



**THE UNIVERSITY OF
NORTH CAROLINA SYSTEM**

2024 UNC Fall Enrollment Report

November 14, 2024

University of North Carolina System

2024 UNC Fall Enrollment Report

Table of Contents

Introduction and Summary 3

Interactive Data Dashboards 3

Overall Fall 2024 Enrollment..... 3

Fall 2024 New Student Enrollment 5

First-Time Freshmen Student Residency 7

High School Student Enrollment..... 8

Conclusion..... 9

2024 UNC Fall Enrollment Report

Introduction and Summary

When the University of North Carolina System was redesigned in 1972 to include all 16 public four-year institutions of higher education, one of the primary responsibilities given to the University of North Carolina Board of Governors was to “...foster the development of a well-planned and coordinated system of higher education.” One of the key activities the Board oversees in executing this responsibility is periodically evaluating enrollment trends and making projections about the future. The Fall 2024 Enrollment Report presents the trends in enrollment across the 16 constituent universities of the UNC System.

- **Overall Enrollment.** The fall 2024 total UNC System headcount enrollment was 247,927 students, an increase of 5,409 students (2.2 percent) from the previous fall and with higher enrollment than in fall 2021. All 16 institutions saw their total student headcount increase.
- **New Student Enrollment.** New first-time freshman enrollment increased by 325. New graduate student enrollment increased by 494. New transfer student enrollment continued to increase and mirror the highest enrollment seen in fall 2018.
- **Resident/Nonresident First-Time Freshmen.** The UNC System saw a slight change in enrollment demand from first-time freshmen inside and outside of North Carolina. The percentage of out-of-state first-time freshmen declined from 17.8 percent in 2023 to 17.4 percent in 2024, whereas in-state first-time freshmen increased slightly by 0.4 percent.

Interactive Data Dashboards

The UNC Data Dashboards are interactive reports sourced from an online database that provide students, parents, policymakers, and taxpayers expanded access to detailed system data on selected core measures. This fall enrollment report is intended to provide an overview of key trends and data points; for additional detailed and customizable information, please visit the interactive data dashboards linked below.

- **Enrollment**
Explore enrollment trends across the UNC System; learn more about who our students are and where they come from.
- **Transfer Students**
Examine trends in transfer student enrollment, first-year performance, and graduation rates.
- **Freshmen Admissions and Performance**
Students, parents, schools, and school district officials can see admissions and performance information about high school graduates pursuing degrees at all the universities. This includes graduation rate information, peer comparisons, and more.
- **Degrees**
With over 200 academic programs across our institutions, UNC System students earn degrees in a variety of critical fields. Learn more about degrees awarded over the past 10 years, and sort the data by level of degree, field of study, and demographics.

Overall Fall 2024 Enrollment

After 2022's first-time decrease in nine years, the UNC System saw another increase in student enrollment. The total headcount for fall 2024 was 247,927, an increase of 5,409 students (2.2 percent) over fall 2023. At the undergraduate level, UNC System enrollment increased by 4,877 students (2.5

2024 UNC Fall Enrollment Report

percent) from 2023 to 2024. Graduate enrollment began to increase with a fall 2024 graduate enrollment of 52,307, which was an increase of 532 students (1.03 percent) over the prior year.

Enrollment figures have improved across individual UNC System constituent institutions. Between fall 2023 and fall 2024, 16 institutions increased in total enrollment. Figure 1 and Tables 1 and 2 provide additional information on overall fall enrollment data.

Figure 1: UNC System Fall Headcount Enrollment, 2015—2024

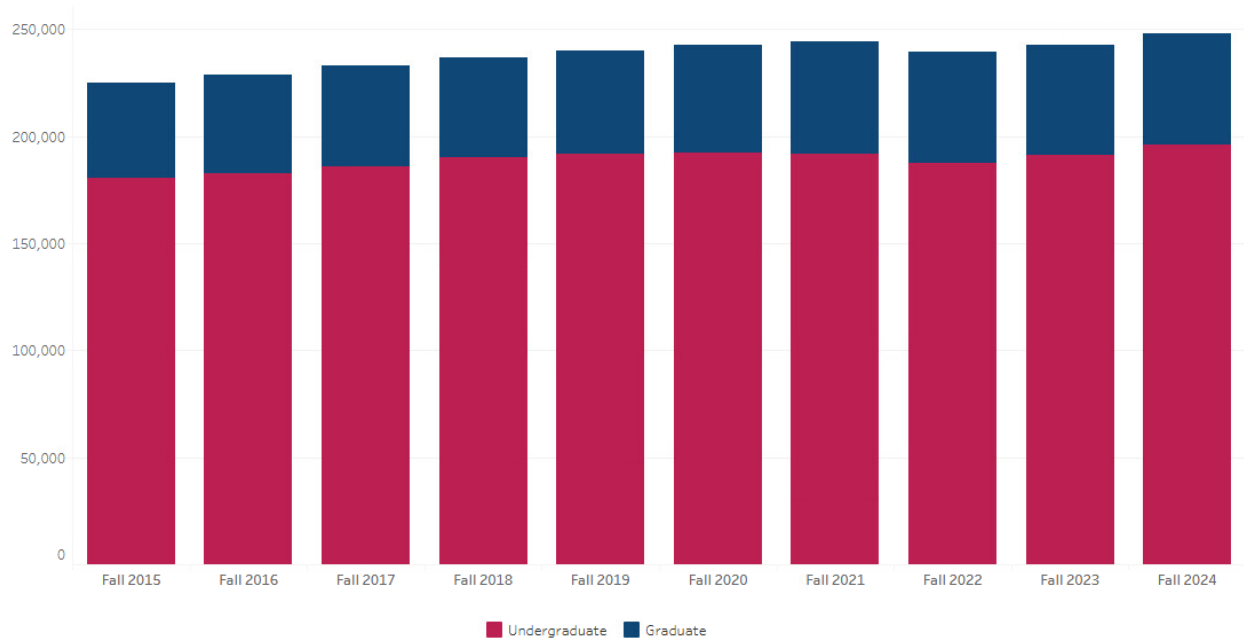


Table 1: UNC System Fall Headcount Enrollment, 2015—2024

	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024
Undergraduate	180,376	182,465	185,880	189,890	191,632	192,170	191,510	187,676	191,013	195,890
Graduate	44,539	46,062	46,992	47,103	48,349	50,276	52,990	51,987	51,505	52,037
Total	224,915	228,527	232,872	236,993	239,981	242,446	244,500	239,663	242,518	247,927

Table 2: UNC Institutions Total Fall Headcount Enrollment, 2015—2024

	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024
ASU	17,932	18,295	18,811	19,108	19,280	20,023	20,641	20,436	21,253	21,570
ECU	28,289	28,962	29,131	28,718	28,651	28,798	28,021	27,151	26,785	26,940
ECSU	1,585	1,357	1,411	1,677	1,769	2,002	2,054	2,149	2,165	2,258
FSU	6,104	6,223	6,226	6,318	6,551	6,726	6,748	6,787	6,847	7,107
NCA&T	10,852	11,177	11,877	12,142	12,556	12,753	13,322	13,487	13,885	14,311
NCCU	8,011	8,094	8,097	8,207	8,011	8,078	7,953	7,553	7,965	8,579
NC State	34,015	33,755	34,432	35,479	36,304	36,042	36,831	36,700	37,323	38,464
UNCA	3,891	3,821	3,852	3,762	3,600	3,363	3,233	2,914	2,925	3,056
UNC-CH	29,084	29,468	29,911	30,011	29,877	30,092	31,641	31,705	32,234	32,438
UNCC	27,983	28,721	29,317	29,710	29,615	30,146	30,448	29,551	30,298	31,091
UNCG	19,393	19,647	19,922	20,106	20,196	19,764	19,038	17,978	17,743	18,012
UNCP	6,441	6,268	6,252	7,137	7,698	8,262	8,318	7,666	7,630	7,674
UNCW	14,918	15,740	16,487	16,747	17,499	17,915	18,030	17,843	17,987	18,848
UNCSA	970	1,043	1,014	1,042	1,086	1,070	1,119	1,104	1,074	1,111
WCU	10,340	10,805	11,034	11,639	12,167	12,243	11,877	11,635	11,628	11,686
WSSU	5,107	5,151	5,098	5,190	5,121	5,169	5,226	5,004	4,776	4,782
Total	224,915	228,527	232,872	236,993	239,981	242,446	244,500	239,663	242,518	247,927

2024 UNC Fall Enrollment Report

Fall 2024 New Student Enrollment

In addition to tracking overall enrollment, analyzing new student enrollment levels can provide an early look at emerging trends. Three categories of new student enrollment are analyzed: new first-time freshmen, new undergraduate transfer, and new graduate students. Fall 2024 enrollment for each of these three categories increased compared to fall 2023. Figures 2-4 and Tables 3-5 provide additional information on how enrollment counts compared to the previous nine years.

New first-time freshman enrollment increased by eight percent (325 students) making this incoming class the largest entering freshmen class in UNC System’s history. Enrollment patterns slightly increased for new in-state freshmen and slightly decreased for new out-of-state freshmen.

Figure 2: UNC System New First-Time Freshmen Enrollment, Fall 2015-Fall 2024

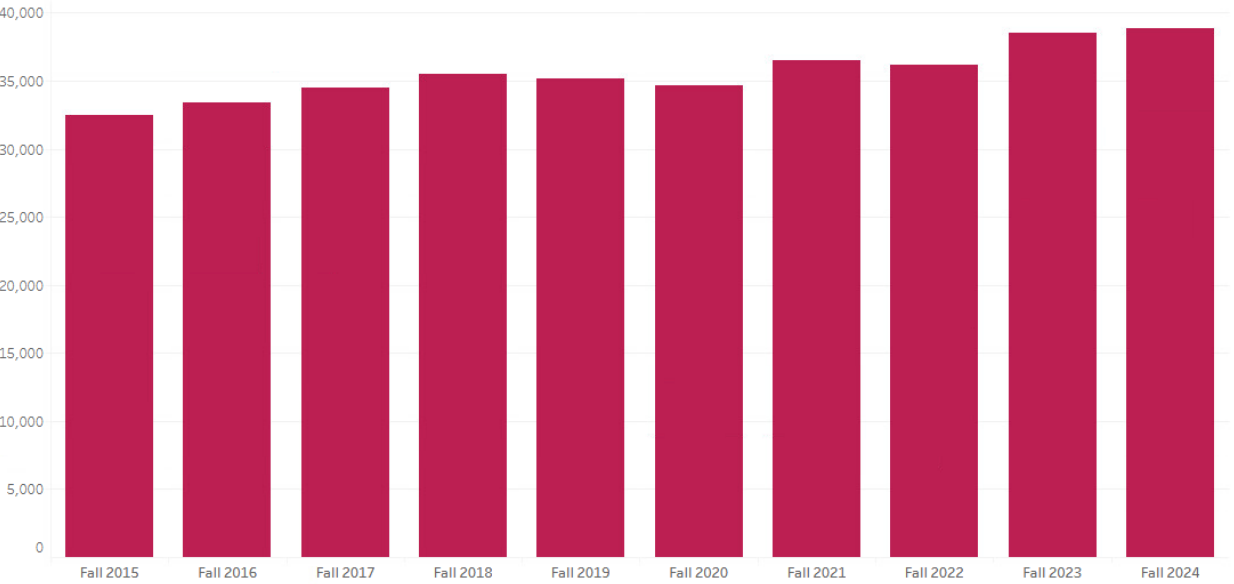


Table 3: UNC System New First-Time Freshmen Enrollment, Fall 2015-Fall 2024

Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024
32,525	33,420	34,522	35,537	35,133	34,700	36,535	36,145	38,529	38,854

New transfer student enrollment increased 7.7 percent in fall 2024 after reaching a peak in fall 2018, which coincides with trends in enrollment at community colleges in North Carolina and nationally. Additional information on transfer student enrollment and initiatives between the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) and the UNC System can be found in the annual [Review of the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement](#) report. This report was submitted to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee, the Senate Appropriations Committee on Education/Higher Education, and the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Education by the NCCCS State Board and the Board on November 1, 2024.

2024 UNC Fall Enrollment Report

Figure 3: UNC System New Undergraduate Transfer Enrollment, Fall 2015-Fall 2024

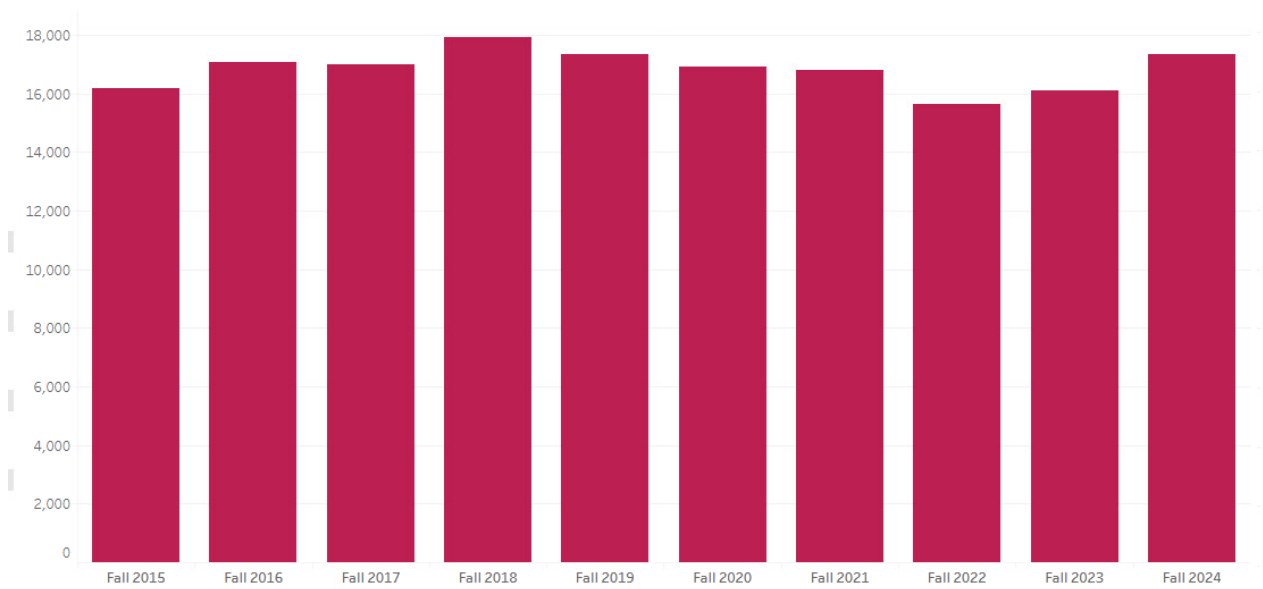


Table 4: UNC System New Undergraduate Transfer Enrollment, Fall 2015-Fall 2024

Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024
16,176	17,080	17,014	17,919	17,329	16,934	16,795	15,622	16,103	17,349

2024 UNC Fall Enrollment Report

New graduate student enrollment increased 2.85 percent this year from fall 2023. In fall 2024, 17,805 new students enrolled in graduate programs.

Figure 4: UNC System New Graduate Student Enrollment, Fall 2015-Fall 2024

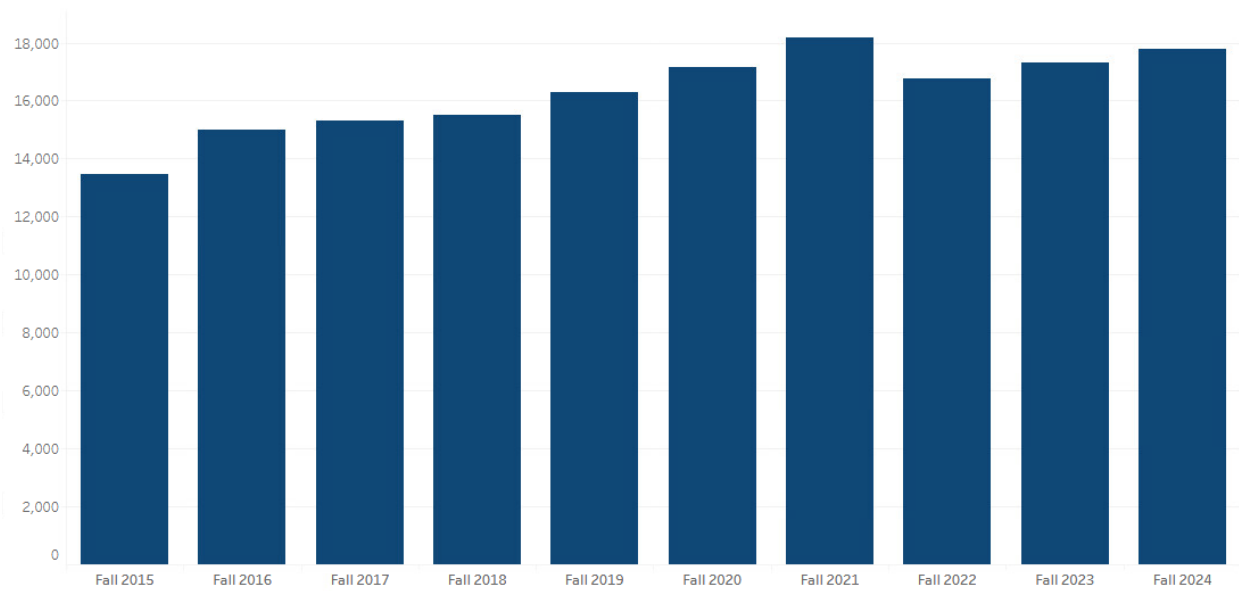


Table 5: UNC System New Graduate Student Enrollment, Fall 2015-Fall 2024

Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024
13,449	14,987	15,307	15,490	16,309	17,165	18,173	16,748	17,311	17,805

First-Time Freshmen Student Residency

Section 700.1.3 of the UNC Policy Manual outlines caps set by the Board on the percentage of nonresident students enrolled at each institution as first-time freshmen. As of a 2022 policy change, the out-of-state caps are calculated as a percentage of the previous year’s first-time freshman cohort. The caps for fall 2024 were 50 percent for Elizabeth City State University, 35 percent for North Carolina Central University and North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, 25 percent for East Carolina University, Fayetteville State University, University of North Carolina Asheville, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, University of North Carolina at Pembroke, Western Carolina University, and Winston-Salem State University and 18 percent for the rest of the institutions (the University of North Carolina School of the Arts is exempted from the policy). For the fall of 2024, one institution exceeded its specified cap on nonresident enrollment, as outlined in Table 6.

2024 UNC Fall Enrollment Report

Table 6: New Freshmen Enrollment by Residency

	Fall 2024 Census Enrollment			Fall 2024 Out-of-State Enrollment Cap based on Fall 2023 Cohort				
	In-State	Out-of-State	Total	Allowable Percentage	Actual Percentage	Allowable Enrollment	Actual Enrollment	Enrollment Exceeding Cap
ASU	3,459	579	4,038	18%	14%	760	579	.
ECU	3,308	714	4,022	25%	18%	985	714	.
ECSU	293	130	423	50%	37%	173	130	.
FSU	596	201	797	25%	25%	201	201	.
NCA&T	1,567	891	2,458	35%	34%	917	891	.
NCCU	1,251	502	1,753	35%	34%	512	502	.
NC State	5,027	812	5,839	18%	14%	1,031	812	.
UNCA	610	115	725	25%	18%	157	115	.
UNC-CH	3,910	730	4,640	18%	16%	845	730	.
UNCC	4,174	483	4,657	18%	11%	810	483	.
UNCG	2,262	171	2,433	25%	7%	653	171	.
UNCP	645	156	801	25%	17%	227	156	.
UNCW	2,402	352	2,754	18%	13%	486	352	.
UNCSA	113	126	239	.	57%	.	126	.
WCU	1,562	504	2,066	25%	24%	525	504	.
WSSU	697	234	931	25%	27%	220	234	14
<i>UNC System Total</i>	31,876	6,700	38,576

High School Student Enrollment

The UNC System has two constituent institutions with residential high school programs—the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics and the high school program at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. Enrollment in these programs is largely stable and generally constrained by residence hall capacity.

Table 7: Residential High School Enrollment

Institution	Fall 2023	Fall 2024
NCSSM – Durham	675	675
NCSSM – Morganton	300	300
UNCSA	253	252
UNC System Total	1228	1227

2024 UNC Fall Enrollment Report

Conclusion

The UNC System is experiencing notable enrollment growth, despite a national trend of declining higher education enrollment over the past decade. For fall 2024, the UNC System's total headcount enrollment saw a 2.2 percent increase compared to the previous year, marking the highest enrollment in its history. New first-time freshmen enrollment rose by 0.8 percent, also reaching its highest point to date, while new transfer student enrollment surged by 7.7 percent.

These gains are especially significant in the context of ongoing national declines, where many institutions have faced shrinking student bodies due to demographic shifts, economic pressures, and changing perceptions of the value of higher education. The UNC System's continued growth reflects its strategic efforts to attract and retain students, including expanding access, offering flexible academic pathways, and strengthening partnerships with North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and the North Carolina Community College System.

Report Authors:

Dr. David English, senior vice president for Academic Affairs

Dr. Bethany Meighen, vice president for Academic and Student Affairs

Keon Jordan, UNC System Office Intern, North Carolina A&T State University