Digital Learning Compass
Distance Education
Enrollment Report 2017

What you should know about the 6,000,000+ students who study exclusively online or at least in part via distance remains steady.

30% of all students in higher education are now taking at least one distance course. Of those learners, 14% are exclusively “distance” students (those who take all courses at a distance). However, the proportion of students taking distance courses has fallen by nearly a third.

As overall distance enrollment has grown, on-campus enrollment has fallen by 5% since 2012.

The majority of “exclusively distance” students live in the same state, not out-of-state institutions.

The largest institutions have the highest percentages of distance students.

Digital learning is a core component of the new Federal “Cohort” definition. This represents an important change in how the Federal government defines students and what is measured. Further, the Digital Learning Compass is the only study that follows the “Cohort” definition. In the Digital Learning Compass we track all distance learning enrollments for each relevant course and student. In 2017 we continue to do the same but for the first time we are aggregating by institution control types – public, private not-for-profit, private for-profit and others.

The key findings from Digital Learning Compass Distance Education Enrollment Report 2017 are the result of a series of reports, each of which focused on a particular set of issues. In 2017, the series is comprised of the following:

- **PROPORTION OF STUDENTS TAKING DISTANCE COURSES BY LEVEL OF STUDY (2015)**
- **PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS TAKING DISTANCE COURSES BY INSTITUTION SIZE (2015)**
- **LOCATION OF STUDENTS ENROLLED EXCLUSIVELY IN DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSES (2015)**
- **PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS STUDYING ON CAMPUS (2012–2015)**
- **PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS TAKING DISTANCE COURSES BY CONTROL OF INSTITUTION AND LEVEL OF STUDY (2015)**
- **YEAR-TO-YEAR CHANGE IN DISTANCE ENROLLMENTS (DEGREE-GRANTING INSTITUTIONS) (2012–2015)**
- **TYPE OF INSTITUTION—STUDENTS ENROLLED IN DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSES (2015)**
- **PROPORTION OF STUDENTS TAKING DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSES (2015)**

The full report is available at [Digital Learning Compass](https://digitallearningcompass.com).