WILEY | EDUCATION SERVICES

State of the Education Market:

Trends and Insights in Key Bachelor's Disciplines

2021

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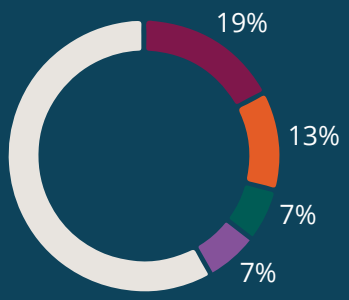
Introduction

Since 2010, the market for bachelor's degrees has grown overall by a brisk 22%. However, not all degree disciplines have enjoyed equal growth. While some have the proven scale and success to thrive over the coming decade, others have been on the decline.

Research Methodology

Data for this report is based on schools reporting graduates (i.e., completed students) and was collected from IPEDS/NCES through the end of the 2018/19 academic year. Completions, while a historical indicator, are available at a level of detail that enables analysis down to the individual degree. Enrollments, by comparison, only provide data at a vertical level and do not permit finely tuned programmatic analysis. The data collected for this report allows for exploration of the four largest undergraduate verticals and the most notable programs within them. These verticals comprise 45% of bachelor's graduates:

- Business
- Health
- Social Sciences
- Engineering



Bachelor's graduates, 2019 total

2,036,077

How to Read This Report

The sections of this report are broken down into four main topics:

1. **General Overview:** A macro view of overall trends in a degree vertical (e.g., business, health)
2. **The Largest Program:** A deep dive into the largest program in each vertical
3. **Biggest, Fastest-Growing, and Shrinking Programs:** A high-level look at some of the biggest, fastest-growing, and declining programs (Icon Legend below)
4. **Programs Spotlight:** Additional context and notable trends for specific programs from each vertical

Icon Legend

- Biggest Programs
- Fastest-Growing Programs
- Shrinking Programs
- STEM Programs

Understanding CIP Codes

Schools report their program and graduate info to the U.S. Department of Education by Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) codes. These six-digit codes are akin to the Dewey Decimal System. For instance, a degree in project management has a CIP code of 52.0211.

Here's how it works:

The base two digits show a general degree. For example, all business degrees are reported using a CIP code that begins with 52.

The next four numbers narrowly define the discipline, while the whole six-digit number represents the specific degree program.

Example: **Project Management**

52.0211

52.0211 Business (general degree)

52.0211 Business Administration, Management, and Operations (degree type)

52.0211 Project Management (specific degree)

Data Definitions

In this data-driven report, the following key metrics are utilized to analyze the higher education market:

- **School years:** These correspond to the end of the academic calendar. For example, the most recent school year in IPEDS is 2018/2019 and is often abbreviated to "2019".

- **Graduates:** This is the total number of students receiving degrees in a given academic year. Unless otherwise specified, the word "graduate" refers to those who have completed their bachelor's degree programs (not master's or doctoral level students, which will be covered in separate reports).

- **Growth:** This usually refers to the average year-over-year increase in graduates from 2014 to 2019 unless stated otherwise.

- **Average program size:** This metric indicates what a given program's typical graduating class size might be. It is calculated based on the number of graduates divided by the number of schools reporting graduates. While each program's class size varies by school, this metric helps reveal if a program is trending toward growth or decline.

- **Median program size:** This data shows the most standard program size. Median is defined as the most middle value in a list of numbers ordered smallest to greatest. Here it means the most middle program size. Unlike average graduating class size, median is less likely to be skewed by large programs in the market.

- **Percent online:** The number of universities reporting that they offer their program in an online/distance format. This may mean that the program is available both online and on-campus or online-only.

Broad Undergraduate Education Trends

Expansion of Online Learning

There's no doubt about it. Online learning is on the rise. The number of bachelor's programs online has grown 67% since 2012—the first year schools reported data about distance learning to IPEDS. Forty-eight percent of schools offered at least one bachelor's program online in 2019. This is up from 33% of schools offering programs online in 2012.

International Students and STEM Reclassifications

Many universities are incentivizing international students to enroll in their programs by reclassifying programs into the STEM category. International students are eligible to extend their F-1 visas up to 24 months if they earn a degree from a CIP code the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has given STEM designation (see the full list of DHS-approved STEM degrees here).

Job-Secure Degrees

The most popular degrees align with occupational growth. Business, health, and technology degrees are some of the largest and fastest-growing programs. These programs line up with nursing, management, computer science, and engineering—some of the occupations projected to experience the most growth in the next decade. When high job growth corresponds to a specific degree, it is often called out with a special note called "Labor Forecast."

Bachelor's Completion Programs

Bachelor's completion programs expand options. They are an effective, learner-friendly way of growing enrollments. Schools that allow individuals to transfer in up to 75% of their required credits for completion can help decrease tuition costs and the time it takes to complete their degrees.

The Impact of COVID-19

Adding unforeseen complexity to the state of the market is COVID-19. The pandemic's economic effect on the bachelor's degree market will not be apparent in graduate data for another three years or so. Until then, enrollments will be more of a leading indicator of trends. For instance, preliminary data shows fall 2020 undergraduate enrollment was down .9% year over year[1].

Now that vaccines are available to the majority of the public, it is imperative that universities quickly and deftly assess which programs they should either seize the moment to launch, keep up the momentum with, or expand as the country begins to synthesize a new normal.

[1] "Current Term Enrollment Estimates," https://nscresearchcenter.org/current-term-enrollment-estimates/

#1 Business: *The Leader of the Pack*

Base CIP Code: **52**

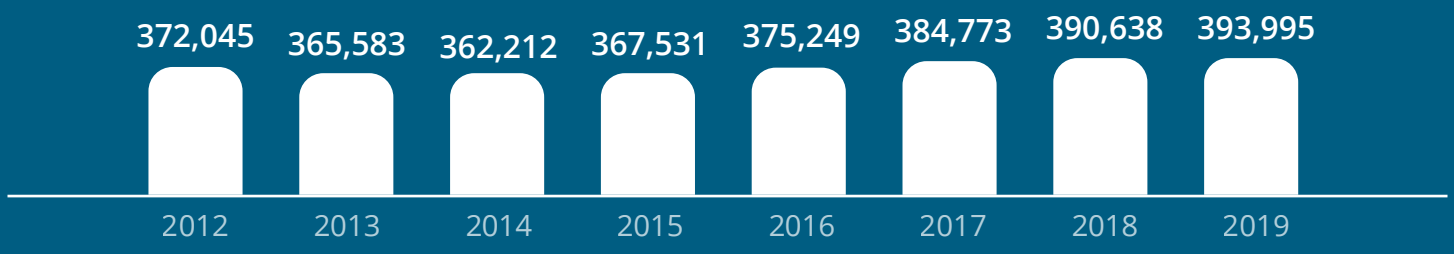
19% *of all 2019 bachelor's grads*

Graduates

Business has been the largest undergraduate vertical for the last two decades. After years of relatively flat (and at times declining) growth, undergraduate degrees in business have increased 6% overall since 2012 and 4% Y/Y since 2014.

Despite 8% yearly growth in health—the second-largest undergrad vertical—the popularity of business programs will not be eclipsed anytime soon.

Number of Graduates

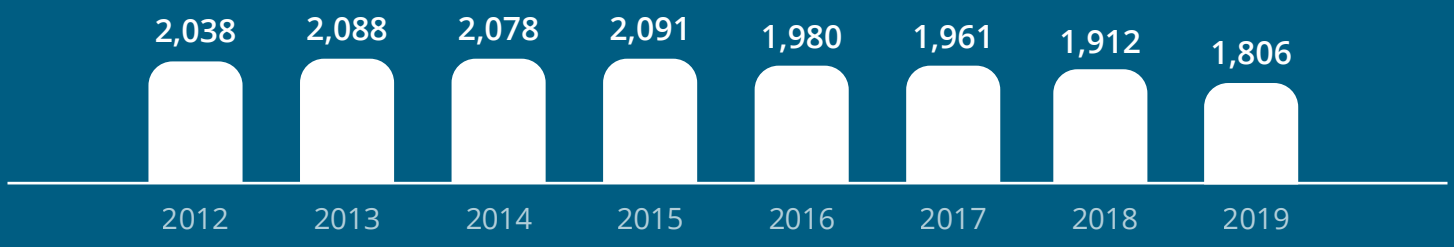


Schools in the Market

Graduate growth in the business vertical has occurred despite numerous for-profit schools exiting the market in recent years.

Following their closures, the overall number of schools has dropped since 2016, with an overall drop of 11% since 2012.

Number of Schools

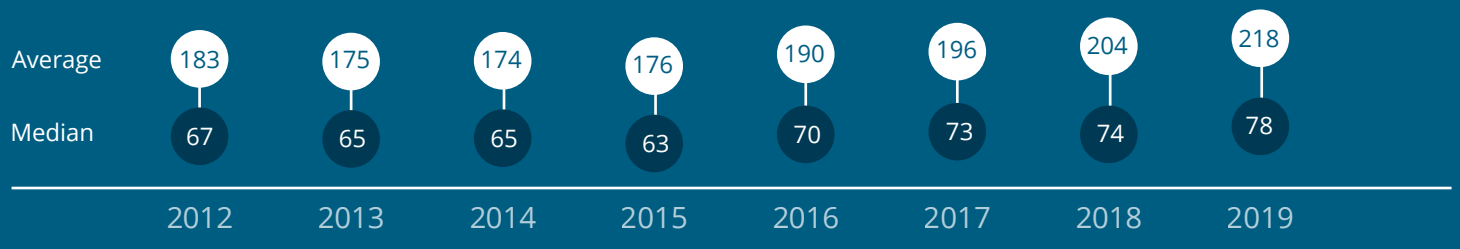


Program Size

There is a sizeable gap between the average and the median number of graduates from each program in this vertical.

This indicates that there are some very large universities in the market.

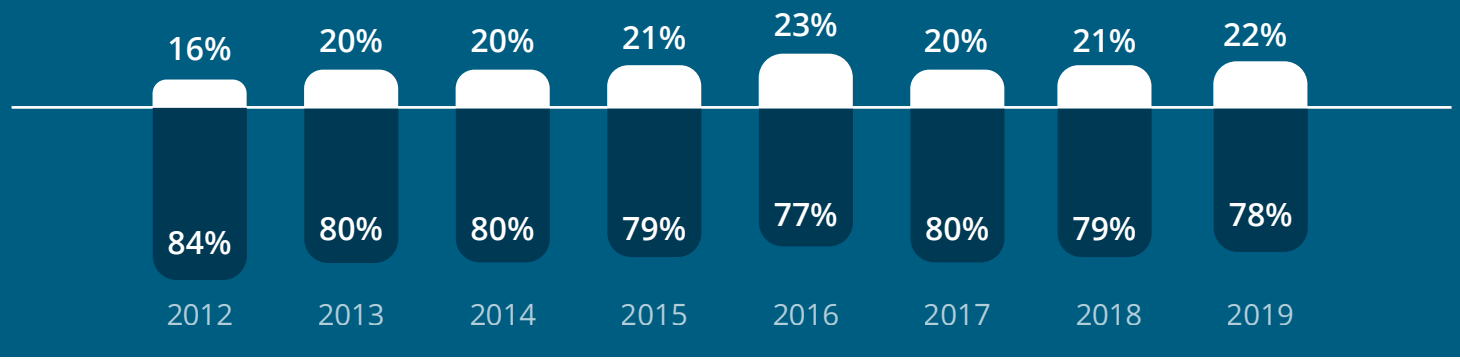
Average/Median Program Size



Programs Online

When looking at the business vertical as a whole, business programs are still primarily ground-based. In 2019, 22% of all undergraduate business programs were offered online; however, this percentage varies by individual degree, with some having a much higher rate of online availability.

Percentage of Programs Online



Undergraduate Business Programs With Highest Online Adoption

(min. 100 programs reporting grads)

Project Management	Organizational Leadership	Accounting and Business/ Management	Organizational Behavior Studies	Operations Management and Supervision
71%	**58%**	**46%**	**41%**	**39%**

The Largest Business Program

Business Administration 52.0211

Biggest of the big. With business as the leading undergraduate vertical, business administration is the most popular of all undergraduate programs. That also means the biggest potential for returns. In fact, there is a direct relationship in graduation rates between Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) and Master of Business Administration (MBA) programs. When schools offer a BBA, they tend to havea higher number of MBA graduates than schools that do not offer a BBA. This effect is even more pronounced when the school offers both programs online.

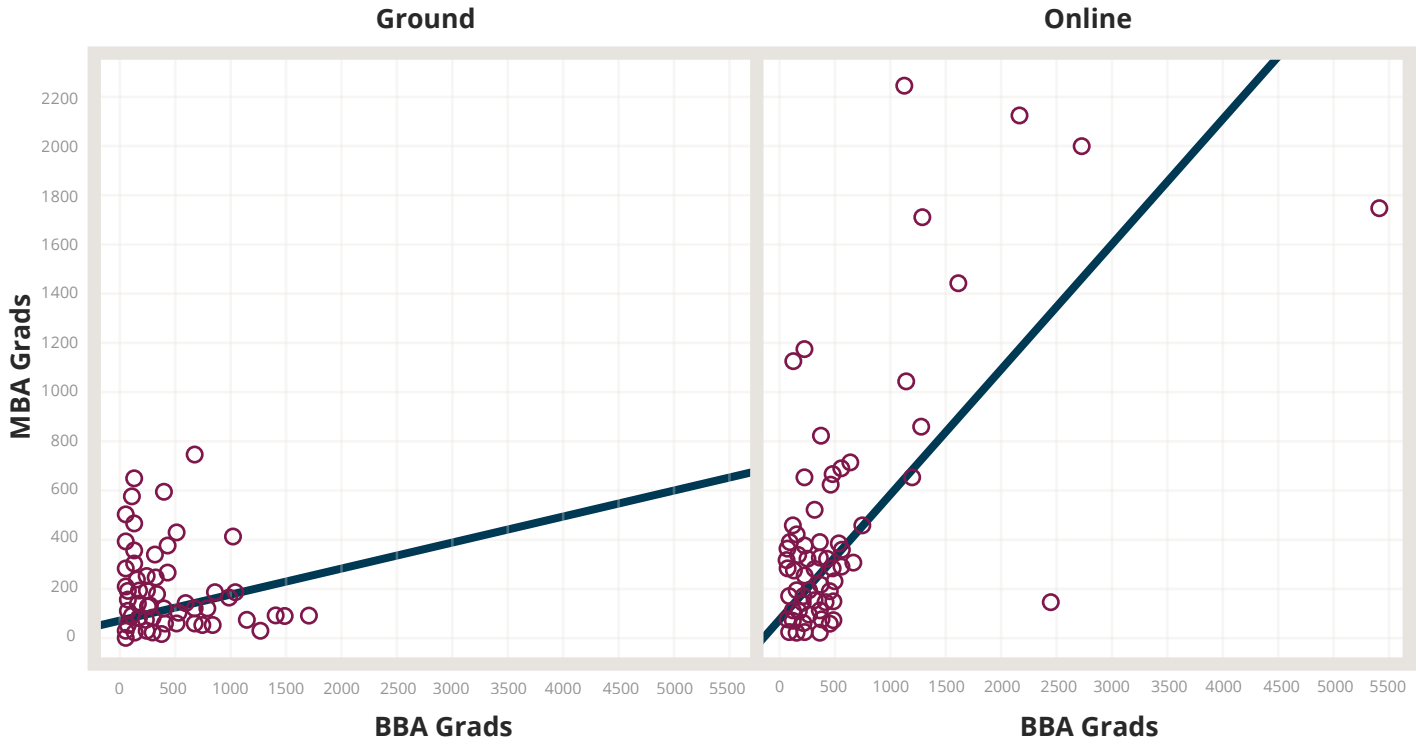
141K
grads, 2019

99
average program size

0%
yearly growth

35%
online, 2019

BBA/MBA Graduate Relationship



Big Opportunity: *MBA Laddering*

As the scatter plot above indicates, when schools offer a dual online BBA/MBA, it tends to lead to more MBA graduates. Such schools are extremely well-positioned for continued success. Those that adopt this 4+1 laddered MBA system are projected to be successful long-term. **Common concentrations for online BBAs are management, marketing, accounting, and human resources.**

Labor Forecast: *Management Occupations*

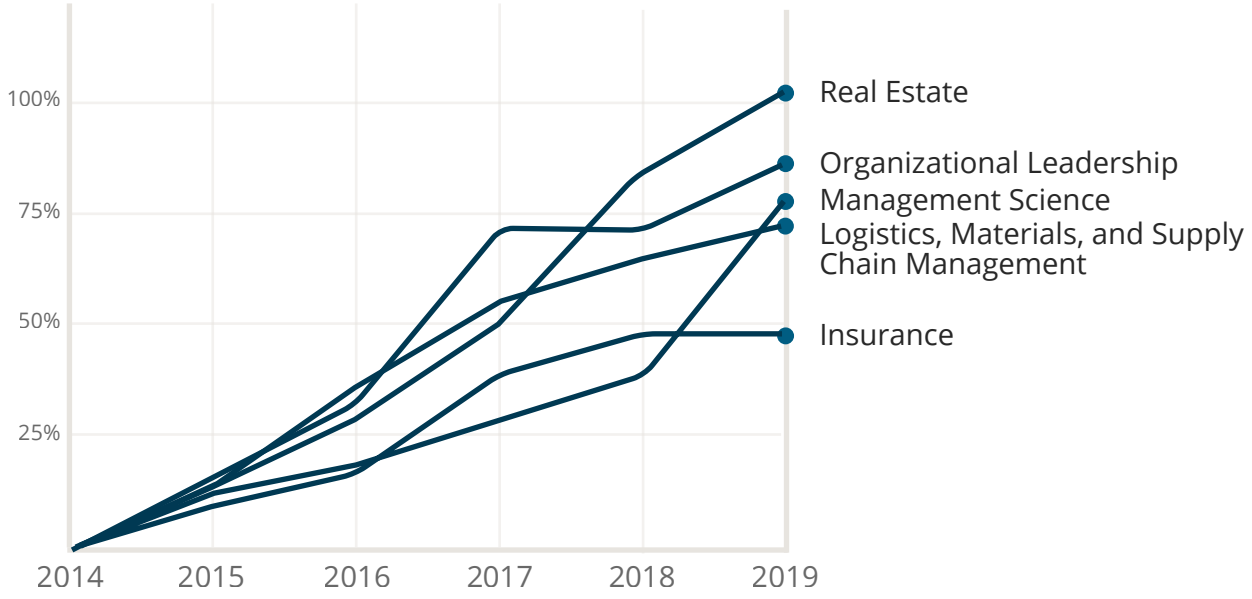
Management occupations are projected to be 6.6% of all occupations by 2029, up from 5.5% in 2019.

Biggest, Fastest-Growing, & Shrinking Business Programs

Program Icon Legend Biggest Fastest-Growing Shrinking STEM

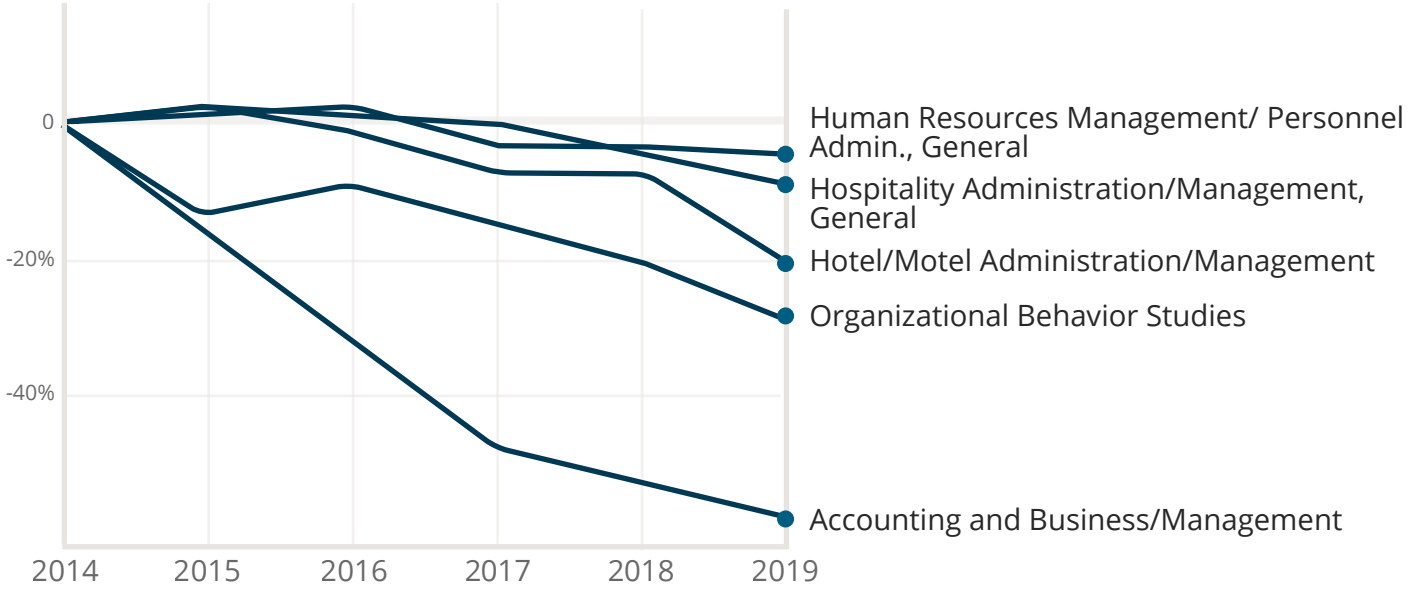
Fastest-Growing Business Programs

Overall growth since 2014



Shrinking Business Programs

Overall growth since 2014



Accounting 52.0301

50K+ grads, 2019	**47** average program size
0% yearly growth	**17%** online, 2019

Accounting and Business/Management 52.0305

938 grads, 2019	**13** average program size
-16% yearly growth	**36%** online, 2019

Business, General 52.0101

25K grads, 2019	**71** average program size
1% yearly growth	**30%** online, 2019

Finance 52.0801

41K grads, 2019	**65** average program size
2% yearly growth	**10%** online, 2019

Labor Forecast: *Financial Managers*

Financial managers are projected to grow 15.5% through 2029, notably higher than the national average job growth of 3.7%.

Hospitality Administration/ Management 52.0901

7,151 grads, 2019	**46** average program size
-2% yearly growth	**19%** online, 2019

Hotel/Motel Administration/ Management 52.0904

1,575 grads, 2019	**48** average program size
-4% yearly growth	**10%** online, 2019

Human Resources Management 52.1001

7,044 grads, 2019	**30** average program size
-1% yearly growth	**32%** online, 2019

Insurance 52.1701

1,144 grads, 2019	**29** average program size
8% yearly growth	**17%** online, 2019

Management Science 52.1301

5,480 grads, 2019	**42** average program size
13% yearly growth	**10%** online, 2019

Marketing 52.1401

40K grads, 2019

55 average program size

2% yearly growth

18% online, 2019

Organizational Behavior Science 52.1003

2,037 grads, 2019

30 average program size

-7% yearly growth

33% online, 2019

Organizational Leadership 52.0213

4,303 grads, 2019

31 average program size

14% yearly growth

48% online, 2019

Logistics, Materials, and Supply Chain Management 52.0203

5,762 grads, 2019

48 average program size

12% yearly growth

20% online, 2019

Real Estate 52.1501

1,085 grads, 2019

24 average program size

15% yearly growth

4% online, 2019

Business Programs Spotlight

For Better or Worse: Consequences of COVID-19

- Supply Chain Management
- Hospitality Administration/ Management
- Hotel/Motel Administration/ Management

COVID-19 could impact the trajectory of all of these programs but in different ways. Whereas supply chain management will be more valuable as people increasingly shop online, the pandemic's lingering impact on the travel industry may further declining enrollment in hospitality and hotel administration programs.

Shifting Growth

- Organizational Leadership
- Organizational Behavior Studies

Organizational leadership is likely growing at the expense of organizational behavior studies. However, the combined market for these two degrees is increasing at an average rate of 4% yearly.

Small Programs, Big Goals

- Real Estate
- Insurance

Both real estate and insurance are growing degrees, but they are small markets (around 1,000 grads each in 2019). The two programs' growth may indicate new schools coming into the market, rather than a more organic increase driven by student interest.

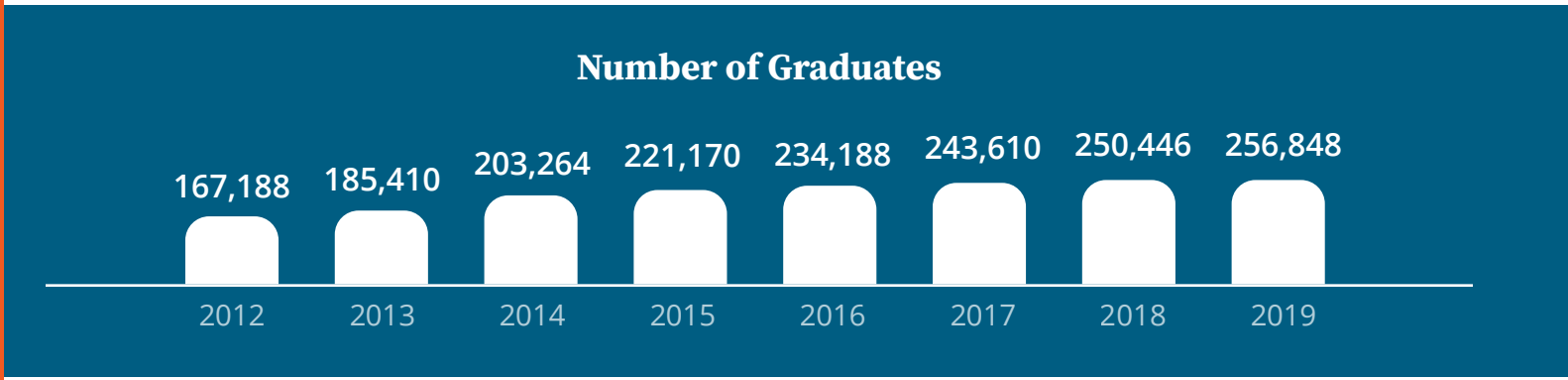
#2 Health: *Likely to Lead*

Base CIP Code: **51**

13% *of all 2019 bachelor grads*

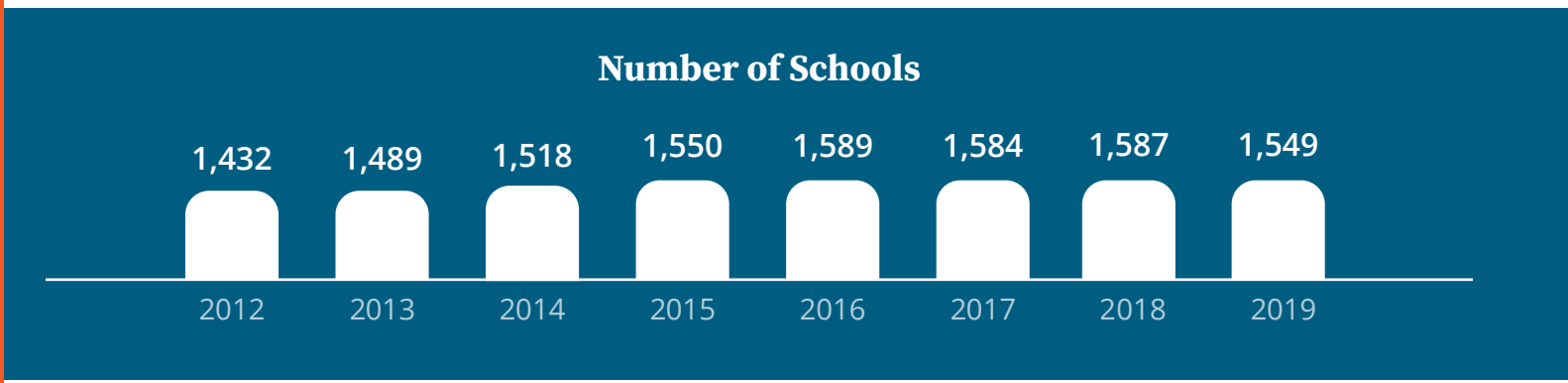
Graduates

Health was the second largest vertical of 2019 and accounted for 13% of all bachelor's graduates. With 5% yearly growth since 2014, **expansion of this discipline has largely been driven by nursing degrees, such as the RN-BSN.** Specializations are the norm for master's-level nursing degrees, but most bachelor's-level nursing degrees are still focused on the standard BSN.



Schools in the Market

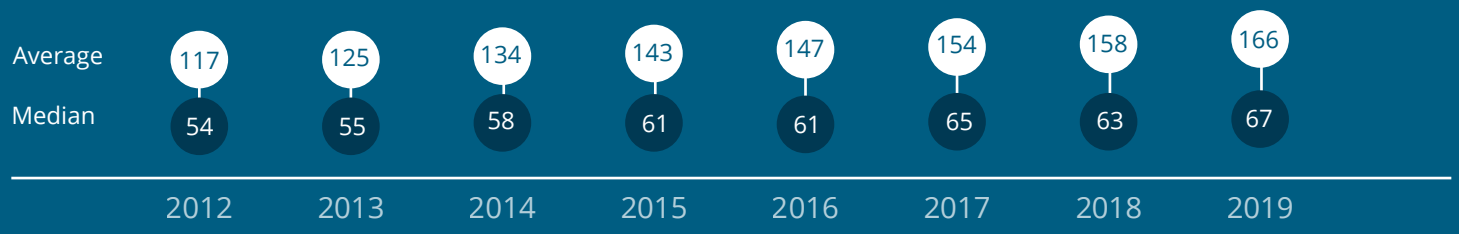
This vertical has seen a decline in universities since 2016 due to for-profit schools exiting the market. In 2016, there were 300 for-profits in the market compared to 219 in 2019.



Program Size

Average program sizes have grown disproportionately to median program sizes, indicating that this vertical mostly consists of smaller programs interspersed with a few very large programs.

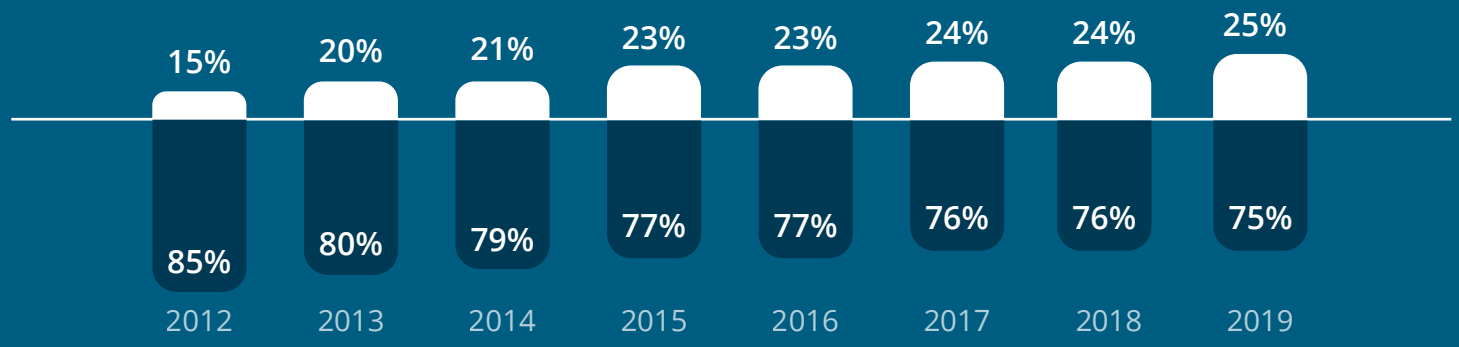
Average/Median Program Size



Programs Online

The share of health degrees offered online has increased from 15% of programs in 2012 to 25% of programs in 2019. This has mostly been driven by the high availability of online programs for bachelor's degrees like nursing (BSN) and health care administration.

Percentage of Programs Online



Undergraduate Health Programs With Highest Online Adoption

(min. 100 programs reporting grads)

Health Information/ Medical Records Administration	Health Care Administration/ Management	Nursing (BSN)	Health Services/ Allied Health	Public Health
71%	**58%**	**46%**	**41%**	**39%**

The Largest Health Program

Nursing 51.3801

The popularity of nursing (BSN) is not to be understated. It accounted for the majority (57%) of all 2019 health graduates. Over 146,000 nursing students graduated in 2019, a whopping 11 times the next biggest health degree (allied health/health services). Median program sizes here are almost twice as large for online programs as for those on the ground, 110 versus 60, respectively.

146K+
grads, 2019

144
average program size

5%
yearly growth

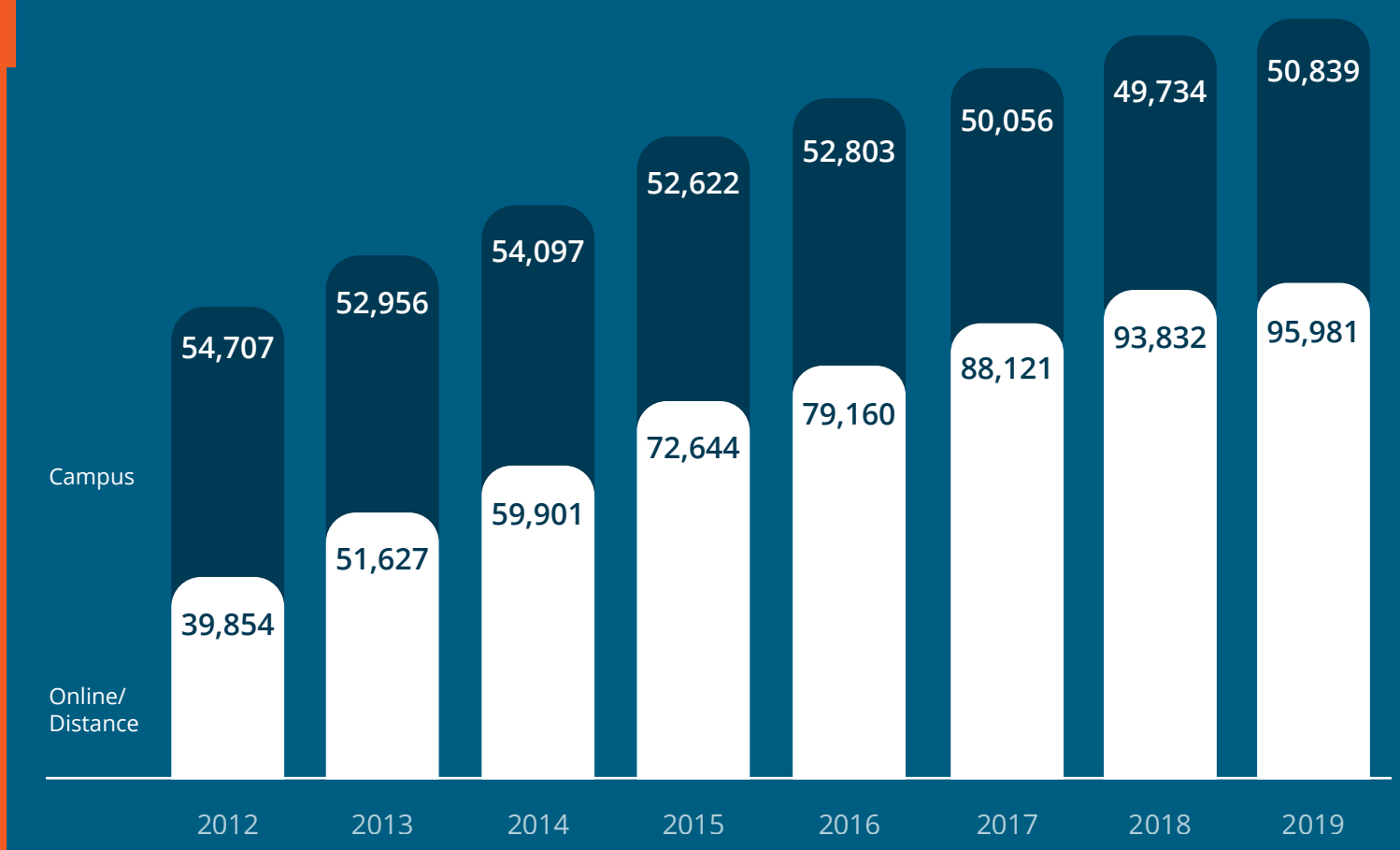
44%
online, 2019

Ranking Is *Not* a Top Factor

Cost and time to complete are much more important than other factors for students in this discipline. Six out of 10 of the largest schools graduating nursing students were unranked by U.S. News.

Labor Forecast: *Nursing*

Nursing is one of the occupations with the highest absolute projected job growth in the next 10 years. If growth continues at the anticipated rate of 7.2%, there will be 220,000 more RNs by 2029.



The X Factor on Growth:
Online Enrollment

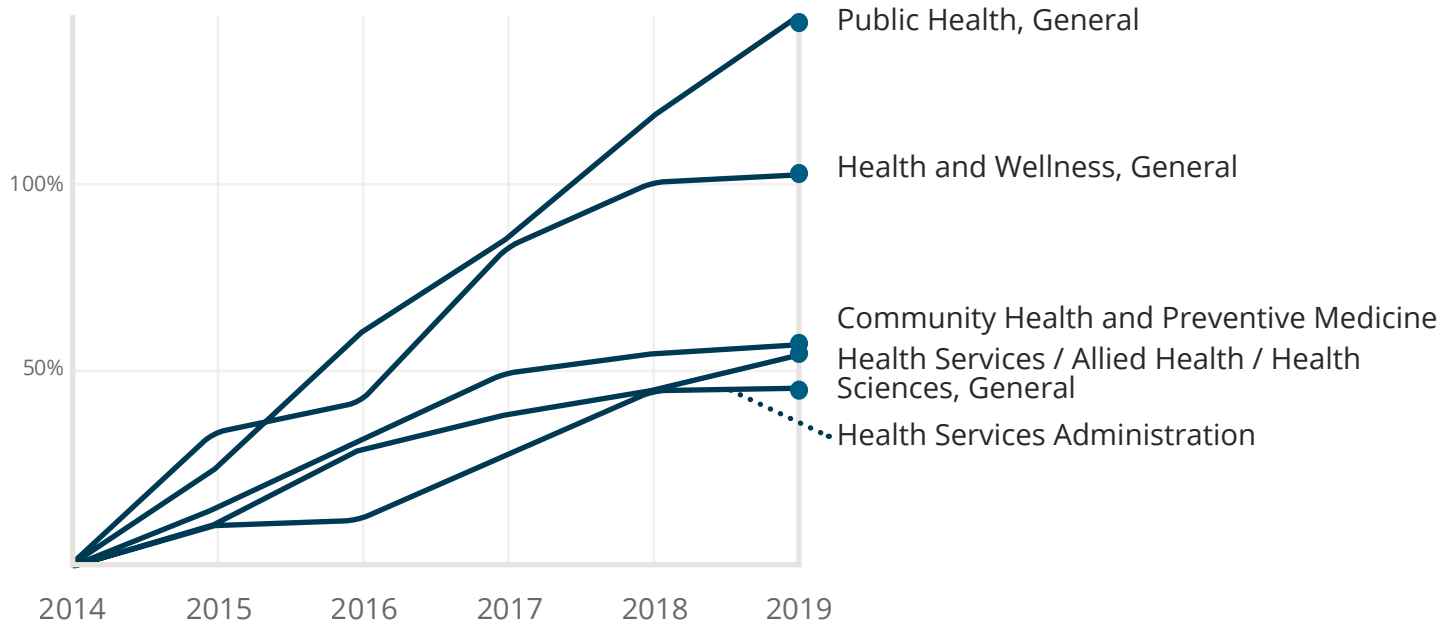
Twenty-five of the 28 largest nursing programs are offered online. In fact, schools with the option to complete the degree online graduate nearly twice as many students yearly as schools that provide ground options only. Furthermore, graduates of ground-only programs have declined by 7% since 2012, but **graduates of programs offered online have surged by 140% in that same time.**

Biggest, Fastest-Growing, & Shrinking Health Programs

Program Icon Legend Biggest Fastest-Growing Shrinking STEM

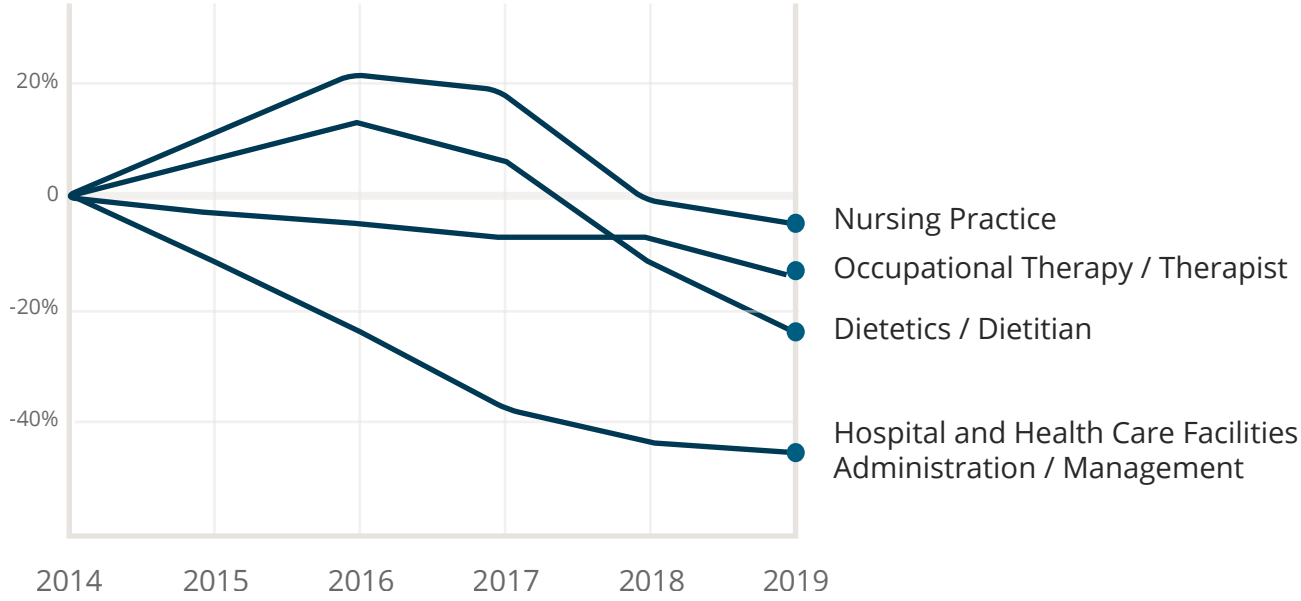
Fastest-Growing Health Programs

Overall growth since 2014



Shrinking Health Programs

Overall growth since 2014



Allied Health/Health Services 51.0000

13K+ grads, 2019	**57** average program size
10% yearly growth	**17%** online, 2019

Communication Sciences and Disorders 51.0201

4,912 grads, 2019	**44** average program size
0% yearly growth	**4%** online, 2019

Community Health and Preventative Medicine 51.2208

1,815 grads, 2019	**49** average program size
8% yearly growth	**24%** online, 2019

Dietetics 51.3101

2,347 grads, 2019	**25** average program size
-5% yearly growth	**3%** online, 2019

Health and Wellness 51.0001

3,621 grads, 2019	**34** average program size
16% yearly growth	**12%** online, 2019

Labor Forecast: *Community Health Workers*

This is a small labor market with high projected growth. This occupation has 15.2% anticipated growth (+9,900 jobs) by 2029 for a total market of 74,800 workers.

Health Care Administration 51.0701

12K+ grads, 2019	**35** average program size
6% yearly growth	**44%** online, 2019

Health Services Administration 51.2211

1,212 grads, 2019	**30** average program size
8% yearly growth	**28%** online, 2019

Hospital & Health Care Facilities Management 51.0702

2,381 grads, 2019	**61** average program size
-11% yearly growth	**18%** online, 2019

Nursing Practice 51.3818

765 grads, 2019	**48** average program size
-1% yearly growth	**40%** online, 2019

Occupational Therapy 51.2306

784 grads, 2019	**28** average program size
-3% yearly growth	**2%** online, 2019

Public Health 51.2201

7,463 grads, 2019	**45** average program size
20% yearly growth	**18%** online, 2019

Health Programs Spotlight

Imminent Growth

- Public Health
- Community Health

These programs are either already growing or likely to grow even more in the coming years. In the case of public health programs, some aspects of growth are off-kilter.

Graduation rates have grown by 20%, but the number of schools in the market has grown slightly faster at 22%. This has led to declining median program sizes (-3% yearly). This program and similar disciplines like community health could gain even more popularity moving forward due to the fallout of COVID-19.

Similar Degrees, Different Trajectories

- Health Care Administration
- Health Services Administration
- Hospital & Health Care Facilities Management

These three programs are quite similar but should be defined by their differences. Health care administration is one of the most sizable programs. It focuses on health care operations and services and centers on managing health care facilities and systems. In contrast, the much smaller health services administration program is one of the fastest-growing health programs and centers more on health policy analysis and public administration. In contrast to these two flourishing programs, hospital and health care facilities management appears to be in decline due to a vertical shift toward its more broadly-focused cousin, health care administration.

Higher Credentials Required

- Occupational Therapy

An undergraduate degree isn't enough for students choosing this career path. This program is likely small and declining at the bachelor's level because occupational therapy licensure ultimately requires a master's degree.

#3 Engineering: *STEM Star*

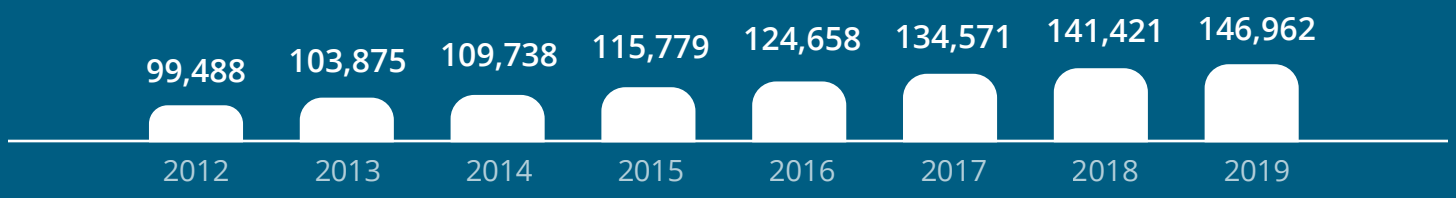
7% *of all 2019 bachelor grads*

Base CIP Code: **14/15**

Graduates

Engineering is a quickly-growing bachelor's vertical, averaging 6% yearly and 34% overall since 2014. Most growth in the overall higher education market results from programs offered online, but this is not the case in engineering. **This vertical is unique because it is experiencing rapid growth even though it is primarily ground-based.**

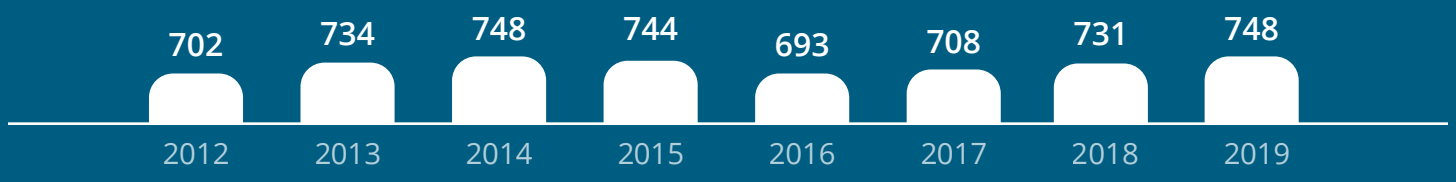
Number of Graduates



Schools in the Market

This vertical has experienced a slight decline in schools since 2016. As in other verticals, this is due to for-profit schools exiting the market. There were 166 of these in 2015 compared to only 37 in 2019. **For-profit schools are now virtually non-existent in this vertical.**

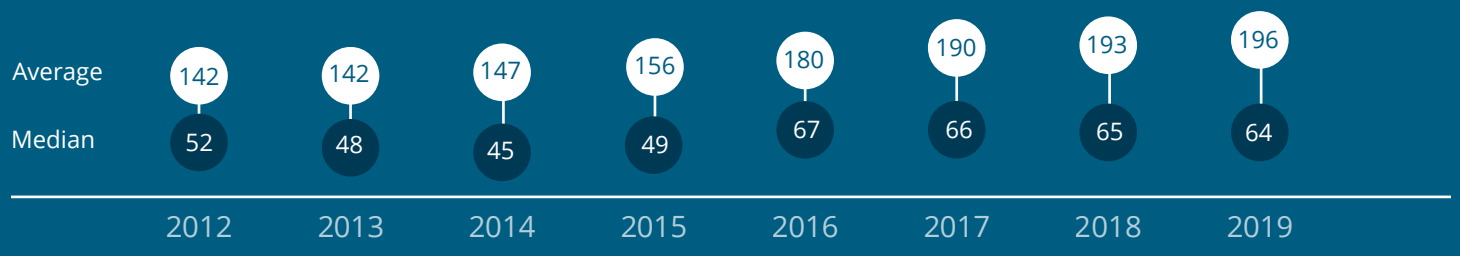
Number of Schools



Program Size

Following a decrease in for-profit schools in the market, both average and median program sizes have increased since 2016.

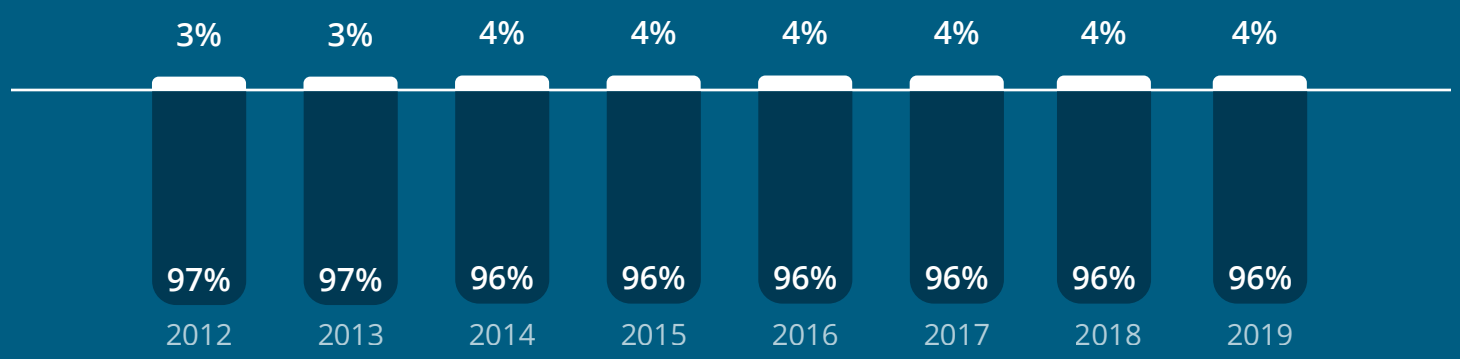
Average/Median Program Size



Programs Online

The low percentage of programs online is quite surprising as most programs that grow rapidly have a strong online presence. Engineering is proving to be the exception to the rule.

Percentage of Programs Online



Undergraduate Engineering Programs With Highest Online Adoption

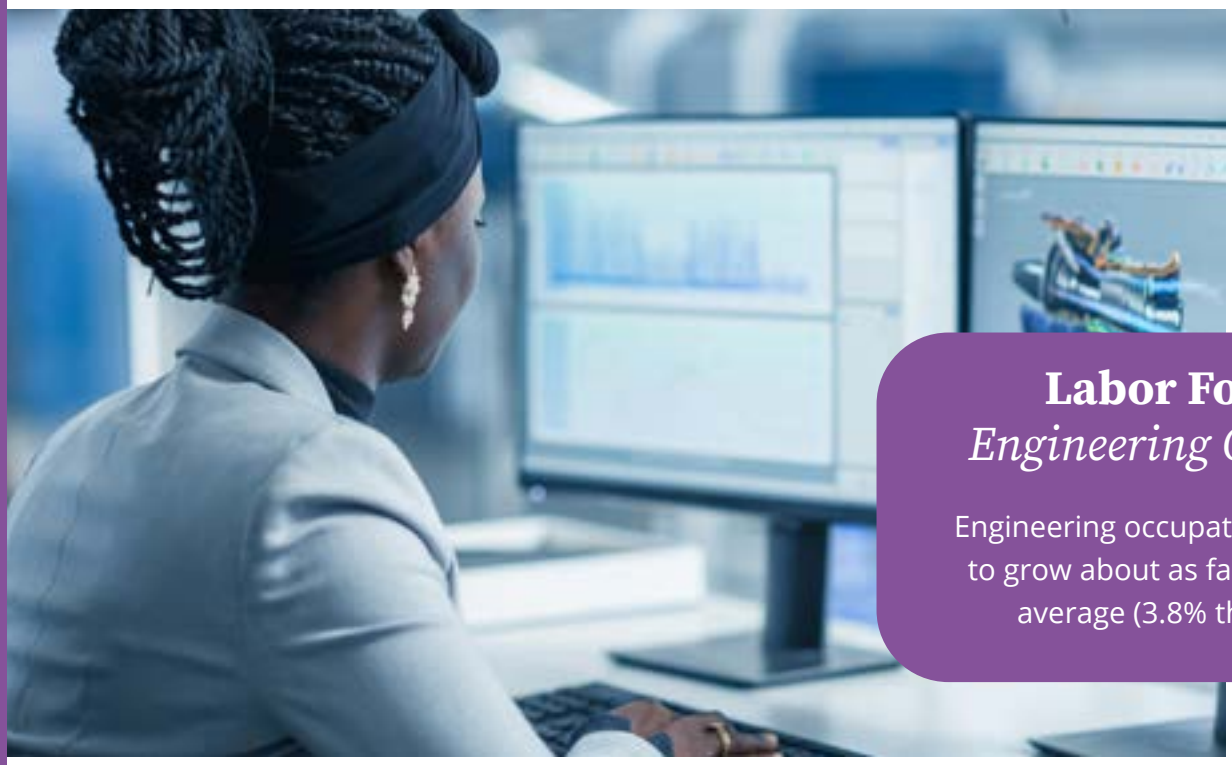
(min. 100 programs reporting grads)

Electrical, Electronic, and Communications Engineering Technology	Industrial Engineering	Electrical and Electronics Engineering	Engineering, General
9%	**5%**	**3%**	**2%**

The Largest Engineering Program

Mechanical Engineering 14.1901

This most-popular engineering degree accounted for 29% of all graduates in the vertical. The largest programs are at nationally-ranked public schools (see Graduates by Carnegie Classification), which graduated 79% of all 2019 mechanical engineering grads. Despite this program's large scale, it has very low online adoption. **Only six out of 366 programs were online in 2019.**



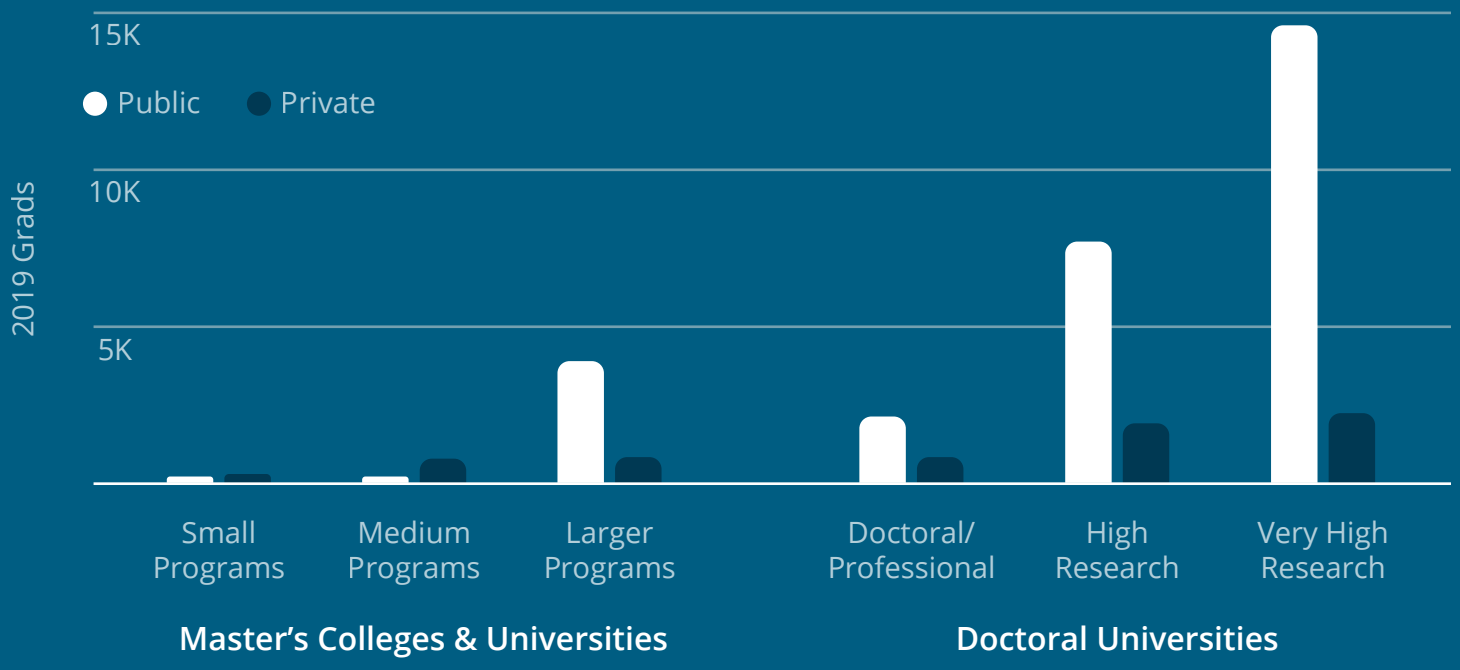
Labor Forecast:
Engineering Occupations

Engineering occupations are projected to grow about as fast as the national average (3.8% through 2029).

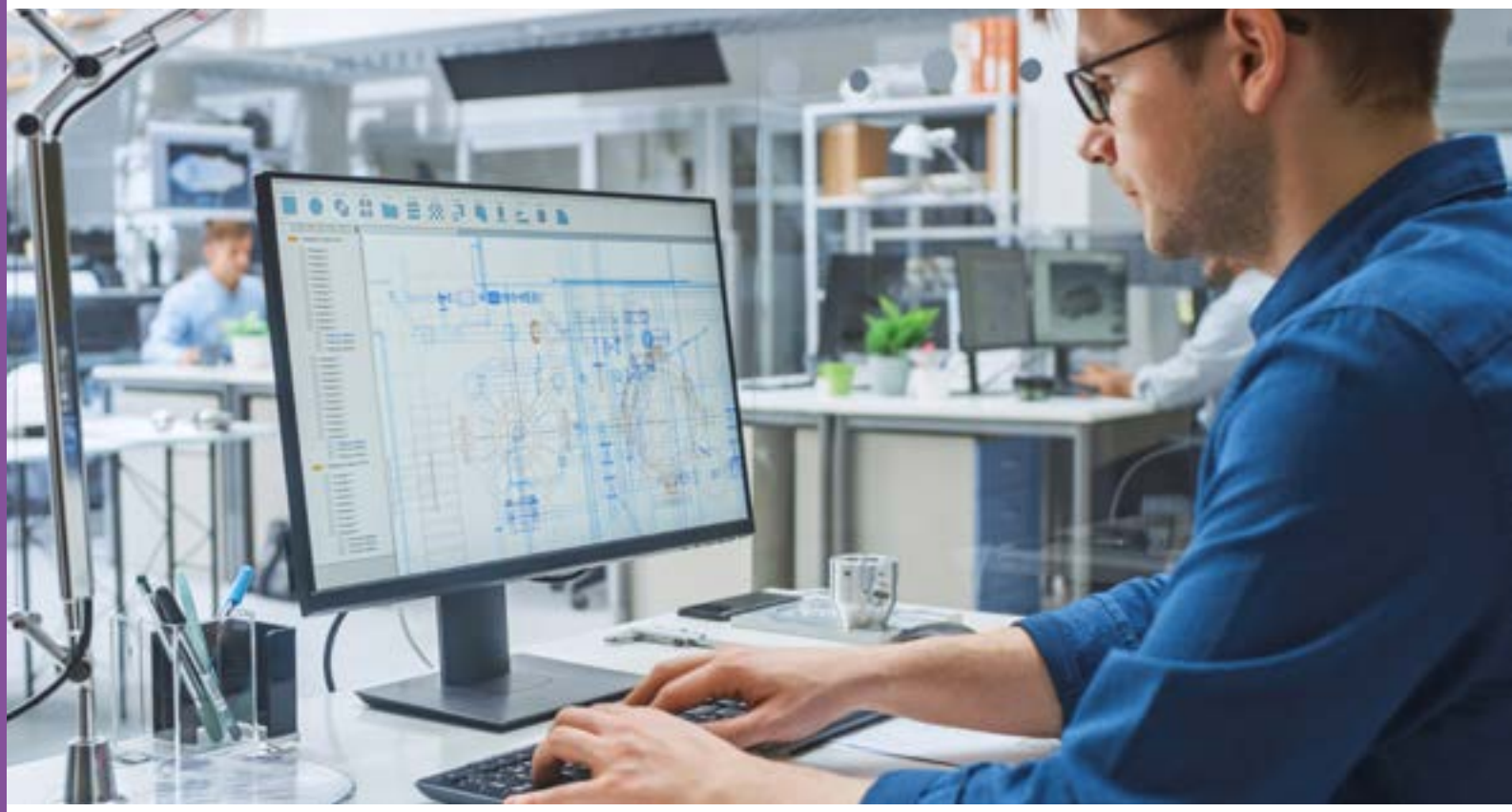
37K+	107	9%	2%
grads, 2019	average program size	yearly growth	online, 2019

Graduates by Carnegie Classification

By Carnegie Classification (Public and Private)*



*For-Profit colleges excluded due to limited enrollments. Excluded Associate/Baccalaureate/Special Focus Schools

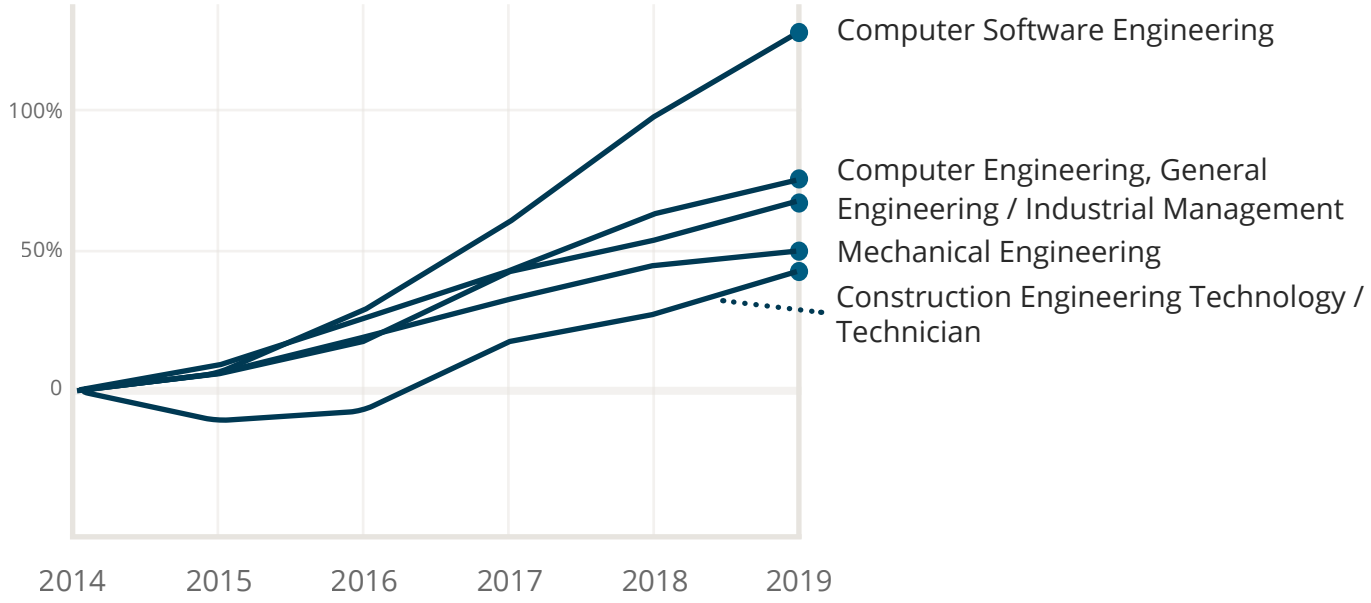


Biggest, Fastest-Growing, & Shrinking Engineering Programs

Program Icon Legend Biggest Fastest-Growing Shrinking STEM

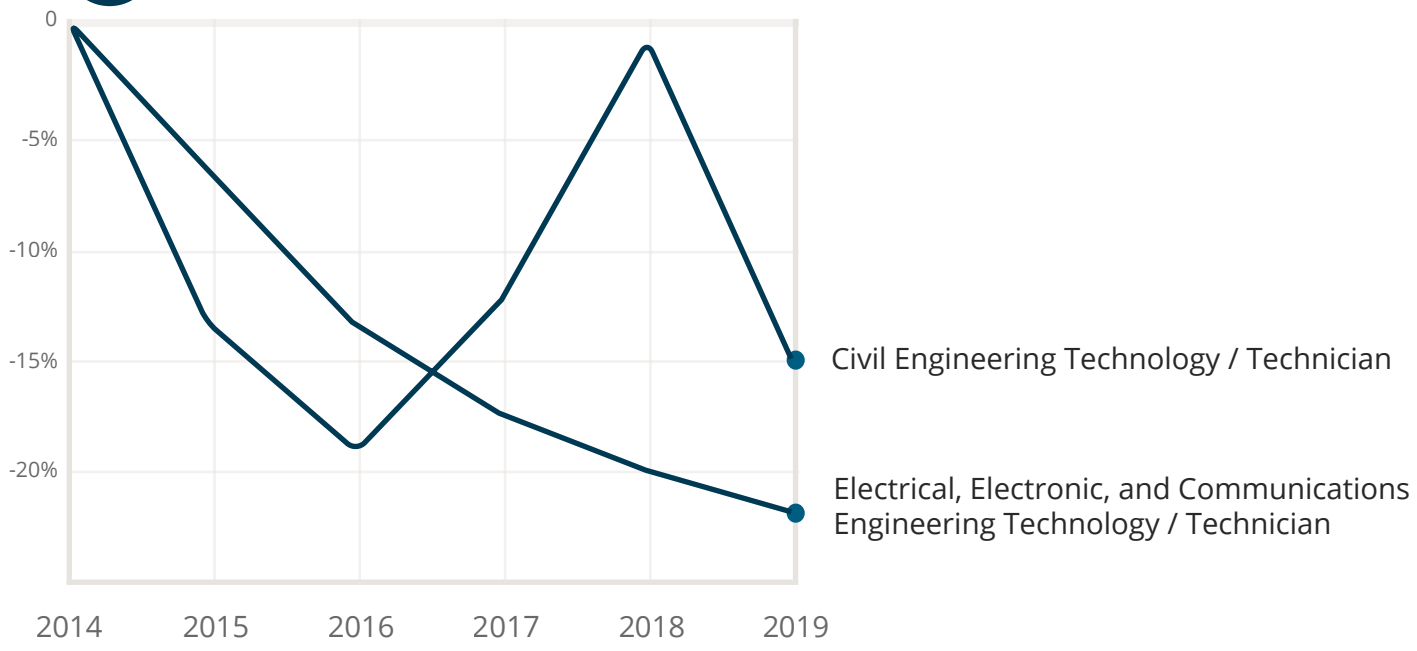
Fastest-Growing Engineering Programs

Overall growth since 2014



Shrinking Engineering Programs

Overall growth since 2014



Chemical Engineering 14.0701

11K+ grads, 2019

68 average program size

7% yearly growth

1% online, 2019

Civil Engineering 14.0801

14K+ grads, 2019

55 average program size

2% yearly growth

1% online, 2019

Civil Engineering Technology 15.0201

453 grads, 2019

17 average program size

-3% yearly growth

0% online, 2019

Computer Engineering 14.0901

8,978 grads, 2019

36 average program size

12% yearly growth

2% online, 2019

Computer Software Engineering 14.0903

1,501 grads, 2019

22 average program size

18% yearly growth

10% online, 2019

Construction Engineering Technology 15.1001

2,373 grads, 2019

46 average program size

8% yearly growth

5% online, 2019

Electrical, Electronic, and Communications Engineering Technology 15.0303

1,400 grads, 2019

14 average program size

-5% yearly growth

9% online, 2019

Electrical and Electronics Engineering 14.1001

17K+ grads, 2019

50 average program size

5% yearly growth

3% online, 2019

Engineering/Industrial Management 15.1501

1,215 grads, 2019

23 average program size

11% yearly growth

25% online, 2019

Engineering Programs Spotlight

Computers Are King

Computer Software Engineering

In keeping with an increasingly tech-centric world, the fastest-growing engineering degrees center on the application of computers. Computer software engineering is similar to computer science (CIP 11.0701, see "Notable Programs"), with the difference that they each prepare students a little differently. Computer science majors typically focus more on the theory of computational systems and the scientific design of user interfaces. On the other hand, computer software engineering concentrates predominantly on applying computational and mathematical design, implementation, and maintenance.

On the Rebound

Construction Engineering Technology

Graduate numbers in this program dropped between 2010 and 2015 but have made a comeback since then. This rebound is organic and driven by student interest, not artificial or caused by an increase in schools, which have remained consistent in the same period.

#4 Social Sciences: *A Fading Trifecta*

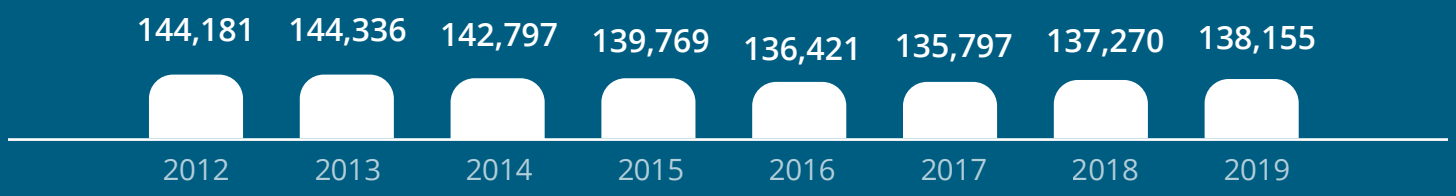
7% *of all 2019 bachelor's grads*

Base CIP Code: **45**

This vertical accounted for 7% of all bachelor's graduates in 2019. Unlike psychology (CIP 42) and its focus on cognitive and emotional activity, **this vertical centered on social systems is dominated by political science, sociology, and economics;** combined, these three programs **make up 64% of this entire vertical.**

Econometrics, geographic information science, and criminology are much smaller disciplines but are the only ones in this area actually growing. While those programs have been on the rise since 2014, this vertical has declined overall (-3%) in the same timeframe.

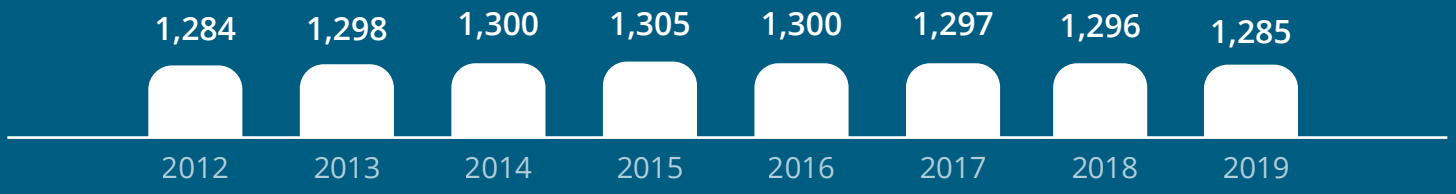
Number of Graduates



Schools in the Market

The number of universities graduating bachelor's students has been in decline since 2015. Compared to 2012, there was just one school more on the market in 2019 (1,284 vs. 1,285).

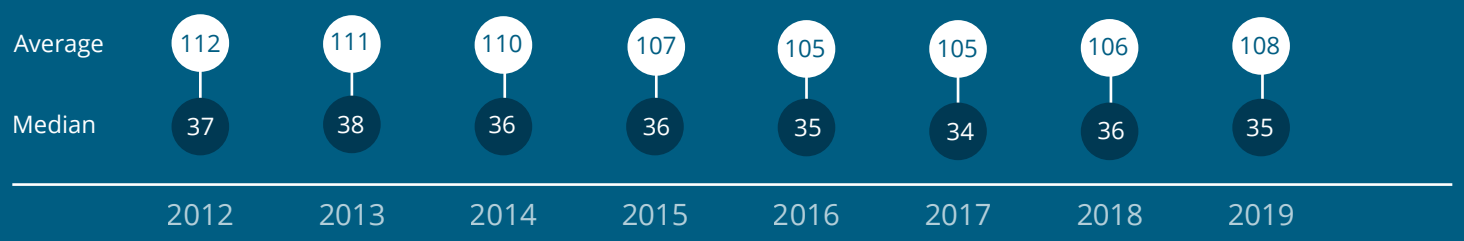
Number of Schools



Program Size

Both average and median program sizes have remained relatively the same since 2012, although averages have dropped slightly.

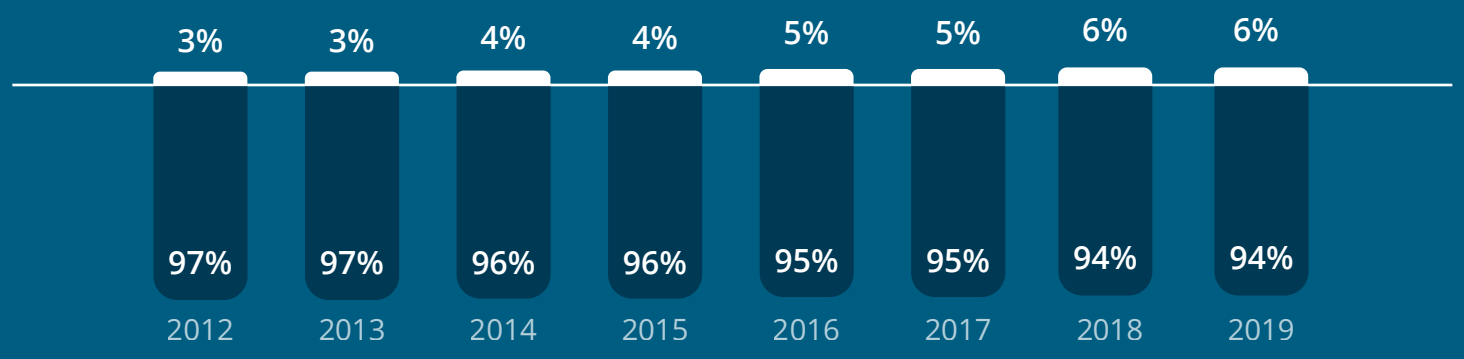
Average/Median Program Size



Programs Online

Social sciences programs have been sluggish to adopt online instruction. Although the percentage of online programs has doubled since 2012, only 6% of programs in this vertical are available online.

Percentage of Programs Online



Undergraduate Social Sciences Programs With Highest Online Adoption

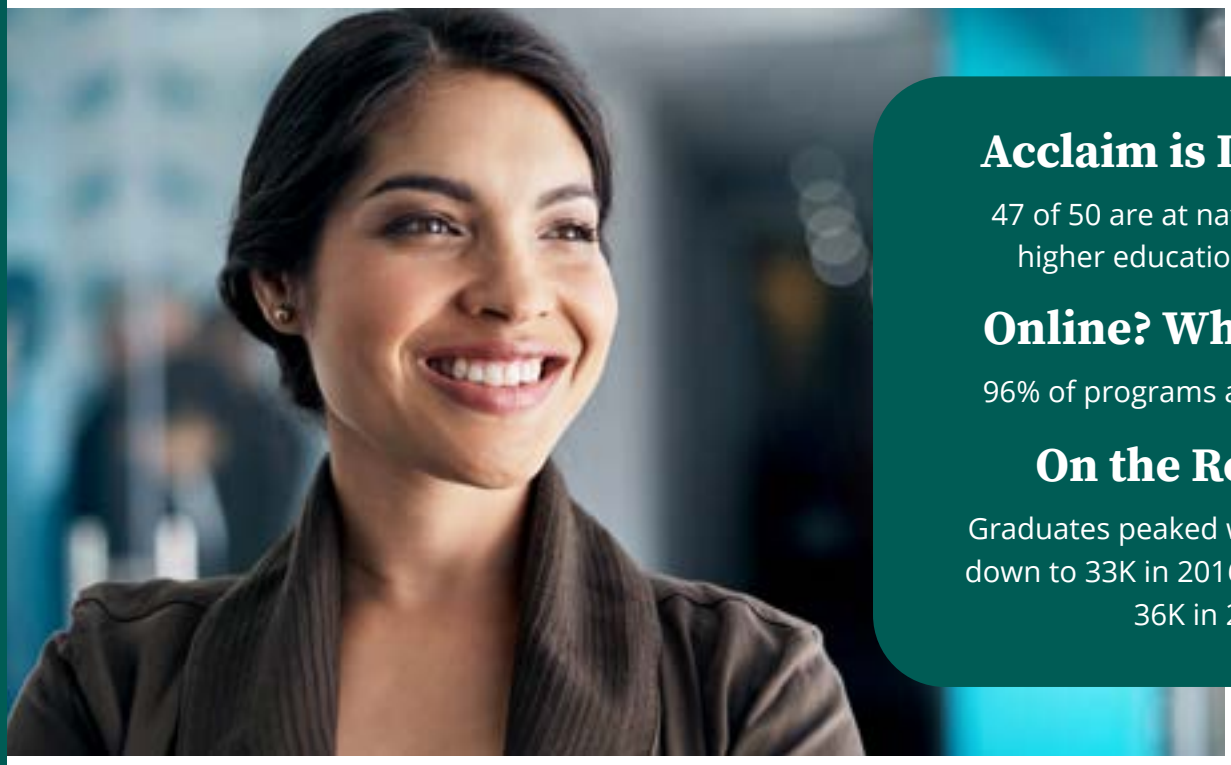
(min. 100 programs reporting grads)

Criminology	Social Sciences, General	Sociology	Political Science
20%	**17%**	**8%**	**4%**

The Largest Social Sciences Program

Political Science 45.1001

This is the largest of all social sciences programs. **The largest political science programs tend to fall in one of two categories: public schools in the southern half of the U.S. and private schools in the upper half of the east coast.** There are few for-profit schools in this discipline, with only three reporting bachelor's graduates in 2019. The competition has remained steady in this discipline at around 1,000 schools, indicating organic programmatic growth.



Acclaim is Important

47 of 50 are at nationally-ranked higher education institutions

Online? What's That?

96% of programs are ground-only

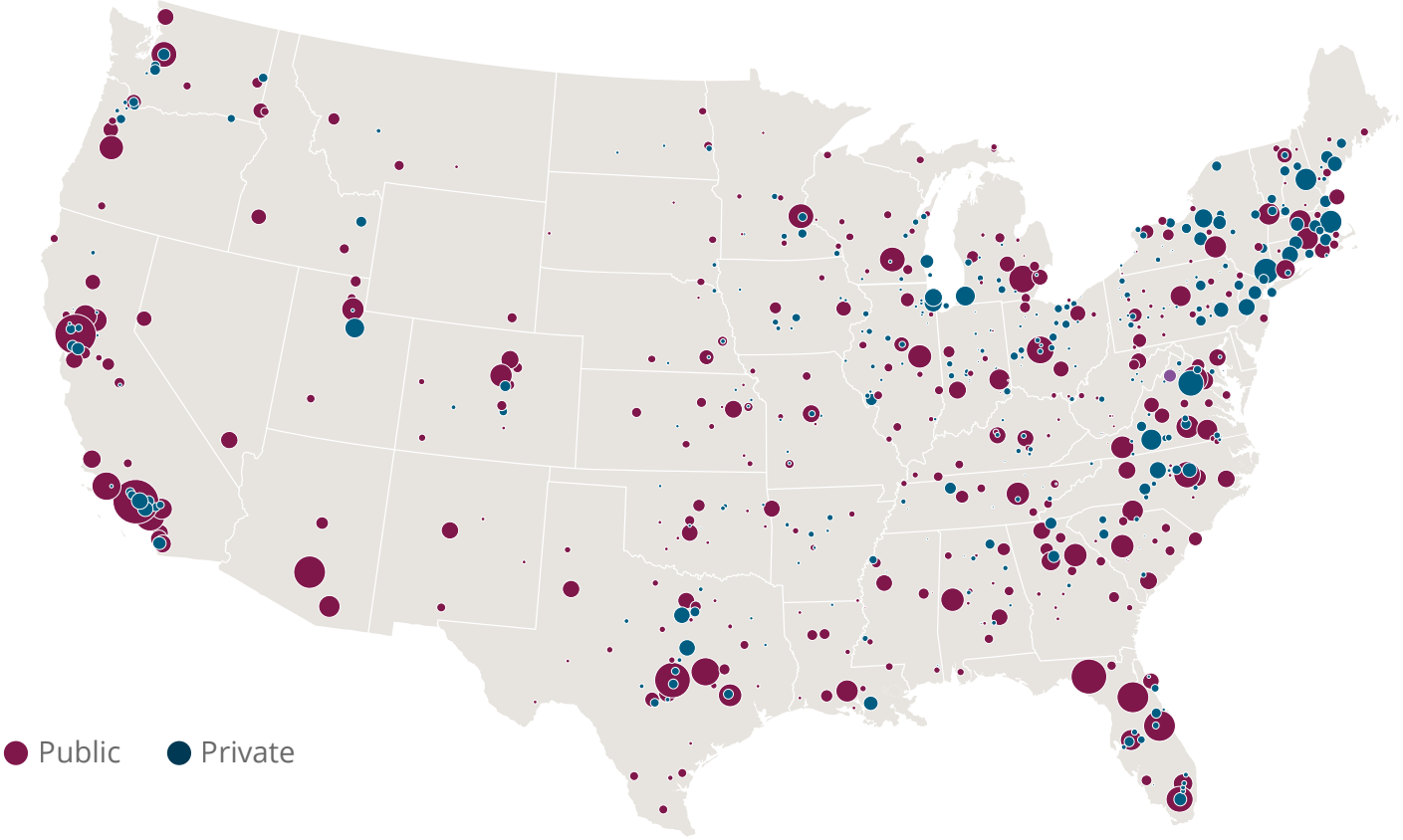
On the Rebound

Graduates peaked with 39K in 2011, down to 33K in 2016, and back up to 36K in 2019

35K+	34	0%	4%
grads, 2019	average program size	yearly growth	online, 2019

Distribution of Political Science Programs Across the U.S.

Size = 2019 graduates



Labor Forecast: *Political Science Occupations*

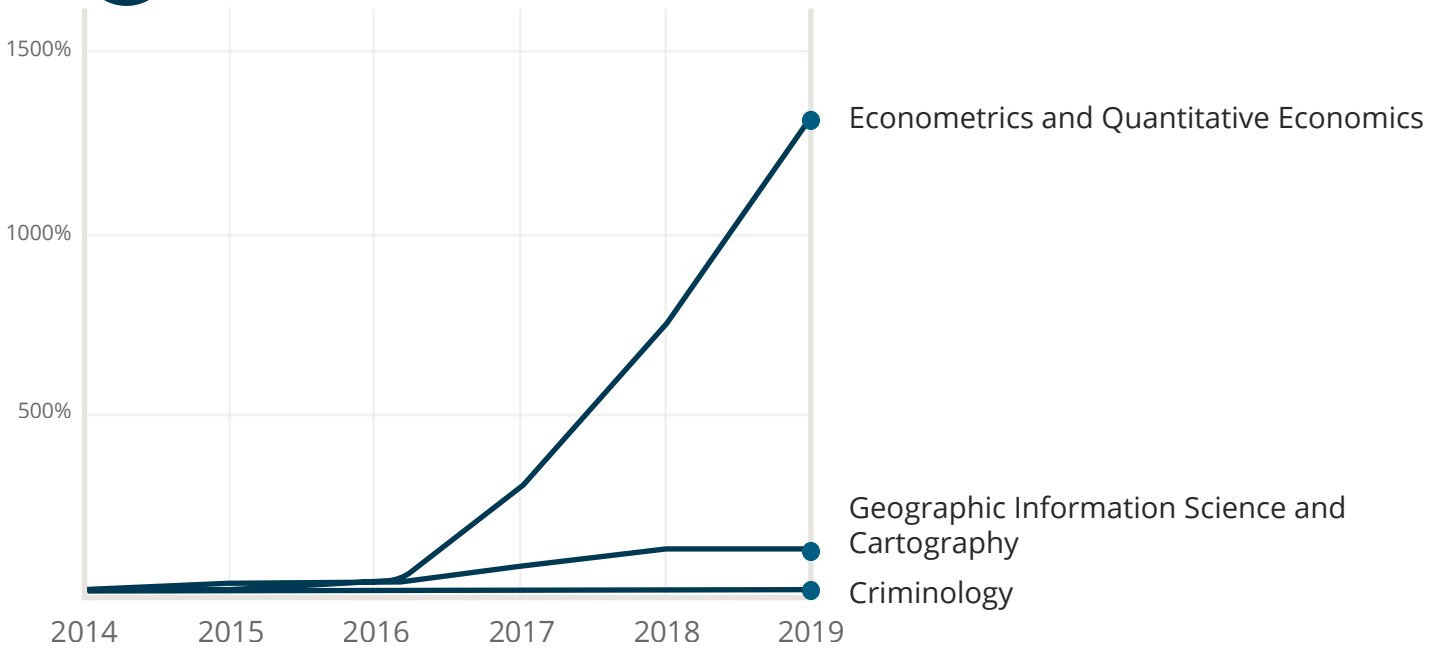
Political science occupations are projected to grow as government agencies and social science organizations increasingly seek public policy research, analysis, and expertise.

Biggest, Fastest-Growing, & Shrinking Social Sciences Programs

Program Icon Legend Biggest Fastest-Growing Shrinking STEM

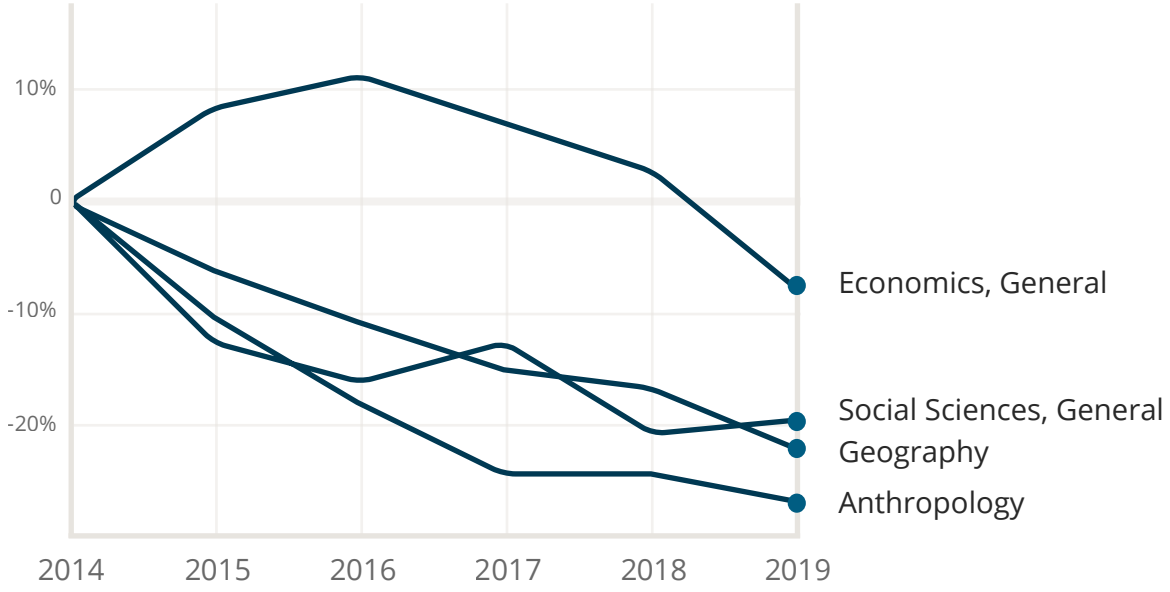
Fastest-Growing Social Sciences Programs

Overall growth since 2014



Shrinking Social Sciences Programs

Overall growth since 2014



Anthropology 45.0201

8,021 grads, 2019	**19** average program size
-6% yearly growth	**2%** online, 2019

Criminology 45.0401

7,943 grads, 2019	**46** average program size
1% yearly growth	**22%** online, 2019

Economics 45.0601

26K+ grads, 2019	**40** average program size
-1% yearly growth	**5%** online, 2019

Econometrics and Quantitative Econometrics 45.0603

7,789 grads, 2019	**81** average program size
79% yearly growth	**0%** online, 2019

Geographic Information Science and Cartography 45.0702

583 grads, 2019	**12** average program size
19% yearly growth	**7%** online, 2019

Geography 45.0701

3,517 grads, 2019

14 average program size

-5% yearly growth

4% online, 2019

International Relations and Affairs 45.0901

8,536 grads, 2019

28 average program size

-2% yearly growth

3% online, 2019

Sociology 45.1101

26K+ grads, 2019

29 average program size

-2% yearly growth

8% online, 2019

Social Sciences 45.0101

6,650 grads, 2019

28 average program size

-4% yearly growth

13% online, 2019

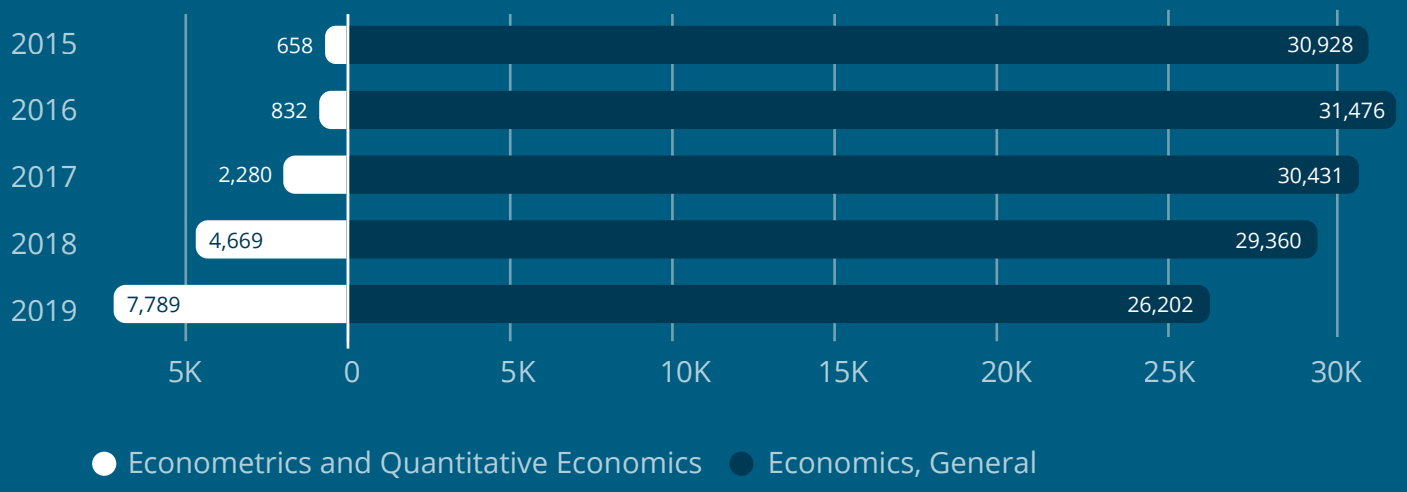
Social Sciences Programs Spotlight

Stolen by STEM

- Economics
- Econometrics and Quantitative Econometrics

This vertical is in overall decline, and so are two of its largest programs: sociology and economics. Economics is also declining because schools are converting these into STEM-designated econometrics degrees. When taken together, the overall market for economics increases only slightly, if not exhibiting flat growth.

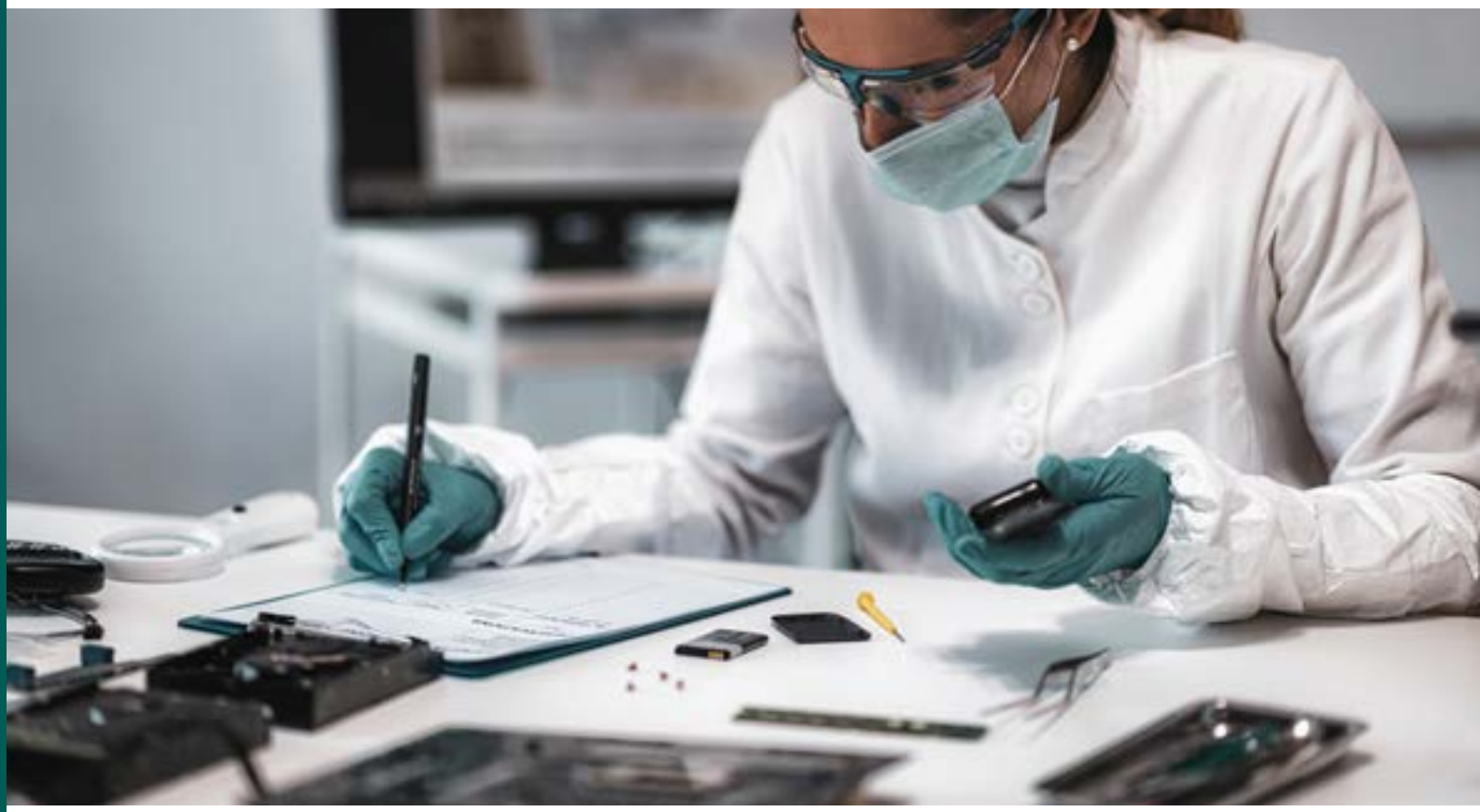
Distribution of Economics & Econometrics Graduates



Only Organic

Criminology

Criminology is the only social sciences degree with organic growth (i.e., truly driven by student interest). The similar but larger degree of criminal justice had 30,000 grads in 2019 (see “Other Programs” section) but has shown a decline in graduates, averaging -1% yearly. Also, take note that more schools have entered the market than there are students available. This has led to average program sizes decreasing by 19% since 2014.



#5 Notable Programs: *The Bedrock*

While we have explored the four largest verticals in the undergraduate market, research indicated trends within a few programs outside of those verticals worth drawing attention toward.

The Largest Notable Program

Psychology 42.0101

Almost all psychology programs are still on the ground (87%), but those that are online have it figured out: **The only four psychology programs to graduate more than 1,000 students in 2019 offered the program online.**

103K+ grads, 2019	**78** average program size
-1% yearly growth	**17%** online, 2019

Concentrate

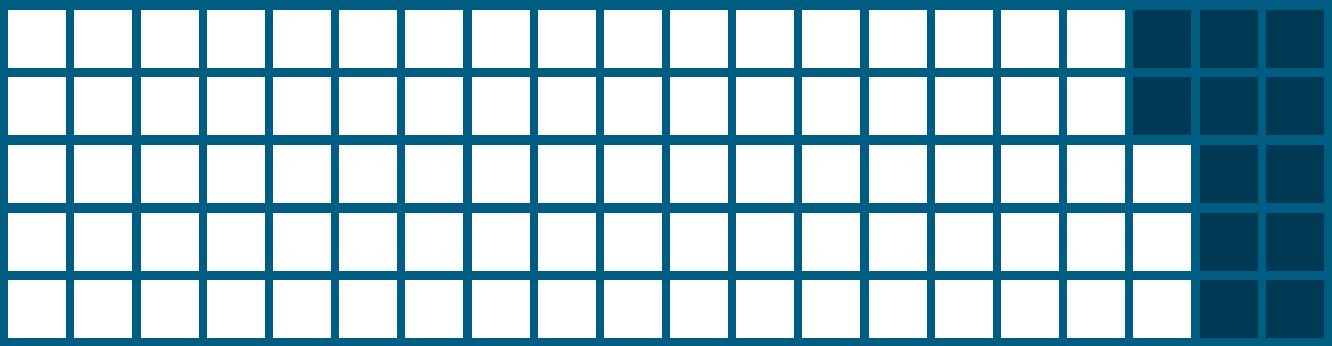
Instead of offering multiple psychology degrees, offer a general psychology degree with various concentration options.

Largest Undergraduate Psychology Programs

Psychology at the undergraduate level is fairly singular. **Eighty-eight percent of all bachelor's graduates received a general psychology degree compared to just 21% of master's graduates**. At the master's level, counseling is the top concentration (28% of graduates).

Undergraduate Psychology Distribution

Psychology, General: **88%** All Other Psychology Programs: **12%**



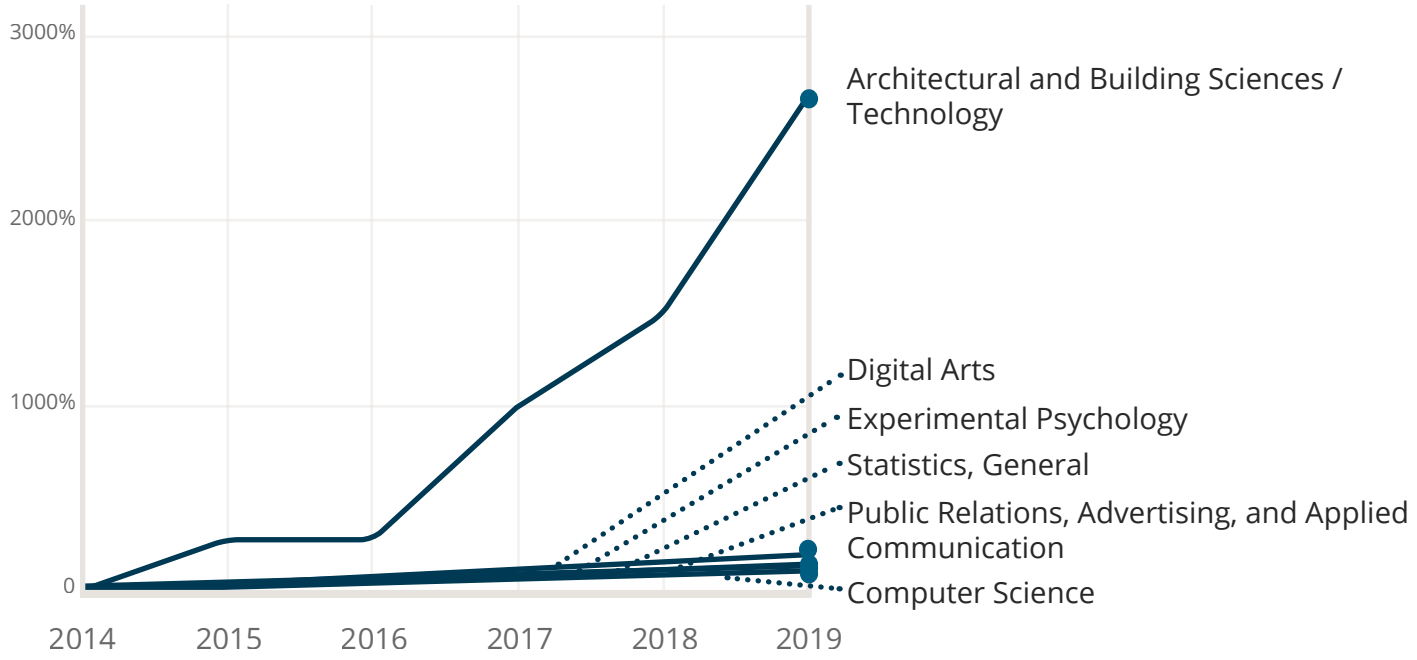
88% of this CIP family's graduates in 2019

Notable Biggest, Fastest-Growing, & Shrinking Programs

Program Icon Legend Biggest Fastest-Growing Shrinking STEM

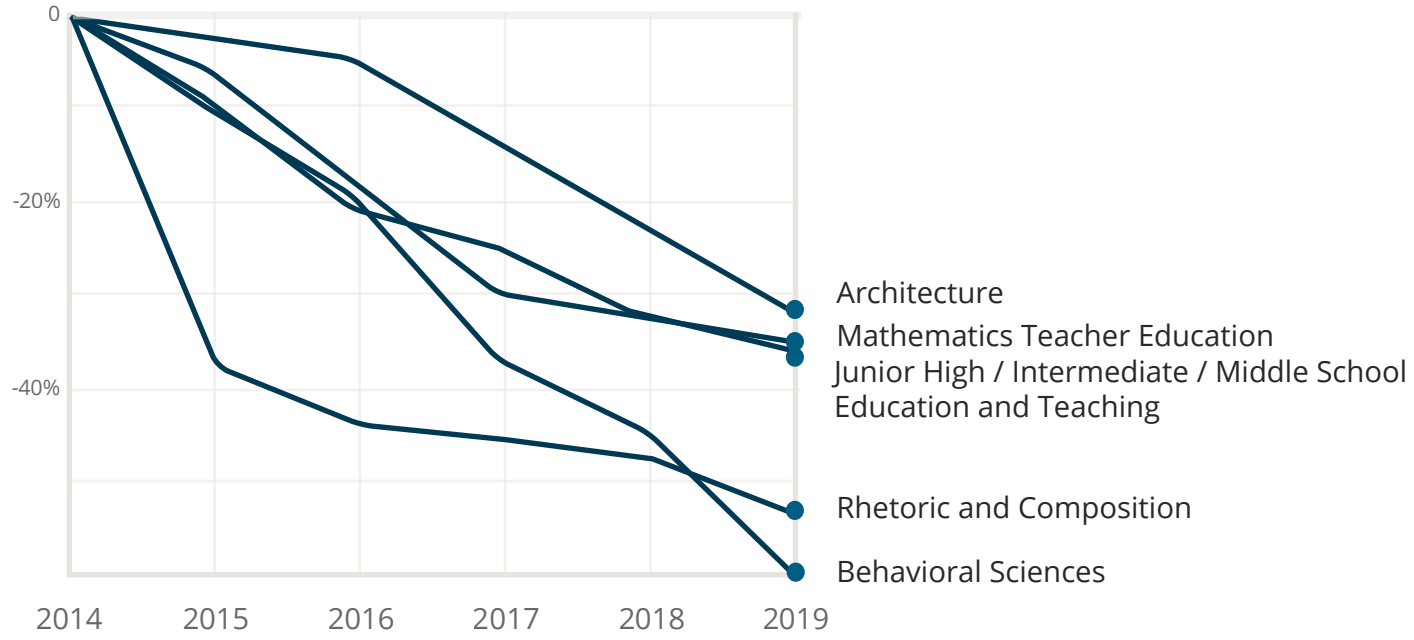
Notable Fastest-Growing Programs

Overall growth since 2014



Notable Shrinking Programs

Overall growth since 2014



Architectural and Building Sciences 04.0902

1,724 grads, 2019	**52** average program size
115% yearly growth	**0%** online, 2019

Architecture 04.0201

4,088 grads, 2019	**38** average program size
-7% yearly growth	**1%** online, 2019

Behavioral Sciences 30.1701

2,351 grads, 2019	**43** average program size
-16% yearly growth	**11%** online, 2019

Biology 26.0101

76K+ grads, 2019	**56** average program size
2% yearly growth	**1%** online, 2019

Computer Science 11.0701

30K+ grads, 2019	**49** average program size
18% yearly growth	**6%** online, 2019

Criminal Justice/Safety Studies 43.0104

30K+ grads, 2019	**62** average program size
-1% yearly growth	**32%** online, 2019

Labor Forecast: *Protective Services Occupations*

This occupation is projected to grow more slowly than others. While the national average projected job growth is 3.7%, protective services occupations are expected to grow by only 2.6%.

Digital Arts 50.0102

1,620 grads, 2019	**21** average program size
24% yearly growth	**12%** online, 2019

English Language and Literature 23.0101

31K+ grads, 2019	**25** average program size
-5% yearly growth	**5%** online, 2019

Experimental Psychology 42.2704

2,122 grads, 2019	**88** average program size
21% yearly growth	**0%** online, 2019

Mathematics Teacher Education 26.0101

1,352 grads, 2019	**5** average program size
-8% yearly growth	**3%** online, 2019

Middle School Education and Teaching 13.1203

2,050 grads, 2019	**10** average program size
-8% yearly growth	**4%** online, 2019

PR/Advertising/Applied Communications 09.0900

2,973 grads, 2019	**33** average program size
19% yearly growth	**14%** online, 2019

Rhetoric and Composition 23.1304

2,302 grads, 2019	**38** average program size
-13% yearly growth	**2%** online, 2019

Speech Communication and Rhetoric 09.0101

31K+ grads, 2019	**55** average program size
0% yearly growth	**10%** online, 2019

Statistics 27.0501

2,938 grads, 2019	**25** average program size
20% yearly growth	**1%** online, 2019

Notable Programs Spotlight

Good to Be Grounded

Biology

Some degrees simply aren't suited to an online format. A mere 1% of bachelor's biology programs are offered online as it is difficult for virtual learning to replace hands-on labs and instruction.

To Be, Or Not to Be (Big)

English Language and Literature

Some degrees simply aren't suited to an online format. A mere 1% of bachelor's biology programs are offered online as it is difficult for virtual learning to replace hands-on labs and instruction.

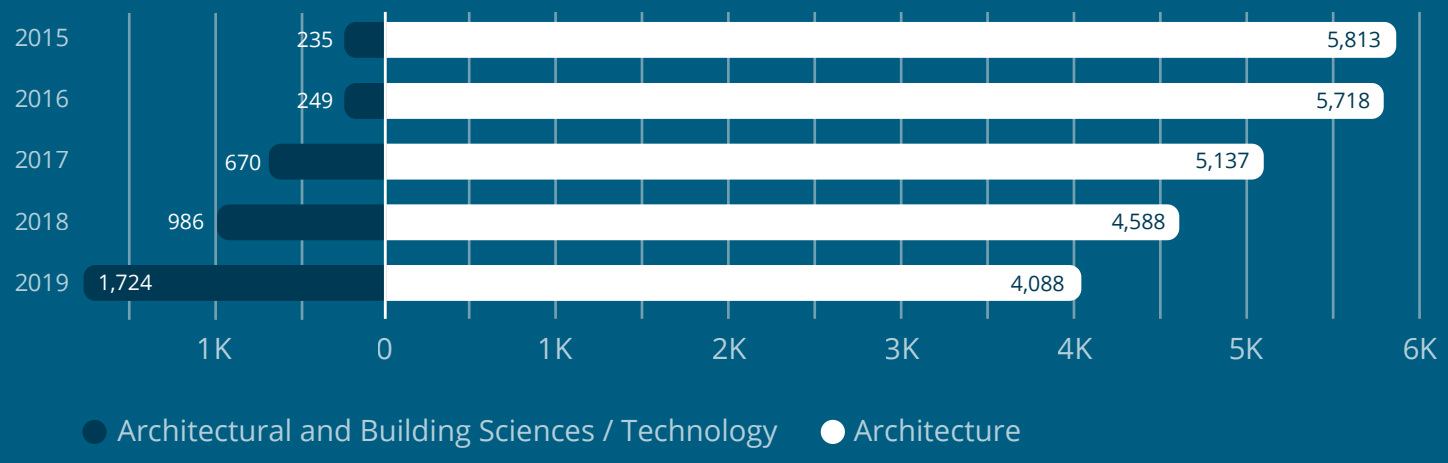
A Matter of Inversion

Architecture

Architectural and Building Sciences

These two programs have trended in opposite directions, but together they tell a single story. The decline of architecture matches up with a rise in its STEM-designated counterpart, architecture and building sciences. As a result, the combined market has remained relatively steady, if declining slightly.

Distribution of Architectural and Building Sciences to Architecture Graduates



Defying Definitions

Computer Science

Most quickly-growing degrees have strong online adoption, but computer science defies the norm. Like engineering degrees, which are growing but have low online adoption, most computer science graduates (>90%) come from ground-only programs.

Appearances Aren't What They Seem

Digital Arts

Rhetoric and Composition

It's important to look deeper to understand why a degree is growing or declining. Growth and decline may not truly imply interest or a lack thereof, especially for degrees with lower numbers of graduates. One such example is the field of digital arts, which may be growing for two reasons. Firstly, it may be gaining market share from general art and studio art, both of which have been declining since 2013. Secondly, its growth was boosted by a single art-focused school reclassifying its graphic design program to digital arts in 2017. With that school excluded, yearly growth averages 20%.

An opposite expression of the same theme in large part due to a 2015 change for one large state university system. That year, six schools began reporting programs into the CIP code for speech communication and rhetoric (09.0101) instead, which instantly skewed this program's numbers toward decline.

Conclusion

This report has explored potential programmatic opportunities for expanding an undergraduate portfolio and highlights some programs that may be at risk. Bear in mind that this data is a snapshot in time. Programs that have performed well in the past may offer diminishing returns in the future. By contrast, other niche markets (e.g., epigenetics or artificial intelligence) may see increased demand in the future due to emerging trends.

Utilizing This Analysis

The information and insights in this report should be considered within the context of a university's unique portfolio. What may be a powerful opportunity for one school may not be viable for another. For example, a health degree may not perform well at a school known for its business degrees. Regional needs and differences may also impact the success of a program. Furthermore, new programs often have the best chance to succeed when added to a suite of degrees centered around a large anchor program (e.g., business administration or nursing).

We're Here to Help

If your school needs support with program selection, Wiley Education Services can provide your university with in-depth and up-to-date analysis. We can assess your institutional profile, identify the programs with the most potential for your school, and help you bring them to market. By zeroing in on the right programs for your university, we can help ensure that you invest your resources wisely and that your educational offerings are aligned with your students' needs and market trends. Whether you are thinking about taking existing programs online, expanding your range of programs, or launching entirely new ones, Wiley can help.

Resources

National Center for Education Statistics. (n.d.). *Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System* [Data set]. Available from https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/use-the-data

About Carnegie Classification. Retrieved February 6, 2021 from http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/

National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. (2020). (rep.). *Current Term Enrollment Estimates, Fall 2020.* Retrieved from https://nscresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/CTEE_Report_Fall_2020.pdf

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