

Looking at Enrollments: Multiple Measures

One of the most common questions we receive in the Office of Research is “What’s our enrollment?” This simple question can be answered in many ways, depending on how “enrollment” is defined. For example, enrollments at Oakton can count

- All course enrollments regardless of whether the student dropped or was dropped, or re-registered for the same course in the same term;
- All course enrollments so long as the student was officially in the course as of a specific date, usually the census date (about two weeks into the term);
- Credit hours as of a specific date, such as the census date or mid-term (reimbursement from the state is based on credit-hour enrollments as of mid-term—late-start courses have their own mid-term dates);
- Number of students enrolled for one or more courses in a given term (unduplicated headcount);
- Enrollments, however defined, in credit courses, or in non-credit courses, or in both; or
- Number of students in each program, which we typically base on information from the student’s application form; we find that a number of students are “officially” in a program very different from the one in which they are taking most of their courses.

We can also look at enrollments in different timeframes: semester, academic year (fall and spring), fiscal year (summer, fall and spring). In the data below, we present three common measures of enrollment, each based on a full year (summer, fall and spring). We counted students who were enrolled as of the census date of the term or who had earned a grade or indicator in a course in that term (this picks up students in late-start classes and those who, for whatever reason, weren’t on the official course roster as of the census date). The table provides the raw numbers, and the chart depicts the annual percentage change in each enrollment count over the prior year, with the year 2003-04 set as the base year. All data are for Oakton credit courses, including developmental courses. Data show the decline in credit hours is less than the decline in either course enrollments or headcount.

Enrollment Definition	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Credit Hours, using enrollments as of the census date or end of term, using only one enrollment if a student took the same course in the same term.	195,669	196,801	193,974	191,128
Course Enrollments, using only one enrollment if a student took the same course in the same term.	63,579	63,591	62,716	61,289
Unduplicated Head Count – Students who took one or more courses in the summer, fall and/or spring. Each student is counted only once per year.	17,884	17,706	17,407	16,935

Percent Change over Prior Year – 2003-04 is Base on Which 2004-05 is Calculated

