-12%	-4%	1%	-11%	11%
<i>Taiwan</i>	14%	10%	1%	5%	-35%	84%
Europe	8%	1%	-3%	-3%	-26%	46%
Latin America & Caribbean	5%	-10%	4%	0%	-20%	45%
<i>Brazil</i>	-9%	18%	-2%	-7%	-33%	77%
<i>Mexico</i>	12%	-10%	-5%	10%	-6%	41%
Middle East & North Africa	-11%	-5%	-12%	0%	-36%	63%
<i>Iran</i>	-	-16%	-10%	-7%	-56%	158%
<i>Saudi Arabia</i>	-13%	-2%	-18%	1%	-36%	62%
North America (Canada only)	-3%	-7%	3%	6%	-5%	17%
Oceania	7%	-6%	-9%	7%	5%	15%
Sub-Saharan Africa	3%	27%	19%	22%	-28%	103%

Data Source: Council of Graduate Schools, International Graduate Admissions Survey

Note: Not all responding institutions provided valid data for country/region of origin, field of study, or degree objectives.

Compared to Fall 2020, first-time international graduate enrollment in Fall 2021 increased by 92%. Patterns of first-time graduate enrollment across fields of study and countries/regions of origin generally mirror those of final application counts. After recent decreases in first-time graduate enrollment between the Fall 2019 and Fall 2020 admission cycles, the number of Indian first-time graduate students increased substantially this past year, rebounding to Fall 2019 enrollment levels. There was robust increase in first-time graduate enrollment for Chinese nationals (35%), however, the rate of increase from Chinese nationals was slower than the increases from other region/country of origin. The regions of Sub-Saharan Africa (103%), Europe (46%), and Latin America & Caribbean (45%) saw robust growth in first-time graduate enrollments. Taiwan (84%) also reported significant growth in first-time graduate enrollment. Another notable finding is that first-time graduate enrollment for students hailing from the Middle East & North Africa increased by 63%, with Iranian first-time graduate enrollment increasing by 158% between Fall 2020 and Fall 2021 (Tables A.2).

Table A.3 Annual Changes in Final International Graduate Applications by Field of Study, Fall 2015 to Fall 2021 Admission Cycles

Table A.3 Annual Changes in Final International Graduate Applications by Field of Study, Fall 2015 to Fall 2021 Admission Cycles						
	Fall 2015 to Fall 2016	Fall 2016 to Fall 2017	Fall 2017 to Fall 2018	Fall 2018 to Fall 2019	Fall 2019 to Fall 2020	Fall 2020 to Fall 2021
Total	1%	-3%	-4%	3%	3%	12%
Arts & Humanities	2%	-9%	1%	6%	-1%	-1%
Biological & Agricultural Sciences	-5%	-5%	3%	14%	10%	2%
Business	8%	-3%	-8%	-3%	-1%	17%
Education	0%	-11%	4%	2%	-4%	25%
Engineering	-3%	-10%	-16%	-2%	0%	4%
Health Sciences	-17%	-11%	5%	7%	2%	22%
Mathematics & Computer Sciences	5%	-2%	6%	7%	12%	17%
Physical & Earth Sciences	6%	-6%	-9%	2%	17%	12%
Public Administration & Services	-7%	-15%	-1%	1%	-12%	43%
Social & Behavioral Sciences	-3%	-1%	3%	3%	6%	12%
Other Fields	14%	-2%	8%	23%	-16%	19%

Data Source: Council of Graduate Schools, International Graduate Admissions Survey

Note: Not all responding institutions provided valid data for country/region of origin, field of study, or degree objectives.

Public Administration and Services (43%), Education (25%), Health Sciences (22%), and Business (17%) all saw increases in the total number of applications by international students (Table A.3).

Table A.4 Annual Changes in First-time International Graduate Enrollment by Field of Study, Fall 2015 to Fall 2021 Admission Cycles

Table A.4 Annual Changes in First-time International Graduate Enrollment by Field of Study, Fall 2015 to Fall 2021 Admission Cycles						
	Fall 2015 to Fall 2016	Fall 2016 to Fall 2017	Fall 2017 to Fall 2018	Fall 2018 to Fall 2019	Fall 2019 to Fall 2020	Fall 2020 to Fall 2021
Total	5%	-1%	1%	4%	-39%	92%
Arts & Humanities	6%	-12%	-7%	0%	-32%	41%
Biological & Agricultural Sciences	2%	-1%	-4%	10%	-35%	80%
Business	7%	-11%	-7%	-2%	-41%	58%
Education	7%	-16%	-31%	9%	-33%	38%
Engineering	-3%	-10%	-17%	1%	-52%	129%
Health Sciences	-14%	3%	-16%	8%	-38%	58%
Mathematics & Computer Sciences	4%	2%	1%	11%	-53%	189%
Physical & Earth Sciences	-3%	-1%	-15%	6%	-33%	81%
Public Administration & Services	7%	4%	-49%	8%	-51%	71%
Social & Behavioral Sciences	9%	0%	-6%	11%	-28%	28%
Other Fields	11%	4%	-2%	9%	-46%	58%

Data Source: Council of Graduate Schools, International Graduate Admissions Survey

Note: Not all responding institutions provided valid data for country/region of origin, field of study, or degree objectives.

Compared to the past five admission cycles, first-time graduate enrollment across all fields of study increased substantially. In particular, the fields of Mathematics & Computer Sciences and Engineering increased substantially between Fall 2020 and Fall 2021 (189% and 129% respectively) (Table A.4).

Fall 2021 International Graduate Admissions Data by Region/Country of Origin

Table B.1 Final International Graduate Applications by Region/Country of Origin, Fall 2021 Admission Cycle

	% Shares by Region/Country of Origin			% Shares by Degree Objective	
	Total	Master's & Certificate	Doctorates	Master's & Certificate	Doctorates
Total	852,006	561,935	290,071	66%	34%
Asia	77%	82%	65%	71%	29%
<i>China</i>	33%	34%	30%	69%	31%
<i>India</i>	31%	40%	14%	85%	15%
<i>Japan</i>	0%	0%	1%	63%	37%
<i>South Korea</i>	3%	2%	7%	32%	68%
<i>Taiwan</i>	2%	2%	3%	61%	39%
Europe	5%	4%	9%	44%	56%
Latin America & Caribbean	3%	3%	5%	51%	49%
<i>Brazil</i>	1%	1%	1%	47%	53%
<i>Mexico</i>	1%	1%	1%	52%	48%
Middle East & North Africa	6%	3%	11%	37%	63%
<i>Iran</i>	3%	1%	6%	23%	77%
<i>Saudi Arabia</i>	1%	1%	2%	55%	45%
North America (Canada only)	2%	1%	2%	56%	44%
Oceania	0%	0%	1%	49%	51%
Sub-Saharan Africa	7%	6%	7%	63%	37%

Data Source: Council of Graduate Schools, International Graduate Admissions Survey 2021

Note: Not all responding institutions provided valid data for country/region of origin, field of study, or degree objectives.

Prospective Chinese and Indian students accounted for 64% of the 852,006 international graduate applications received by institutions responding to the 2021 CGS *International Graduate Admissions Survey*, with graduate applications submitted by Indian nationals accounting for 31% of all international applications. Prospective Indian graduate students sent well over one-third of the total international master's and certificate applications (40%) during the Fall 2021 admission cycle, topping China (34%) by six percentage points. Indian nationals increased their share of master's and certificate applications by six percentage points last year, while the share of Chinese nationals' master's and certificate applications declined by nine percentage points from the prior year.

For those applicants whose degree levels were reported, overall, about two thirds (66%) submitted applications for master's and certificate programs, and 34% submitted applications for doctoral degree programs. The majority of graduate applications from Indian nationals (85%) continue to be for master's and certificate programs. In contrast, a large majority of applications from Iran (77%) and the Republic of Korea (South Korea, 68%) were for doctoral programs. Similarly, 63% of applications from Middle East and North Africa were also for doctoral programs (Table B.1).

Table B.2 Offers of Admission to International Graduate Applicants by Region/Country of Origin, Fall 2021 Admission Cycle

	% Shares by Region/Country of Origin			% Shares by Degree Objective	
	Total	Master's & Certificate	Doctorates	Master's & Certificate	Doctorates
Total	286,619	241,885	44,734	84%	16%
Asia	79%	82%	63%	88%	12%
<i>China</i>	27%	28%	26%	85%	15%
<i>India</i>	40%	45%	11%	95%	5%
<i>Japan</i>	0%	0%	1%	82%	18%
<i>South Korea</i>	2%	1%	5%	59%	41%
<i>Taiwan</i>	2%	2%	2%	83%	17%
Europe	4%	4%	8%	71%	29%
Latin America & Caribbean	4%	3%	7%	72%	28%
<i>Brazil</i>	1%	1%	2%	65%	35%
<i>Mexico</i>	1%	1%	1%	75%	25%
Middle East & North Africa	5%	3%	13%	57%	43%
<i>Iran</i>	2%	1%	7%	42%	58%
<i>Saudi Arabia</i>	1%	1%	2%	68%	32%
North America (Canada only)	1%	1%	2%	79%	21%
Oceania	0%	0%	1%	72%	28%
Sub-Saharan Africa	6%	6%	8%	81%	19%

Data Source: Council of Graduate Schools, International Graduate Admissions Survey 2021

Note: Not all responding institutions provided valid data for country/region of origin, field of study, or degree objectives.

More than eight in ten (84%) offers of admission made to prospective international graduate students during the Fall 2021 admission cycle were for master's and certificate programs. Compared to applications, proportionally more offers of admissions were made to master's and certificate programs than to doctoral programs (Table B.2).

Table B.3 First-time International Graduate Enrollment by Region/Country of Origin, Fall 2021 Admission Cycle

	% Shares by Region/Country of Origin			% Shares by Degree Objective	
	Total	Master's & Certificate	Doctorates	Master's & Certificate	Doctorates
Total	101,371	80,949	20,422	80%	20%
Asia	78%	81%	64%	84%	16%
<i>China</i>	28%	28%	28%	80%	20%
<i>India</i>	37%	43%	13%	93%	7%
<i>Japan</i>	1%	1%	1%	77%	23%
<i>South Korea</i>	2%	2%	6%	55%	45%
<i>Taiwan</i>	2%	2%	2%	79%	21%
Europe	6%	5%	9%	70%	30%
Latin America & Caribbean	5%	5%	8%	71%	29%
<i>Brazil</i>	1%	1%	2%	65%	35%
<i>Mexico</i>	1%	1%	1%	75%	25%
Middle East & North Africa	4%	3%	9%	53%	47%
<i>Iran</i>	1%	0%	4%	32%	68%
<i>Saudi Arabia</i>	1%	1%	2%	61%	39%
North America (Canada only)	2%	2%	2%	79%	21%
Oceania	0%	0%	0%	76%	24%
Sub-Saharan Africa	5%	4%	8%	69%	31%

Data Source: Council of Graduate Schools, International Graduate Admissions Survey 2021

Note: Not all responding institutions provided valid data for country/region of origin, field of study, or degree objectives.

Of the 101,371 first-time international graduate students enrolled in U.S. institutions in the Fall of 2021, approximately three quarters (78%) were from Asia, including Indian nationals (37%), Chinese nationals (28%), South Korean nationals (2%), Taiwanese nationals (2%), and Japanese nationals (1%). The shares of Indian nationals increased from the Fall 2020 figure (15%). However, the shares of Chinese nationals had a large decrease from last year's figure (41%). The representation of Asian international students remains substantial in master's and certificate programs, accounting for 81% of all first-time international students, with China and India claiming 28% and 43% of the shares, respectively. China's share of first-time doctoral students (28%) is larger than each of India (13%), the Middle East & North Africa region (9%), and Europe (9%).

In terms of degree objectives of international graduate students, first-time Indian graduate students were predominantly (93%) enrolled in master's and certificate programs. Similar to the international graduate applications data, three-quarters (68%) of first-time graduate enrollment of Iranian nationals were in doctoral programs. In contrast, 61% of first-time Saudi Arabian graduate students in Fall 2021 were enrolled in master's and certificate programs (Table B.3).

Table B.4 Deferred Admissions and First-time International Graduate Enrollment as Percentage Shares of Offers of Admission by Region/Country of Origin, Fall 2021 Admission Cycle

	Master's & Certificate			Doctorates		
	Offers of Admissions	% Deferred	% Enrolled	Offers of Admissions	% Deferred	% Enrolled
Total	241,885	5%	33%	44,734	6%	46%
Asia	197,416	5%	33%	28,119	4%	46%
<i>China</i>	66,160	3%	34%	11,518	3%	49%
<i>India</i>	107,277	5%	32%	5,091	4%	52%
<i>Japan</i>	1,141	3%	40%	254	3%	53%
<i>South Korea</i>	3,264	3%	41%	2,279	2%	49%
<i>Taiwan</i>	4,640	3%	39%	972	2%	50%
Europe	8,832	5%	45%	3,641	3%	47%
Latin America & Caribbean	7,491	5%	51%	2,965	5%	53%
<i>Brazil</i>	1,298	7%	52%	706	5%	52%
<i>Mexico</i>	1,557	4%	57%	517	3%	56%
Middle East & North Africa	7,579	10%	28%	5,687	15%	33%
<i>Iran</i>	2,446	13%	16%	3,332	18%	26%
<i>Saudi Arabia</i>	2,041	12%	38%	939	14%	53%
North America (Canada only)	3,145	3%	50%	825	2%	50%
Oceania	644	4%	48%	252	5%	39%
Sub-Saharan Africa	14,389	12%	23%	3,399	9%	45%

Data Source: Council of Graduate Schools, *International Graduate Admissions Survey 2021*

Note: Not all responding institutions provided valid data for country/region of origin, field of study, or degree objectives.

Institutions responding to the 2021 CGS *International Graduate Admissions Survey* presented a total of 286,619 offers of admissions to prospective graduate students in Fall 2021. In 2021, international applicants deferred fewer offers of acceptance compared to the prior year. Approximately 5% of master's offers of admissions and 6% of doctoral offers of admissions were deferred to future semesters in Fall 2021. By region, Sub-Saharan Africa and Middle East & North Africa had large shares of deferred offers at both the master's and certificate and the doctoral levels. Thirteen percent of master's and certificate offers of admissions to Iranian graduate students in Fall 2021 were deferred. Furthermore, at the doctoral level, 18% of offers of admissions to graduate students in Iran were deferred, followed by Saudi Arabia (14%), and Sub-Saharan Africa (9%) (Table B.4).

Table B.5 Total International Graduate Enrollment by Region/Country of Origin, Fall 2021 Admission Cycle

	% Shares by Region/Country of Origin			% Shares by Degree Objective	
	Total	Master's & Certificate	Doctorates	Master's & Certificate	Doctorates
Total	268,527	156,457	112,070	58%	42%
Asia	73%	78%	67%	62%	38%
China	31%	30%	33%	56%	44%
India	27%	37%	14%	79%	21%
Japan	1%	1%	1%	59%	41%
South Korea	4%	2%	6%	34%	66%
Taiwan	2%	2%	2%	56%	44%
Europe	7%	6%	9%	45%	55%
Latin America & Caribbean	7%	6%	7%	54%	46%
Brazil	1%	1%	2%	46%	54%
Mexico	1%	1%	1%	60%	40%
Middle East & North Africa	6%	4%	9%	36%	64%
Iran	2%	1%	4%	16%	84%
Saudi Arabia	2%	1%	2%	47%	53%
North America (Canada only)	2%	3%	2%	62%	38%
Oceania	0%	0%	1%	54%	46%
Sub-Saharan Africa	4%	4%	5%	54%	46%

Data Source: Council of Graduate Schools, International Graduate Admissions Survey 2021

Note: Not all responding institutions provided valid data for country/region of origin, field of study, or degree objectives.

Chinese nationals constituted the largest share (31%) of international graduate students with 268,527 students enrolled in Fall 2021 at institutions participating in this survey. In addition, Chinese graduate students make up the largest percentage (33%) of international doctoral students. However, India for the first time exceeded China in terms of percentage of international master's and certificate students (37%) (Table B.5).

Fall 2021 International Graduate Admissions Data by Field of Study

Table C.1 Final International Graduate Applications by Field of Study, Fall 2021 Admission Cycle

	% Shares by Field of Study			% Shares by Degree Objective	
	Total	Master's & Certificate	Doctorates	Master's & Certificate	Doctorates
Total	852,006	561,935	290,071	66%	34%
Arts & Humanities	4%	3%	6%	47%	53%
Biological & Agricultural Sciences	7%	3%	14%	30%	70%
Business	13%	17%	5%	86%	14%
Education	2%	2%	2%	68%	32%
Engineering	23%	22%	23%	65%	35%
Health Sciences	3%	3%	4%	60%	40%
Mathematics & Computer Sciences	28%	35%	15%	82%	18%
Physical & Earth Sciences	5%	1%	11%	15%	85%
Public Administration & Services	1%	1%	1%	65%	35%
Social & Behavioral Sciences	9%	6%	15%	43%	57%
Other Fields	6%	7%	4%	78%	22%

Data Source: Council of Graduate Schools, International Graduate Admissions Survey 2021

Note: Not all responding institutions provided valid data for country/region of origin, field of study, or degree objectives.

By field of study, Mathematics & Computer Sciences continued to receive the most applications from international students for both master's and certificate programs (35%) and doctoral programs (15%). However, the percentage share of Engineering applications among all international applications declined for both types of degrees from the last admission cycle. At the master's and certificate level, Engineering applications (22%) decreased their share among all international applications by two percentage points compared to Fall 2020 (24%). At the doctoral level, Engineering applications (23%) decreased their share among all international applications by one percentage points compared to Fall 2020 (24%).

Master's applications were concentrated in three specific fields: Mathematics & Computer Science (35%), Engineering (22%), and Business (17%). After Engineering (23%) and Mathematics & Computer Sciences (15%), the top three fields of study for international doctoral applicants were Social & Behavioral Sciences (15%), Biological & Agricultural Sciences (14%), and Physical & Earth Sciences (11%).

For those applicants whose degree objective levels were reported, the majority of applications in the fields of Business (86%), Mathematics & Computer Sciences (82%), Education (68%), Public Administration & Services (65%), and Engineering (65%) were for master's and certificate programs. In contrast, applications for basic science fields, such as Physical & Earth Sciences (85%), Biological & Agricultural Sciences (70%), and Social & Behavioral Sciences (57%) were more likely for doctoral programs (Table C.1).

Table C.2 Offers of Admission to International Graduate Applicants by Field of Study, Fall 2021 Admission Cycle

	% Shares by Field of Study			% Shares by Degree Objective	
	Total	Master's & Certificate	Doctorates	Master's & Certificate	Doctorates
Total	286,619	241,885	44,734	84%	16%
Arts & Humanities	3%	2%	6%	68%	32%
Biological & Agricultural Sciences	4%	3%	11%	60%	40%
Business	14%	16%	3%	97%	3%
Education	2%	2%	4%	76%	24%
Engineering	27%	26%	31%	82%	18%
Health Sciences	3%	3%	4%	81%	19%
Mathematics & Computer Sciences	31%	33%	16%	92%	8%
Physical & Earth Sciences	3%	1%	12%	28%	72%
Public Administration & Services	1%	1%	1%	86%	14%
Social & Behavioral Sciences	6%	5%	10%	75%	25%
Other Fields	6%	7%	4%	91%	9%

Data Source: Council of Graduate Schools, International Graduate Admissions Survey 2021

Note: Not all responding institutions provided valid data for country/region of origin, field of study, or degree objectives.

Table C.3 First-time International Graduate Enrollment by Field of Study, Fall 2021 Admission Cycle

	% Shares by Field of Study			% Shares by Degree Objective	
	Total	Master's & Certificate	Doctorates	Master's & Certificate	Doctorates
Total	101,371	80,949	20,422	80%	20%
Arts & Humanities	4%	3%	6%	64%	36%
Biological & Agricultural Sciences	6%	4%	14%	51%	49%
Business	16%	19%	4%	95%	5%
Education	3%	3%	4%	76%	24%
Engineering	24%	23%	28%	76%	24%
Health Sciences	4%	3%	5%	73%	27%
Mathematics & Computer Sciences	28%	32%	14%	90%	10%
Physical & Earth Sciences	3%	1%	12%	28%	72%
Public Administration & Services	1%	1%	1%	81%	19%
Social & Behavioral Sciences	6%	5%	9%	70%	30%
Other Fields	6%	6%	4%	87%	13%

Data Source: Council of Graduate Schools, International Graduate Admissions Survey 2021

Note: Not all responding institutions provided valid data for country/region of origin, field of study, or degree objectives.

The fields of Business (95%), Mathematics & Computer Sciences (90%), and Public Administration & Services (81%) had high concentrations of first-time international students in master's and certificate programs in Fall 2021. In contrast, doctoral first-time students accounted for 72% of international graduate students in Physical & Earth Sciences and 49% in Biological & Agricultural Sciences.

While nearly three quarters of first-time master's and certificate students were in the fields of Mathematics & Computer Sciences (32%), Engineering (23%), and Business (19%), doctoral students were spread across a more diverse range of disciplines. Engineering (28%) continues to be the field of choice for first-time doctoral enrollment; however, four fields, Biological & Agricultural Sciences (14%), Mathematics & Computer Sciences (14%), Physical & Earth Sciences (12%), and Social & Behavioral Sciences (9%) also have sizeable enrollments of first-time doctoral students (Table C3).

Table C.4 Deferred Admissions and First-time International Graduate Enrollment as Percentage Shares of Offers of Admission by Field of Study, Fall 2021 Admission Cycle

	Master's & Certificate			Doctorates		
	Offers of Admissions	% Deferred	% Enrolled	Offers of Admissions	% Deferred	% Enrolled
Total	241,885	5%	33%	44,734	6%	46%
Arts & Humanities	5,594	6%	40%	2,611	6%	49%
Biological & Agricultural Sciences	7,379	6%	40%	4,861	4%	57%
Business	38,799	3%	39%	1,206	3%	68%
Education	5,282	6%	44%	1,626	7%	46%
Engineering	63,022	5%	29%	14,032	8%	41%
Health Sciences	7,878	5%	34%	1,846	5%	54%
Mathematics & Computer Sciences	80,869	6%	32%	6,989	4%	40%
Physical & Earth Sciences	2,014	0%	47%	5,299	4%	45%
Public Administration & Services	1,889	7%	36%	315	5%	51%
Social & Behavioral Sciences	13,171	6%	32%	4,296	4%	42%
Other Fields	15,988	6%	32%	1,653	7%	47%

Data Source: Council of Graduate Schools, International Graduate Admissions Survey 2021

Note: Not all responding institutions provided valid data for country/region of origin, field of study, or degree objectives.

Of the offers of admission made to international graduate students for master's/certificate programs in Fall 2021, 33% of them enrolled for the first-time and 5% deferred their offers. At the doctoral level, in contrast, 46% of them enrolled and 6% of them deferred. The deferred admissions figures decreased at both the master's and certificate level and doctoral level compared to the deferred figures in Fall 2020 (12% at the master's and certificate level and 10% at the doctoral level).

For master's and certificate programs, the rates of deferrals for Engineering and Mathematics & Computer Sciences were 5% and 6% respectively, a decrease of nearly ten percentage points from Fall 2020 admission cycle. For doctoral programs, the rate of deferrals was the highest for Engineering (8%), a decrease of four percentage points compared to the deferred figure (12%) in Fall 2020 (Table C.4).

Table C.5 Total International Graduate Enrollment by Field of Study, Fall 2021 Admission Cycle

	% Shares by Field of Study			% Shares by Degree Objective	
	Total	Master's & Certificate	Doctorates	Master's & Certificate	Doctorates
Total	268,527	156,457	112,070	58%	42%
Arts & Humanities	5%	3%	7%	38%	62%
Biological & Agricultural Sciences	8%	4%	13%	31%	69%
Business	12%	19%	3%	89%	11%
Education	3%	3%	4%	54%	46%
Engineering	26%	22%	30%	51%	49%
Health Sciences	4%	4%	4%	56%	44%
Mathematics & Computer Sciences	24%	31%	14%	76%	24%
Physical & Earth Sciences	6%	1%	12%	13%	87%
Public Administration & Services	1%	1%	1%	60%	40%
Social & Behavioral Sciences	7%	5%	9%	45%	55%
Other Fields	5%	6%	3%	73%	27%

Data Source: Council of Graduate Schools, International Graduate Admissions Survey 2021

Note: Not all responding institutions provided valid data for country/region of origin, field of study, or degree objectives.

Engineering and Mathematics & Computer Sciences constitute 50% of all international graduate student enrollments, with 26% and 24% respectively. These two fields lead all other fields of study by a substantial margin, with respect to total enrollment. Business constitutes 12% of total international graduate students, comprised largely of master's & certificate students (Table C.5).

NOTES AND DEFINITIONS

About the CGS International Graduate Admissions Survey

In 2004, the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) launched an annual empirical examination of international graduate application, admission, and enrollment trends in response to member institutions' interest in changes in the enrollment of students from abroad seeking master's and doctoral degrees from U.S. colleges and universities. Broadly speaking, the survey is designed to capture information about application counts and offers of admission, as well as first-time and total graduate enrollment of international students for each fall admission cycle. For the purpose of this survey, an international student is defined as a person who is not a citizen, national, or permanent resident of the United States and is in this country on a student visa, or on a temporary basis, and does not have the legal right to remain indefinitely. Undocumented students, individuals with deferred action status, and refugees are not included in this definition of international students.

Beginning in the Fall 2016 admission cycle, the survey was redesigned to collect data by degree objective (master's and graduate certificate versus doctorate), and for all seven regions of origin, eight countries of origin, and all 11 broad fields of study. Additionally, beginning this survey cycle, the respondent pool was expanded to include institutions that were not CGS members but were members of the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools (CSGS), the Midwestern Association of Graduate Schools (MAGS), the Northeastern Association of Graduate Schools (NAGS), or the Western Association of Graduate Schools (WAGS). These changes were made to make the results more comprehensive, and to make them consistent with the CGS/GRE Survey of Graduate Enrollment and Degrees.

Data Collection

The 2021 CGS *International Graduate Admissions Survey* was sent to 744 U.S. colleges and universities, which were CGS members as of January 2021 and other institutions which were members of CSGS, MAGS, NAGS, or WAGS. Institutions were asked to report the number of final applications from and offers of admission to prospective international graduate students, as well as first-time and total international graduate enrollment for Fall 2021. The 2021 survey was administered between September 30, 2021 and November 12, 2021. A total of 361 institutions, or 48.5%, responded to the survey. The data collection instrument and survey instructions are available on the project website. Each completed data collection instrument submitted by participating institutions was then exported into four databases: final applications, offers of admission, first-time enrollment, and total enrollment.

Data Analysis Methods

Valid respondents for data analysis

Institutions providing data for the overall total count for international graduate students (i.e., sums of master's and certificate international students and doctoral international students) in respective sections of the survey (i.e., final applications, offers of admission, first-time enrollment, and total enrollment) were included in data analysis. This equated to 338 institutions for the final applications section with the reported total of 852,006 applications, 343 institutions for the offers of admission section with the reported total of 286,619 offers of admission, 340 institutions for the first-time enrollment section with the reported total of 101,371 first-time enrollments, and 361 institutions for the total enrollment section with the reported total of 268,527 total enrollments.

The summary of institutional control, region, and Carnegie Classification of institutions with valid responses for the first-time enrollment in Fall 2021 (N=340) is shown in Table D.1. Overall, two thirds (69%) of responding institutions were public universities. Over one third (36%) were master’s and other institutions, while the majority (64%) were research universities. Similarly, the summary of institutional control, region, and Carnegie Classification of institutions with valid responses for the first-time enrollment in both Fall 2020 and Fall 2021 (N=270) is shown in Table D.2.

Table D.1 Characteristics of Institutions with Valid Responses for Fall 2021 First-time Enrollment

Table D.1 Characteristics of Institutions with Valid Responses for the First-time Enrollment Fall 2021									
	Total		Institution Control			Region			
			Public	Private, not-for-profit	Private, for-profit	Midwest	Northeast	West	South
All Institutions	100%	340	69%	31%	0%	17%	25%	17%	42%
<i>Doctoral Universities: Very High Research Activity</i>	30%	102	71%	29%	0%	25%	19%	15%	41%
<i>Doctoral Universities: High Research Activity</i>	24%	80	79%	21%	0%	19%	30%	16%	35%
<i>Doctoral/Professional Universities</i>	11%	37	51%	49%	0%	24%	21%	17%	38%
<i>Master's-focused Institutions</i>	28%	95	67%	33%	0%	15%	23%	4%	58%
<i>All Other Institutions</i>	8%	26	58%	42%	0%	21%	23%	15%	41%

Data Source: Council of Graduate Schools, International Graduate Admissions Survey 2021

Table D.2 Characteristics of Institutions with Valid Responses for Fall 2020 and Fall 2021 First-time Enrollment

Table D.2 Characteristics of Institutions with Valid Responses for the First-time Enrollment in both Fall 2020 and Fall 2021									
	Total		Institution Control			Region			
			Public	Private, not-for-profit	Private, for-profit	Midwest	Northeast	West	South
All Institutions	100%	270	70%	30%	0%	18%	21%	18%	44%
<i>Doctoral Universities: Very High Research Activity</i>	34%	91	73%	27%	0%	31%	13%	15%	42%
<i>Doctoral Universities: High Research Activity</i>	23%	62	77%	23%	0%	19%	26%	19%	37%
<i>Doctoral/Professional Universities</i>	10%	27	52%	48%	0%	22%	23%	16%	39%
<i>Master's-focused Institutions</i>	27%	74	66%	34%	0%	19%	19%	6%	56%
<i>All Other Institutions</i>	6%	16	69%	31%	0%	22%	20%	16%	42%

Data Source: Council of Graduate Schools, International Graduate Admissions Survey 2021

Additional data exclusion rules were applied for computations of percentage distributions of international students by regions/countries of origin and by fields of study, as well as by degree levels within specific regions/countries of origin or fields of study.

Percentage distributions of international students by regions/countries of origin

For each section of the survey, percentage distributions of master’s degree & certificate students, doctoral students, and all students by regions/countries of origin were reported. The computations were based on the disaggregated data reported in regions/countries of origin sections of the data collection instrument, and only those institutions reporting complete data for the respective section were included in the computation. The sum of all six regions and Canada in this section served as the denominator, or 100%.

Only institutions with the reported total counts in master's & certificates and doctorates columns matched with calculated totals of all six regions and Canada respectively were included in this calculation. Due to missing values, these sums may be smaller than the total counts reported as the totals of valid respondents noted earlier.

Percentage distributions of international students by fields of study

For each section of the survey, percentage distributions of master's degree & certificate students, doctoral students, and all students by fields of study were reported. The computations were based on the disaggregated data reported in the fields of study section of the data collection instrument, and only those institutions reported complete data for the respective section was included in the computation. The sum of all 11 fields of study in this section served as the denominator, or 100%. Only institutions with the reported total counts in master's & certificates and doctorates columns matched with calculated totals of all 11 fields of study respectively were included in this calculation. Due to missing values, these sums may be smaller than the total counts reported as the totals of valid respondents noted earlier.

Percentage distributions of international students by degree-levels within particular regions/countries of origin

Percentage distributions of international students by degree-levels (i.e., master's and certificate students versus doctoral students) were computed for each region/country of origin. Calculated sums for master's & certificate students and doctoral students to each category (e.g., Asia, India, etc.) served as the denominator, or 100%. Due to missing values, these sums may be smaller than the total counts reported as the totals of valid respondents noted earlier.

Percentage distributions of international students by degree-levels within particular fields of study

Percentage distributions of international students by degree-levels (i.e., master's and certificate students versus doctoral students) were computed for each field of study. Calculated sums for master's and certificate students and doctoral students for each category (e.g., Business, Engineering, etc.) served as the denominator, or 100%. Due to missing values, these sums may be smaller than the total counts reported as the totals of valid respondents noted earlier.

Changes between Fall 2020 and Fall 2021

Changes between Fall 2020 and Fall 2021 are expressed as percentage differences, and only those institutions reporting valid data for both admission cycles were included in the computation. Fall 2020 data was drawn from the CGS *International Graduate Admissions Survey*.

Countries and Regions of Origin

The survey collected data on eight countries of origin, including: Brazil, Canada, China, India, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Republic of Korea (South Korea), and Taiwan. These eight countries were selected because they represent the top countries of origin for international graduate students in the United States, or for other geopolitical reasons. The survey also collected data from all seven regions of the world: Asia, Europe, Latin America & Caribbean, Middle East & North Africa, North America (for the purpose of this study, North America includes only Canada), Oceania, and Sub-Saharan Africa. Specific definitions are listed below:

Asia

Asia includes: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia, China, East Timor, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Macau, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, People's Democratic Republic of Korea (North Korea), Philippines, Republic

of Korea (South Korea), Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam.

For the purpose of this survey, China refers to the People's Republic of China and excludes Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan.

Europe

Europe includes: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Gibraltar, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kosovo, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, and Vatican City (Holy See).

Latin America & Caribbean

Latin America & Caribbean includes: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, Bolivia, Brazil, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Curacao, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Falkland Islands, French Guiana, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Martinique, Mexico, Montserrat, Netherlands Antilles, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Sint Maarten, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

Middle East & North Africa

Middle East & North Africa includes: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestinian Territories, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

Oceania

Oceania includes: Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Wallis & Futuna.

Sub-Saharan Africa

Sub-Saharan Africa includes: Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast), Democratic Republic of Congo (Kinshasa, Republic of Congo), Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Republic of the Congo (Brazzaville), Rwanda, Saint Helena, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Taxonomy

The survey collected data for all 11 broad fields of study, including: Arts & Humanities, Biological & Agricultural Sciences, Business, Education, Engineering, Health Sciences, Mathematics & Computer Sciences, Physical & Earth Sciences, Public Administration & Services, Social & Behavioral Sciences,

and Other Fields. These are the same fields of study as used by the CGS/GRE Survey of Graduate Enrollment & Degrees. The detailed taxonomy is available on the project website

End Note

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The 2022 CGS Committee on Research and Information Services

Scott Lanyon, University of Minnesota – Committee Chair
Joshua Barker, University of Toronto
Brian Carolan, SUNY Empire State College
Devon Jensen, University of Central Florida
Craig Ogilvie, Montana State University
Amanda L. Ostreko, University of Kansas
Dana Williams, Howard University

Contact and Suggested Citation

Enyu Zhou

Senior Analyst

Council of Graduate Schools

(202)-461-3876

ezhou@cgs.nche.edu

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