

the condition of education 2004



INDICATOR 32

Distance Education at Postsecondary Institutions

The indicator and corresponding tables are taken directly from *The Condition of Education 2004*. Therefore, the page numbers may not be sequential.

Additional information about the survey data and supplementary notes can be found in the full report. For a copy of *The Condition of Education 2004* visit the NCES web site (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2004077>) or contact ED PUBs at 1-877-4ED-PUBS.

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Learning Opportunities

Distance Education at Postsecondary Institutions

The number of course enrollments in distance education nearly doubled between 1997–98 and 2000–01; by 2000–01, about half of these enrollments were at public 2-year institutions.

Postsecondary institutions offer distance education to improve their ability to reach new audiences as well as to increase enrollments and students' access to learning (NCES 98–062). In 2000–01, 56 percent of all postsecondary institutions offered distance education courses (up from 34 percent 3 years earlier). Continued growth is expected, with additional institutions planning to offer these courses. The public sector is more likely than the private sector to offer distance education courses, with 90 percent of public 2-year and 89 percent of public 4-year institutions doing so in 2000–01, compared with 40 percent of private 4-year institutions. Nonetheless, growth is also occurring in the private sector: the percentage of private 4-year institutions offering distance education courses approximately doubled between 1997–98 and 2000–01 (19 to 40 percent).

Course enrollments in distance education have increased as well at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, increasing from 1.7 million to 3.1 million between 1997–98 and 2000–01 (see supplemental table 32-1).¹ The growth of course enrollments at public 2-year institutions

is particularly notable. In 1997–98, public 2- and 4-year institutions each had approximately 710,000 enrollments in distance education courses. In 2000–01, enrollments at public 2-year institutions rose to nearly 1.5 million, compared with 945,000 at public 4-year institutions. By 2000–01, about half of all course enrollments in distance education courses were at public 2-year colleges.

The extent to which colleges and universities offer certificates and degree programs designed to be completed solely through distance education offers an additional indication of the penetration of distance education at the postsecondary level. Among institutions offering any distance education courses, the proportion offering programs designed to be completed entirely by distance education increased between 1997–98 and 2000–01 for degree (22 to 30 percent) and certificate programs (7 to 16 percent) (see supplemental table 32-2). The increases occurred among public 2- and 4-year institutions, but the apparent differences were not statistically significant for private 4-year institutions.

¹Some students enroll in more than one distance education course, so the total enrollment is greater than the number of students.

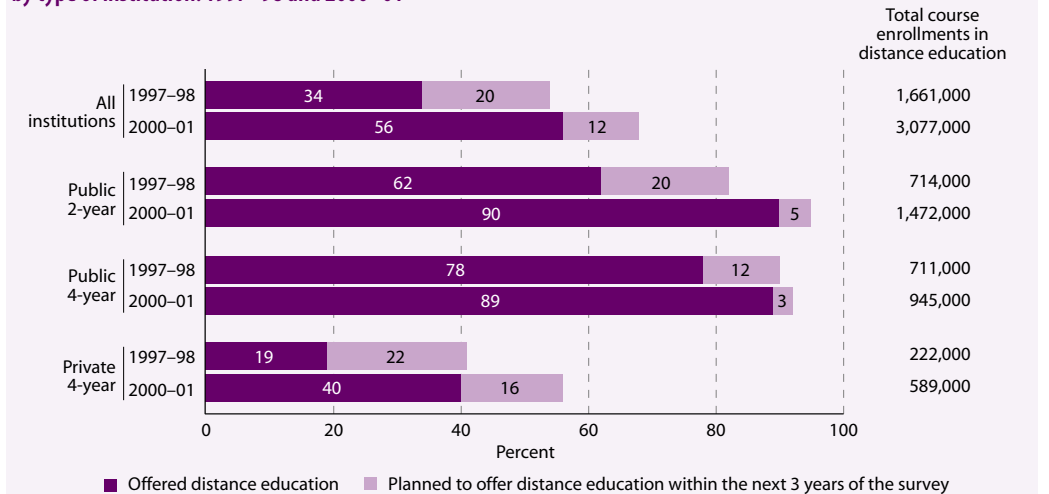
NOTE: Percentages for 1997–98 are based on the estimated 5,010 2- and 4-year postsecondary education institutions in the nation. Percentages for 2000–01 are based on the estimated 4,130 2- and 4-year Title IV-eligible, degree-granting institutions in the nation. Data for private 2-year institutions are not reported in a separate category because too few private 2-year institutions in the sample offered distance education courses to make reliable estimates. Data for private 2-year institutions are included in the totals and in analyses by other institutional characteristics.

SOURCE: Lewis, L., Snow, K., Farris, E., and Levin, D. (1999). *Distance Education at Postsecondary Education Institutions: 1997–98* (NCES 2000–013), tables 2 and 5; and Waits, T., and Lewis, L. (2003). *Distance Education at Degree-Granting Postsecondary Institutions: 2000–2001* (NCES 2003–017), tables 1 and 4. Data from U.S. Department of Education, NCES, Postsecondary Education Quick Information System (PEQIS), "Survey on Distance Education at Postsecondary Education Institutions," 1998–99 and "Survey on Distance Education at Higher Education Institutions," 2000–01.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Supplemental Notes 3, 8
Supplemental Tables 32-1,
32-2
NCES 98–062

DISTANCE EDUCATION OFFERINGS AND ENROLLMENT: Percentage of 2-year and 4-year postsecondary institutions offering distance education courses or planning to offer them within the next 3 years of the survey and total course enrollments, by type of institution: 1997–98 and 2000–01



Distance Education at Postsecondary Institutions

Table 32-1. Total number of institutions that offered distance education courses, total number of enrollments in all distance education courses, and the number of enrollments in college-level, credit-granting distance education courses, by level and type of institution: 1997–98 and 2000–01

| Type of institution | Total number of institutions | Number of institutions offering distance education courses | Total number of enrollments in all distance education courses | Number of enrollments in college-level, credit-granting distance education courses | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|--|---|--|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | | | | Undergraduate and graduate levels | Undergraduate courses | Graduate/first-professional courses |
| 1997–98 | | | | | | |
| All institutions | 5,010 | 1,680 | 1,661,000 | 1,364,000 | 1,082,000 | 281,000 |
| Public 2-year | 1,230 | 760 | 714,000 | 691,000 | 691,000 | ‡ |
| Public 4-year | 610 | 480 | 711,000 | 453,000 | 290,000 | 163,000 |
| Private 4-year | 2,050 | 390 | 222,000 | 209,000 | 91,000 | 118,000 |
| 2000–01 | | | | | | |
| All institutions | 4,130 | 2,320 | 3,077,000 | 2,876,000 | 2,350,000 | 510,000 |
| Public 2-year | 1,070 | 960 | 1,472,000 | 1,436,000 | 1,435,000 | ‡ |
| Public 4-year | 620 | 550 | 945,000 | 888,000 | 566,000 | 308,000 |
| Private 4-year | 1,800 | 710 | 589,000 | 480,000 | 278,000 | 202,000 |

‡Reporting standards not met (too few cases).

NOTE: The sample for the 1997–98 survey consisted of 2- and 4-year postsecondary institutions (both higher education and postsecondary institutions) in the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The 2000–01 survey consisted of 2- and 4-year Title IV-eligible, degree-granting institutions in the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The change was made because NCES shifted the way in which it categorizes postsecondary institutions. Data for private 2-year institutions are not reported in a separate category because too few private 2-year institutions in the sample offered distance education courses to make reliable estimates. Data for private 2-year institutions are included in the totals. Enrollments may include duplicated counts of students because institutions were instructed to count a student enrolled in multiple courses for each course in which that student was enrolled. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding, missing data, or because too few cases were reported for a reliable estimate for private 2-year institutions.

SOURCE: Lewis, L., Snow, K., Farris, E., and Levin, D. (1999). *Distance Education at Postsecondary Education Institutions: 1997–98* (NCES 2000–013), table 5; and Waits, T., and Lewis, L. (2003). *Distance Education at Degree-Granting Postsecondary Institutions: 2000–2001* (NCES 2003–017), table 4. Data from U.S. Department of Education, NCES, Postsecondary Education Quick Information System (PEQIS), “Survey on Distance Education at Postsecondary Education Institutions,” 1998–99 and “Survey on Distance Education at Higher Education Institutions,” 2000–01.

Distance Education at Postsecondary Institutions

Table 32-2. Percentage of 2- and 4-year postsecondary institutions offering any distance education courses, and among those, the percentage that had college-level degree or certificate programs designed to be completed through distance education, by level and type of institution: 1997–98 and 2000–01

| Type of institution | Offered any distance education courses ¹ | Programs designed to be completed totally through distance education | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|--|------------------------------------|--|--|--|---|---|
| | | Institutions with distance education courses ² | Degree programs | | | Certificate programs | | |
| | | | Any degree or certificate programs | Undergraduate degree programs ³ | Graduate/first-professional degree programs ⁴ | Degree programs at either level ² | Undergraduate certificate programs ³ | Graduate/first-professional certificate programs ⁴ |
| 1997–98 | | | | | | | | |
| All institutions | 34 | 25 | 13 | 31 | 22 | 4 | 9 | 7 |
| Public 2-year | 62 | 13 | 11 | † | 11 | 4 | † | 4 |
| Public 4-year | 78 | 39 | 18 | 34 | 38 | 4 | 8 | 10 |
| Private 4-year | 19 | 32 | 14 | 26 | 29 | 3 | 11 | 11 |
| 2000–01 | | | | | | | | |
| All institutions | 56 | 34 | 21 | 35 | 30 | 12 | 13 | 16 |
| Public 2-year | 90 | 25 | 20 | † | 20 | 15 | † | 15 |
| Public 4-year | 89 | 53 | 28 | 43 | 48 | 13 | 18 | 25 |
| Private 4-year | 40 | 36 | 19 | 28 | 33 | 10 | 10 | 14 |

†Not applicable.

¹1997–98 data based on the estimated 5,010 2- and 4-year postsecondary institutions in the nation; 2000–01 data based on the estimated 4,130 2- and 4-year Title IV-eligible, degree-granting institutions.

²1997–98 data based on the estimated 1,680 institutions that offered distance education courses in 1997–98; 2000–01 data based on the estimated 2,320 institutions that offered any distance education courses in 2000–01.

³1997–98 data based on the estimated 1,620 institutions that had undergraduate programs and that offered any distance education courses in 1997–98; 2000–01 data based on the estimated 2,170 institutions that had undergraduate programs and that offered any distance education courses in 2000–01.

⁴1997–98 data based on the estimated 750 institutions that had graduate or first-professional programs and that offered any distance education courses in 1997–98; 2000–01 data based on the estimated 1,080 institutions that had graduate or first-professional programs and that offered any distance education in 2000–01.

NOTE: Data for private 2-year institutions are not reported in a separate category because too few private 2-year institutions in the sample offered distance education courses to make reliable estimates. Data for private 2-year institutions are included in the totals and in analyses by other institutional characteristics.

SOURCE: Lewis, L., Snow, K., Farris, E., and Levin, D. (1999). *Distance Education at Postsecondary Education Institutions: 1997–98* (NCES 2000–013), table 13; and Waits, T., and Lewis, L. (2003). *Distance Education at Degree-Granting Postsecondary Institutions: 2000–2001* (NCES 2003–017), table 8. Data from U.S. Department of Education, NCES, Postsecondary Education Quick Information System (PEQIS), "Survey on Distance Education at Postsecondary Education Institutions," 1998–99 and "Survey on Distance Education at Higher Education Institutions," 2000–01.

Distance Education at Postsecondary Institutions

Table S32. Standard errors for the percentage of 2-year and 4-year postsecondary institutions offering distance education courses or planning to offer them within the next 3 years of the survey and total course enrollments, by type of institution: 1997–98 and 2000–01

| Type of institution | Offered distance education | Planned to offer distance education within the next 3 years of the survey | Total course enrollments in distance education |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|---|--|
| 1997–98 | | | |
| All institutions | 1.0 | 1.5 | 92,400 |
| Public 2-year | 2.5 | 1.7 | 33,700 |
| Public 4-year | 1.8 | 1.5 | 71,500 |
| Private 4-year | 1.5 | 2.7 | 33,500 |
| 2000–01 | | | |
| All institutions | 1.2 | 0.7 | 60,200 |
| Public 2-year | 2.0 | 1.2 | 32,600 |
| Public 4-year | 1.9 | 0.9 | 25,000 |
| Private 4-year | 2.2 | 1.7 | 46,400 |

SOURCE: Lewis, L., Snow, K., Farris, E., and Levin, D. (1999). *Distance Education at Postsecondary Education Institutions: 1997–98* (NCES 2000–013), tables 2a and 5a; and Waits, T., and Lewis, L. (2003). *Distance Education at Degree-Granting Postsecondary Institutions: 2000–2001* (NCES 2003–017), tables 1a and 4a. Data from U.S. Department of Education, NCES, Postsecondary Education Quick Information System (PEQIS), “Survey on Distance Education at Postsecondary Education Institutions,” 1998–99 and “Survey on Distance Education at Higher Education Institutions,” 2000–01.

Distance Education at Postsecondary Institutions

Table S32-1. Standard errors for the total number of institutions that offered distance education courses, total number of enrollments in all distance education courses, and the number of enrollments in college-level, credit-granting distance education courses, by level and type of institution: 1997–98 and 2000–01

| Type of institution | Number of institutions Total number of institutions | Total number of enrollments offering distance education courses | in all distance education courses | Number of enrollments in college-level, credit-granting distance education courses | | |
|-------------------------|--|---|-----------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| | | | | Undergraduate and graduate levels | Graduate/first-Undergraduate courses | professional courses |
| 1997–98 | | | | | | |
| All institutions | 42 | 45 | 92,400 | 58,600 | 38,900 | 33,400 |
| Public 2-year | 32 | 25 | 33,700 | 33,500 | 33,500 | ‡ |
| Public 4-year | 9 | 12 | 71,500 | 20,500 | 17,700 | 4,800 |
| Private 4-year | 21 | 31 | 33,500 | 33,000 | 10,300 | 31,200 |
| 2000–01 | | | | | | |
| All institutions | 23 | 54 | 60,200 | 58,200 | 46,300 | 28,500 |
| Public 2-year | 11 | 17 | 32,600 | 31,700 | 31,800 | ‡ |
| Public 4-year | 4 | 11 | 25,000 | 25,500 | 15,600 | 14,100 |
| Private 4-year | 19 | 40 | 46,400 | 44,100 | 29,800 | 24,400 |

‡Reporting standards not met (too few cases).

SOURCE: Lewis, L., Snow, K., Farris, E., and Levin, D. (1999). *Distance Education at Postsecondary Education Institutions: 1997–98* (NCES 2000–013), table 5a; and Waits, T., and Lewis, L. (2003). *Distance Education at Degree-Granting Postsecondary Institutions: 2000–2001* (NCES 2003–017), table 4a. Data from U.S. Department of Education, NCES, Postsecondary Education Quick Information System (PEQIS), “Survey on Distance Education at Postsecondary Education Institutions,” 1998–99 and “Survey on Distance Education at Higher Education Institutions,” 2000–01.

Distance Education at Postsecondary Institutions

Table S32-2. Standard errors for the percentage of 2- and 4-year postsecondary institutions offering any distance education courses, and among those, the percentage that had college-level degree or certificate programs designed to be completed through distance education, by level and type of institution: 1997–98 and 2000–01

| Type of institution | Offered any distance education courses | Programs designed to be completed totally through distance education | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| | | Any degree or certificate programs Institutions with distance education courses | Degree programs | | | Certificate programs | | |
| | | | Under-graduate degree programs | Graduate/first-professional degree programs | Degree programs at either level | Under-graduate certificate programs | Graduate/first-professional certificate programs | Certificate programs at either level |
| 1997–98 | | | | | | | | |
| All institutions | 1.0 | 1.2 | 1.0 | 1.9 | 1.0 | 0.5 | 1.3 | 0.9 |
| Public 2-year | 2.5 | 1.7 | 1.7 | † | 1.7 | 0.8 | † | 0.8 |
| Public 4-year | 1.8 | 2.1 | 1.4 | 2.1 | 2.0 | 0.4 | 0.9 | 0.9 |
| Private 4-year | 1.5 | 3.5 | 2.8 | 3.4 | 3.0 | 1.2 | 2.6 | 2.4 |
| 2000–01 | | | | | | | | |
| All institutions | 1.2 | 1.2 | 1.2 | 1.9 | 1.3 | 0.9 | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| Public 2-year | 2.0 | 1.8 | 1.5 | † | 1.5 | 1.5 | † | 1.5 |
| Public 4-year | 1.9 | 2.0 | 1.6 | 1.9 | 2.0 | 1.2 | 0.6 | 1.4 |
| Private 4-year | 2.2 | 3.2 | 3.1 | 3.0 | 3.4 | 2.0 | 1.7 | 2.1 |

†Not applicable.

SOURCE: Lewis, L., Snow, K., Farris, E., and Levin, D. (1999). *Distance Education at Postsecondary Education Institutions: 1997–98* (NCES 2000–013), table 13a; and Waits, T., and Lewis, L. (2003). *Distance Education at Degree-Granting Postsecondary Institutions: 2000–2001* (NCES 2003–017), table 8a. Data from U.S. Department of Education, NCES, Postsecondary Education Quick Information System (PEQIS), "Survey on Distance Education at Postsecondary Education Institutions," 1998–99 and "Survey on Distance Education at Higher Education Institutions," 2000–01.