

# Postsecondary outcomes of International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme candidates in the United States

## Research snapshot

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## Background

Participation and success in postsecondary education are associated with a wide variety of positive outcomes. In the United States (US), college graduates are more likely to be employed and enjoy higher median earnings than individuals with a high school degree only. Higher levels of educational attainment are also associated with positive health outcomes, increased civic engagement and decreased reliance on public assistance (Ma et al. 2016).

This study examines the postsecondary outcomes of International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme (DP) students (both DP candidates and DP course students) who graduated from US high schools in 2013 ( $N = 37,348$ ). This snapshot focuses specifically on the outcomes of DP candidates ( $N = 18,660$ ), while a separate summary reports findings for the whole sample of candidates and course students.

## Terminology

In this study, “**DP candidates**” refers to students who are pursuing the full DP, with all of its required courses and components, regardless of whether or not they earn the diploma. “**DP candidates (received diploma)**” are full DP students who successfully completed all DP requirements and earned the diploma.

## Research methods

### Data Sources

The study combines data from a variety of sources, including the IB Information System (IBIS), the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), the Carnegie Classifications of Institutions of Higher Education (CCEIHE), the Integrated

Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), and the Common Core of Data (CCD). The 2013 DP graduating cohort was chosen because, at the time of data preparation, this was the most recent cohort that allowed for inclusion of four-year postsecondary graduation outcomes.

## Findings

### Postsecondary enrollment

In 2013, 84.6% of all DP candidates enrolled in university immediately after high school. DP candidates who received the diploma had a slightly higher immediate enrollment rate (85.6%). These enrollment rates compare favorably to the US national average for immediate enrollment of 66% (2013) (figure 1).

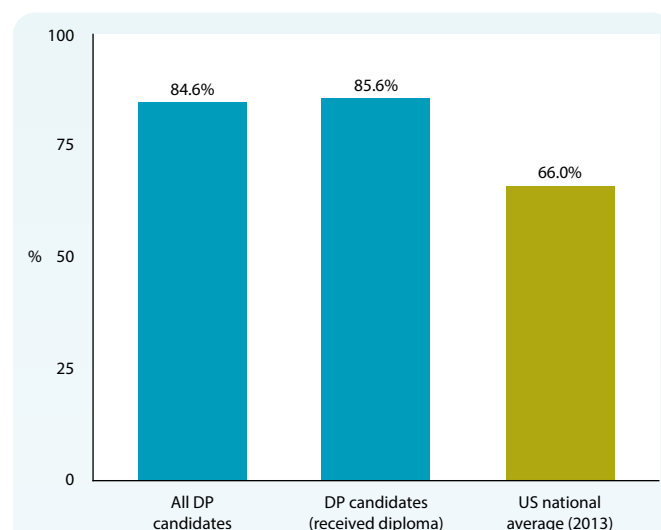


Figure 1. Immediate postsecondary enrollment of DP candidates compared to the US national average

Additionally, the vast majority of DP candidates enrolled in four-year institutions (figure 2). The study found that 81.9% of DP candidates enrolled in four-year institutions and 2.7% enrolled in two-year institutions. As a comparison, about 40% of 2013 US high school graduates enrolled in four-year institutions and 26% enrolled in two-year institutions (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). In terms of institutional selectivity, a greater percentage of DP candidates enrolled in more-selective institutions (70.2%), compared to selective (23.3%) or inclusive institutions (3.4%).

### Persistence

DP candidates were also more likely to persist at university (continuing on to their second year) compared to students nationally. The study found that 90.4% of DP candidates who enrolled in a four-year postsecondary institution immediately after high school were enrolled in the same institution the following year. Persistence rates

were highest among DP candidates who received the diploma (92.9%). As a comparison, 80% of all US students who enrolled in four-year institutions in 2013 returned the following year (Kena et al., 2016) (figure 3).

### Graduation

Among the DP candidates who enrolled in four-year institutions immediately after high school, 66.5% graduated within four years. As a comparison, 41.1% of all US students who enrolled in a four-year institution in 2011 graduated after four years (IPEDS, 2017). When considering diploma earners alone, the average four-year graduation rate increases to 74.4% (figure 4). The average four-year graduation rate of DP candidates was higher at more selective institutions (73.0%) than at selective or inclusive institutions, and highest among those students who both received the diploma and attended more selective institutions (77.6%).

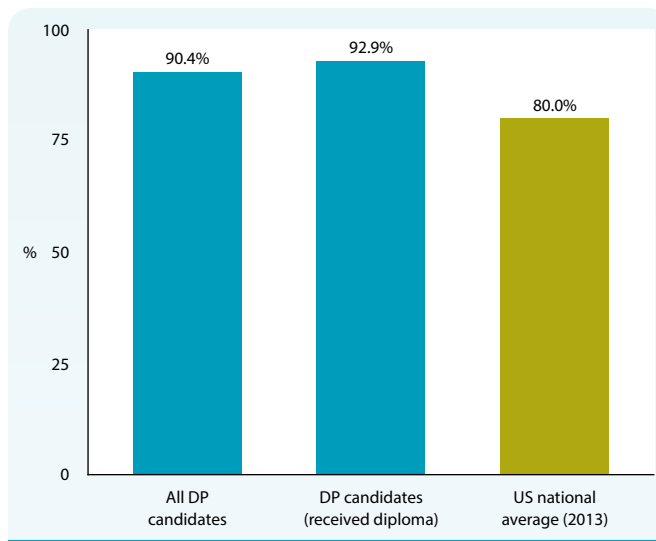


Figure 3. First year persistence rates of DP candidates compared to the US national average

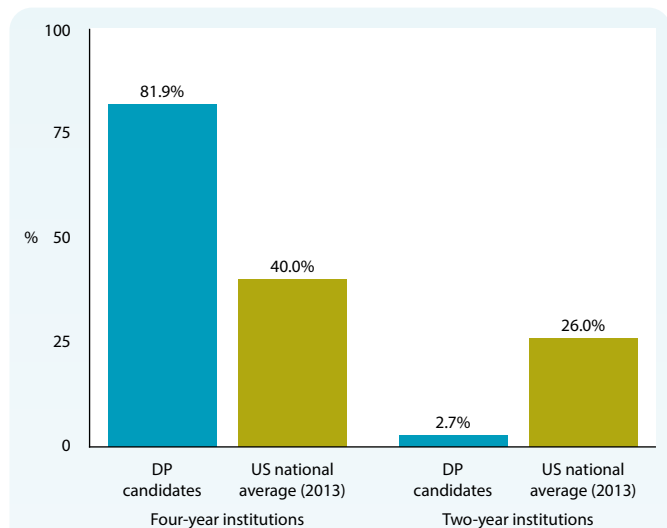


Figure 2. Immediate enrollment by institution type  
Note. Source for 2013 US national average: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014

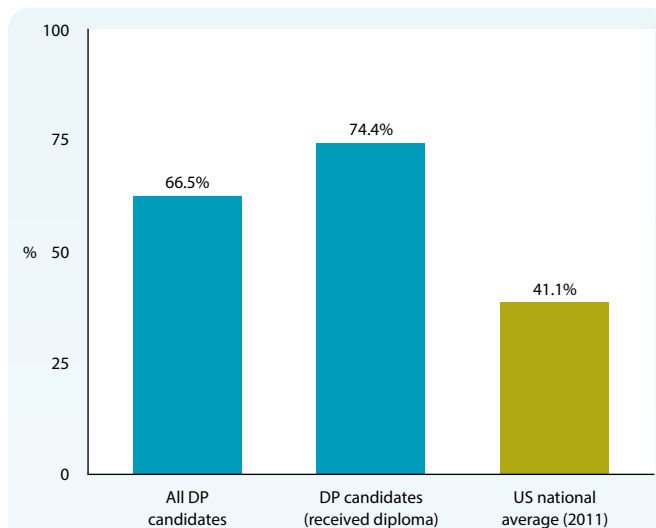


Figure 4. Four-year graduation rates of 2013 DP candidates and the US national average (2011)

## References

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