

Section B

Degrees and Awards

Executive Summary of Data

Section B of the *Factual Look at Higher Education in Nebraska* summarizes the numbers of degrees and other awards reported through Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) surveys of Nebraska's public and independent (not for profit) colleges and universities and for-profit/career schools. Institutions report the number of degrees and other awards conferred during a one-year period beginning on July 1. For example, degrees and awards reported for 2007-2008 were awarded between July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008. Ten-year trends are based on the 1998-2008 IPEDS surveys of Nebraska public and independent colleges and universities. Seven-year trends include Nebraska's for-profit/career schools. In this section, the number of degrees and awards conferred are analyzed by (1) sector and institution, (2) degree level, (3) gender, (4) race/ethnicity and (5) discipline.

Executive Summary of Data 1998-2008

Total Number of Degrees Conferred

- In 2007-08, Nebraska’s public and independent colleges and universities conferred 25,167 degrees, certificates and diplomas.¹
- Between 1997-98 and 2007-08, the total number of degrees conferred by public and independent institutions increased 30.8%.
- Including the for-profit/career schools, the total number of awarded degrees increased to 27,088 in 2007-08, an increase of 25.8% from 2000-01 when 21,540 degrees were conferred by all of Nebraska’s postsecondary institutions.

Increases in the Number of Degrees by Sector

The number of degrees increased across all sectors, but the highest rates of increase were in the independent and for-profit sectors.

Sector	Seven-Year Increase in the Number of Degrees 2000-01 through 2007-08	
University of Nebraska	1,027 students	Up 11.6%
Nebraska State College System	189 students	Up 13.6%
Nebraska community colleges	1,362 students	Up 29.4%
Independent colleges and universities	2,255 students	Up 41.0%
For-profit/career schools	715 students	Up 59.3%

Shifts in the Degrees Awarded by Sector

- As a result of the increases in the number of degrees awarded within the independent and for-profit/career school sectors, the public sectors conferred about the same or lower percentages of the total number of degrees, diplomas and certificates awarded in 2007-08 than in 2000-01.

¹Throughout the remainder of this summary, “degrees” include certificates and diplomas.

Note: The numbers of degrees reported since 1998-1999 include 500 to 600 bachelor’s and master’s degrees conferred each year by the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) to graduates of the physician assistant military and distance education programs. These programs serve all branches of the military and most graduates are not residents of Nebraska. For technical reasons, these students are not included in UNMC enrollment counts.

- The University of Nebraska continues to award the highest number and percentage of degrees conferred in the state. However, in 2007-08, the University of Nebraska accounted for a lower percentage of the degrees conferred in the state than in 2000-01. At the end of the seven-year period, the state's independent institutions, community colleges, state colleges and for-profit/career schools accounted for the about the same or increased percentages of the awards conferred.

**% of Total Degrees Awarded by
Public and Independent Institutions**

Sector	2000-01	2007-08
University of Nebraska	40.9%	36.3%
Independent colleges and universities	25.5%	28.6%
Nebraska community colleges	21.5%	22.1%
Nebraska State College System	6.4%	5.8%
For-profit/career schools	5.6%	7.1%

Institutions Conferring the Highest Number of Degrees

- The University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) conferred the highest number of degrees in the state throughout the 10-year period from 1997-98 to 2007-08.
- The University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) awarded the second-highest number of degrees and other awards until 2006-07, when Bellevue University in the independent sector conferred a slightly higher number of academic awards.

Number of Degrees

Rank	Sector	1997-98	2007-08	% Increase
1	University of Nebraska-Lincoln	4,113	4,456	8.3%
3	Bellevue University	900	2,661	195.7%
2	University of Nebraska at Omaha	2,265	2,629	16.1%
4	Creighton University	1,522	1,744	14.6%
5	Central Community College	1,068	1,732	62.2%

Institutions with the Highest Growth Rates

- Between 1997-98 and 2007-08, the largest increase in the number of degrees awarded was at Bellevue University, where the number of degrees almost tripled.
- The highest growth rates within the public sector were at Peru State College, where the number of degrees increased 89.0%, from 236 in 1997-98 to 446 in 2007-08, and at Central Community college where degrees and awards increased 62.2%, from 1,068 in 1997-98 to 1,732 in 2007-08.

Degrees by Level

Undergraduate degrees, including awards for the completion of less-than-four-year programs, accounted for 77.8% of the 27,088 degrees granted in 2007-08, but the highest rate of growth between 2000-01 and 2007-08 was at the master's level.

- A significant increase in the number of master's degrees was evidenced within the Nebraska State College System, where the number of master's degrees more than doubled, from 185 in 2000-01 to 478 in 2007-08.
- Within the independent sector, the number of master's degrees also more than doubled, from 734 in 2000-01 to 1,737 in 2007-08.
- By 2007-08, master's degrees accounted for 17.3% of the degrees awarded, up from 15.0% in 2000-01.
- Professional practice² and research/scholarship doctor's degrees accounted for the remaining 4.9% of all degrees awarded in 2007-08, down slightly from 5.3% in 2000-01.

Degrees by Discipline (Not Including Degrees Conferred by For-Profit/Career Schools)

- Nebraska's public and independent institutions confer high numbers of degrees in business, education and health professions. Together, these disciplines accounted for 52.3% of the degrees awarded in 2007-08 and for 64.4% of the growth in the number of degrees that were conferred between 1997-98 and 2007-08.
- Over the 10-year period, business accounted for the highest total number of degrees awarded in Nebraska, but the health professions had a higher rate of growth.

Number of Degrees

Discipline	1997-98	2007-08	Increase	% Increase
Business	3,806	5,457	1,651	43.4%
Health professions	3,162	4,649	1,487	47.0%
Education	2,385	3,064	1,219	28.5%

- The largest 10-year increases in business degrees were at the bachelor's level and master's level, whereas the largest increases in the number of education degrees were at the master's and doctoral levels.
- In the health care professions, there were significant 10-year increases in the number of degrees at the less-than-four-year degree level and the bachelor's level as well as at the master's and doctoral levels.

²In Nebraska, professional practice doctor's degrees are awarded in dentistry, pharmacy, medicine, audiology, occupational therapy, physical therapy and law. The remaining degrees at the doctoral level are classified as research/scholarship doctor's degrees.

- 1,724 more master's degrees were conferred in 2007-08 than in 1997-98. Of these additional degrees, 17.3% were in the health professions, 30.5% were in education and 34.6% were in business.
- Degrees in the health professions accounted for 82% of the increased number of professional practice doctor's degrees between 1997-98 and 2007-08, while law degrees accounted for 18% of the 10-year increase.
- Among the professional practice doctorates, the highest increase in the number of degrees was in pharmacy, followed by occupational therapy.

Professional Practice Doctor's Degrees	<u>Number of Degrees</u>		10-Year Increase (or Decrease) in the Number of Degrees
	1997-98	2007-08	
Dentistry	118	127	9
Pharmacy	174	232	58
Medicine, M.D.	227	236	9
Audiology	0	4	4
Occupational Therapy	9	49	40
Physical Therapy	<u>103</u>	<u>98</u>	<u>(5)</u>
Health professions total	631	746	115
Law	<u>245</u>	<u>270</u>	<u>25</u>
Total	876	1,016	140

Degrees by Gender

- In 2007-08, women earned 56.8% of the degrees awarded by Nebraska's public, independent and for-profit institutions, down slightly from 58.0% in 2006-07 but up from 55.3% in 2000-01.
- The widest gender gap was at the master's level, where men earned 40.4% and women 59.6% of the degrees in 2007-08.
- The most significant change in gender gaps occurred for professional practice degrees at the doctoral level. In 2007-08, women earned 55.8% of the professional practice doctor's degrees, up from 43.6% in 1997-98.
- The new IPEDS classification of doctoral degrees resulted in a significant change in findings with regard to research/scholarship doctor's degrees. Using the new classification, women earned fewer than 50% of the research/scholarship doctoral degrees between 1997-98 and 2007-08. In 2007-08, women were awarded 47.3% of the doctorates in this category, compared to 48.3% in 1997-98. Using the previous classification system, it appeared that women earned more doctorates of this type than men, due to degrees in audiology, occupational therapy and physical therapy being classified in the doctoral, rather than first professional, degree category. These degrees are now classified as professional practice doctor's degrees.

- In 2007-08, the smallest gender gaps at the undergraduate level were evidenced at the Nebraska community colleges and the University of Nebraska, where women earned 50.4% of the less-than-four-year degrees in each of these sectors, and at the University of Nebraska, where women earned 53.0% of the bachelor's degrees. In comparison, women earned 58.2% of the bachelor's degrees conferred by the state colleges and 57.6% of the bachelor's degrees awarded by independent institutions.

Minorities and Foreign Students

- Minorities students – consisting of Black non-Hispanics, Hispanics, Asians/Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans³ – earned 10.3% of the degrees conferred by public, independent and for-profit/career schools in 2007-08, up from 7.5% in 2000-01.
- In 2007-08, foreign students earned 2.0% of the degrees, down from 2.9% seven years earlier.
- As shown below, minorities and foreign students earned higher percentages of the degrees at the doctoral levels than at the master's or undergraduate level in 2007-08.

	% of Degrees Earned in 2006-07			
	Less-Than-Four-Year Degrees	Bachelor's Degrees	Master's Degrees	Professional Practice and Research/Scholarship Doctoral Degrees
White non-Hispanics	88.5%	88.9%	84.9%	80.5%
Minorities	11.1%	9.2%	11.0%	12.2%
Foreign students	0.3%	1.9%	4.1%	7.3%

- Within the minorities, the highest increase in the percentage of degrees awarded was for black non-Hispanics who received less-than-four-year awards from for-profit/career schools. In 2007-08, black non-Hispanics accounted for 11.1% of the less-than-four-year awards conferred by for-profit/career schools in Nebraska, up from 5.8% in 2000-01.

³The Coordinating Commission is continuing use these names for race/ethnicity categories until all Nebraska higher education institutions convert to the new race/ethnicity categories for reporting IPEDS data. The new IPEDS category names that are equivalent to the ones currently used by the Commission are Black or African American; Hispanic or Latino; Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; American Indian or Alaska Native.