

Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education Indicators



Enrolments 2020-21

Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education Indicators: Enrolments 2020-21

Since 2016, Saskatchewan's post-secondary institutions and the Ministry of Advanced Education have been working together to develop and implement the Post-Secondary Education Indicators Project to collect, analyze and report sector-wide post-secondary data. The project is led by the province's four public credential-granting institutions – Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT), Saskatchewan Polytechnic, University of Regina, and University of Saskatchewan. Reports from the project cover all students enrolled in credentialed programming (i.e. Degree, Diploma or Certificate programs) through the province's public post-secondary institutions. While the majority of students take their classes on the main campuses of these four institutions, this data also includes students taking SIIT, Saskatchewan Polytechnic or university programming offered at Saskatchewan's federated and regional colleges, and at Dumont Technical Institute.

This report focuses on the numbers and demographic details of students enrolled in post-secondary education over the past five years, up to the most recently completed academic year, 2020-21. Enrolments overall have declined slightly over the last year, including more significant decreases among Indigenous and International students, both of which were disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, in the latest Fall semester enrolment data from 2021, both Indigenous and International student numbers increased compared to Fall 2020, suggesting that a recovery from the pandemic is underway.

Total Enrolments

In the 2020-21 academic year, there were 53,410¹ students enrolled in credentialed post-secondary programs through Saskatchewan's public institutions. This represents a one per cent decrease from the previous year, however, the total number of post-secondary students has grown over the past five years, increasing by seven per cent between 2016-17 and 2020-21.

¹ All numbers are rounded to the nearest 10. Enrolment figures represent an annual headcount of students, the number of distinct students enrolled in an academic year in instructional activity that counts as credit towards an approved credential.

Figure 1

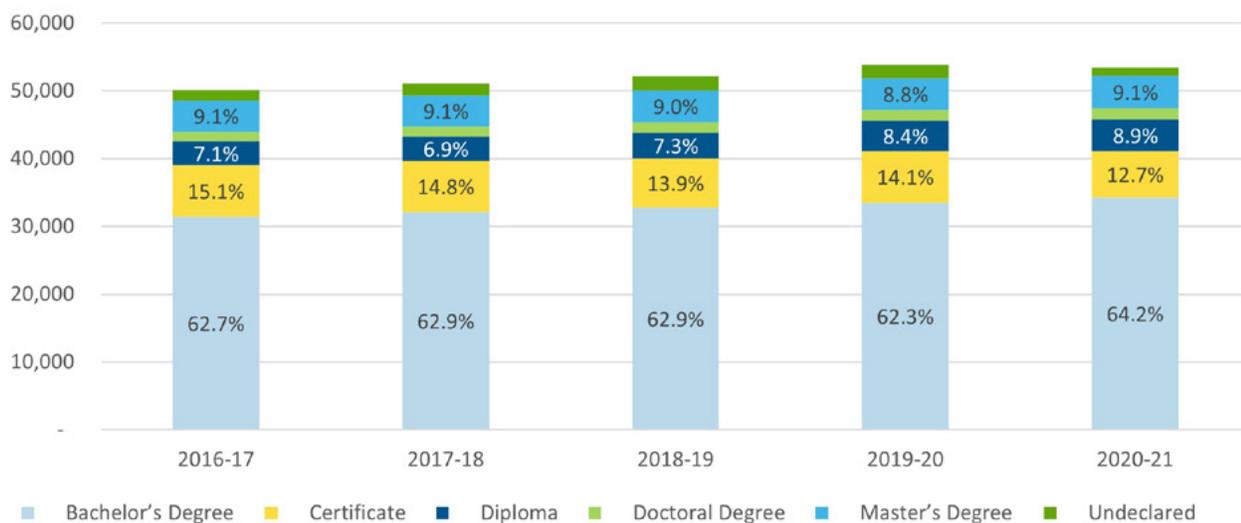
Total Annual Enrolments, 2016-17 to 2020-21



The majority of these students are enrolled in Bachelor's Degree programs (nearly two-thirds), followed by Certificate programs, Master's Degrees, Diploma programs, Doctoral Degrees, and Undeclared students². While the overall numbers have grown, this breakdown has not changed significantly over the past five years.

Figure 2

Total Annual Enrolments by Credential Type, 2016-17 to 2020-21

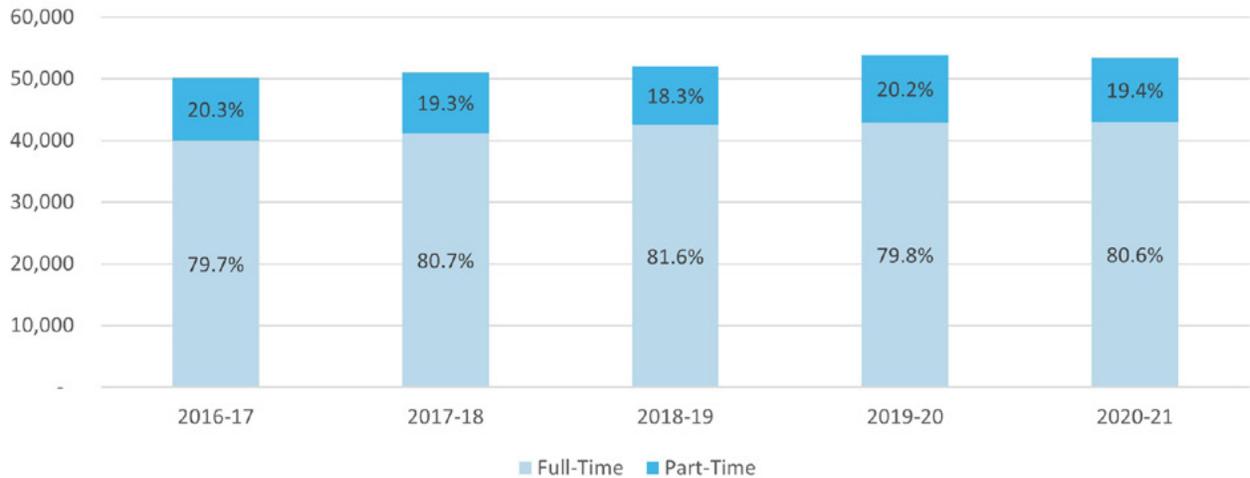


In 2020-21, just over 80 per cent of Saskatchewan students were enrolled as full-time students. This percentage has remained constant over the past five years.

² Undeclared students are those who are registered in one or more credit courses at a university, but have not yet declared their intended degree, diploma or certificate program at the institution.

Figure 3

Total Annual Enrolments by Registration Type, 2016-17 to 2020-21

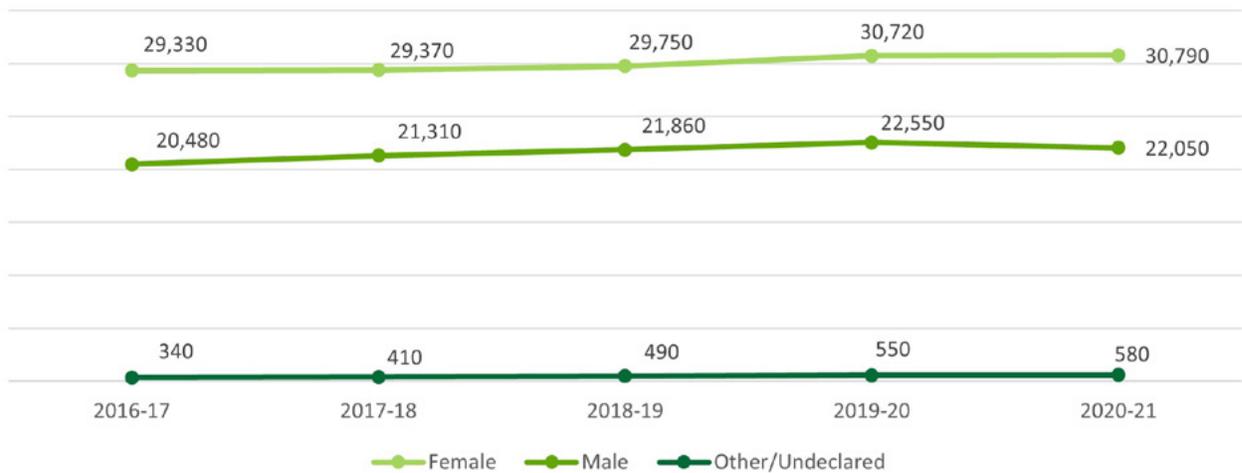


Gender

There are significantly more females than males enrolled in post-secondary education in Saskatchewan. The number of male students in the sector had been increasing more rapidly than the number of female students over the past several years, however the number of male students dropped by 500 in 2020-21 compared to the previous year while female enrolments stayed approximately the same. The number of students who did not self-identify as either male or female has increased significantly, by 71 per cent since 2016-17.

Figure 4

Total Annual Enrolments by Gender, 2016-17 to 2020-21

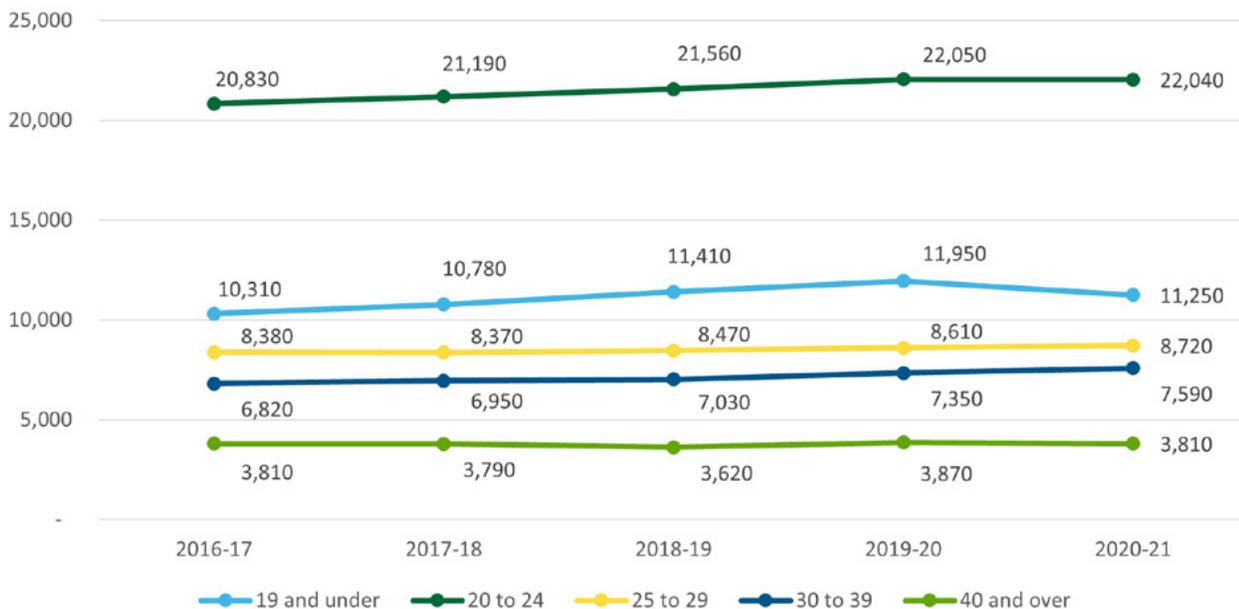


Age

In Saskatchewan, a majority of post-secondary students (just under two-thirds) are young adults aged 24 years and under, though in recent years there has been significant enrolment growth among students in their 30s, increasing by over nine per cent since 2017-18. This trend may indicate that people are waiting until later in life to pursue post-secondary education, or are returning to education mid-career to re-skill or up-skill to advance their employment opportunities. In 2020-21, there was a six per cent decrease in the number of students aged 19 years and younger compared to the year before, while all other age groups remained largely unchanged, which may suggest that COVID-19 has caused some students to delay the start of their post-secondary education.

Figure 5

Total Annual Enrolments by Age Group, 2017-18 to 2020-21



Indigenous Students

In 2020-21, there were 8,080 students enrolled in credentialed programs at Saskatchewan’s public post-secondary institutions who self-declared as First Nations, Métis or Inuit, representing 15 per cent of the Saskatchewan student body. Over the past five years, the number of Indigenous students has grown by four per cent, however between 2019-20 and 2020-21 Indigenous enrolment decreased by four per cent in just one year. This one-year drop was observed in the Fall 2020 enrolment numbers presented in last year’s report³ and is believed to be the result of disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic which disproportionately impacted Indigenous and International students.

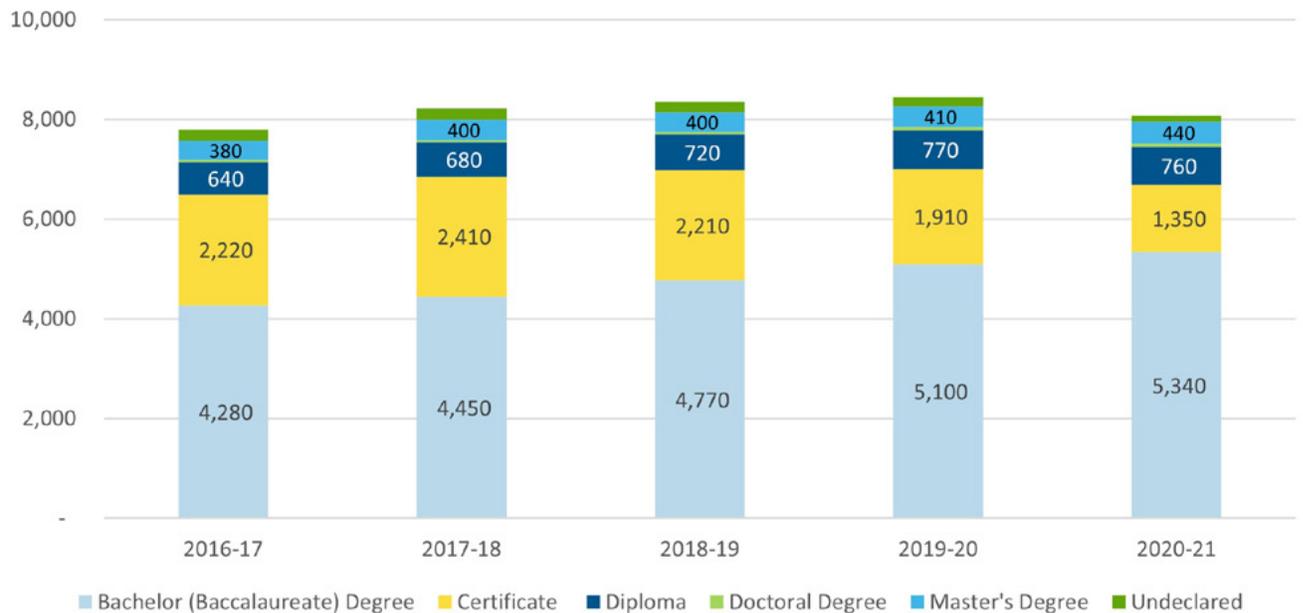
³ Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education Indicators Project, “[Enrolments 2019-20.](#)”

Figure 6
Indigenous Student Enrolments, 2016-17 to 2020-21



Over the past five years, while Indigenous student enrolments have increased only modestly overall, at the credential-level, decreases have occurred only among Undeclared students (48 per cent decline) and for one-year Certificate programs (39 per cent decline). Indigenous enrolments have increased for all of the longer-cycle programs, with Diploma students increasing by 18 per cent, Bachelors by 25 per cent, Masters by 16 per cent and Doctoral students by 40 per cent since 2016-17.

Figure 7
Indigenous Student Enrolments, by Credential Type, 2016-17 to 2020-21



In 2020-21, two-thirds of Indigenous students were First Nations and nearly one-third were Métis. A very small percentage of Saskatchewan Indigenous students are Inuit, some of whom take university programs offered in Canada’s far north.

Figure 8

Indigenous Student Enrolments, by Student Group, 2016-17 to 2020-21

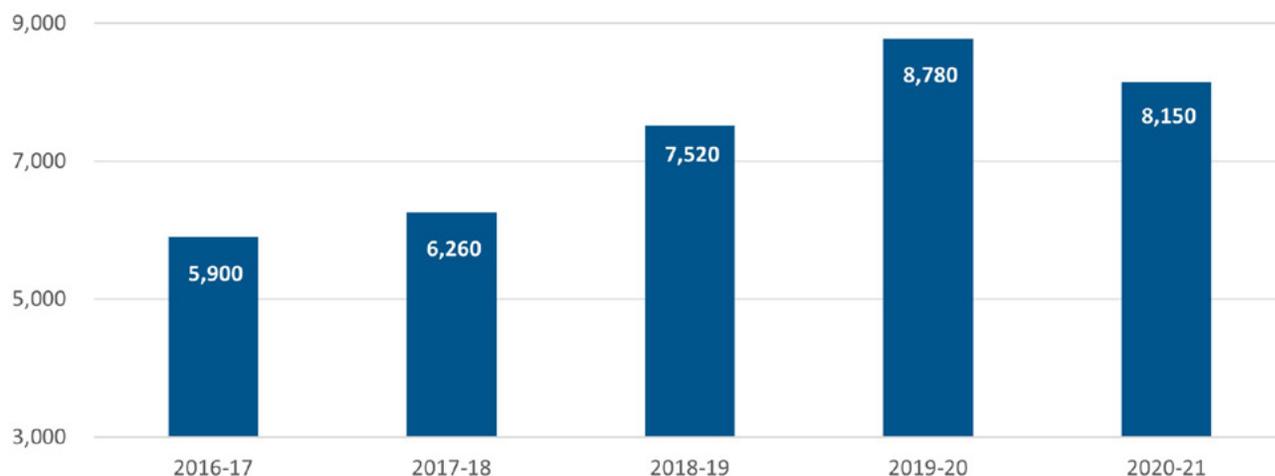


International Students

Over the past several years, there have been significant increases in the numbers of International post-secondary students studying in Saskatchewan, including a 57 per cent five-year increase between 2015-16 and 2019-20. However, the impact of COVID-19 on International students in 2020 and 2021 has been significant and resulted in a sudden decline in International student enrolments. This decrease was first observed in the Fall 2020 enrolment numbers presented in last year’s report⁴, and that trend continued throughout the 2020-21 academic year. In 2020-21, International enrolment decreased by 630 students, or seven per cent. Over the past five years however, from 2016-17 to 2020-21, International enrolment has still increased significantly, by 2,250 students, or 38 per cent.

⁴ Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education Indicators Project, “[Enrolments 2019-20](#)”.

Figure 9
International Student Enrolments, 2016-17 to 2020-21



Students with Disabilities

In 2020-21, 3,020 Saskatchewan post-secondary students were granted an academic accommodation for a disability⁵, down slightly from 3,080 students in 2019-20. As the overall annual enrolment was also down slightly, the percentage of students granted an accommodation for a disability remained unchanged at 5.7%.

Areas of Study

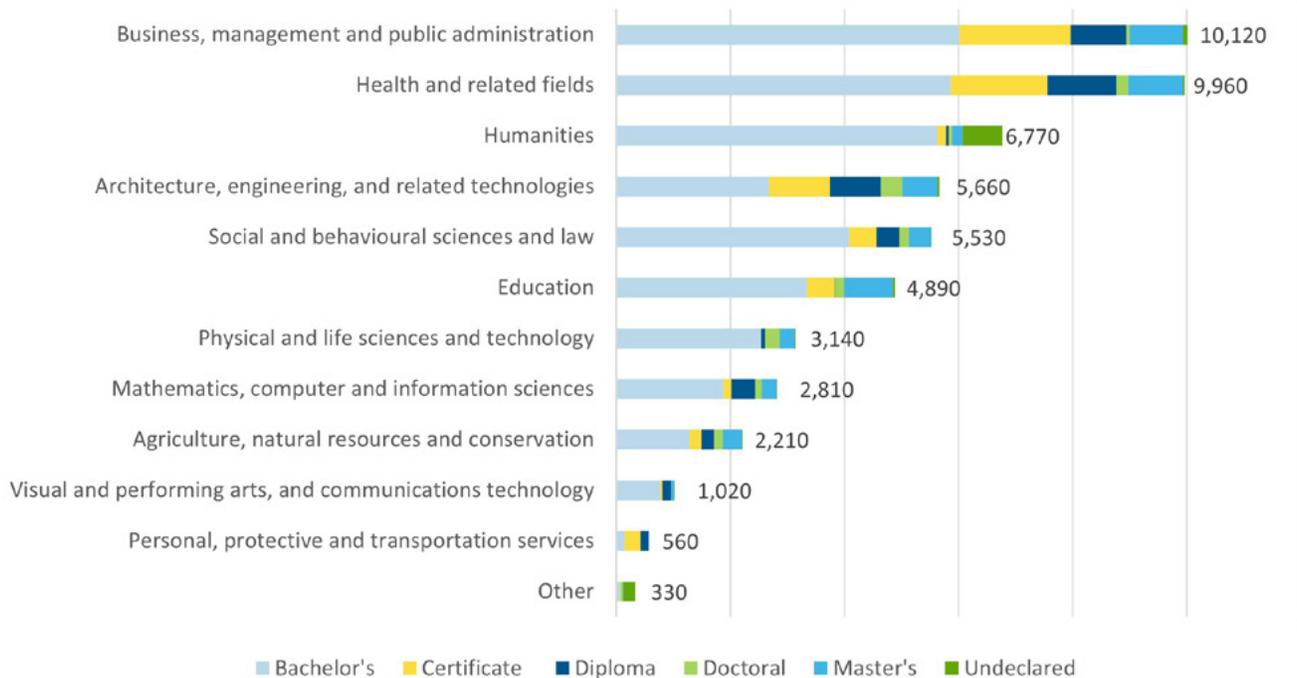
In 2020-21, the most popular areas of study for Saskatchewan post-secondary students were those of Business, Management and Public Administration (10,020 students); Health and Related Fields (9,960); and, Humanities (6,770). Together these three groups comprise half of all enrolments⁶.

⁵ This data does not provide a count of the total number of students with disabilities in the sector, as only those students who required an academic accommodation for their disability are accounted for. Common accommodations include notetaking services, audio-recorded lectures, enlarged print materials, extensions for assignments, extended time for exams, quiet space for exams, and the use of a reader or scribe for exams.

⁶ Area of study categories are derived from Statistics Canada's Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP Canada 2016) – Primary groupings. Data for this section includes students enrolled in credentialed programs at Saskatchewan Polytechnic, University of Regina and University of Saskatchewan.

Figure 10

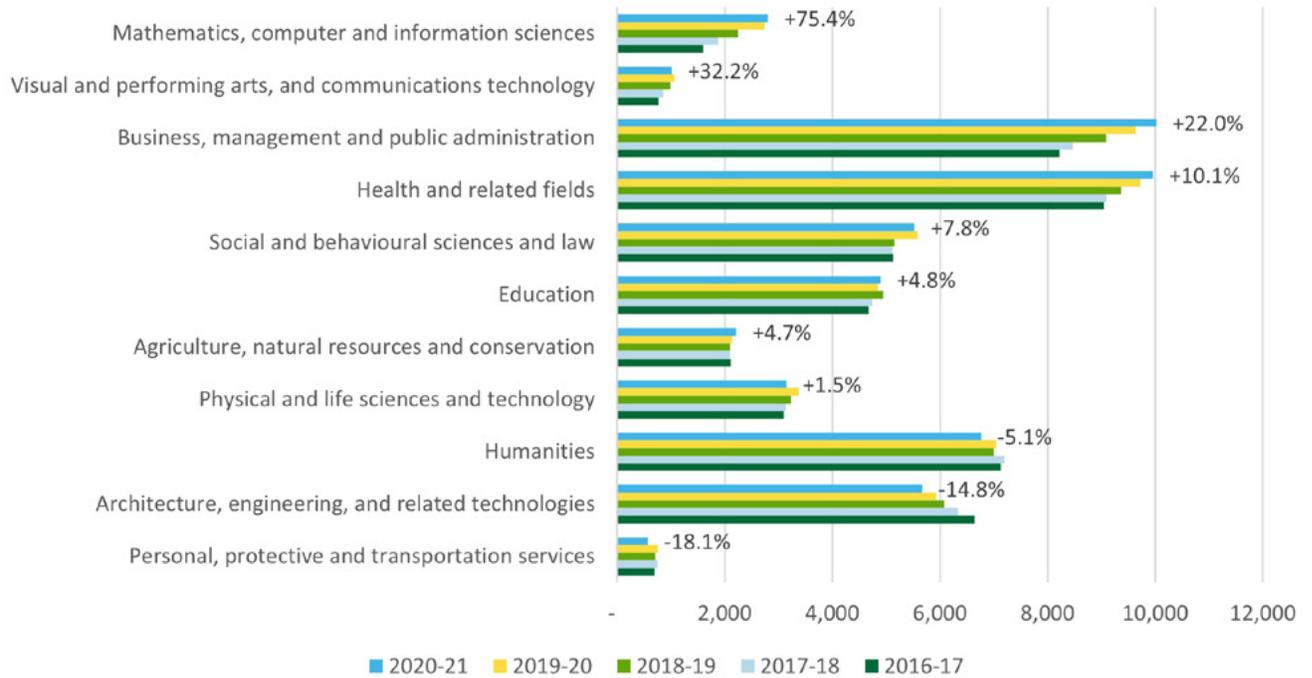
Total Annual Enrolments by Primary Grouping and Credential Type, 2020-21



Over the past five years, the fastest growing areas of study in Saskatchewan (by percentage) have been those of Mathematics, Computer and Information Sciences (75 per cent growth); Visual and Performing Arts (32 per cent); and, Business, Management and Public Administration (22 per cent). Over that period, three areas have seen decreasing enrolments. These are Personal, Protective and Transportation Services; Architecture, Engineering and Related Technologies; and, Humanities.

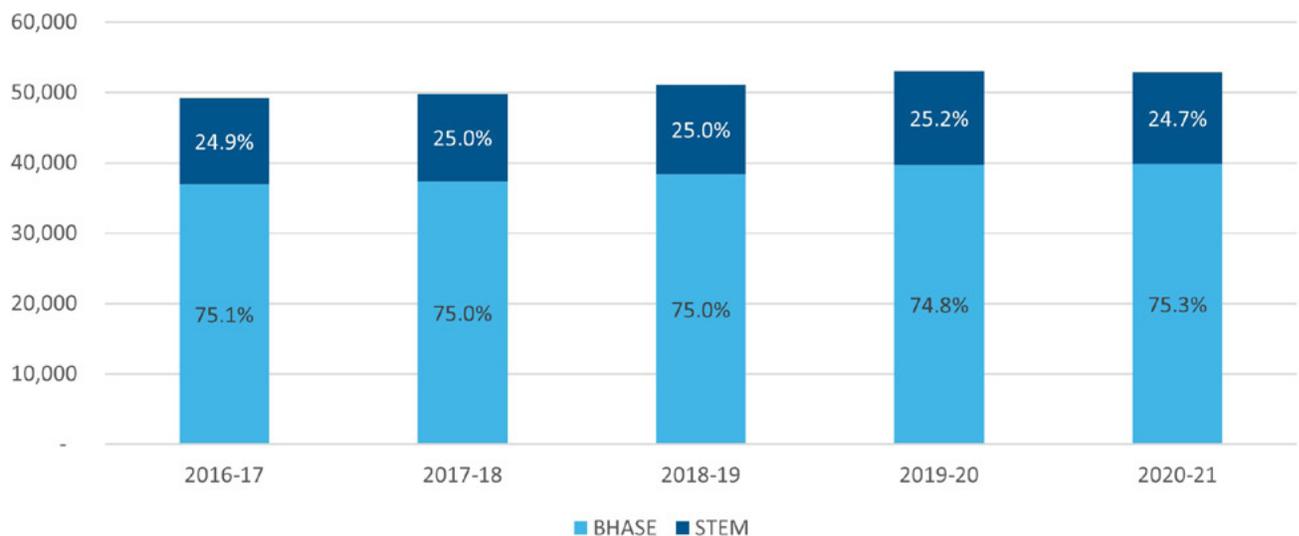
In terms of total students, the most significant increases have occurred in the areas of Business, Management and Public Administration, which has added 1,810 students since 2016-17; Mathematics, Computer and Information Sciences, which has increased by 1,210 students; and, Health and related fields, which has increased by 920 students in that time.

Figure 11
Total Annual Enrolments by Primary Grouping, 2016-17 to 2020-21



In 2020-21, over one-quarter of students were enrolled in programs in the STEM fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics and Computer Sciences, with the remainder enrolled in the BHASE fields of Business, Humanities, Health, Arts, Social Science, and Education. The composition of total enrolments in Saskatchewan by STEM and BHASE fields has remained virtually unchanged between 2016-17 and 2020-21.

Figure 12
Enrolments by STEM and BHASE fields, 2016-17 to 2020-21

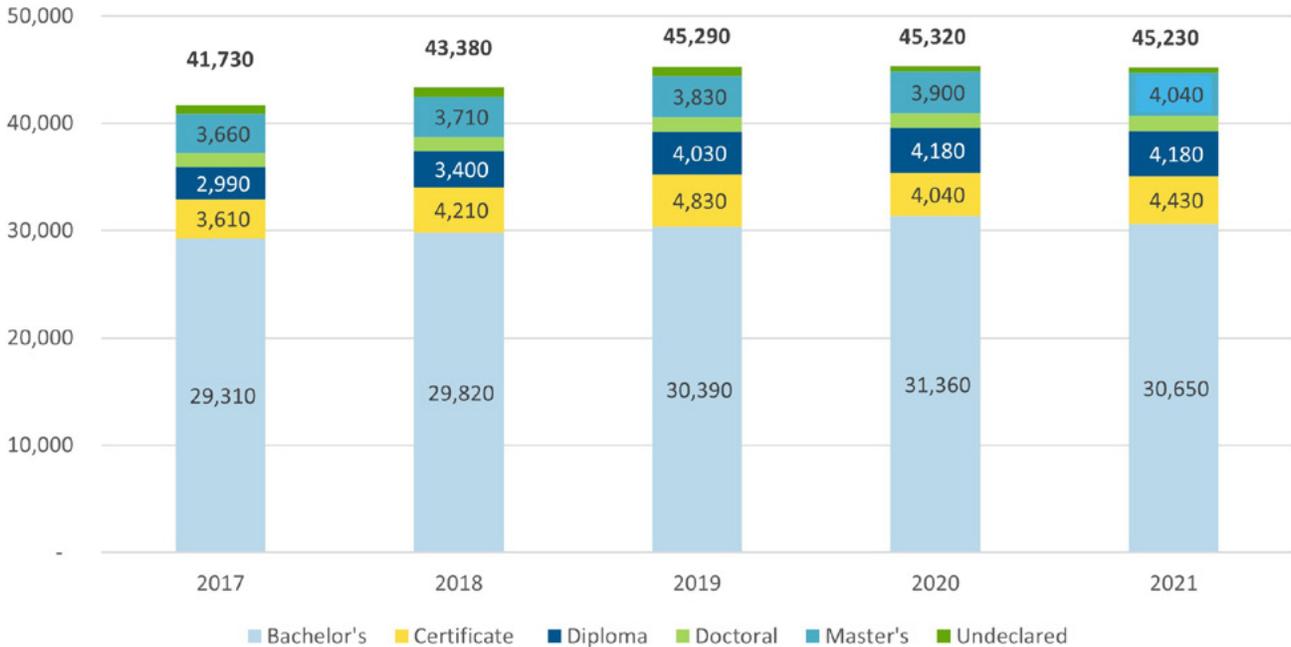


Fall 2020 Enrolments

Reports by the Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Indicators Project focus primarily on annual enrolment, which accounts for all students in credentialed post-secondary education in an academic year, the most recent being 2020-21. The project also collects enrolment data for each Fall semester, which provides an early indicator of enrolment trends at the beginning of the current academic year.

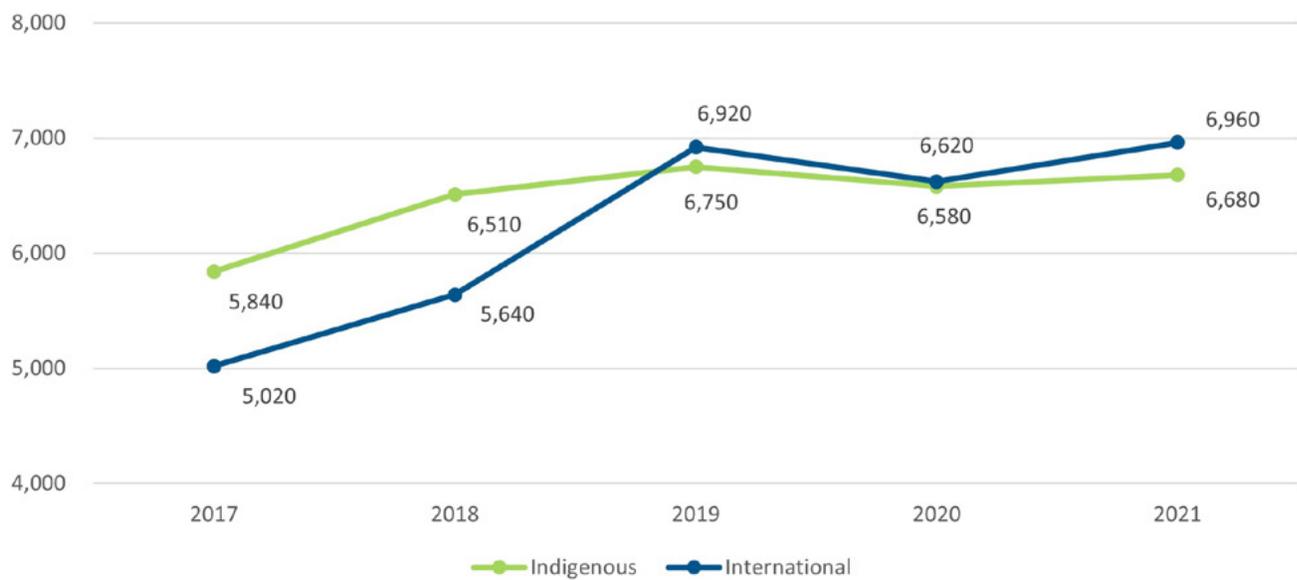
In Fall 2021, there were 45,230 students enrolled in credentialed programming at Saskatchewan’s public post-secondary institutions, down just slightly (by 90 students) from Fall 2020 and eight per cent higher than in 2017. Despite the small overall decline between Fall 2020 and 2021, enrolments have increased at all levels of study except for Bachelor’s Degree programs which decreased by two per cent, and Diploma programs which remained the same.

Figure 13
Fall Semester Enrolments by Credential Type, 2017-2021



Although overall Fall enrolments are down slightly, the numbers for both Indigenous and International students have increased, by two and five per cent respectively since Fall 2020. This suggests that enrolments for both of these student groups may rebound in next years’ annual enrolment numbers.

Figure 14
Fall Semester Enrolments by Student Group, 2017-2021



The Ministry of Advanced Education and post-secondary institutions will continue to closely monitor enrolment trends for the duration of the COVID-19 health crisis. The next Indicators Project report will focus on credentials awarded (Degrees, Diplomas, Certificates) and will be released in Spring 2022.

Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education Indicators Project - Annual Enrolment Data

| | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 |
|------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Total Annual Enrolment | 50,160 | 51,080 | 52,100 | 53,820 | 53,410 |
| Bachelor's Degree | 31,430 | 32,120 | 32,770 | 33,530 | 34,290 |
| Certificate | 7,560 | 7,560 | 7,250 | 7,570 | 6,780 |
| Diploma | 3,540 | 3,550 | 3,820 | 4,500 | 4,740 |
| Doctoral Degree | 1,480 | 1,500 | 1,550 | 1,550 | 1,580 |
| Master's Degree | 4,550 | 4,630 | 4,690 | 4,730 | 4,850 |
| Undeclared | 1,600 | 1,720 | 2,010 | 1,950 | 1,170 |
| Full-time | 40,000 | 41,210 | 42,520 | 42,950 | 43,040 |
| Part-time | 10,170 | 9,870 | 9,560 | 10,890 | 10,370 |
| Female | 29,330 | 29,370 | 29,750 | 30,720 | 30,790 |
| Male | 20,480 | 21,310 | 21,860 | 22,550 | 22,050 |
| Indigenous | 7,800 | 8,220 | 8,360 | 8,440 | 8,080 |
| First Nations | 5,290 | 5,630 | 5,670 | 5,650 | 5,390 |
| Métis | 2,380 | 2,450 | 2,540 | 2,650 | 2,640 |
| International | 5,900 | 6,260 | 7,520 | 8,780 | 8,150 |
| Granted Accommodations | | | | 3,080 | 3,020 |
| STEM | 12,270 | 12,470 | 12,780 | 13,360 | 13,060 |
| BHASE | 36,940 | 37,380 | 38,350 | 39,690 | 39,840 |

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