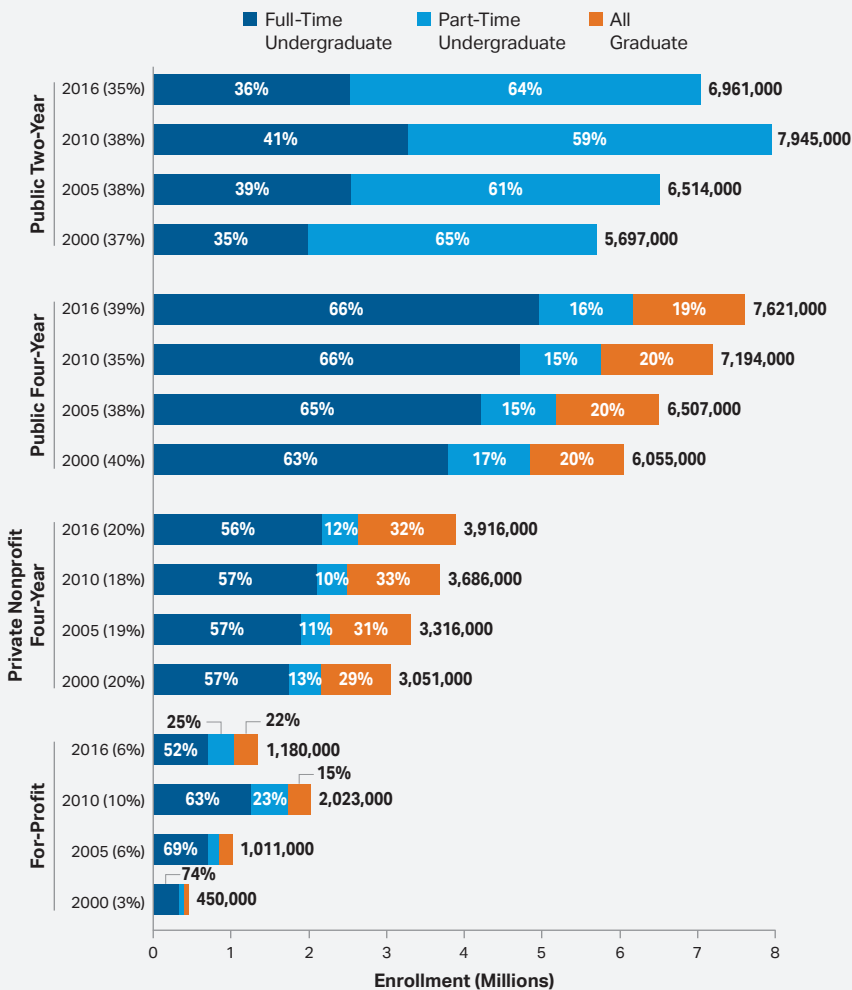


# Enrollment Patterns over Time

Public two-year colleges enrolled about 1 million fewer students in fall 2016 than in fall 2010 (a decline of 12%), and for-profit institutions enrolled about 840,000 fewer students (a decline of 42%) over this period. But both sectors enrolled more students in 2016 than they did in 2005.

**FIGURE 21** Postsecondary Fall Enrollment by Attendance Status and Level of Enrollment (with Percentage of All Students Enrolled in Each Sector), 2000 to 2016, Selected Years



**NOTES:** Percentages on the vertical axis represent the enrollment in each sector as a percentage of total enrollments. Four-year institutions include only those where more than 50% of degrees/certificates awarded are bachelor's degree or higher. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

**SOURCES:** NCES, IPEDS Fall Enrollment data, 2000, 2005, 2010, and 2016; calculations by the authors.

- Even after the dramatic enrollment declines in for-profit institutions, this sector enrolled about 1.2 million students in fall 2016, compared with 450,000 in fall 2000.
- The enrollment decline in the for-profit sector was primarily among full-time undergraduate students. In 2016, these students made up 52% of for-profit enrollment—a decline from 63% in 2010.
- Enrollment continued to increase in both the public and private nonprofit four-year sectors between 2010 and 2016. In fall 2016, these sectors enrolled 39% and 20%, respectively, of all postsecondary students.

## ALSO IMPORTANT:

- All of the students reported in Figure 21 were enrolled in degree-granting institutions that participate in federal student aid programs. In the late 2000s, about 600,000 to 800,000 students were enrolled in for-profit institutions that do not participate in these programs. (S. Cellini and C. Goldin, "Does Federal Student Aid Raise Tuition? New Evidence on For-Profit Colleges," *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, November 2014)
- Students enrolled in non-degree-granting institutions, not included in Figure 21, may be eligible for federal student aid if they are working toward certificates at accredited institutions. Some students enrolled in degree-granting institutions are not eligible for federal student aid because they are enrolled in non-credit-bearing programs.
- Some colleges offer both two-year and four-year degrees. In Figure 21, four-year colleges are defined as institutions where bachelor's degrees comprise more than half of all degrees awarded. Reclassifying colleges that offer any bachelor's degrees as four-year institutions would increase the percentage of total postsecondary enrollments in public four-year colleges from the 39% reported here to 44%.

## Total Postsecondary Enrollment (in Millions)

Year	Enrollment (in Millions)
2000	15.3
2005	17.3
2010	20.8
2016	19.7

