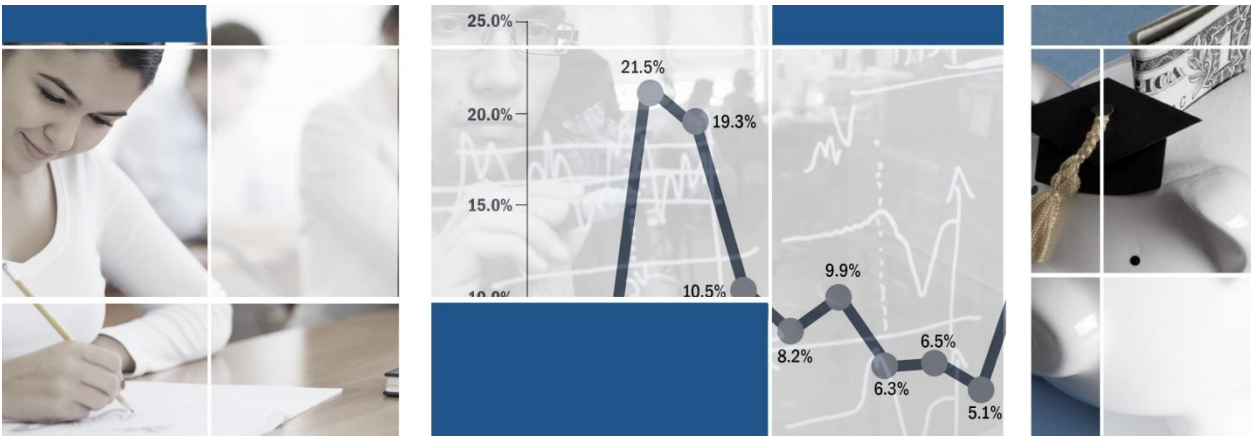


November 2, 2018



2017-18 Degree Completions and Other Awards

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SUMMARY

One of the most important responsibilities of higher education is to ensure that students complete a degree in a field that is relevant to their lives and their communities. This report provides a summary of awards in 2017-18. It also tracks the Commonwealth's progress towards state goals.

In 2017-18, Virginia public and private nonprofit institutions awarded a total of 119,980 degrees and certificates, compared to 118,927 in the previous year, representing the largest increase ever (0.9%) (Table 1).

Table 1
Degree Awards, 2017-18

Degree	Public Two-years	Public Four-years	Private Four-years	Total
Certificates	14,546	112	389	15,047
Associate	18,200	42	1,293	19,535
Bachelor	0	37,916	17,031	54,947
First Professional	0	1,344	1,769	3,113
Master	0	11,448	10,398	21,846
Doctor	0	1,883	1,120	3,003
Post-grad Certificates	0	1,572	917	2,489
Total Degrees	18,200	52,633	31,611	102,444
Total Awards	32,746	54,317	32,917	119,980

(See Appendix A for data on institutions' average time-to-degree, average attempted credits, and top majors in 2017-18.)

Virginia's public and private nonprofit colleges and universities awarded 54,947 bachelor's degrees in 2017-18, the largest number ever. This is 408 more (0.7%) than in 2016-17 (54,539), and 486 more (0.9%) than in 2015-16 (54,461).

- Virginia public four-year universities conferred 37,916 bachelor's degrees, 103 fewer than the previous year.
- Private nonprofit institutions conferred 17,031, 511 more than the previous year and the most ever.

Virginia's community colleges and Richard Bland College conferred 18,200 associate degrees in 2017-18. That compares to 18,419 last year and 18,956 in 2015-16.

The top three degree programs at public institutions – psychology, biology and business administration – remain unchanged from previous years.

- Over the last five years, the following programs have seen the greatest increase in graduates: liberal arts and sciences, computer and information services, mechanical engineering and nursing.
- The largest decreases are found in history, English language and literature, psychology and international relations.

Degrees in STEM-H fields (science, technology, engineering, math and health professions) continued to grow. Public institutions awarded 24,655 STEM-H degrees, or 34.8% of all degrees – the highest number and percentage ever. Private nonprofit colleges and universities also met new highs for STEM-H degrees – 7,880, or 24.9% of all degrees.

Data science degrees – a subset of STEM-H – have grown from 4,961 to 7,122 over the last five years, marking an increase in employment demand for graduates with these credentials.

The recently introduced New Economy Workforce Credential Grant program added yet more credentials of value to the count. In the second year of its existence, 3,362 students enrolled in state-supported programs, with 3,156 students completing workforce programs and 2,419 of those students have earned the desired credential thus far. These noncredit credential programs are specifically targeted to existing workforce needs thus have specific value to the Commonwealth’s goals.

The Top Jobs Act (TJ21) calls for the awarding, by 2025, of an additional 100,000 degrees to in-state undergraduates at public institutions and a “comparable increase” in degree awards at private nonprofit institutions. These awards represent an important intermediate step of The Virginia Plan for Higher Education’s target of 1.5 million degrees and workforce credentials between 2014 and 2030.

The Commonwealth will need to begin increasing degree awards at public institutions to meet TJ21’s degree-award goals. If there is no further growth in awards at public institutions between now and 2025, the state will fall short of the goal by approximately 20,000 associate and bachelor’s degrees. Since 2010-11, 37,280 in-state undergraduate students have received a degree at public institutions. In the last two years, the number of degrees awarded has decreased by 1.1% and 0.7%, respectively. Degree awards will need to increase 1.2% annually to meet the 2025 goal. Originally, public institutions

needed to maintain average increase of 960 degrees to in-state undergraduates to meet the target. Two years of modest declines have offset the early gains made.

The decline in the number of associate and bachelor's degrees over the last two years is a matter to monitor. This year's degree report suggests that Virginia needs to continue its vigilance on both access and completion to meet The Virginia Plan goal of being the best-educated state in the nation by 2030.

IN-STATE UNDERGRADUATES

The information below details degree completions and other awards in 2017-18, with particular focus on in-state undergraduates at public and private nonprofit institutions.

Presented are summaries of degree- and certificate-award totals in the public and private sectors, comparisons of 2017-18 in-state undergraduate degree awards to past years and to current estimates, and analyses of progress toward the degree goals of the Top Jobs Act (TJ21), which is a step toward becoming the best-educated state in the nation by 2030.

Data on individual institutions are shown in the appendices. These data, as well as those on completions of non-degree credentials, are accessible on the Research section of the SCHEV website (<http://research.schev.edu/apps/info/Reports.Guide-to-the-Degrees-Awarded-Reports.ashx>).

All Degree Awards at Public Institutions

In 2017-18, in-state students completed 48,885 undergraduate degrees (associate and bachelor) at public institutions. This total is 336 (-0.7%) below the count for the prior year (49,191) (Table 2). It is below the amount estimated (50,145) for 2017. The two-year colleges were 1,119 associate degrees below estimates, and the four-year institutions were 163 bachelor's degrees and eight associate degrees below estimates.

Table 2
Degree Completions by In-State Undergraduates at Public Institutions

Academic Year	Associate	Bachelor	Total	Estimate
2010-11	15,606	27,219	42,825	
2011-12	17,534	28,870	46,404	
2012-13	18,135	29,366	47,501	
2013-14	17,835	29,548	47,383	
2014-15	17,918	30,077	47,995	47,026
2015-16	18,585*	31,141*	49,726*	47,100
2016-17	18,063	31,128	49,191	49,407
2017-18	17,829	31,026	48,855	50,145

*Denotes an all-time high.

Associate-Degree Completions at Public Institutions

In 2017-18, in-state students completed 17,829 associate degrees at public institutions – 17,787 at two-year institutions and 42 at four-year institutions. The total is 234 (-1.3%) lower than the prior year's count (18,063).

Below are the five community colleges with the highest net decreases in associate degrees awarded to in-state students:

Table 3
Community Colleges with Highest Net Decreases in Associate Degrees to In-State Students, 2016-17 to 2017-18

Community College	Net Decrease	Percentage
Tidewater Community College	-156	-5.7%
Southside Virginia Community College	-101	-16.9%
Lord Fairfax Community College	-95	-12.9%
J Sargeant Reynolds Community College	-63	-6.5%
Danville Community College	-38	-15.7%

Below are the five community colleges with the highest net increases in associate degrees awarded to in-state students:

Table 4
Community Colleges with Highest Net Increases in Associate Degrees to In-State Students, 2016-17 to 2017-18

Community College	Net Increase	Percentage
Patrick Henry Community College	168	62.2%
Thomas Nelson Community College	48	5.7%
John Tyler Community College	34	3.9%
Virginia Highlands Community College	29	14.3%
Wytheville Community College	26	8.3%

(See Appendix B for data on in-state undergraduate completions and degree estimates for all bachelor-awarding public institutions.)

Bachelor-Degree Completions at Public Institutions

In 2017-18, in-state students completed 31,026 baccalaureate degrees at public institutions (Table 2). This total is 102 (-0.3%) lower than the 2016-17 count (31,128). The all-time high was 2015-16 (31,141) (Table 2).

Below are the five public four-year institutions with the highest net decreases in bachelor's degrees awarded to in-state students:

Table 5
Public Institutions with Highest Net Decreases in Bachelor's Degrees to In-State Students, 2016-17 to 2017-18

Public Four-Year Institutions	Net Decrease	Percentage
Norfolk State University	-163	-20.5%
Virginia Commonwealth University	-163	-3.4%
Old Dominion University	-89	-2.5%
College of William and Mary	-65	-5.9%
University of Mary Washington	-65	-7.2%

Below are the four public four-year institutions with net increases in bachelor's degrees awarded to in-state students (all other public four-years had net decreases):

Table 6
Public Institutions with Highest Net Increases in Bachelor's Degrees to In-State Students, 2016-17 to 2017-18

Public Four-Year Institutions	Net Increase	Percentage
University of Virginia	224	8.1%
George Mason University	207	4.6%
Virginia Tech	122	2.7%
Virginia Military Institute	56	26.4%

(See Appendix C for data on in-state undergraduate completions and degree estimates for all bachelor-awarding public institutions.)

TOWARD 100,000 ADDITIONAL IN-STATE UNDERGRADUATE-DEGREE AWARDS BY 2025

TJ21 set a goal for public institutions of awarding an additional 100,000 undergraduate degrees to in-state students between 2010-11 and 2024-25.

The 48,855 degree completions by in-state undergraduate awards at public institutions (Table 2) are 6,030 more than in 2010-11 (42,825), the baseline year.

Between 2011-12 and 2017-18, public institutions have awarded 337,055¹ in-state undergraduate degrees toward the goal. This is 37,280 above what the degree count would have been had each year from 2011-12 to 2017-18 equaled the baseline year. These awards are important components of The Virginia Plan for Higher Education's target of 1.5 million degrees and workforce credentials between 2014 and 2030. Over the past 12 years, annual degree-award growth rates in the range of 3.1% to 5.2% have been

¹ This paragraph contains calculations based on C01: Completions Summary by Domicile.

common. The 6,901-award rise since 2010-11 represents an overall increase of 16%, which averages to 3.2% per year. If the average rate of growth achieved since enactment of TJ21 had continued, then the goal of 100,000 additional public-sector degree awards by 2025 would have been readily attainable.

However, two years of declining degree awards now leave the Commonwealth short of the goal by approximately 20,000 degrees if no further increases occur. Additional declines would worsen this shortfall.

Public institutions' degree estimates for in-state undergraduate degrees through 2021-22 (approved in October 2017) are more aggressive than they made in the 2015 projections. The newer projections, when combined with progress made thus far, suggested that the Commonwealth would achieve at least 105,000 cumulative new awards for in-state undergraduate students. It appears that the strengthening economy may have made the goal more difficult to achieve as more students, particularly at the community colleges, chose to return to work rather than complete degree programs.

UNDERGRADUATE-DEGREE COMPLETIONS BY IN-STATE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AT PRIVATE NONPROFIT INSTITUTIONS

In 2017-18, in-state students completed 7,174 undergraduate degrees (268 associates and 6,906 bachelors) at private nonprofit institutions. This total represents a slight increase in undergraduate-degree awards and is 86 (1.1%) above the prior year's count.

Table 7
Associate and Bachelor's Degree Completions by In-State Students at Private Nonprofit Institutions

Academic Year	Associate	Bachelor	Total	Estimate
2010-11	172	5,858	6,030	
2011-12	228	6,368	6,596	
2012-13	232	6,583	6,815	
2013-14	222	6,683	6,905	
2014-15	314*	6,659	6,973	6,953
2015-16	304	6,875	7,179*	7,088
2016-17	294	6,799	7,093	7,212
2017-18	268	6,906*	7,174	7,475

*Denotes an all-time high.

Below are the five private nonprofit institutions with the highest net decreases in undergraduate degrees awarded to in-state students from 2016-17 to 2017-18:

Table 8**Private Nonprofit Institutions with Highest Net Decreases in Undergraduate Degrees to In-State Students, 2016-17 to 2017-18**

Private Nonprofit Institutions	Net Decrease	Percentage
University of Lynchburg	-46	-14.6%
Averett University Non-Traditional	-43	-22.4%
Sweet Briar College	-40	-100.0%
Hampton University	-23	-11.7%
Bluefield College	-20	-11.6%

Below are the six private nonprofit institutions with the highest net increases in undergraduate degrees awarded to in-state students from 2016-17 to 2017-18:

Table 9**Private Nonprofit Institutions with Highest Net Increases in Undergraduate Degrees to In-State Students, 2016-17 to 2017-18**

Private Nonprofit Institutions	Net Increase	Percentage
Liberty University	183	7.8%
Regent University	41	14.8%
Mary Baldwin University	25	13.4%
Randolph College	19	26.0%
George Washington University	14	12.0%
Randolph-Macon College	14	6.1%

Toward a “Comparable Increase” in In-State Undergraduate Degree Awards by Private Nonprofit Institutions

The 7,174 degree completions by in-state undergraduates at private nonprofit institutions in 2017-18 (Table 7) are 1,114 more than in 2010-11, the baseline year for TJ21’s goal for these institutions to produce an increase in awards by 2025 that is “comparable” to the TJ21’s target for public institutions. This increase occurred despite the closure of two institutions – Saint Paul’s and Virginia Intermont – during the period.

SCHEV staff has estimated that a comparable increase in private nonprofits’ undergraduate awards to in-state students would be at least an additional 15,000 awards by 2025. In the academic years since TJ21 was enacted, private nonprofit institutions have awarded 8,633 additional undergraduate degrees, which represent an average annual rate of growth of 3.8%. Such a growth rate is more than adequate to achieve TJ21’s “comparable increase” of 15,000 awards. Indeed, if there is no growth in degree awards after this year, and no decrease in the total, the total cumulative increase by 2024-25 will be 15,726.

Table 10
Degree Completions by In-State Undergraduates at Private Nonprofit Institutions

Academic Year	Degrees	% Change	Annual Degree Growth
2000-01	4,305		
2001-02	3,899	-9.4%	-406
2002-03	3,505	-10.1%	-394
2003-04	3,869	10.4%	364
2004-05	4,934	28.4%	1,100
2005-06	5,167	4.7%	233
2006-07	5,579	8.0%	412
2007-08	5,654	1.3%	75
2008-09	5,622	-0.6%	-32
2009-10	5,587	-1.0%	-55
2010-11	6,030	7.9%	443
2011-12	6,596	9.4%	566
2012-13	6,815	3.3%	219
2013-14	6,905	1.3%	90
2014-15	6,973	1.0%	68
2015-16	7,179	3.2%	213
2016-17	7,093	-1.2%	-86
2017-18	7,174	1.1%	81

BECOMING THE BEST-EDUCATED STATE IN THE NATION BY 2030

To achieve the Commonwealth's goal of becoming the best-educated state in the nation by 2030, SCHEV has estimated that Virginia colleges and universities need to award 1.5 million undergraduate degrees, certificates and workforce credentials between 2014-15 and 2029-30. At this point, 354,935 undergraduate degrees and certificates (including 85,876 for 2014-15, and 89,529 for 2017-18) have been awarded to all students, by all institutions, public and nonprofit private. Current estimates are that a sustained overall growth of one percent per year (from the 2017-18 count) will result in slightly above 1,501,000 awards. While this is good news and is likely achievable, it may not be enough as other states are making the same attempt. Further, any number of factors, such as net in-state migration and a slowing in the growth in the number of high-school graduates, could create challenges to meeting this goal.

Although The Virginia Plan does not include degrees from for-profit institutions in the 1.5 million target, Virginia residents with degrees from this sector do contribute to the overall level of educational attainment in the state. Based on national data, these

institutions awarded approximately 6,000 associate degrees and 4,500 bachelor degrees in 2017-18.

Finally, the recently introduced New Economy Workforce Credential Grant program will add yet more credentials of value to the count. In the second year of its existence, 3,362 students enrolled in state-supported programs, with 3,156 students completing workforce programs and 2,419 of those students have earned the desired credential thus far. In the first two years, 5,455 new workforce credentials have been earned. These noncredit credential programs are specifically targeted to existing workforce needs thus have specific value to the Commonwealth's goals.

INSTITUTIONS' AVERAGE TIME-TO-DEGREE, AVERAGE ATTEMPTED CREDITS, AND TOP MAJORS IN 2017-18

Typically, discussions about institutional efficiency and effectiveness are expressed in terms of graduation rates. Graduation rates are based on the number and percentage of an entering cohort of students finishing in a specified number of years.

Measuring "Average Time-to-Degree," specified in elapsed years, provides insight to how long students take to complete a degree. The companion metric, "Average Credits-to-Degree," provides insight into the efforts students make to complete on time. It also could be an indication of student preparation and as well the impact of federal policy on student behavior.

For public two-year colleges, new first-time in college (FTIC) students who enroll as part-time in their first semester attempt more credits than required for the degree, while full-time students tend to be closer to "just enough." Public and private four-year colleges, the opposite is the case (Table A.1).

Top Programs at Private Nonprofit Four-Year Institutions

Top Five Most Popular Programs	Degrees and Awards	% of Total Degrees and Awards
Business Administration and Management, General	4,221	13%
Psychology, General	1,905	6%
Multi-/Interdisciplinary Studies, Other	1,669	5%
Mental and Social Health Services and Allied Professions, Other	1,456	4%
Theology/Theological Studies	1,271	4%

APPENDIX B: PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS' ASSOCIATE DEGREES TO IN-STATE STUDENTS, 2017-18

Institution	Awards in 2017-18			Estimates for 2017-18		
	Total	Change from 2016-17		Total	Difference from Awards	
		N	%		N	%
Total Public Four-year	42	-7	-14.3%			
Norfolk State University	2	-1	-33.3%	3	-1	-33%
Virginia Tech	40	-6	-13.0%	47	-7	-15%
Total Public Two-Year	17,787	-227	-1.3%	18,906	1,119	-6%
Richard Bland College	206	-4	-1.9%	217		
VCCS	17,581	-223	-1.3%			
Blue Ridge CC	519	-4	-0.8%			
Central Virginia CC	447	-2	-0.4%			
Dabney S. Lancaster CC	116	-2	-1.7%			
Danville CC	208	-38	-15.4%			
Eastern Shore CC	45	4	9.8%			
Germanna CC	899	-24	-2.6%			
J Sargeant Reynolds CC	908	-63	-6.5%			
John Tyler CC	911	34	3.9%			
Lord Fairfax CC	642	-95	-12.9%			
Mountain CC	268	-4	-1.5%			
New River CC	417	-12	-2.8%			
Northern Virginia CC	5,307	1	0.0%			
Patrick Henry CC	438	168	62.2%			
Paul D Camp CC	101	-11	-9.8%			
Piedmont Virginia CC	540	2	0.4%			
Rappahannock CC	282	14	5.2%			
Southside Virginia CC	497	-101	-16.9%			
Southwest Virginia CC	282	-10	-3.4%			
Thomas Nelson CC	889	48	5.7%			
Tidewater CC	2,595	-156	-5.7%			
Virginia Highlands CC	232	29	14.3%			
Virginia Western CC	698	-27	-3.7%			
Wytheville CC	340	26	8.3%			
Total Public Institutions	17,829	-234	-1.3%	18,689	860	-5%

APPENDIX C: PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS' BACHELOR'S DEGREES TO IN-STATE STUDENTS, 2017-18

Institution	Awards in 2017-18			Estimates for 2017-18		
	Total	Change from 2016-17		Total	Difference from Awards	
		N	%		N	%
Total Public Four-year Institutions	31,026	-102	-0.3%	31,189	-163	-0.5%
Christopher Newport University	1,043	-43	-4.0%	1,100	-57	-5.2%
College of William and Mary	1,040	-65	-5.9%	1,073	-33	-3.1%
George Mason University	4,748	207	4.6%	4,700	48	1.0%
James Madison University	3,341	-17	-0.5%	3,163	178	5.6%
Longwood University	879	-21	-2.3%	922	-43	-4.7%
Norfolk State University	633	-163	-20.5%	717	-84	-11.7%
Old Dominion University	3,446	-89	-2.5%	3,573	-127	-3.6%
Radford University	1,799	-20	-1.1%	1,723	76	4.4%
University of Mary Washington	843	-65	-7.2%	892	-49	-5.5%
University of Virginia	2,977	224	8.1%	2,924	53	1.8%
University of Virginia's College at Wise	263	-2	-0.8%	212	51	24.1%
Virginia Commonwealth University	4,604	-163	-3.4%	4,666	-62	-1.3%
Virginia Military Institute	268	56	26.4%	228	40	17.5%
Virginia State University	552	-63	-10.2%	656	-104	-15.9%
Virginia Tech	4,590	122	2.7%	4,617	-27	-0.6%

APPENDIX D: PRIVATE NONPROFIT INSTITUTIONS' BACHELOR'S DEGREES TO IN-STATE STUDENTS, 2017-18

Institution	Awards in 2017-18			Estimates for 2017-18		
	Total	Change from 2016-17		Total	Difference from Awards	
		N	%		N	%
Total Private, NonProfit, Four-year Institutions	6,906	107	1.6%	7,070	-164	-2.3%
Averett University	111	-10	-8.3%	140	-29	-20.7%
Averett University Non-Traditional	146	-37	-20.2%	160	-14	-8.8%
Bluefield College	153	-20	-11.6%	185	-32	-17.3%
Bridgewater College	285	9	3.3%	288	-3	-1.0%
Christendom College	46	7	17.9%	38	8	21.1%
Eastern Mennonite University	188	-7	-3.6%	180	8	4.4%
Emory and Henry College	125	8	6.8%	150	-25	-16.7%
Ferrum College	161	-18	-10.1%	N/A	N/A	N/A
George Washington University	131	14	12.0%	108	23	21.3%
Hampden-Sydney College	167	10	6.4%	154	13	8.4%
Hampton University	173	-23	-11.7%	205	-32	-15.6%
Hollins University	73	2	2.8%	87	-14	-16.1%
Jefferson College of Health Sciences	189	7	3.8%	184	5	2.7%
Liberty University	2,318	186	8.7%	2,162	156	7.2%
Mary Baldwin University	212	2	0.6%	221	-9	-4.1%
Marymount University	340	19	26.0%	354	-14	-4.0%
Randolph College	92	14	6.1%	62	30	48.4%
Randolph-Macon College	243	45	16.9%	246	-3	-1.2%
Regent University	312	1	0.4%	385	-73	-19.0%
Roanoke College	233	-17	-5.2%	223	10	4.5%
Shenandoah University	311	-19	-38.0%	322	-11	-3.4%
Southern Virginia University	111	-10	6.8%	26	85	326.9%
Sweet Briar College	N/A	33	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
University of Lynchburg	269	46	-14.6%	350	-81	-23.1%
University of Richmond	210	-5	-2.3%	180	30	16.7%
Virginia Union University	101	5	5.2%	105	-4	-3.8%
Virginia Wesleyan University	221	3	1.4%	231	-10	-4.3%
Washington and Lee University	65	-8	-11.0%	65	0	0.0%

APPENDIX E: NUMBERS CITED IN THE TEXT

Institutions	Student	Award	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16	Source	Pg.
Public and private	All	bachelor's	54,947	54,539	54,461	C01: Completions Report	1,3
Public and private	All	all awards	119,980	118,927		C01: Completions Report	1,3
Public and private	All	data science degrees	7,122			C15: Completion, Data Science-Related Programs	2
Public and private	All	Undergrad degrees & cert	89,529			C01: Completions Report	9
Public (4-year and 2-year)	All	STEM-H degrees	24,655			C07: Trends in STEMH Degree Production	1
Public (4-year and 2-year)	In-state	Undergrad (assoc and bach)	48,885	49,191		C01: Completions Summary by Domicile	4
Public (4-year and 2-year)	In-state	associate	17,829	18,063		C01: Completions Summary by Domicile	4
Public (4-year and 2-year)	In-state	bachelor's	31,026	31,128	31,141	C01: Completions Summary by Domicile	6
Public 4-year	All	bachelor's	37,916	38,019		C01: Completions Report	1
Public 2-year (VCCS & Richard Bland)	All	associate	18,200	18,419	18,956	C01: Completions Report	1
Private nonprofit	All	bachelor's	17,031	16,520		C01: Completions Report	1
Private nonprofit	All	STEM-H degrees	7,880			C07: Trends in STEMH Degree Production	1
Private nonprofit	In-state	Undergrad (assoc and bach)	7,174	7,093		C01: Completions Summary by Domicile	7,8

Note. Blanks mean that the number was not cited in the text, and do not mean lack of data.