This report on adult learners allows the reader to discern enrollment trends of adult graduate students at Penn State University.

An adult learner at Penn State University is defined as a student who:

- Has been away from formal education for four or more years OR
- Is a veteran of the United States Armed Forces OR
- Is 24 years of age or older OR
- Assumes multiple adult roles, such as parent, employee, spouse/partner, and student

The data reflect ONLY the numbers of graduate students who are 24 years of age or older and who are enrolled as resident instruction or continuing education students.

The authors are grateful to the office of Budget and Resource Analysis for supplying enrollment information.

Statistics are provided for the enrollment levels of graduate adults by campus, age, gender, degree, and full- or part-time status. Summary statements follow:

**Enrollment and Age Frequency**  (Statements derived using Tables 1 and 2)

- Adult learners comprise 87% of the total fall 2004 graduate enrollment at Penn State University (9,019 of 10,310 students). As illustrated in Graph 1, the percentage of graduate students age 24 and older rose to 87% from 86% in 2001, 2002, and 2003.

![Graph 1](image-url)  
Percentage of Adult Graduate Students at PSU
84% of the graduate students at University Park are adult learners, 5,448 out of a total population of 6,465. At other campus locations in the Penn State system, 93% of the graduate student population are adult learners.

43% of all graduate students are 30 years of age and older.

**Gender** (Statements derived using Table 3)

Within the Penn State University system, 51% of the fall 2003 adult graduate students are male and 49% are female.

The percentage of male adult graduate students exceeds that of female adult graduate students at five campuses: New Kensington (69% M/31% F), Behrend (64% M/36% F), Great Valley (60% M/40% F), Hershey (55% M/45% F), and University Park (54% M/46% F).

**Full- and Part-time Status** (Statements derived using Table 4)

In fall 2004, 52% of Penn State adult graduate students study full time and 48% study part time.

- Notable exceptions are:
  - At Hershey, 91% of the adult graduate students study full time.
  - At University Park, 78% of adult graduate students study full time.
  - At locations other than University Park, the percentage of full-time adult graduate students decreased from 12% in 2003 to 11% in 2004. (See Graph 3)
**Degree and Nondegree Enrollment**  (Statements derived using Table 5)

- 12% of fall 2004 adult graduate students are nondegree, while 88% seek degrees.
- The percentage of adult graduate students seeking degrees rose from 87% in 2002 and 2003 to 88% in 2004. (See Graph 4) Degree-seeking adult graduate students at University Park increased to 92%, a 2% increase from 2003. (See Graph 5)

![Graph 4](image)

**Degree-Seeking Adult Graduate Students - PSU**

![Graph 5](image)

**Degree-Seeking Adult Graduate Students – UP**

**Summary**

At Penn State University, the percentage of male and female adult graduate students is almost equal. Slightly more study full time than part time and most seek degrees. The University Park graduate student is likely to be a degree-seeking male attending full-time, while graduate students at locations other than University Park tend to be degree-seeking females attending part time.