

RESEARCH BRIEF:

Postsecondary educational attainment of IB Diploma Programme candidates from US high schools

Olivia Halic

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Introduction

The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (DP) is an academically challenging and balanced educational programme that prepares students to succeed in postsecondary education and life beyond. The programme's high quality, indicated by the success of its graduates, is recognized by many universities around the world (IBO 2013).

For the purpose of this report, DP graduate success at university is defined by their enrollment in postsecondary institutions and, more importantly, by their persistence toward completion and degree attainment. Recent research provides evidence that DP graduates pursue and successfully complete postsecondary studies in higher proportions than other high school graduates (Shah, Dean and Chen 2010; HESA 2011; Caspary 2011; Edwards and Underwood 2012; Coca et al 2012).

With the purpose of further studying the postsecondary trajectories of DP graduates, IB Global Research obtained longitudinal postsecondary data on the DP candidates from the year 2005. Looking within a 6-year cycle of university completion for these candidates, this study identified their patterns of postsecondary enrollment, retention, and graduation.

DATA SOURCES

The National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) offers a repository of data on postsecondary student enrollment, graduation, and degree attainment across multiple institutions in the US. In November 2011, IB Global Research requested data on all DP candidates (n=11,273) who sat in 2005 for IB examinations in public and private high schools in the US. Complete data were returned for 9,654 students (86%), which were used for these analyses.

Findings

Postsecondary enrollment

Overall, 92% of the DP candidates graduating in 2005 enrolled in US postsecondary institutions anytime between May 2005 and November 2011, and 77% enrolled directly from high school (before 31 January 2006). By comparison, the national rate of postsecondary enrollment directly from high school was 69% in 2005 (US Department of Labor 2006). Figures 1 and 2 below show DP candidates' postsecondary enrollment compared to national rates of enrollment.

Postsecondary destinations

At the state level, the highest immediate enrollments at both 2-year and 4-year institutions were in Florida (n=2,230; 26%), California (n=872; 10%), and Virginia (n=649; 8%). Among the 4-year institutions, University of Florida had the highest enrollment of DP graduates (13%) followed by Florida State University (3%) and University of Virginia (2%).

Terminology

Once students enroll in postsecondary institutions, typical indicators of postsecondary success are retention and graduation. This report defines these terms as:

Postsecondary enrollment:

Enrollment or admission at any postsecondary institution, including both public and private, two-year and 4-year institutions.

Retention: Yearly progression and continued enrollment subsequent to the first semester of admission, either at the same or a different institution.

Graduation: Successful completion of a prescribed program of studies or degree attainment at either the institution of first admission or a different institution.

Diploma Programme candidates are students enrolled in authorized IB schools participating in the DP with the intention of pursuing the IB diploma (regardless of whether they earn it or not).

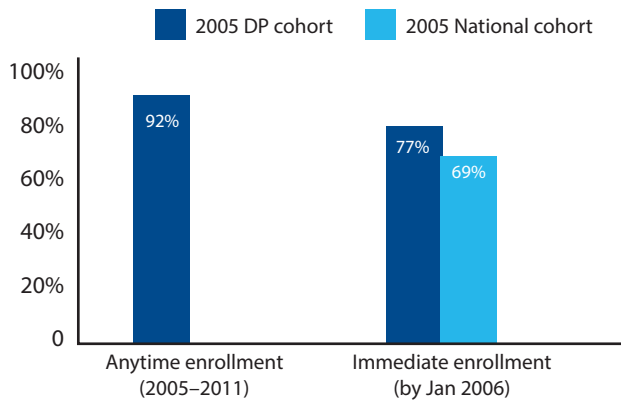


Figure 1. Anytime and immediate enrollment

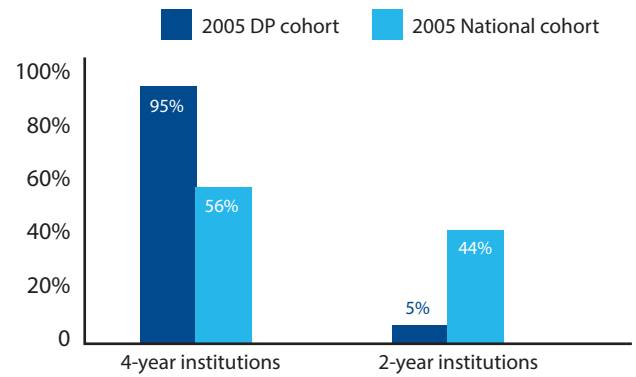


Figure 2. Immediate enrollment by type of institution

Retention rates at 4-year institutions

The rate of first-year retention of DP students enrolled at 4-year institutions was 98% (Figure 3), while the national rate was 75% (NCHEMS 2012).

Graduation rates at 4-year institutions

Overall, 74% of the DP candidates graduated within four years (Figure 4), while the comparative national rate was 38% in 2004 (Knapp, Kelly-Reid and Ginder 2012). The overall 6-year graduation rate of the DP graduates was 87%, while the national rate of the 2005 cohort was 56% (Figure 5).

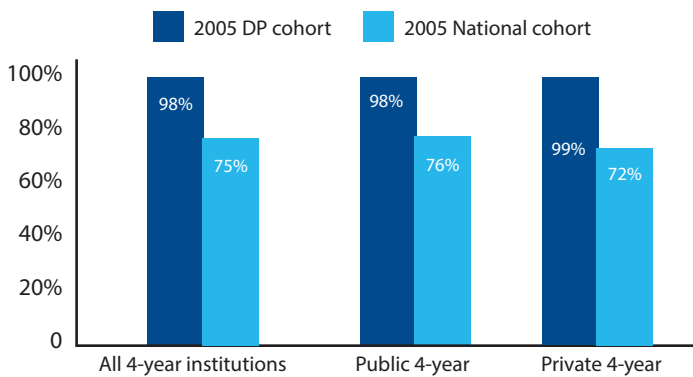


Figure 3. First-year retention rates of DP students enrolled in 4-year institutions compared to national rate

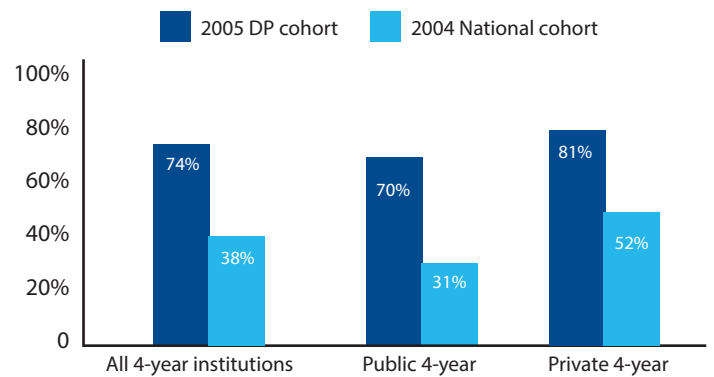


Figure 4. 4-year graduation rates

The graduation rate of DP candidates at institutions considered in this sample was consistently higher than the institutional rate. The percent difference ranged from 5% to 35% for the 4-year graduation rate (University of Virginia; University of South Florida, respectively), and from 4% to 29% for the 6-year graduation rate (University of Virginia and University of California, Los Angeles; University of South Florida, respectively).

The full report is available at <http://www.ibo.org/research>
 To cite the full report, please use the following:
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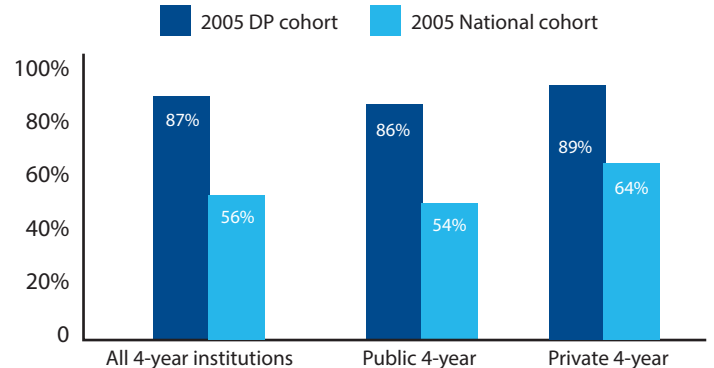


Figure 5. 6-year graduation rates

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