## Distance Education State Almanac

## MASSACHUSETTS



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## National setting

Student enrollment in higher education institutions has undergone fundamental changes over the last decade, a condition only exacerbated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Between 2012 and 2019, the total number of students enrolled at U.S. degree-granting institutions dropped by almost 1.1 million. At the same time, the number of students taking at least one online course grew by 2 million, from 5.4 million to 7.4 million, representing $37.2 \%$ of all students in 2019. The net result of these two changes was far fewer students studying on campus, from 18.3 million in 2012 to 16.4 million by 2019.

The information presented in the report represent the classifications and enrollments for Fall 2019 and were measured before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. National totals include all 50 states, District of Columbia, America Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Marshall Islands, Northern Marianas, Palau, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

## Massachusetts

Massachusetts has 107 degree-granting higher education institutions, representing 2.6\% of all such institutions in the United States. Of these institutions, 30 are classified as public, 75 as private not-for-profit, and 2 as private for-profit. Of these 107 institutions, 88 offer four-year programs, and 19 offer two-year programs.

The state has 492,497 students enrolled across its institutions and ranks 13th in terms of total higher education student enrollment. Between 2012 and 2019, the total number of students enrolled nationally declined by $5.0 \%$. For Massachusetts, the enrollment decreased by 21,622 students, or $-4.2 \%$. Massachusetts has 349,072 students studying at the undergraduate level, a loss of 32,181 students from 2012 ( $-8.4 \%$ ), compared to a $6.8 \%$ national decline. There are 143,425 students studying at the graduate level, which is 10,559 greater than in 2012; this represents a change of $7.9 \%$, where the national data showed an increase of 5.7\%.

There are 105,320 students in Massachusetts that take at least one distance course. The state is ranked 48th for the proportion of students taking at least one distance course (21.4\%). In 2019, there were 49,195 students taking all of their courses at a distance, a growth of 18,679 students ( $61.2 \%$ ) from 2012. Massachusetts ranks 46th in the proportion of students ( $10.0 \%$ ) taking exclusively distance courses in the nation.


## COVID-19 Distance Learning Preparedness

Not all higher education institutions were equally prepared to move courses online. Those institutions with a substantial number of students studying at a distance ( 1,000 or more), or a substantial percentage of their students taking at least one distance course ( $25 \%$ or more), can be expected to have the experience and infrastructure to better support a transition to online learning. Likewise, institutions with no distance students will have the least experience and infrastructure to support such a transition.

Nationally, $59.3 \%$ of all degree-granting institutions meet the criteria of having $25 \%$ or more or over 1,000 of their students taking distance courses. In Massachusetts, $43.0 \%$ of institutions are better prepared for moving completely online. These institutions enroll 339,904 students, or $69.0 \%$ of all students in the state. There are 26 institutions in Massachusetts with no distance students (representing $24.3 \%$ of the total in state institutions) that were likely not well prepared for a rapid transition to distance learning.


Preparedness Definitions:
BETTER PREPARED: Schools with more than 1,000 online students (thus extensive support staff) or having 25 percent or more of their students online

LESS PREPARED: Large schools with less than 1,000 online students (thus some support staff) or having less than 25 percent of their students online

NOT PREPARED: Schools with no distance enrollment

Preparedness by Control


Preparedness by Size




Institutions in Massachusetts enrolled a total of 492,497 students in the of Fall 2019; 349,072 students were enrolled at the undergraduate level, and 143,425 enrolled at the graduate level. The Fall 2019 figure represents a decrease of 21,622 students ( $-4.2 \%$ ) from the number enrolled in the fall of 2012. The number of undergraduate students decreased by 32,181 during this period, from 381,253 in 2012 to 349,072 in $2019(-8.4 \%)$. The number of graduate students increased from 132,866 to 143,425 (7.9\%) in the same period.

Enrollments in Fall 2019 totaled 202,793 students at public institutions (41\% of all students), 288,995 students at private not-for-profit institutions (58.7\%), and 709 students at private for-profit institutions ( $0.1 \%$ ). Enrollments at public institutions decreased by 25,385 students between 2012 and 2019, while those at private not-for-profit institutions increased by 10,088 students, and those at private for-profit institutions decreased by 6,325 students.



In 2019, a total of 105,320 students took at least one distance course from Massachusetts institutions; 65,045 ( $18.6 \%$ of all undergraduate students) were enrolled at the undergraduate level, and 40,275 ( $28.1 \%$ of all graduate students) were enrolled at the graduate level.

Among undergraduate level distance students, 46,937 were enrolled at institutions classified as public, 17,666 as private not-for-profit, and 442 as private for profit. At the graduate-level, 10,780 distance students were enrolled at institutions classified as public, 29,495 as private not-for-profit, and 0 as private for profit.

The number of undergraduate distance enrollments at Massachusetts institutions increased by $17,442(36.6 \%)$ between Fall 2012 and Fall 2019, while the number of graduate distance enrollments grew by 16,794 ( $71.5 \%$ ) during this same period.


Massachusetts


A total of 49,195 students were taking all of their courses at a distance from Massachusetts institutions in the fall of 2019. This represents $10.0 \%$ of the enrolled students in the state, which ranks the state at number 46 in the U.S. The number of exclusively distance students who reside in Massachusetts while taking courses from an institution in Massachusetts was 17,523 in 2012 and grew to 27,422 by 2019. There are 21,773 students enrolled as exclusively distance students in Massachusetts institutions who reside outside Massachusetts, or whose place of residence is unknown.

## Location of Exclusively Distance Students

- Same State

■ U.S., not in same state
■ Unkonwn/ Outside U.S.



On-campus students are those who take one or more of their courses physically on-campus. The number of students studying on campus declined from 483,603 to 443,302 between 2012 and 2019 in Massachusetts, representing a reduction of $8.3 \%$. This compares to a national decrease of $10.3 \%$ for the same period. In 2019, $94.0 \%$ of undergraduate students and $80.4 \%$ of graduate students in Massachusetts were taking at least one on-campus course.


Massachusetts

## INSTITUTIONS

|  | Massachusetts | National | State Rank | State as <br> $\%$ of <br> National |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Total institutions | 107 | 4,089 | 11 | $2.6 \%$ |
| Institutions w/ distance | 81 | 3,161 | 10 | $2.6 \%$ |
| \% Institution w/ distance | $75.7 \%$ | $77.3 \%$ | 10 |  |

## Enrollments

| Massachusetts |  | Total | Any Distance | Exclusive <br> Distance | On <br> Campus |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Total | 492,497 | 105,320 | 49,195 | 443,302 |
| Size | Under 1,000 | 12,332 | 2,341 | 575 | 11,757 |
|  | 1,000-4,999 | 124,001 | 25,561 | 11,490 | 112,511 |
|  | 5,000-9,999 | 130,656 | 36,668 | 15,546 | 115,110 |
|  | 10,000-19,999 | 106,576 | 24,763 | 11,382 | 95,194 |
|  | 20,000 and above | 118,932 | 15,987 | 10,202 | 108,730 |
| Carnegie | Not assigned | 14,961 | 6,823 | 4,228 | 10,733 |
|  | Associates | 83,094 | 25,628 | 8,221 | 74,873 |
|  | Research | 207,635 | 29,880 | 17,260 | 190,375 |
|  | Masters | 105,429 | 27,517 | 11,531 | 93,898 |
|  | Baccalaureate | 47,755 | 7,881 | 3,769 | 43,986 |
|  | Specialized | 33,623 | 7,591 | 4,186 | 29,437 |
| Control | Public | 202,793 | 57,717 | 22,061 | 180,732 |
|  | Private not-for-profit | 288,995 | 47,161 | 27,016 | 261,979 |
|  | Private for-profit | 709 | 442 | 118 | 591 |
| Type | Four or more years | 412,320 | 80,551 | 41,207 | 371,113 |
|  | At least 2 but less than 4 years | 80,177 | 24,769 | 7,988 | 72,189 |

