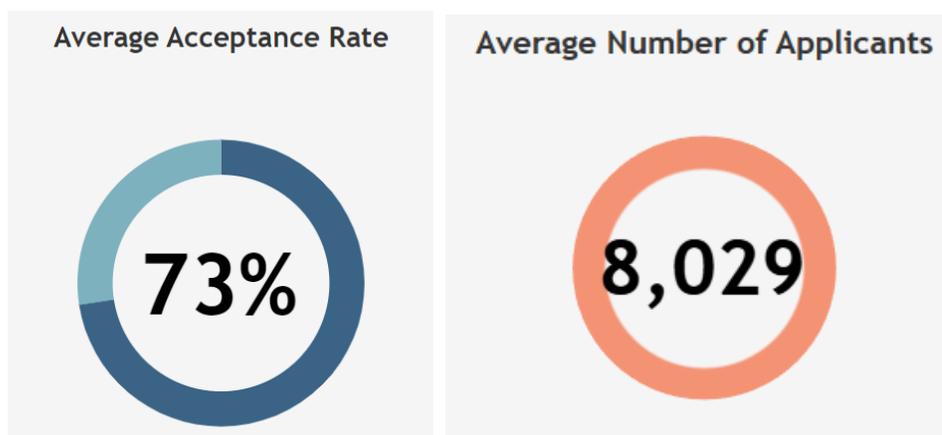


Selectivity: Trends in Acceptance Rates at Four-Year Colleges

FROM THE NACAC STATE OF COLLEGE ADMISSION

In fall 2022, four-year, not-for-profit colleges accepted 73 percent of applications from first-year students, on average. The average acceptance rate was higher for public colleges (78 percent) compared to private colleges (70 percent).



What is selectivity?

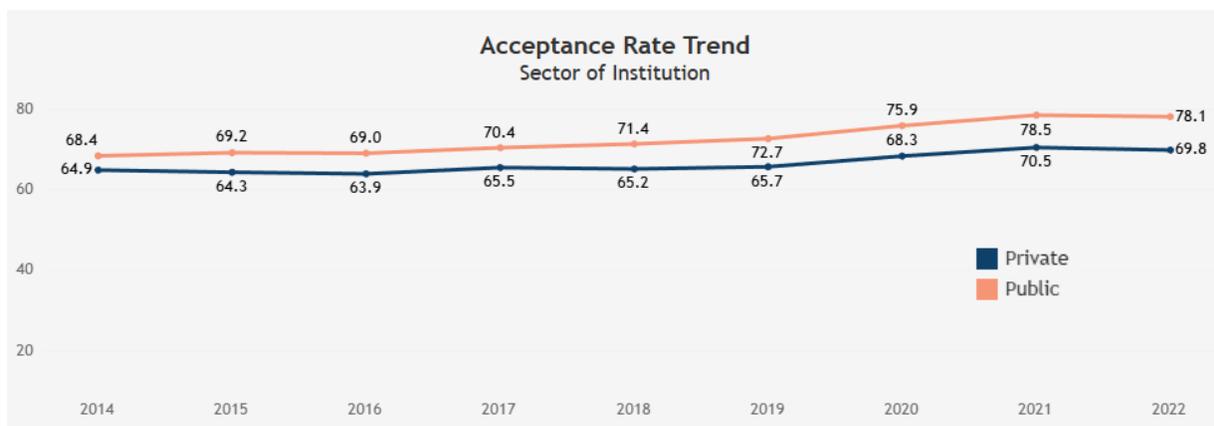
The term “selectivity” is another way to refer to a college or university’s acceptance rate—the percentage of applicants that are offered admission to the institution. A more selective institution is one with a lower acceptance rate. Acceptance rates vary from the single digits to near 100 percent, and institutions with very low acceptance rates represent only a small fraction of higher education institutions.

How does fall 2022 compare to recent years?

The fall 2022 average acceptance rate is only slightly lower than fall 2021 (72.6 percent compared to 73.1 percent). In fall 2020, the average acceptance rate was 70 percent, and in fall 2019, it was 68 percent.

How do public colleges compare to private colleges?

From 2014 to 2022, the average acceptance rate at public four-year colleges increased by 10 percentage points from 68 percent to 78 percent. In comparison, the average rate at private colleges has increased only 5 percentage points.



Key Data Points:

- Four-year college acceptance rate: 73%
- Public college acceptance rate: 78%
- Private college acceptance rate: 70%
- Average number of applications per institution: 8,029
- Average number of applications for public colleges: 14,263
- Average number of applications for private colleges: 4,972
- Number of colleges with an acceptance rate of 71 percent or higher: 1,013

SOURCE: US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2019 – 2022) Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Data Center. Washington, DC: NCES.

Note: The group of colleges used for this analysis includes those that met the following criteria for the IPEDS data collection year—four-year public or four-year private not-for-profit; degree-granting; Title-IV participating and military academies; enrolled first-time freshman; not open admission.