

RESEARCH BRIEF:

Diploma Programme students' enrollment and outcomes at US postsecondary institutions 2008–2014

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Introduction

The International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme (DP) is an academically challenging and balanced educational programme that prepares students to succeed in postsecondary education and life beyond. Research suggests that IB participation improves secondary school academic performance (Caspary 2011, Saavedra 2011, Wade 2011), college enrollment and postsecondary persistence and achievement (Coca et al 2012, Caspary, Bland 2011, HESA 2011, Inkelas, Swan, Pretlow and Jones 2013). This study examines the pathways and outcomes of DP students in the United States who took IB exams in 2008, enabling analysis of four- and six-year graduation rates for the 2008 cohort. The full report also examines some data from DP students from Latin American countries, although data availability was limited for this cohort of students. Additionally, it extends previous research conducted by Halic (2013) reporting on the postsecondary outcomes of IB students graduating from US high schools in 2005.

DATA SOURCES

This study used data from two sources: the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) student tracker system and the International Baccalaureate information system (IBIS). NSC is a non-profit organization providing student enrollment, performance and related information for more than 3,600 colleges and universities in the United States. IBIS is maintained by the IB and collects student demographic data and assessment data for DP students who register for exams. Exam scores, performance on other diploma requirements, diploma result codes and exam dates are recorded in IBIS. Data on all DP candidates (n=15,680) who took IB examinations in 2008 in public and private high schools in the US was requested in October 2014. Complete data was obtained for 13,555 students (94% attended public high schools and 6% attended private schools) which was used for these analyses.

Findings

Postsecondary enrollment

Ninety-two per cent of diploma students graduating from US high schools in 2008 enrolled in US postsecondary institutions between May 2008 and May 2014 (Figure 1). Seventy-eight per cent of students enrolled immediately. In comparison, in 2008 the national rate of immediate enrollment was 69% (Department of Labor 2009). Additionally, of all the DP students who enrolled immediately after high school graduation, 95% enrolled at a four-year institution. This is notably higher than the 2008 national average of 60% (Figure 2).

Terminology

This report defines key terms as follows:

Postsecondary enrollment: Postsecondary enrollment is enrollment or matriculation at a postsecondary institution. Postsecondary institutions include private, public, four-year, and two-year institutions.

Four-year institutions: Four-year institutions are generally referred to as colleges or universities and can award bachelor degrees or higher.

Two-year institutions: Two-year institutions are generally referred to as community colleges or junior colleges and do not award bachelor's degrees or higher, but can award associate's degrees and/or certificates.

Retention (one year and two year): Retention rates refer to yearly progression and continued enrollment one year or two years following initial enrollment, either at the same or a different institution.

Graduation: Graduation refers to successful completion of the programme of study or degree attainment. Both four-year and six-year graduation rates are included.

Diploma earner: A diploma earner is a student who successfully completed the requirements to earn the IB diploma. Diploma non-earners did not successfully complete the IB requirements to earn the IB diploma, but may earn the diploma awarded by their high school.

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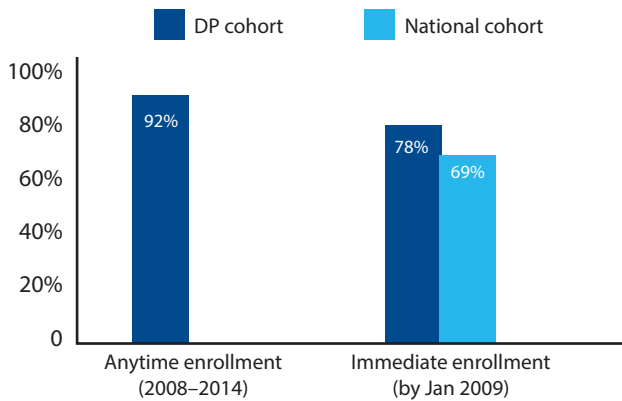


Figure 1. Anytime and immediate enrollment

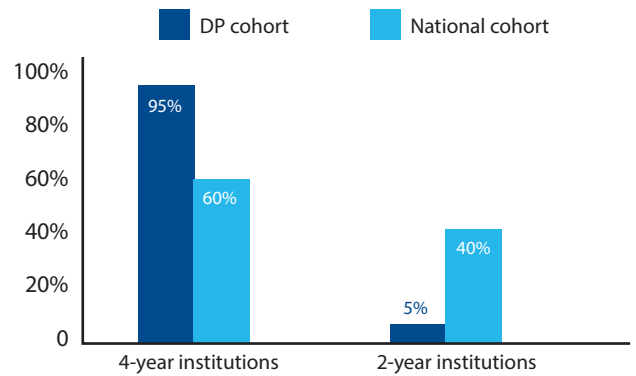


Figure 2. Immediate enrollment by type of institution

Postsecondary retention

The first year retention rate of DP students enrolled in four-year institutions was 98% (Figure 3), while the national rate was 77% (NCHEMS n.d.).

Graduation rates

The average four-year graduation rate of all DP students (both diploma earners and non-earners) was 79% (Figure 4). When considering diploma earners alone, the average four-year graduation (all four-year institutions) rate increases to 84%. Furthermore, DP students (both diploma earners and non-earners) have notably higher six-year graduation rates (83%) than the 2009 national average of 56% (NCHEMS n.d.).

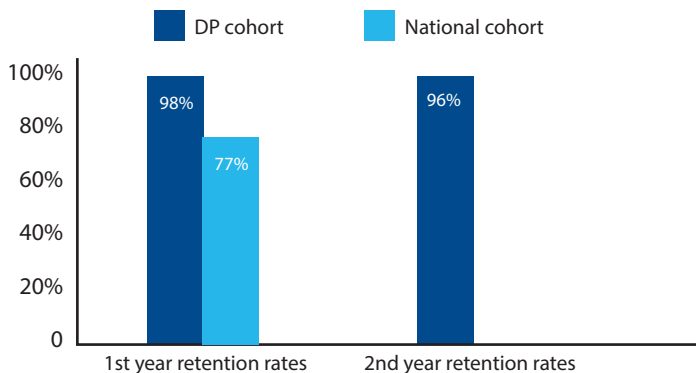


Figure 3. First and second year retention rates

Note: 2nd year retention rates are not currently available for the national cohort

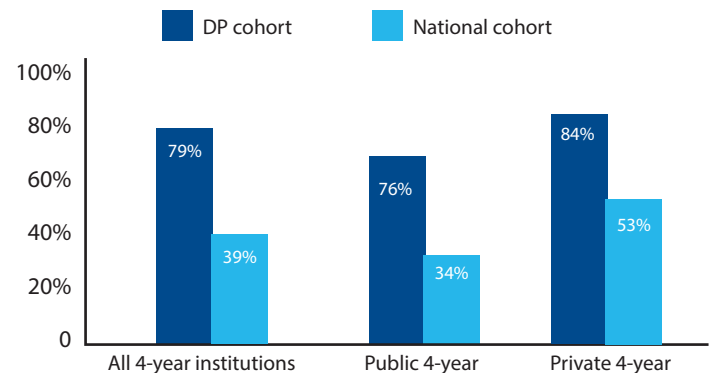


Figure 4. Four-year graduation rates by institution type

Note: National data only available for 2007 (NCES 2014)

The full report is available at <http://www.ibo.org/research>. To cite the full report, please use the following: Bergeron, L. 2015. *Diploma Programme students' enrollment and outcomes at US postsecondary institutions 2008–2014*. Bethesda, MD, USA. International Baccalaureate Organization.

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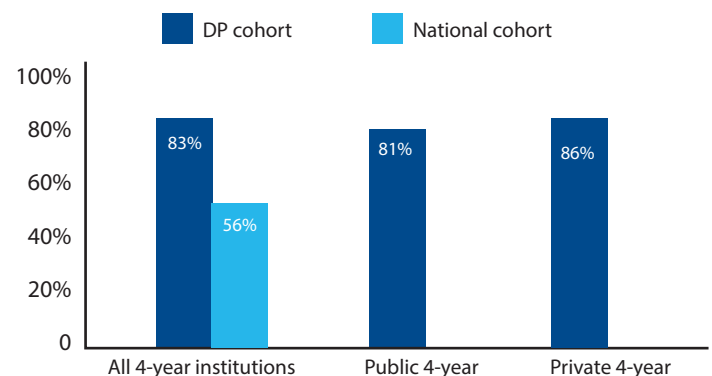


Figure 5. Six-year graduation rates by institution type

Note: National data not available by institution type