



Carnegie Classification of Academic Institutions

The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education is widely used in higher education research to characterize and control for differences in academic institutions.

The 2010 classification update retains the structure adopted in 2005 and classified about 4,200 institutions. More than three-quarters of the institutions added in that update (77%) were from the private for-profit sector, 19% were from the private nonprofit sector, and 4% were from the public sector.

The Carnegie classification categorizes academic institutions primarily on the basis of highest degree conferred, level of degree production, and research activity.* In this report, several Carnegie categories have been aggregated for statistical purposes. The characteristics of those aggregated groups are as follows:

- *Doctorate-granting universities* include institutions that award at least 20 doctoral degrees per year. They include three subgroups based on level of research activity: very high research activity (97 institutions), high research activity (103 institutions), and doctoral/research universities (82 institutions). Because doctorate-granting institutions with very high research activity are central to S&E education and research, data on these institutions are reported separately.
- *Master's colleges and universities* include the 652 institutions that award at least 50 master's degrees and fewer than 20 doctoral degrees per year.
- *Baccalaureate colleges* include the 749 institutions at which baccalaureate degrees represent at least 10% of all undergraduate degrees and that award fewer than 50 master's degrees or 20 doctoral degrees per year.
- *Associate's colleges* include the 1,692 institutions at which all degrees awarded are associate's degrees or at which bachelor's degrees account for less than 10% of all undergraduate degrees.
- *Special-focus institutions* are the 744 institutions at which at least 75% of degrees are concentrated in a single field or a set of related fields (e.g., medical schools and medical centers, schools of engineering, schools of business and management).
- *Tribal colleges* are the 33 colleges and universities that are members of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium.

* Research activity is based on two indexes (aggregate level of research and per capita research activity) derived from a principal components analysis of data on research and development expenditures, S&E research staff, and field of doctoral degree. See <http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/> for more information on the classification system and on the methodology used in defining the categories.