

# Postsecondary Enrollment and Completion for Deaf Students



***DISCLAIMER:** Some of the numbers in this document varied significantly according to the source of data. These differences were related to how data were collected, from whom data were collected, the definition of “deaf,” and other factors.*

## Enrollment

### Survey on Deaf Students in Postsecondary Education

- 1989–1990: **17,040** deaf students enrolled in postsecondary education
- 1992–1993: On average, **9.8** deaf students at each institution

### National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS)

- 1989–1990: **258,197** deaf students enrolled in 2-year and 4-year postsecondary education institutions
- 1995–1996:
  - **16%** of students with disabilities reported being deaf
  - **60%** of eighth-graders who completed high school went on to enroll in postsecondary education

### National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2)

- Between 2000 and 2010:
  - **75%** of deaf students had ever enrolled in any type of postsecondary institution, compared to 68% in the general population (significantly higher than several other disability groups)
  - **52%** of deaf students enrolled in 2-year or community colleges
  - **43%** of deaf students enrolled in vocational, business, or technical schools
  - **34%** of deaf students enrolled in 4-year colleges
- Between 1987 and 2005: Enrollment of deaf students in any type of postsecondary institution increased by **24% to 30%**

## Completion

### Synthesis of Several Nationally Representative Data Sets (1988–1994, 1990–1991, 1994–1995)

- **5%** of deaf individuals graduated from college (in comparison to 13% of hearing population)
- **53%** of deaf individuals had completed any type of postsecondary institution

### NPSAS (1995–1996)

- **40%** of deaf young adults had attained their degree or certificate by 1994 (began postsecondary in 1989–1990)



**NDC**  
National Deaf Center  
on Postsecondary Outcomes

## NLTS2 (2000–2010)

- **53%** of deaf young adults had completed some type of postsecondary education, compared with 52% of students with other disabilities
- **37%** of deaf young adults completed degrees from 2- or 4-year institutions

According to the NLTS2, **53%** of deaf young adults had completed any type of postsecondary education, and **37%** completed degrees from 2- or 4-year institutions.

## References

- Blanchfield, B. B., Feldman, J. J., & Dunbar, J. L. (2001). The severely to profoundly hearing-impaired population in the United States: Prevalence estimates and demographics. *Journal of the American Academy of Audiology*, *12*, 183–189.
- Horn, L., & Berkold, J. (1999). *Statistical analysis report: Students with disabilities in postsecondary education: A profile of preparation, participation, and outcomes*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs99/1999187.pdf>
- Lewis, L., & Farris, E. (1994). *Statistical analysis report: Deaf and hard of hearing students in postsecondary education*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs94/94394.pdf>
- Newman, L., Wagner, M., Knokey, A. M., Marder, C., Nagle, K., Shaver, D., & Wei, X. (2011). *The post-high school outcomes of young adults with disabilities up to 8 years after high school: A report from the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2)*. Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.
- Rawlings, B., Karchmer, M., Decaro, J., & Allen, T. (Eds.) (1991). *College and career programs for deaf students* (8th ed.). Washington, DC, and Rochester, NY: Gallaudet University and National Technical Institute for the Deaf.
- Wagner, M., Newman, L., Cameto, R., & Levine, P. (2005). *Changes over time in the early postschool outcomes of youth with disabilities: A Report of findings from the National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS) and the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2)*. Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.



This document was developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, OSEP #HD326D160001. However, the contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the federal government.

© 2019 National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes, licensed under Creative Commons BY-NC-ND 4.0 International

Additional resources can be found at [www.nationaldeafcenter.org](http://www.nationaldeafcenter.org)