

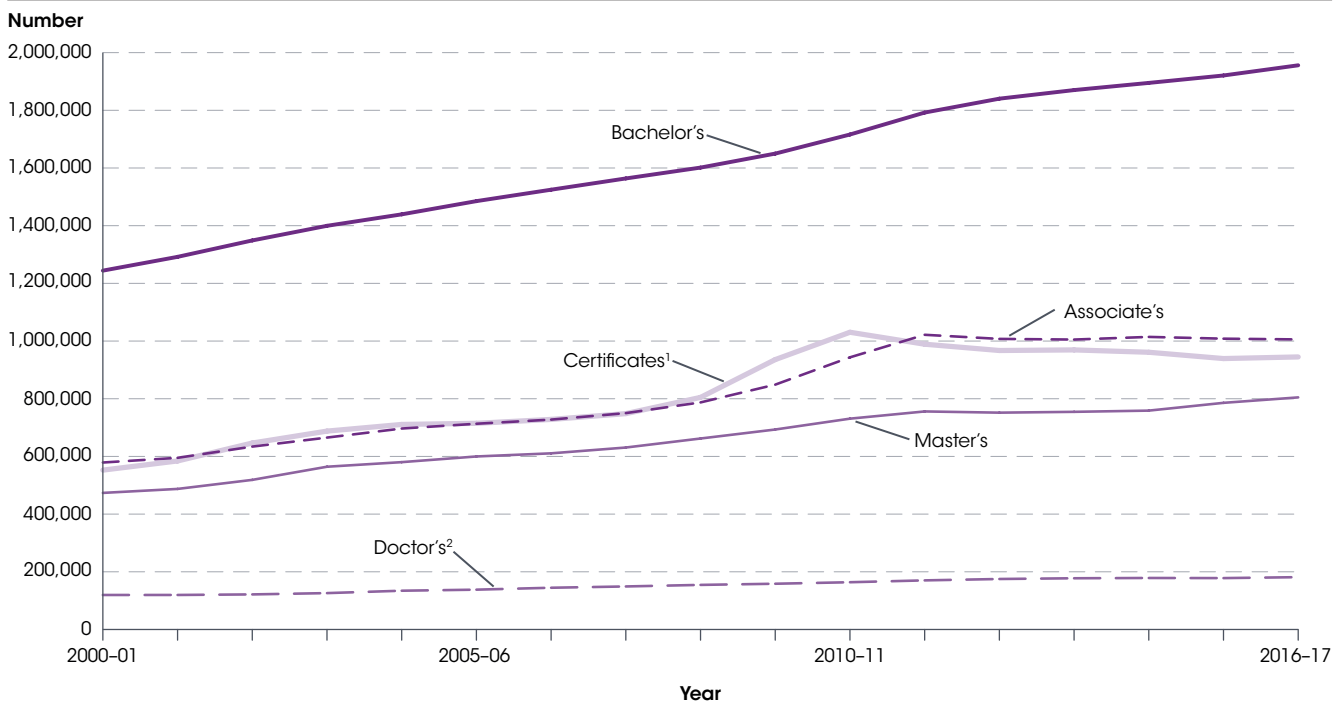
# Postsecondary Certificates and Degrees Conferred

*The number of postsecondary certificates and degrees conferred at each award level increased between 2000–01 and 2016–17. The number of certificates below the associate’s level conferred during this period increased by 71 percent. The number of degrees conferred during this period increased by 74 percent at the associate’s level, by 57 percent at the bachelor’s level, by 70 percent at the master’s level, and by 52 percent at the doctor’s level.*

In academic year 2016–17, postsecondary institutions conferred 945,000 certificates<sup>1</sup> below the associate’s level, 1.0 million associate’s degrees, 2.0 million bachelor’s degrees, 805,000 master’s degrees, and 181,000 doctor’s

degrees. The number of postsecondary certificates and degrees conferred at each award level increased between 2000–01 and 2016–17.

**Figure 1. Number of certificates and degrees conferred by postsecondary institutions: Academic years 2000–01 through 2016–17**



<sup>1</sup> Data are for certificates below the associate’s degree level.

<sup>2</sup> Includes Ph.D., Ed.D., and comparable degrees at the doctoral levels. Includes most degrees formerly classified as first-professional, such as M.D., D.D.S., and law degrees.

NOTE: Data are for postsecondary institutions participating in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Data for associate’s degrees and higher awards are for degree-granting institutions. Some data have been revised from previously published figures.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2001 through Fall 2017, Completions component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2018*, table 318.40.

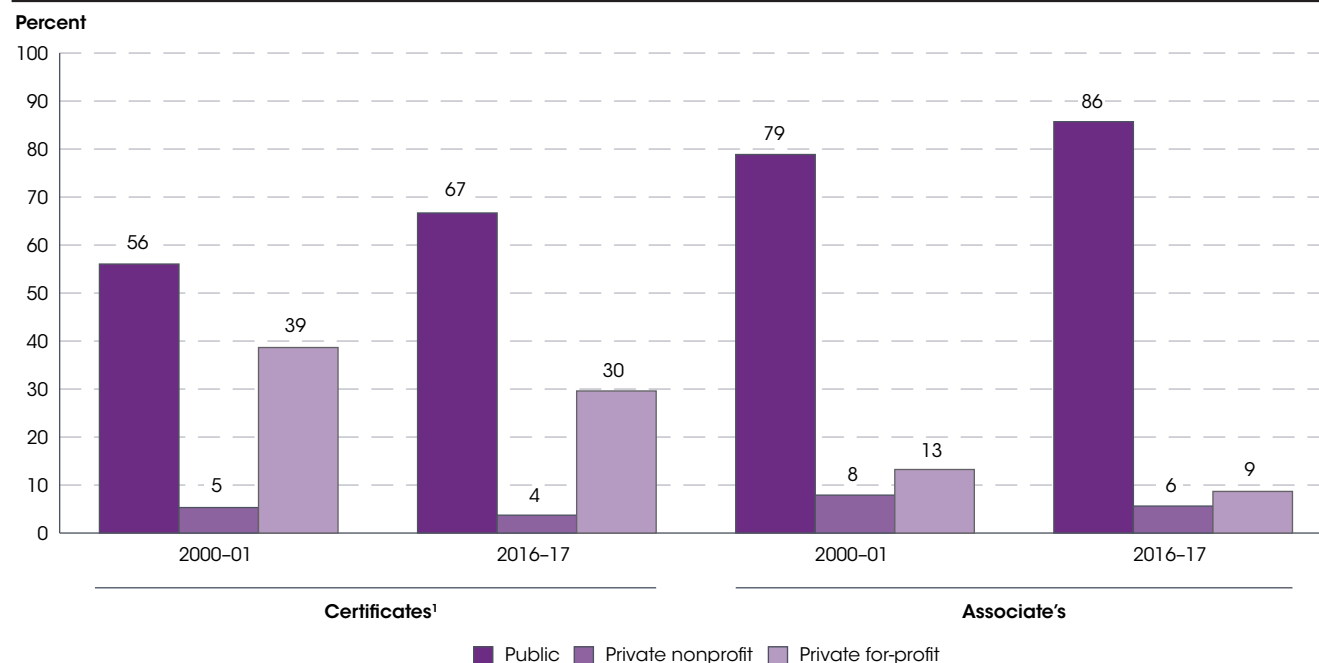
The number of certificates conferred below the associate’s level increased by 87 percent between 2000–01 and 2010–11, from 553,000 to a peak of 1.0 million. Between 2010–11 and 2016–17, the number of certificates conferred decreased by 8 percent (from 1.0 million to 945,000). The number of associate’s degrees conferred peaked in 2011–12, which was 1 year later than the peak in the number of certificates conferred. Between 2000–01

and 2011–12 the number of associate’s degrees conferred increased by 77 percent, from 579,000 to 1.0 million. The number of associate’s degrees conferred then fluctuated, and in 2016–17, it was 2 percent lower than in 2011–12 (1.01 million versus 1.02 million). The number of bachelor’s degrees conferred rose each year between 2000–01 and 2016–17, increasing by 57 percent (from 1.2 million to 2.0 million) during this period.

Between 2000–01 and 2011–12, the number of master's degrees conferred increased by 60 percent (from 474,000 to 756,000), and between 2011–12 and 2016–17, the number increased by 6 percent (from 756,000 to

805,000). The number of doctor's degrees conferred increased by 52 percent (from 120,000 to 181,000) between 2000–01 and 2016–17.

**Figure 2. Percentage distribution of certificates and associate's degrees conferred by postsecondary institutions, by control of institution: Academic years 2000–01 and 2016–17**



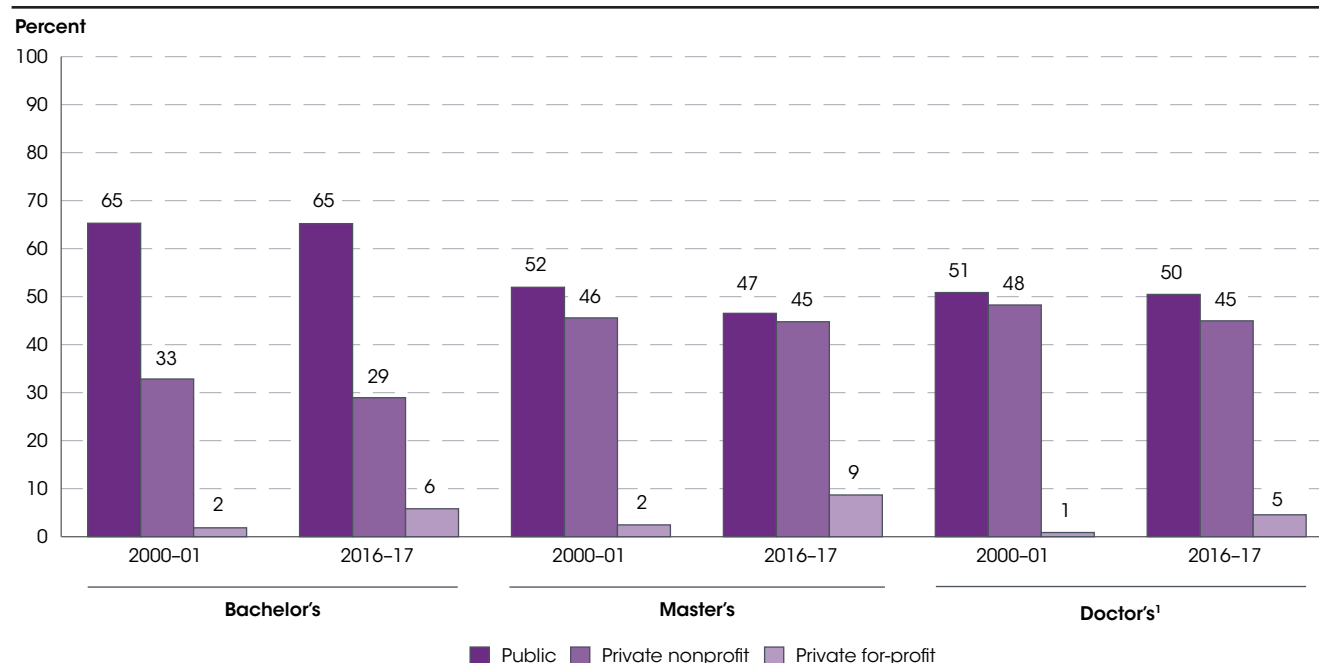
<sup>1</sup> Data are for certificates below the associate's degree level.

NOTE: Data are for postsecondary institutions participating in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Data for associate's degrees are from degree-granting institutions. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2001 and Fall 2017, Completions component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2018*, table 318.40.

Between 2000–01 and 2016–17, the number of certificates below the associate's level conferred by public institutions increased by 104 percent (from 310,000 to 630,000). The number of certificates conferred by private nonprofit institutions was 20 percent higher in 2016–17 (35,000) than in 2000–01 (29,000) but showed no consistent trend during this period. The number of certificates conferred by private for-profit institutions increased by 122 percent between 2000–01 and 2010–11 (from 214,000 to 474,000) and then decreased by 41 percent between 2010–11 and 2016–17 (from 474,000 to 280,000). Between 2000–01 and 2016–17, the proportion of certificates conferred by public institutions increased from 56 to 67 percent, the proportion conferred by private nonprofit institutions decreased from 5 to 4 percent, and the proportion conferred by private for-profit institutions decreased from 39 to 30 percent.

The number of associate's degrees conferred between 2000–01 and 2016–17 increased by 89 percent at public institutions (from 456,000 to 862,000), by 24 percent at private nonprofit institutions (from 46,000 to 57,000), and by 14 percent at private for-profit institutions (from 77,000 to 87,000). The proportion of associate's degrees conferred by public institutions was higher in 2016–17 (86 percent) than in 2000–01 (79 percent). By contrast, the proportion of associate's degrees conferred by private nonprofit institutions was lower in 2016–17 (6 percent) than in 2000–01 (8 percent), as was the proportion conferred by private for-profit institutions (9 percent in 2016–17 vs. 13 percent in 2000–01).

**Figure 3. Percentage distribution of bachelor's, master's, and doctor's degrees conferred by postsecondary institutions, by control of institution: Academic years 2000–01 and 2016–17**

<sup>1</sup> Includes Ph.D., Ed.D., and comparable degrees at the doctoral level. Includes most degrees formerly classified as first-professional, such as M.D., D.D.S., and law degrees.

NOTE: Data are for degree-granting postsecondary institutions participating in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2001 and Fall 2017, Completions component. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2018*, table 318.40.

Between 2000–01 and 2016–17, the number of bachelor's degrees conferred by public institutions increased by 57 percent (from 812,000 to 1.3 million), the number conferred by private nonprofit institutions increased by 39 percent (from 409,000 to 566,000), and the number conferred by private for-profit institutions increased by 395 percent (from 23,000 to 114,000). While the proportion of bachelor's degrees conferred by public institutions was 65 percent in both 2000–01 and 2016–17, the proportion conferred by private nonprofit institutions decreased over that period (from 33 to 29 percent) and the proportion conferred by private for-profit institutions increased (from 2 to 6 percent).

The number of master's degrees conferred between 2000–01 and 2016–17 increased by 52 percent at public institutions (from 246,000 to 374,000), by 67 percent at private nonprofit institutions (from 216,000 to 360,000), and by 501 percent at private for-profit institutions (from 12,000 to 70,000). Over this period, the proportion

of master's degrees conferred by public institutions decreased (from 52 to 47 percent). The proportion of master's degrees conferred by private nonprofit institutions was lower in 2016–17 (45 percent) than in 2000–01 (46 percent). In contrast, the proportion of master's degrees conferred by private for-profit institutions increased (from 2 to 9 percent).

Between 2000–01 and 2016–17, the number of doctor's degrees conferred increased by 50 percent at public institutions (from 61,000 to 92,000), by 41 percent at private nonprofit institutions (from 58,000 to 82,000), and by 693 percent at private for-profit institutions (from 1,000 to 8,000). Over this period, the proportion of doctor's degrees conferred at public institutions decreased (from 51 to 50 percent); the proportion conferred at private nonprofit institutions also decreased (from 48 to 45 percent). At private for-profit institutions, however, the proportion conferred increased (from 1 to 5 percent).

#### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> A certificate is a formal award certifying the satisfactory completion of a postsecondary education program.

**Reference tables:** *Digest of Education Statistics 2018*, table 318.40

**Related indicators and resources:** [Degrees Awarded](#) [*Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups*]; [Graduate Degree Fields](#); [Trends in Student Loan Debt for Graduate School Completers](#) [*The Condition of Education 2018 Spotlight*]; [Undergraduate Degree Fields](#)

**Glossary:** Associate's degree; Bachelor's degree; Certificate; Control of institution; Doctor's degree; Master's degree; Private institution; Public school or institution