Enrollment Definitions

The Oregon University System (OUS), like all other higher education institutions, employs several different definitions in counting enrollment. The various definitions serve different purposes: budget preparation, workload evaluation, federal reporting, single-point snapshots, and description of OUS’s provision of educational services. Additional definitions are provided in the Glossary.

Headcount Enrollment

Headcount enrollment represents the number of individual students enrolled in credit courses, regardless of course load. Historical enrollment has generally been expressed in terms of fall headcount. National comparisons of enrollment are most often made on the basis of fall headcount.

Including extended enrollment

In summer 1999, OUS began including extended enrollment in its reports, including enrollment in continuing education courses, web-based courses, contract courses, and other off-campus courses. For historical purposes in this Fact Book, we have gone back to 1991 to have comparable enrollment headcounts that include extended enrollment.

Historical

For long-term comparisons, however, we sometimes tabulate fall term headcounts that include students only if they enroll for at least one regular, or in-load, course (historically, this was called “base enrollment”). In such tabulations only, students enrolled exclusively in extended enrollment courses are excluded.

Total unduplicated headcount

Total unduplicated headcount provides a more comprehensive picture of student enrollment. This number reflects the total of all students, counted only once, enrolled in an OUS institution during any of the four terms of the year, regardless of course load. Both regular and extended campus enrollments are included.

Student Full-time Equivalent (FTE)

The student full-time equivalent (FTE) translates credit into enrollment, showing how many students it would take to produce the total credit-bearing activity of a campus if each student took exactly a full-time load. Calculation of the student full-time equivalent varies depending on the level of the student. The full-time equivalent for an undergraduate is assumed to be 15 term credit hours (or 45 annual credit hours). For master’s and professional level students, the divisor is 12 term credit hours (36 annual credit hours), and for a doctoral student, it is 9 term credit hours (27 annual credit hours).