

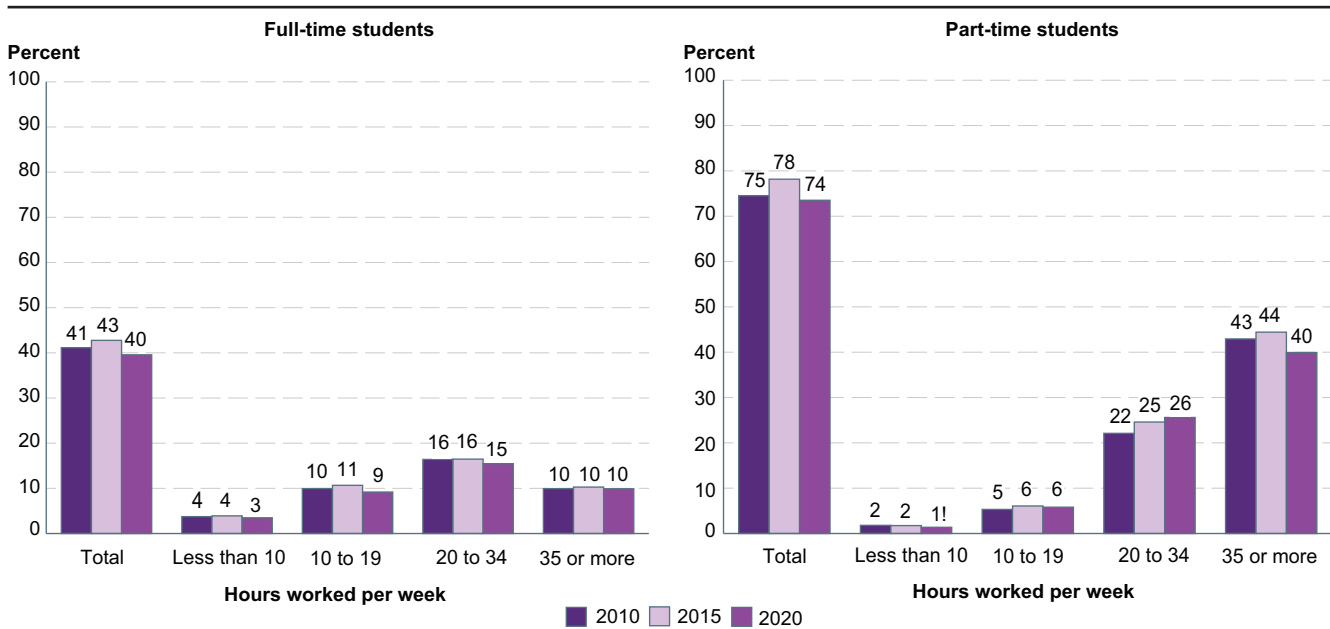
College Student Employment

The percentage of full-time undergraduate students who were employed was lower in 2020 (40 percent) than in 2015 (43 percent). Similarly, the percentage of part-time undergraduates who were employed was lower in 2020 (74 percent) than in 2015 (78 percent).

Many undergraduate students ages 16 to 64 are employed at the same time they are enrolled in school. In 2020, the percentage of undergraduate students who were employed was higher among part-time students (74 percent) than among full-time students (40 percent).¹ Being employed can help a student pay for classes and other living

expenses; it can also be associated, either positively or negatively, with a student's academic performance.^{2, 3} Thus, it is important to examine employment patterns among undergraduate students and how these patterns vary over time and by student characteristics.

Figure 1. Percentage of undergraduate students who were employed, by attendance status and hours worked per week: 2010, 2015, and 2020



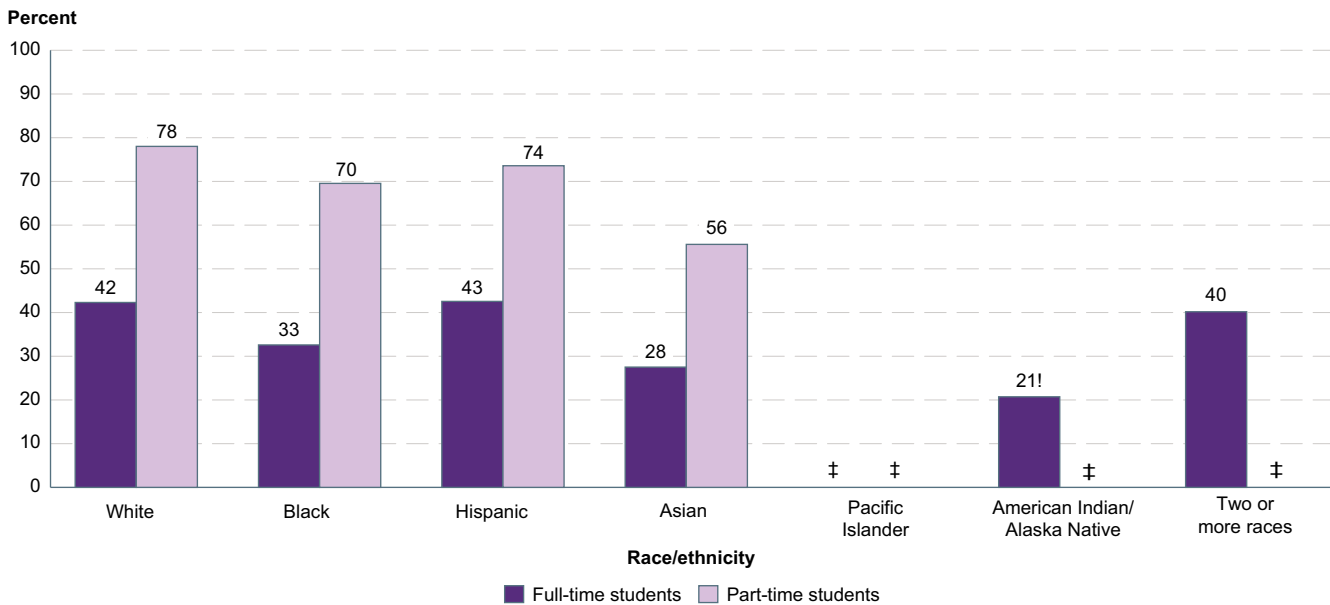
! Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 and 50 percent.

NOTE: Students were classified as full-time if they were taking at least 12 hours of classes during an average school week and as part-time if they were taking fewer hours. Data are based on sample surveys of the civilian noninstitutionalized population, which excludes persons in the military and persons living in institutions (e.g., prisons or nursing facilities). Detail may not sum to totals because the percentages of hours worked per week exclude those who were employed but not at work during the survey week. Includes undergraduate students ages 16 through 64. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October, 2010, 2015, and 2020. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2021*, table 503.40.

There was no measurable difference between 2020 and 2010 in the percentages of undergraduate students—either full-time or part-time—who were employed. However, the percentage of full-time undergraduate students who were employed was lower in 2020 (40 percent) than in 2015 (43 percent). Similarly, the percentage of part-time undergraduates who were employed was lower in 2020 (74 percent) than in 2015 (78 percent).

In 2020, the number of hours worked per week differed between full-time and part-time undergraduates. Overall, the percentages of undergraduates who worked at least 20 hours per week were higher for part-time students than

for full-time students. Specifically, 40 percent of part-time students worked 35 or more hours, compared with 10 percent of full-time students. Additionally, 26 percent of part-time students worked 20 to 34 hours per week, compared with 15 percent of full-time students. In contrast, the percentages of undergraduates who worked less than 20 hours per week were higher for full-time students than for part-time students. Three percent of full-time undergraduates were employed less than 10 hours per week, and 9 percent were employed 10 to 19 hours per week. In comparison, 1 percent⁴ of part-time students were employed less than 10 hours per week and 6 percent were employed 10 to 19 hours per week.

Figure 2. Percentage of undergraduate students who were employed, by race/ethnicity and attendance status: 2020

! Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 and 50 percent.

‡ Reporting standards not met. Either there are too few cases for a reliable estimate or the coefficient of variation (CV) is 50 percent or greater.

NOTE: Students were classified as full-time if they were taking at least 12 hours of classes during an average school week and as part-time if they were taking fewer hours. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Data are based on sample surveys of the civilian noninstitutionalized population, which excludes persons in the military and persons living in institutions (e.g., prisons or nursing facilities). Includes students ages 16 through 64.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October, 2020. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2021*, table 503.40.

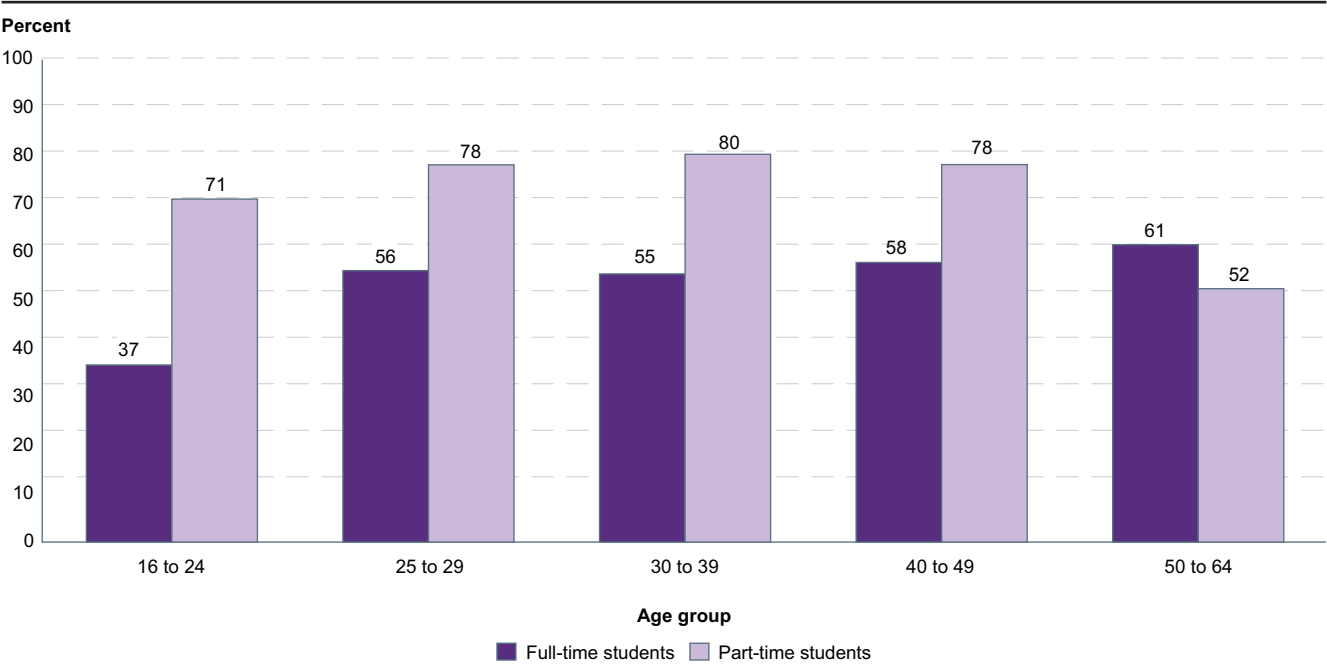
Among undergraduates enrolled full time in 2020, a higher percentage of females (43 percent) than of males (35 percent) were employed. For part-time undergraduates, there was no measurable difference between the percentages of male and female students who were employed (75 and 73 percent).

In 2020, the percentage of full-time undergraduates who were employed was higher for Hispanic (43 percent) and White (42 percent) students than for Black (33 percent) and Asian (28 percent) students. Additionally, the percentage of full-time undergraduates who were employed was lower for American Indian/Alaska Native students (21 percent)⁵ than for students of Two or more races (40 percent), White students (42 percent), and Hispanic students (43 percent).

The percentage of part-time undergraduates who were employed was higher for White (78 percent) and Hispanic (74 percent) students than for Asian (56 percent) students. The percentage of part-time undergraduates who were employed did not differ measurably between Asian and Black students.

In 2020, the percentage of full-time undergraduates who were employed was higher at 2-year institutions (47 percent) than at 4-year institutions (38 percent). In contrast, the percentage of part-time undergraduates who were employed was higher at 4-year institutions (78 percent) than at 2-year institutions (68 percent).

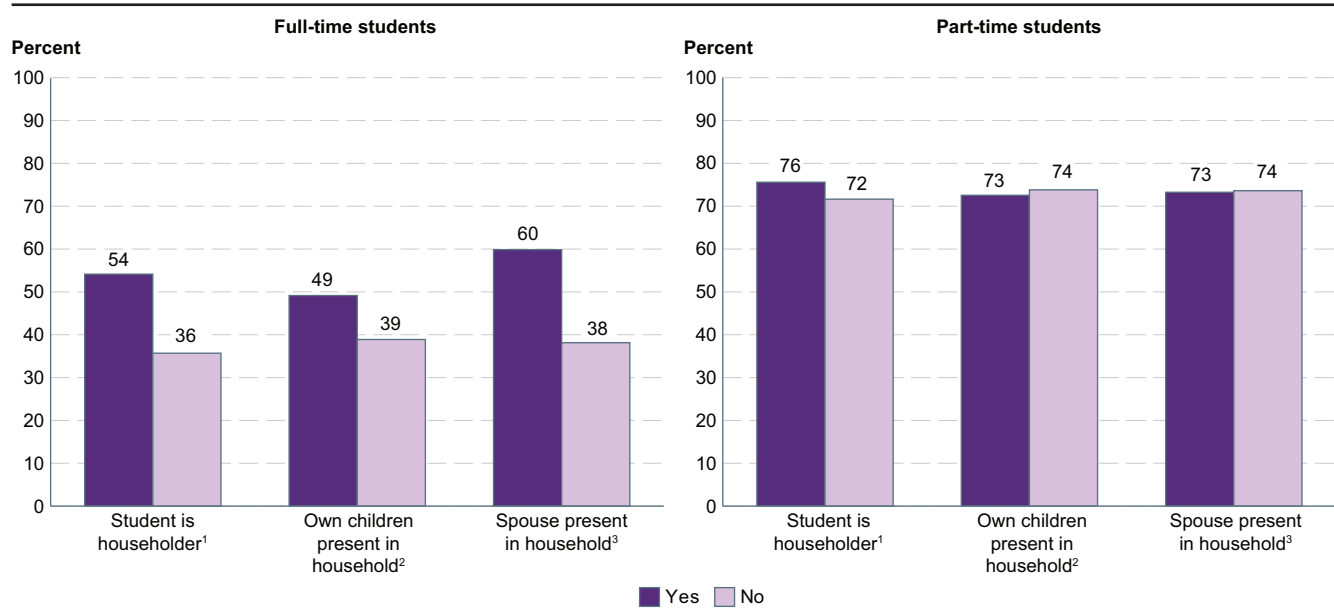
Figure 3. Percentage of undergraduate students who were employed, by age group and attendance status: 2020



NOTE: Students were classified as full-time if they were taking at least 12 hours of classes during an average school week and as part-time if they were taking fewer hours. Data are based on sample surveys of the civilian noninstitutionalized population, which excludes persons in the military and persons living in institutions (e.g., prisons or nursing facilities). Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October, 2020. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2021*, table 503.40.

Comparing full-time and part-time undergraduates, different patterns emerge in the percentage enrolled by age group for the working age population (i.e., ages 16 to 64). In 2020, the percentage of full-time undergraduates who were employed was lower for those ages 16 to 24 (37 percent) than for those in other age groups. There was no measurable difference in employment among full-time undergraduates in other age

groups (ranging from 55 percent for those ages 30 to 39 to 61 percent for those ages 50 to 64). Among undergraduates enrolled part time, the percentage who were employed was lowest for those ages 50 to 64 (52 percent). Additionally, the percentage of part-time undergraduates who were employed was lower for those ages 16 to 24 (71 percent) than for those ages 30 to 39 (80 percent).

Figure 4. Percentage of undergraduate students who were employed, by attendance status and selected student characteristics: 2020

¹ Householders are persons in whose name the housing unit is owned or rented. Never-married students living away from home in college dormitories are not considered householders.

² Own children are never-married sons and daughters of the student who are under 18, including stepchildren and adopted children.

³ Students with no spouse present are all students who did not live with a spouse, including students who are single, divorced, separated, or widowed.

NOTE: Students were classified as full-time if they were taking at least 12 hours of classes during an average school week and as part-time if they were taking fewer hours. Data are based on sample surveys of the civilian noninstitutionalized population, which excludes persons in the military and persons living in institutions (e.g., prisons or nursing facilities). Includes undergraduate students ages 16 through 64. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October, 2020. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2021*, table 503.40.

The percentage of undergraduates who were employed varied by the characteristics of the households in which they lived. For example, among full-time undergraduates in 2020, a higher percentage of householders than of nonhouseholders were employed (54 vs. 36 percent).⁶ The percentage of full-time undergraduates who were employed was higher for those who lived with one or more of their own children (49 percent) than for those who did not live with any of their own children (39 percent).⁷ Also, the percentage of full-time undergraduates who were employed was higher for those who lived with a spouse (60 percent) than for those who did not live with a spouse

(38 percent).⁸ Among undergraduates enrolled part time, the percentages who were employed did not measurably differ either by householder status, the presence of own children, or the presence of a spouse. However, the percentage of part-time undergraduates employed was greater than the percentage of full-time undergraduates employed for all subgroups by household characteristics. For example, the percentage of undergraduates who were employed was higher for part-time undergraduates living with one or more of their own children (73 percent) than for full-time undergraduates living with one or more of their own children (49 percent).

Endnotes:

¹ Students ages 16 to 64 were classified as employed if they worked during any part of the survey week as paid employees. Those who were employed but not at work during the survey week were also included.

² Dundes, L., and Marx, J. (2006). Balancing Work and Academics in College: Why Do Students Working 10 to 19 Hours per Week Excel? *Journal of College Student Retention*, 8(1): 107-120. Retrieved October 25, 2021, from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.2190/7UCU-8F9M-94QG-5WWQ>.

³ Pike, G.R., Kuh, G.D., and Massa-McKinley, R.C. (2008). First-Year Students' Employment, Engagement, and Academic Achievement: Untangling the Relationship Between Work and Grades. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 45(4): 560-582. Retrieved October 25, 2021, from <https://naspa.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.2202/1949-6605.2011#.W4an6c5KhhF>.

⁴ Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 and 50 percent.

⁵ Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 and 50 percent.

⁶ Householders are persons in whose name the housing unit is owned or rented. Never-married students living away from home in college dormitories are not considered householders.

⁷ Own children are never-married sons and daughters of the student who are under 18, including stepchildren and adopted children.

⁸ Includes students who are single, divorced, separated, or widowed.

Reference tables: *Digest of Education Statistics 2021*, table 503.40

Related indicators and resources: [Characteristics of Postsecondary Students](#); [Employment and Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment](#); [Employment Outcomes of Bachelor's Degree Holders](#); [Young Adult Educational and Employment Outcomes by Family Socioeconomic Status](#)

Glossary: College; Employment status; Full-time enrollment; Household; Part-time enrollment; Postsecondary institutions (basic classification by level); Racial/ethnic group; Undergraduate students