

SEVIS BY THE NUMBERS

BIANNUAL REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL STUDENT TRENDS

June 2017

Executive Summary

Background

The [Student and Exchange Visitor Program \(SEVP\)](#) is part of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). SEVP manages the [Student and Exchange Visitor Information System \(SEVIS\)](#), the web-based system DHS uses to maintain and manage information on nonimmigrants whose primary purpose for coming to the United States is to study.

A nonimmigrant is any foreign national who temporarily visits the United States to fulfill a specific purpose (e.g., tourism, business, study). SEVIS tracks information about nonimmigrants in the following categories:

- **F-1 STUDENTS**

Nonimmigrants whose primary purpose is to complete an academic course of study at an SEVP-certified school or program.

- **M-1 STUDENTS**

Nonimmigrants whose primary purpose is to complete a vocational course of study at an SEVP-certified school or program.

- **J-1 EXCHANGE VISITORS**

Nonimmigrants selected to participate in a U.S. Department of State-designated exchange visitor program.

SEVP oversees F and M students and their dependents, as well as the schools that enroll them, for compliance with U.S. laws and regulations governing international students studying in the United States. The Department of State manages the J-1 exchange visitor program. Both SEVP and the Department of State use SEVIS to store critical information that allows DHS to protect national security while supporting the legal entry of international students and exchange visitors.

SEVIS by the Numbers

SEVIS by the Numbers is a biannual report that highlights key SEVIS data to illustrate trends, values and information on international students studying in the United States. The report includes the following sections:

- **STUDENTS**
Shares data on international students who come to the United States to study.
- **SCHOOLS**
Shares data on SEVP-certified schools that enroll international students in the United States.
- **STATES AND TERRITORIES**
Shares data about international student demographics within individual U.S. states.

Trends

The June 2017 SEVIS by the Numbers report uses real-time SEVIS data from May 5, 2017, and compares data from May 2016 to May 2017.

During this reporting period, the total number of SEVIS records for active F and M students, J exchange visitors and their dependents combined increased by 1.3 percent, from 1,516,302 in May 2016 to 1,536,290 in May 2017. In addition, as of May 5, 2017, there are:



1,184,735

ACTIVE F & M STUDENTS
studying in the United States



8,774

SEVP-CERTIFIED SCHOOLS
that enroll international students



194,635

J-1 EXCHANGE VISITORS
in the United States



76%

OF SEVP-CERTIFIED SCHOOLS
that enroll 50 or less F & M students

Students

Overview

Over the course of the reporting year, the number of F and M international students increased by 2 percent, growing from 1.16 million in May 2016 to 1.18 million in May 2017. The number of J-1 exchange visitors decreased by 1.3 percent, from 197,152 visitors in May 2016 to 194,635 visitors in May 2017.

Who studies in the United States?

Most F and M students come to the United States to take part in the higher education system. Seventy-six percent of all F and M students enroll in bachelor's, master's or doctoral programs certified by SEVP.

And while both male and female students come to the United States to advance their education, male students are in the majority (57 percent).

South America is the only continent that sent an equal number of male and female students. North America and Europe sent slightly more males than females (51 percent vs. 49 percent, and 52 percent vs. 48 percent, respectively). Australia and the Pacific Islands have a larger gap (57 percent vs. 43 percent), but it is Africa and Asia that have the largest male to female ratio imbalance (58 percent vs. 42 percent).

PLEASE NOTE: Continent information within this report was compiled using the [United Nation's composition of macro geographical \(continental\) regions, geographical subregions and selected economic and other groupings](#).



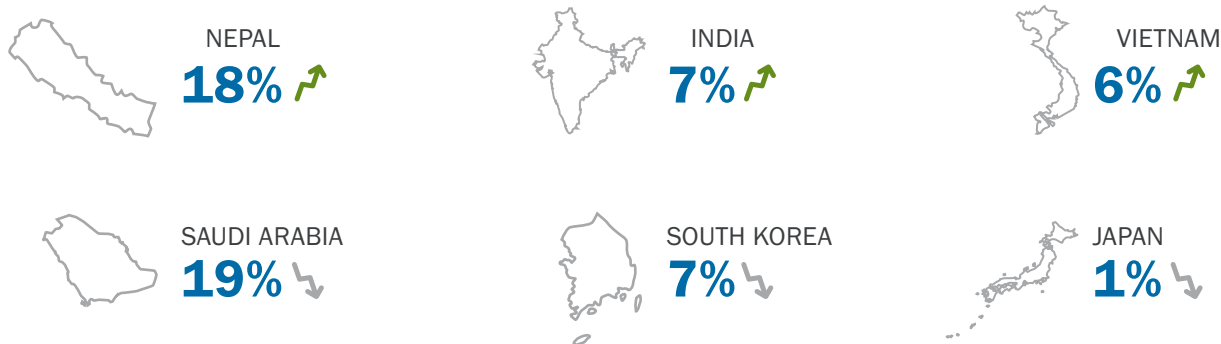
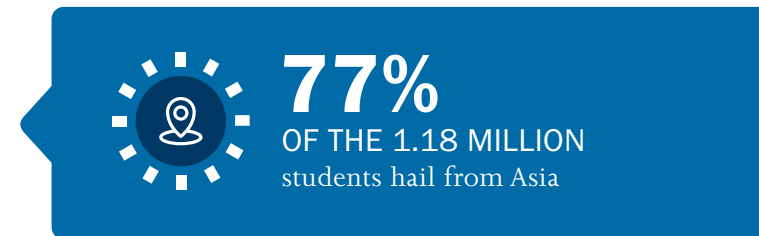
FIGURE 1 — Above are the percentage breakdowns of international students enrolled in the U.S. higher education system.

Where do international students come from?

Aside from Antarctica, F and M students come from every continent in the world, with more than 231 countries and territories represented in the U.S. academic community. Although Asia sent the largest number of international students (915,612), South America saw the largest percentage growth of international students coming to the United States in the reporting year. Figure 2 on the following page illustrates the growth/decline rate of each continent from May 2016 to May 2017.

Because an overwhelming majority of international students hail from Asia, this report takes a closer look at trends from that region. For comparison, Asia sent 915,612 F and M students combined while Europe, the second most popular continent of origin, sent only 84,151 F and M students. For more information about where international students in the United States come from, please visit [Mapping SEVIS by the Numbers - Continent View](#).

Although China and India sent the largest number of students to the United States (362,368 students and 206,698 students, respectively), Nepal saw the largest growth of students coming to the United States to study while Saudi Arabia saw the steepest decline among the top 10 Asian countries. Additionally, the icons below illustrate the Asian countries that saw notable growth and decline during the reporting period. It is worth noting that, despite declines in the last year, South Korea and Saudi Arabia still rank third and fourth among Asian countries sending F and M students to study in the United States (71,204 students and 55,806 students, respectively).



Above are the notable growth/decline rates for select Asian countries over the course of the reporting period (May 2016 to May 2017). To explore more year-over-year comparisons from all over the world, please visit the [Mapping SEVIS by the Numbers - Continent View on Study in the States](#).

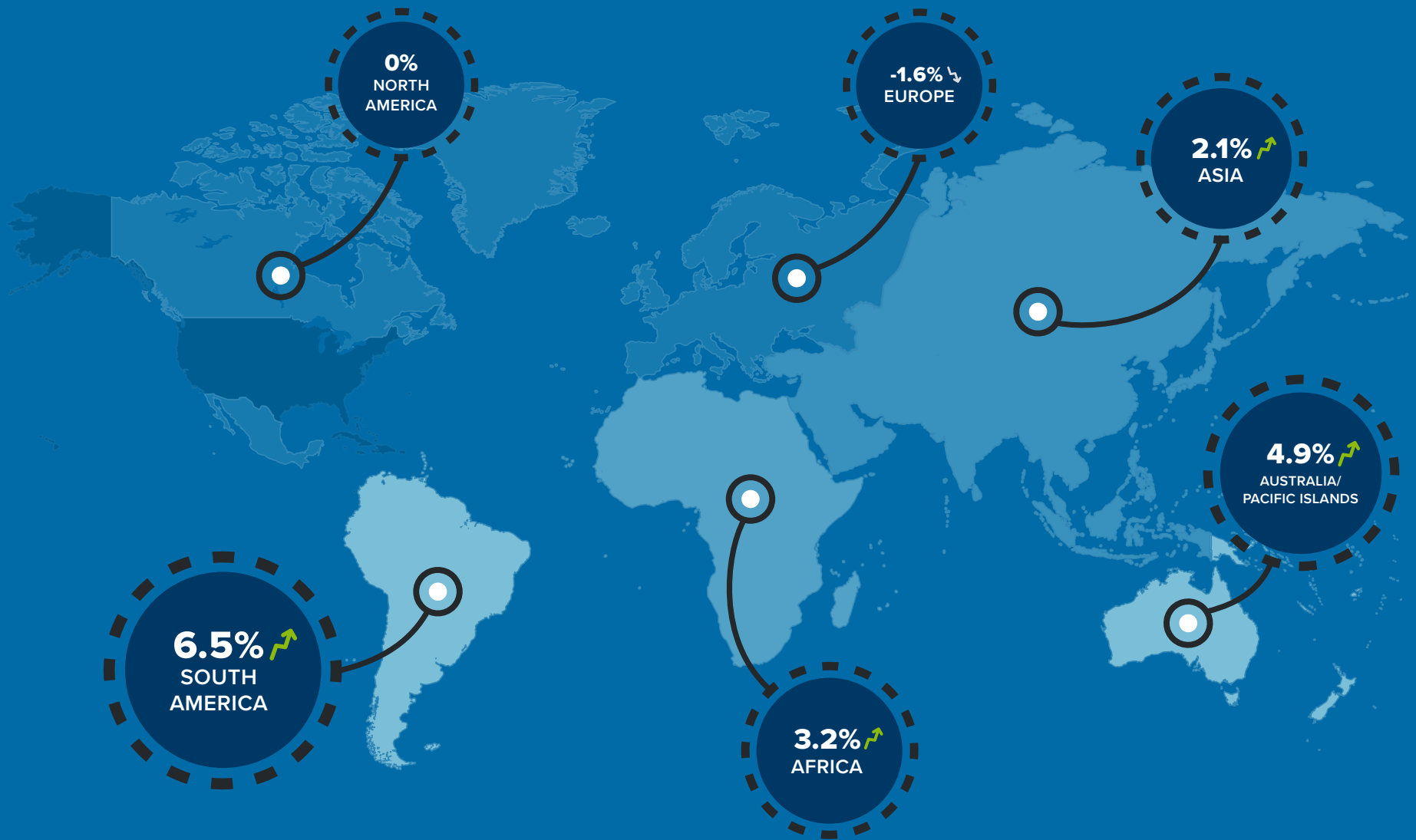
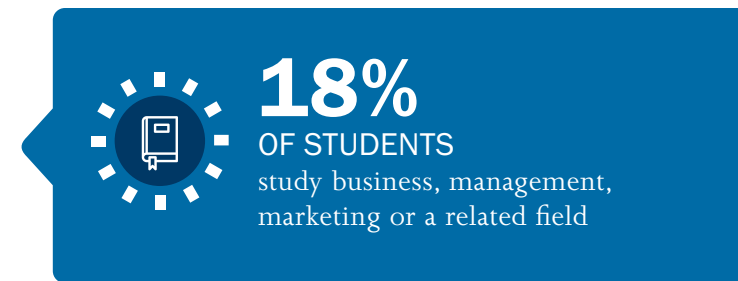


FIGURE 2 — Above are the growth/decline rates for each continent over the course of the reporting period (May 2016 to May 2017). To explore exact figures of the entire student populations from these regions, including specific countries, please visit the [Mapping SEVIS by the Numbers - Continent View on Study in the States](#).

What do international students study?

More F and M students study business (including management, marketing and related support services) than any other field. Other popular fields include engineering, computer science, remedial education and liberal arts.

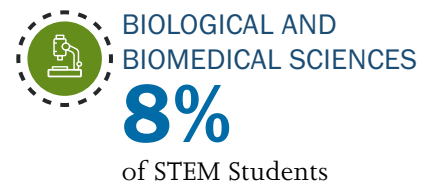
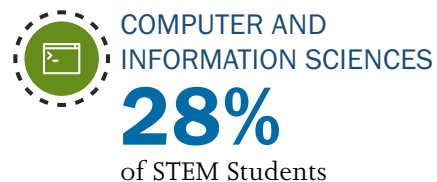
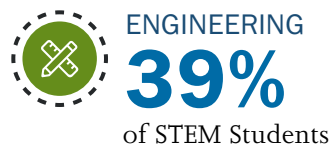
Although fields related to business are the most popular major, 43 percent of international students come to the United States to enroll in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) programs of study. DHS classifies STEM programs according to the [Classification of Instructional Programs codes](#) developed by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics.



Why STEM?

U.S. colleges and universities offer some of the best STEM programs in the world. Graduates of STEM programs are important to innovation and job creation in the United States. F and M students can enroll in a STEM program at any education level, and enrollment in U.S. STEM programs continues to grow.

Between May 2016 and May 2017, there was an 8 percent increase in the number of F and M students enrolled in STEM programs (from 474,442 to 513, 611). The icons below include the most popular STEM degrees and the percentage of STEM students enrolled in these programs.



STEM studies are particularly popular among students from Asia. In fact, 49 percent of Asian students in the United States are earning a STEM degree. India sent the largest number of STEM students and has the largest proportional STEM student population – 84 percent of Indian students in the United States study STEM.

Figure 3 illustrates the Asian countries that sent the largest number of STEM students. STEM students from these four countries make up 31 percent of the entire F and M student population and about 71 percent of the entire international STEM student population.

For a comprehensive look at where international students hail from, the demographic breakdown of students from specific areas of the globe, and the education levels international students seek, visit the [Mapping SEVIS by the Numbers tool on Study in the States](#).

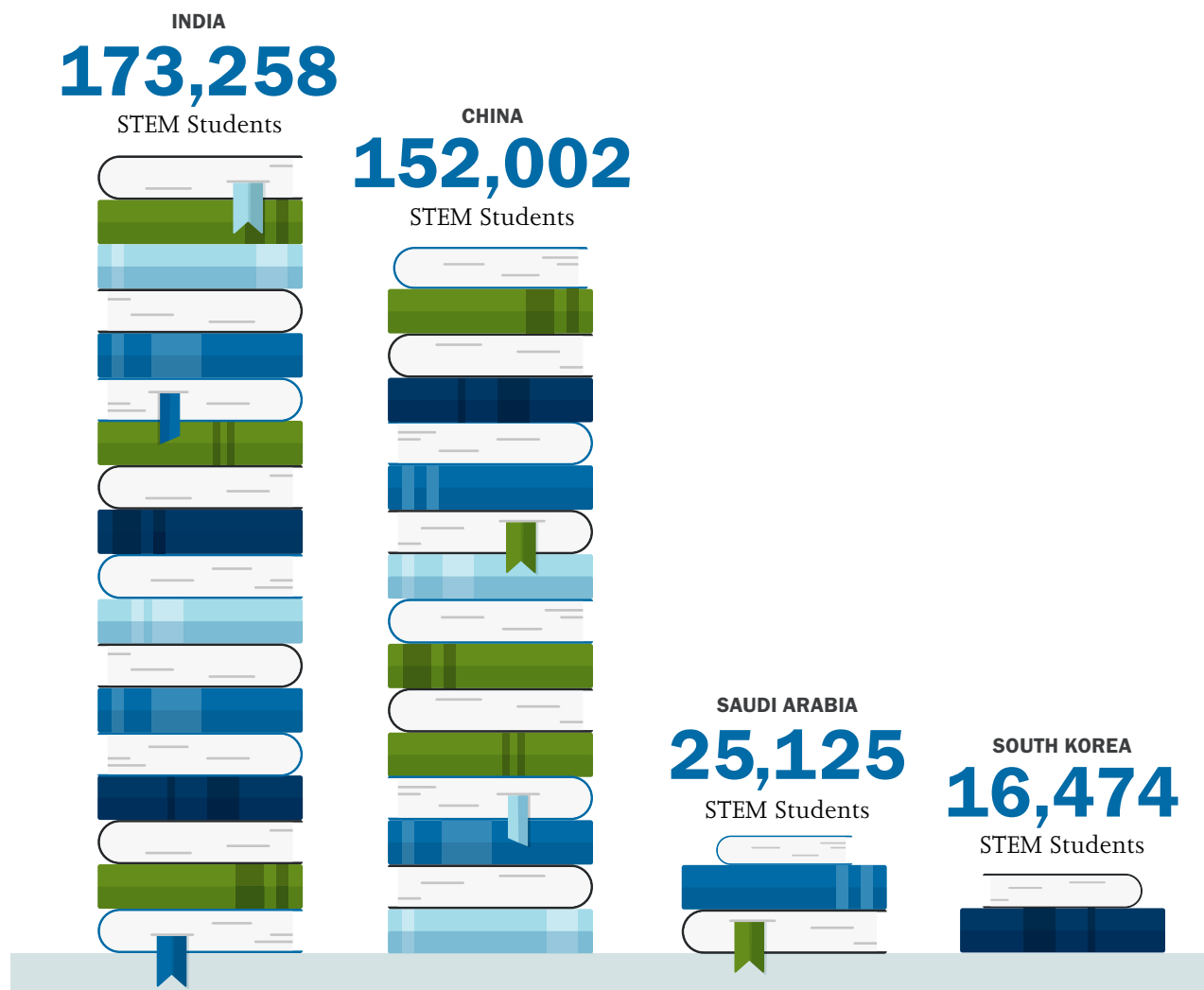


FIGURE 3 — Above is the breakdown of the 366,859 STEM students from the four Asian countries that sent the largest number of STEM students.

Schools

Overview

F and M students must attend schools that are SEVP-certified, and U.S. schools can apply for SEVP-certification to enroll F-1 students, M-1 students and both F-1 and M-1 students.

As of May 5, 2017, there are 8,744 SEVP-certified schools in the United States. Eighty-six percent of SEVP-certified schools can enroll only F-1 students, 5 percent can enroll only M-1 students and 9 percent can enroll both F and M students. For a comprehensive list of all the SEVP-certified schools in the United States, please visit the [School Search tool](#) on Study in the States.

How many students do most SEVP-certified schools enroll?

Although big universities typically host the largest numbers of international students, most SEVP-certified schools host fewer than 50 students. In fact, fewer than 1 percent of SEVP-certified schools host more than 5,000 international students while about 20 percent of SEVP-certified schools do not enroll a single F or M student.

More specifically, only 34 SEVP-certified schools host more than 5,000 students while 2,786 SEVP-certified schools host between one and 10 students. Figure 4 illustrates the breakdown of the number of schools by active student enrollment.

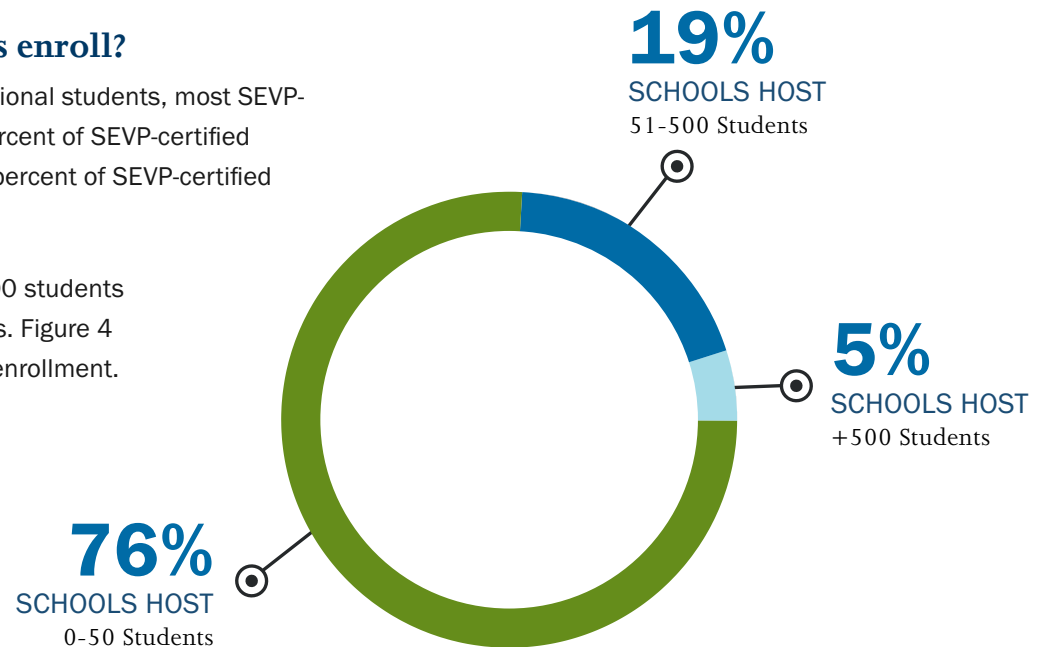


FIGURE 4 — Above is the breakdown of the number of schools by active student enrollment.

What schools host the largest international student population?

The schools that host the largest number of international students are big universities that have SEVP certification to enroll only F-1 students. In fact, just 10 U.S. universities certified to enroll only F-1 students host 10 percent of the entire international student population. Please refer to Figure 5 on the following page for a complete breakdown of these universities and the number of F-1 students they enroll.

Nine percent of schools certified by SEVP can enroll both F-1 and M-1 students. These schools tend to have smaller student populations than their F-1-only counterparts. The top three schools in this category include: Cornell University (5,716 students), the Houston Community College System (4,768 students) and Santa Monica College (3,554 students). No U.S. school that is SEVP-certified to enroll only M-1 students hosts more than 1,000 international students.

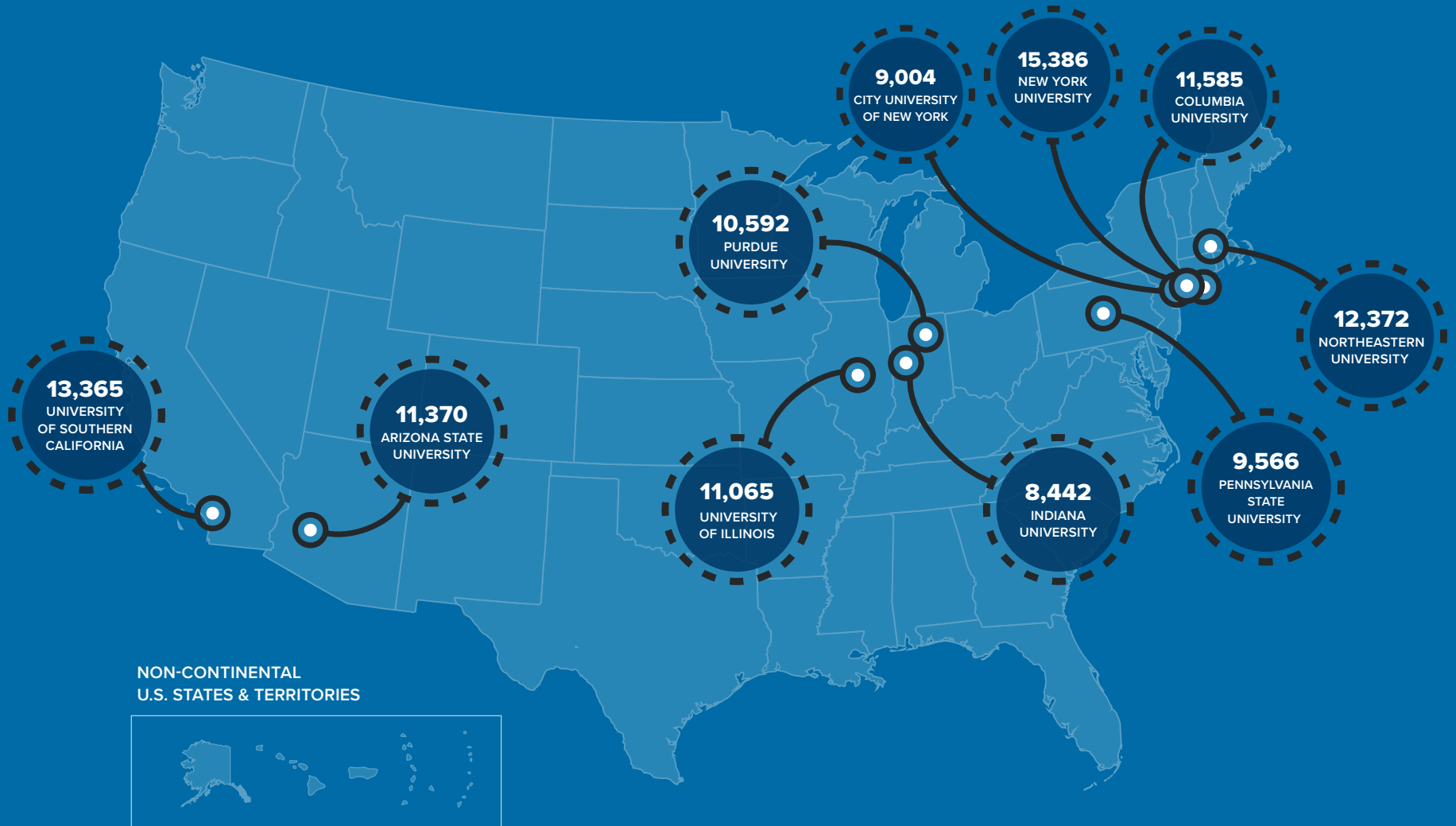


FIGURE 5 — The above 10 schools are certified to enroll only F-1 students and host 10 percent of the entire international student population.

Where are most SEVP-certified schools located?

Though there are SEVP-certified schools throughout the United States and its territories, about 33 percent of the SEVP-certified programs are in one of the four states highlighted below.

In the following section, the report will dive deeper into the trends and statistics coming out of specific regions of the United States.

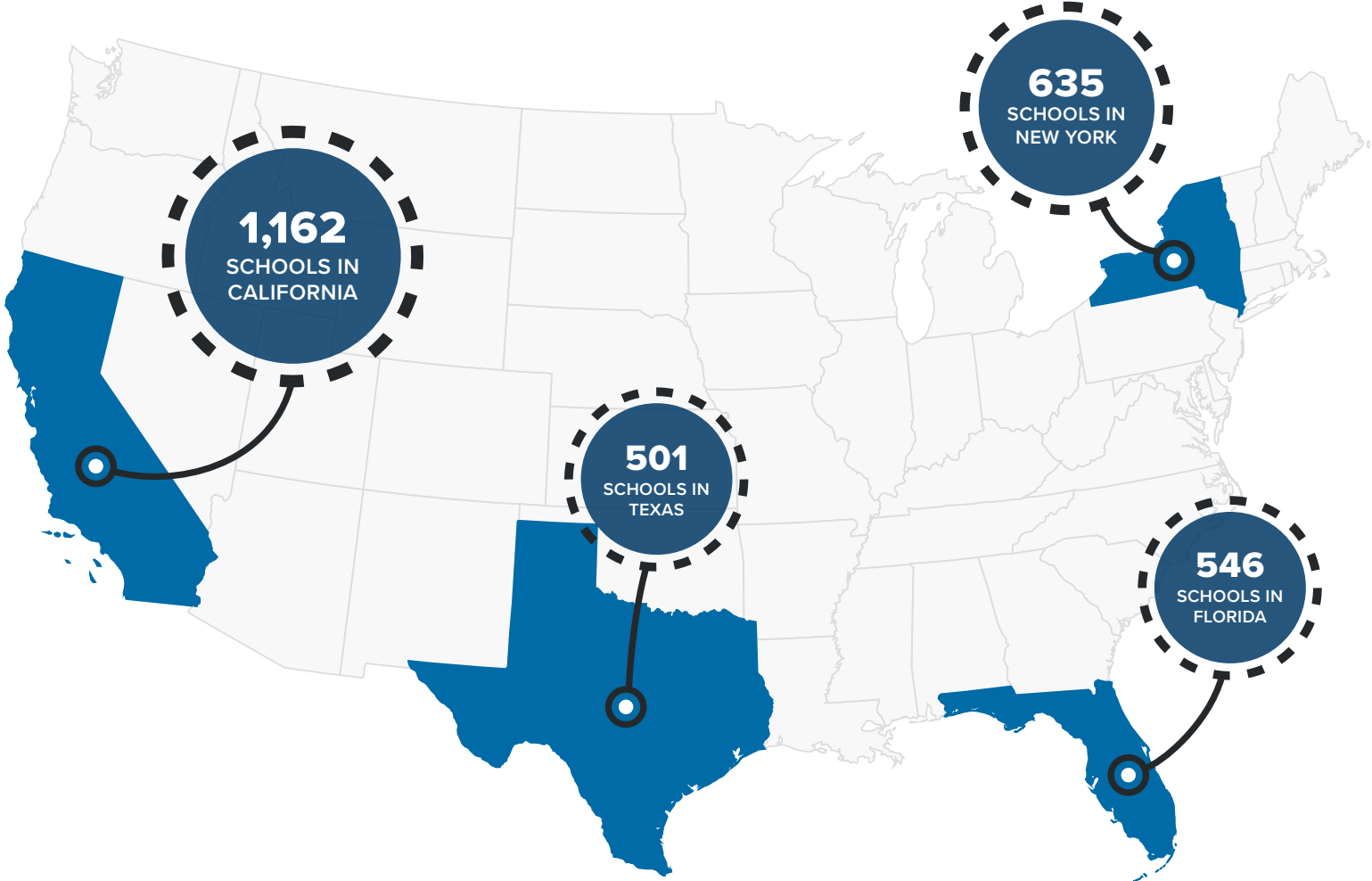


FIGURE 6 — California, New York, Florida and Texas are the four states that have the largest number of SEVP-certified schools.

States and Territories

Overview

F and M students are enrolled at schools in each state and all but one territory (American Samoa). However, 99 percent of international students study within the continental United States, with California, New York and Texas hosting the largest number of students. In fact, 35 percent of the entire student population studies in one of those three states.

Where in the United States do international students study?

The distribution of international students throughout the continental United States is relatively even throughout the four major regions (Northeast, South, Midwest and West). Figure 8 on the following page illustrates this breakdown of where in the United States international students study.

From May 2016 to May 2017, the continental United States saw a slight increase in F and M students (2 percent). However, non-continental U.S. states and territories saw an average 7 percent decline in the number of international students studying in those regions.

PLEASE NOTE: Regional groupings based on [U.S. Census regions](#) except for Hawaii and Alaska, which are grouped in the non-continental U.S. States & Territories category for the purpose of this report.

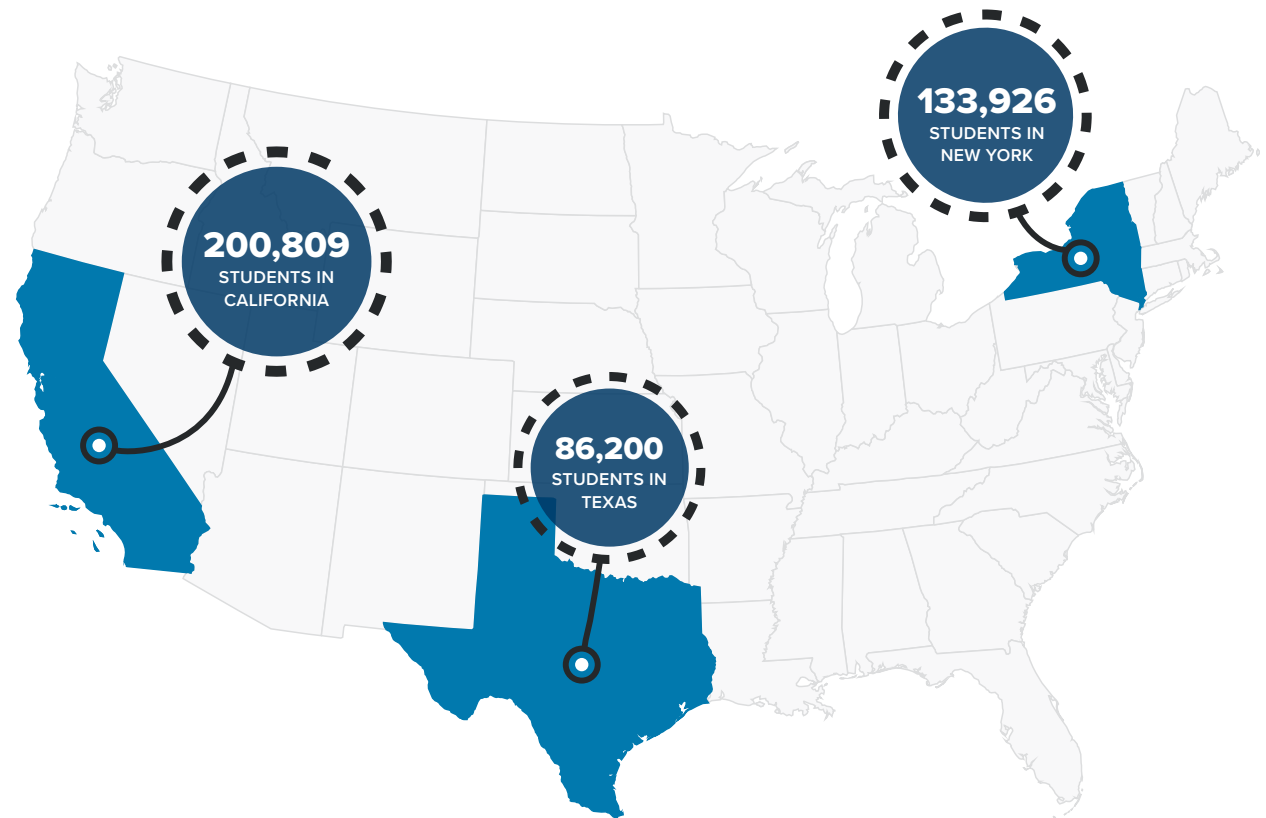


FIGURE 7 – California, New York and Texas have the largest international student populations.

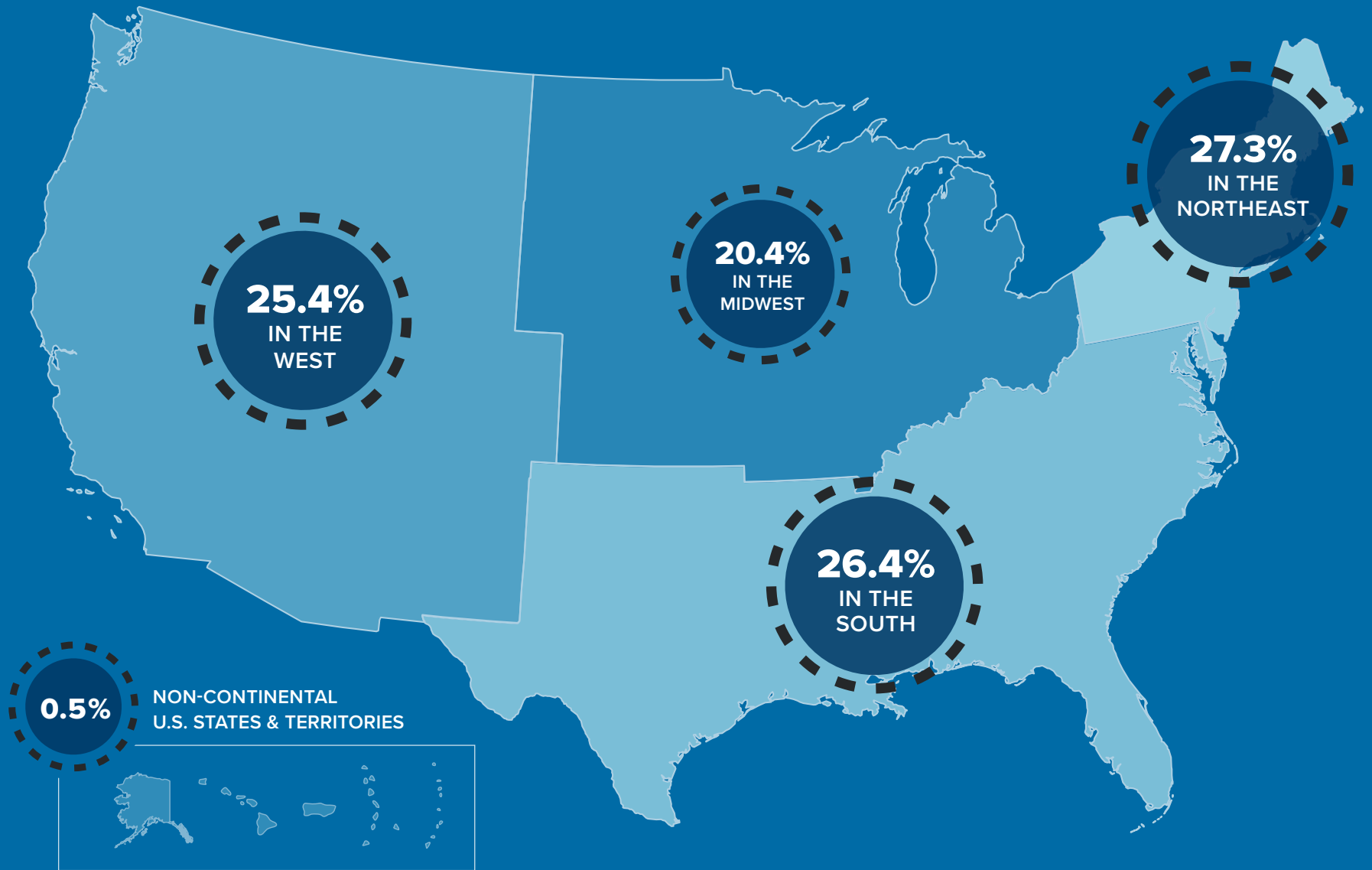


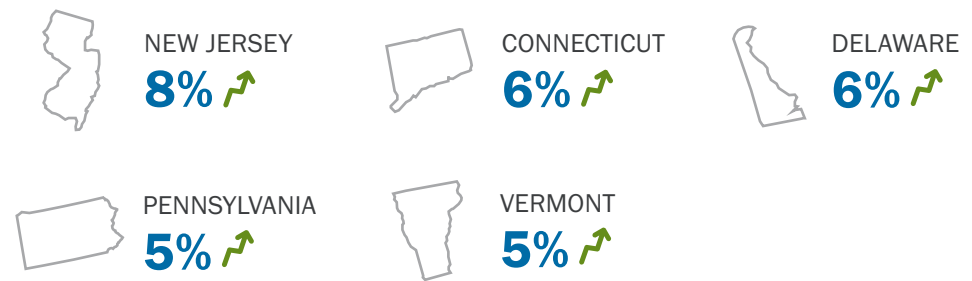
FIGURE 8 — Above is the percentage of the international student population studying in each U.S. region.

What are the trends coming out of the Northeast?

During the reporting period, the Northeast region saw a 4 percent increase in its international student population. Rhode Island was the only state in the region to experience a dip in the number of international students compared to the previous year, while New York and Massachusetts added the largest number of international students during that same period (+4,490 students and +2,770 students, respectively).

In New Jersey, there was also a 10 percent increase (+513 students) in the number of international students earning bachelor's degrees.

THE NORTHEASTERN STATES THAT EXPERIENCED THE LARGEST PROPORTIONAL GROWTH in the last year are shown below

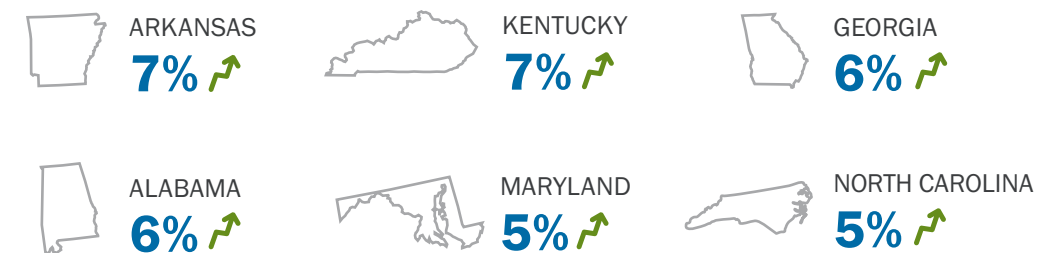


What are the trends coming out of the South?

States in the Southern region of the United States saw an increase of 3 percent. Louisiana, Tennessee and Oklahoma all saw decreases in the number of international students studying there. Florida, Georgia and Texas all saw significant increases in the numbers of international students studying in those states (+2,103 students, +1,412 students and +2,364 students, respectively).

Arkansas, Kentucky and Maryland all saw major growth in international students taking part in their higher education system. Maryland saw a 10 percent increase (+389 students) in the number of students earning a bachelor's degree. However, the region saw the largest growth at the graduate degree level. Specifically, international students earning their master's degrees increased by 25 percent in Arkansas and 35 percent in Kentucky (+523 students and +882 students, respectively).

THE SOUTHERN STATES THAT EXPERIENCED THE LARGEST PROPORTIONAL GROWTH in the last year are shown below



What are the trends coming out of the Midwest?

The Midwest region saw an average growth rate of only 1 percent. Illinois saw the largest increase in the number of international students studying in the state (+1,331 students), while Nebraska experienced the largest proportional growth (+7 percent, from 5,986 students to 6,391 students). Missouri experienced the largest decrease in international students, both in terms of student numbers (-763 students) and proportional decline (-3 percent).

What are the trends coming out of the West?

Interestingly, the international student population in the Western region remained stable when compared to the previous year. California, the most popular state for international student enrollment, saw no significant changes other than an 8 percent increase in the number of students earning bachelor's degrees. Idaho saw a 14 percent drop in the total number of international students studying (from 4,363 students to 2,752 students), with a 16 percent decrease in the number of students earning a bachelor's degree (from 3,429 students to 2,879 students). Meanwhile, Nevada saw the largest proportional growth (+5 percent, from 2,952 students to 3,093 students).



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

Find more information about this report on [ICE.gov](https://ice.dhs.gov) and explore international student data using the [Mapping SEVIS by the Numbers](#) tool on [Study in the States](#).