# Admitting Immigrants into U.S. Higher Education: An Important Dimension of Internationalization

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## **Research Objectives**

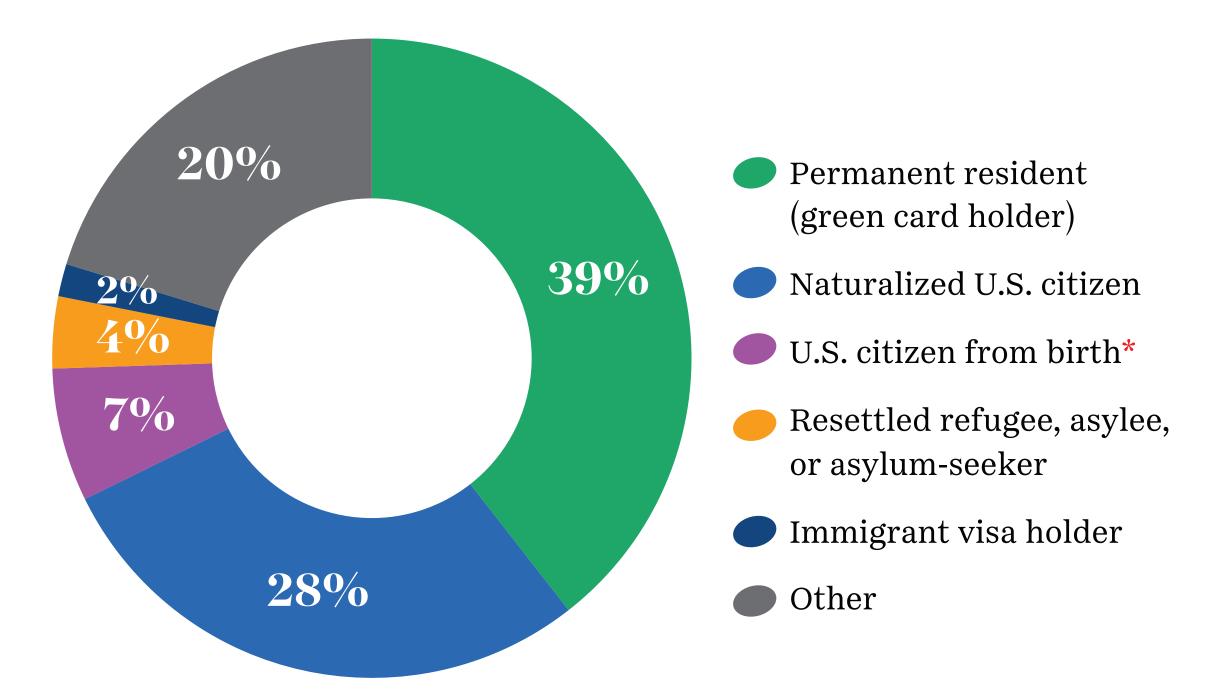
To understand the profile, needs, motivations, and barriers of internationally educated immigrants who are applying for admission to and enrolling in U.S. colleges and universities.

## Methodology

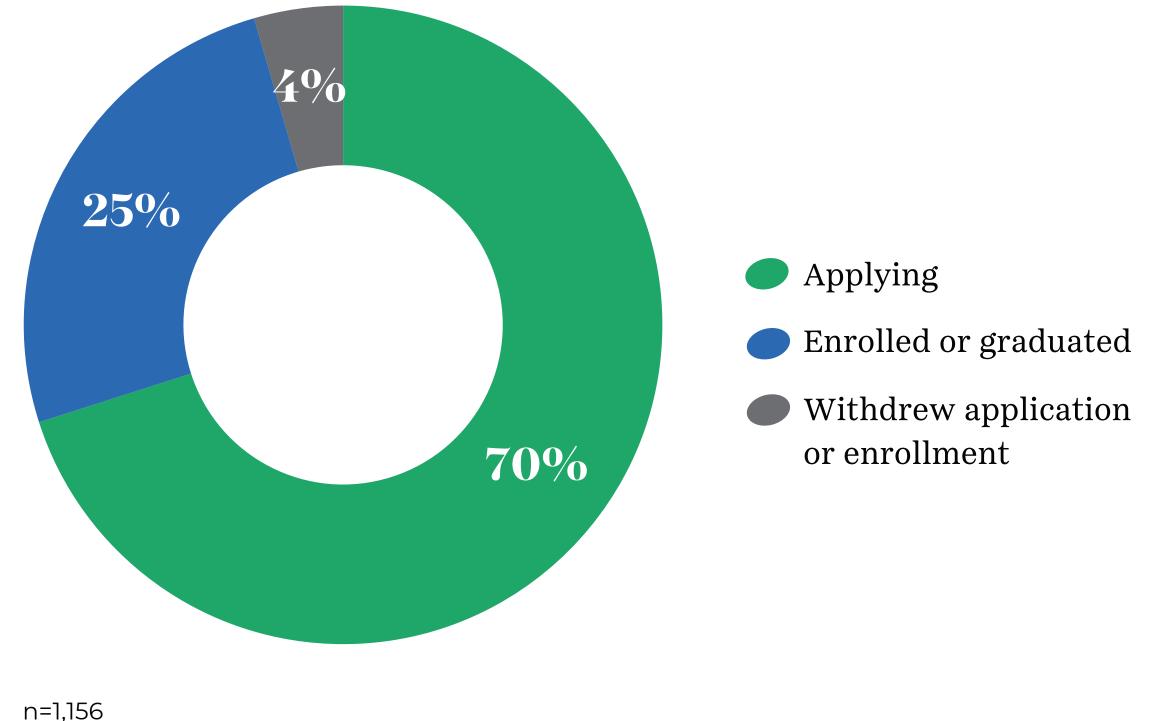
An online survey of 1,156 internationally educated immigrants in the U.S. (valid responses) from WES' credential evaluation applicant base in July and August 2021.

### **Profile of Respondents**

Immigrants: current status in the U.S.



### Stage in process of attending a U.S. institution

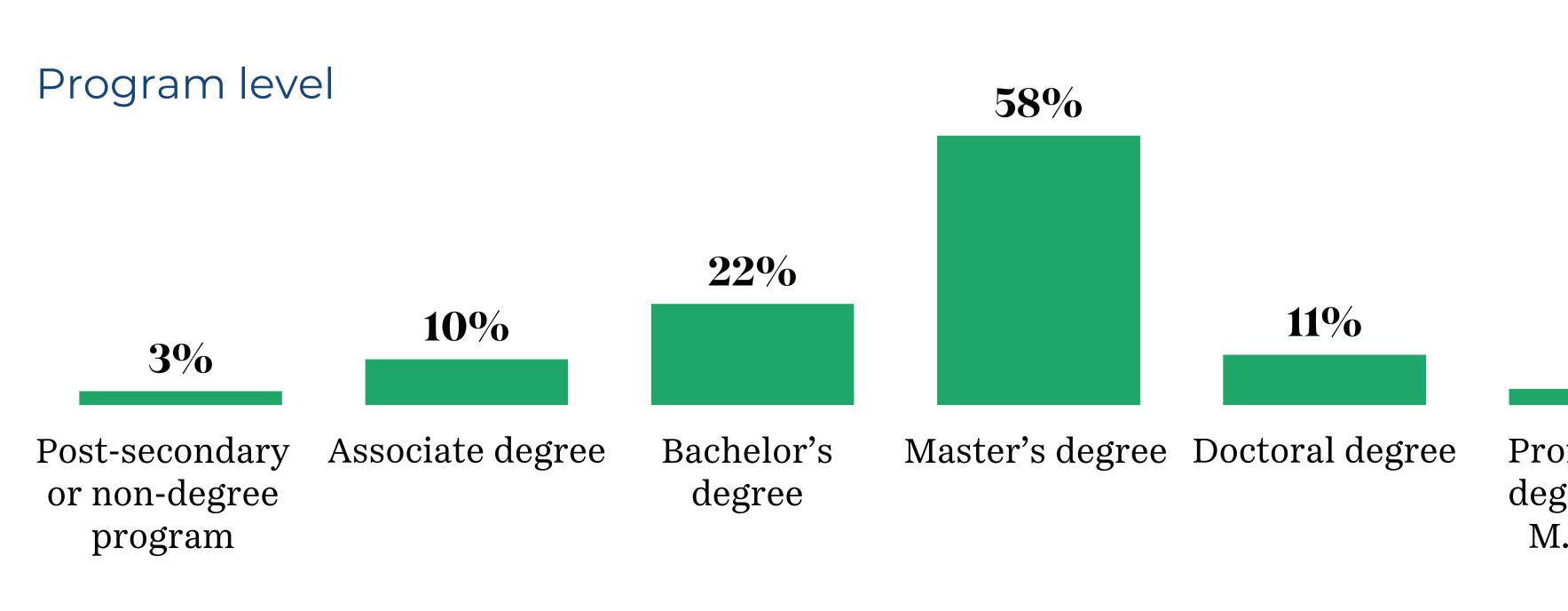


n=1.156

Q for those in the U.S.: What is your current status in the U.S.?

Q for those in other countries who do not need a student visa to study in the U.S.: What is your current legal status in the U.S.?

\*Those who indicated that they received most or all of their primary and secondary education in the U.S. were excluded from the study. Conversely, U.S. citizens from birth who were primarily educated in other countries were included in the study.

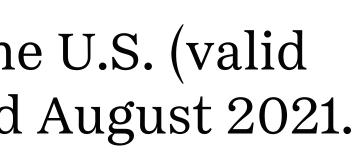


those applying now: What level(s) of education are you applying for?

Q for those enrolled, graduated, or withdrawn: What level(s) of education did you apply for?







Q: Which of the following statements best describes your current or most recent status in applying to or studying in a U.S. higher education institution?

Professional degree (J.D., M.D., etc.)

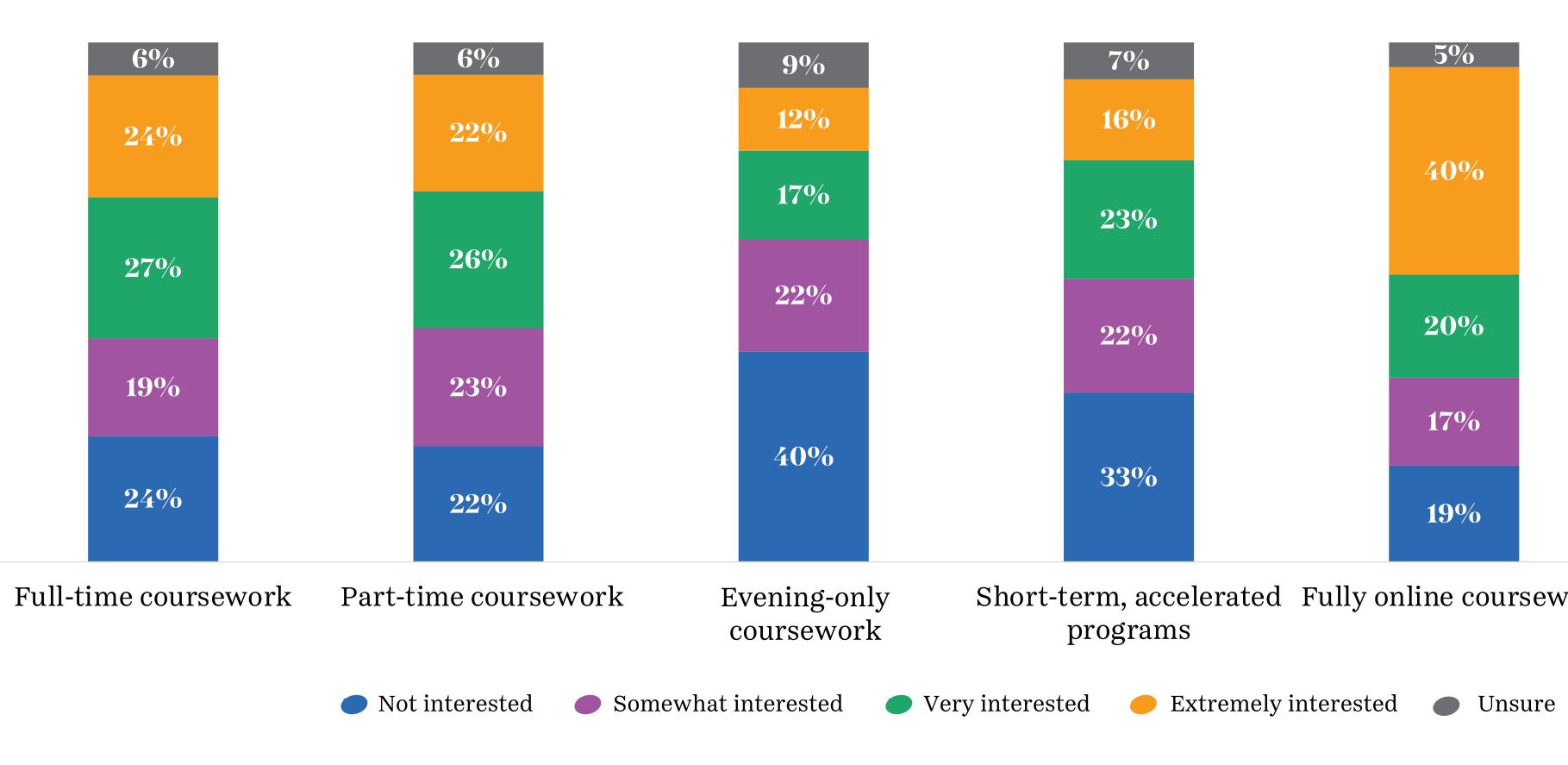
### 2%

Other

## Main Findings

Immigrant students are looking for varied coursework options to accommodate their needs. In particular, there is strong interest in fully online coursework (60%), though there are important differences based on age and academic level.

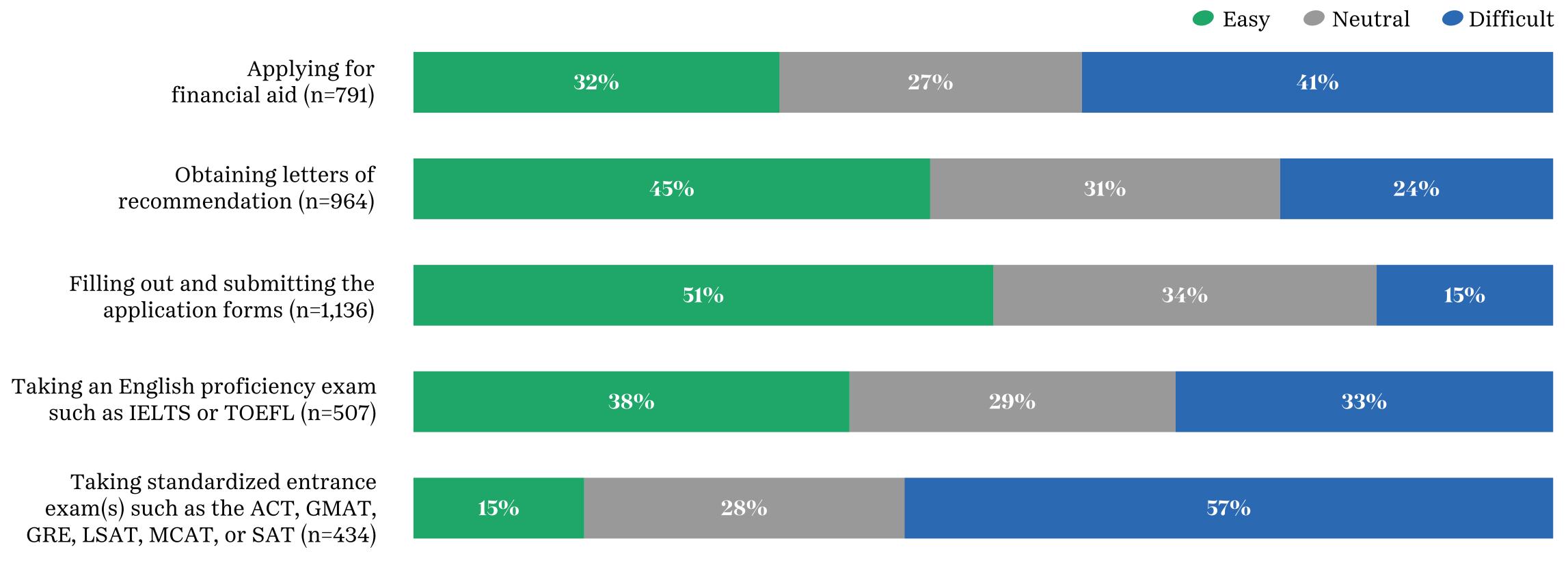
Interest level in coursework options at the time of application



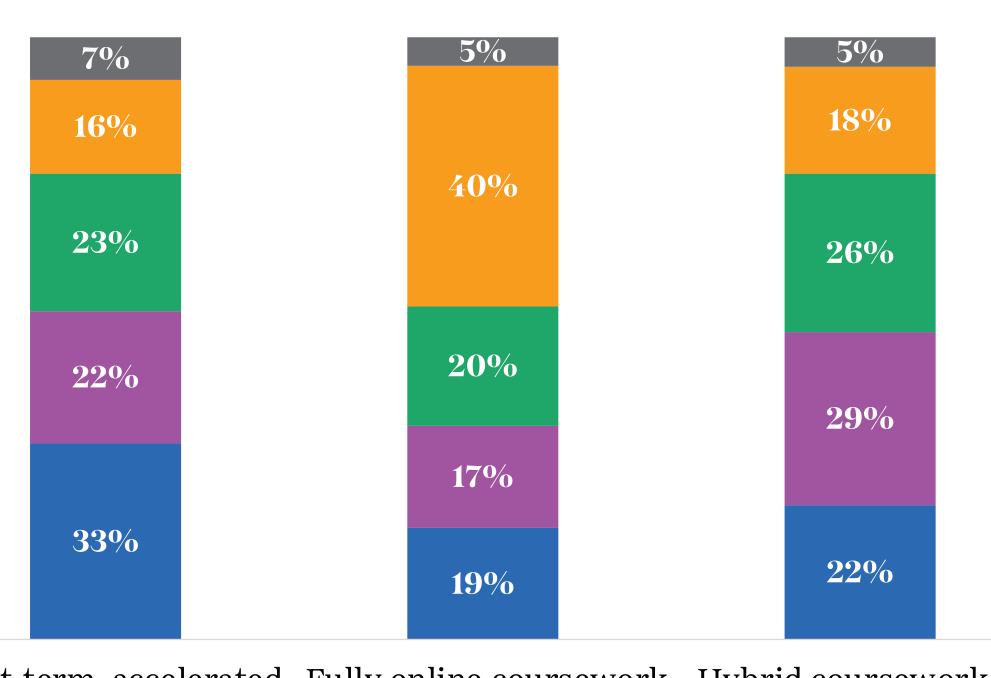
n=1,156 Q for students applying now: To what extent are you interested in the following schedule options? Q for students currently enrolled, graduated, or withdrawn: When you applied, to what extent were you interested in the following schedule options?

Immigrant students sometimes struggle with standardized entrance exams, such as the SAT and GRE, more than with other aspects of the application process.

### Ease or difficulty of completing steps of application process



Q for students applying now: Please rate the level of ease or difficulty with the following steps of the U.S. college/university application. If you have not yet or do not need to complete any of the following, please select "Not applicable."

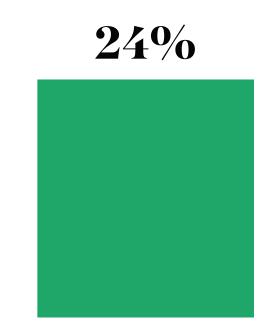


Short-term, accelerated Fully online coursework Hybrid coursework (a combination of in-person programs and online)

Q for students currently enrolled, graduated, or withdrawn: Please rate the level of ease or difficulty in completing the following steps of the U.S. college/university application. If you did not complete any of the following, please select "Not applicable."

## financial aid.

### Percentage of immigrants who found the barrier "extremely challenging"



The cost of attendance and associated expenses (such as tuition, housing, and textbooks)

## Why Immigrant Students?



Immigrant students make up 31% of U.S. higher education (2021).<sup>1</sup>



Immigrant students generally do not face the same restrictions as international students.

### References

## **Recommendations for Institutions**

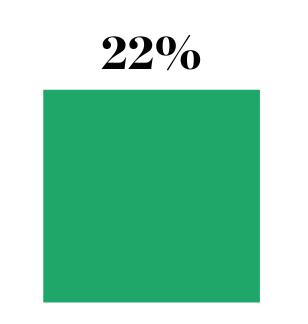
## **Further Reading**

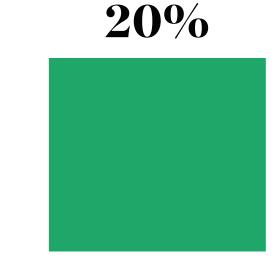
Loo, B., and Santos, M. (2022, January 10). An Overlooked Asset: Internationally Educated Immigrants in the U.S. WENR: World Education News & Reviews (World Education Services) (WES)). <u>https://wenr.wes.org/2022/01/an-overlooked-asset-internationally-educated-</u> <u>immigrants-in-the-u-s</u>





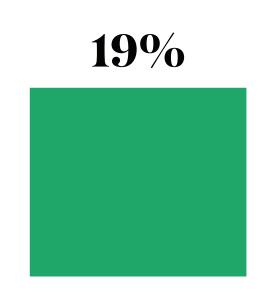
### The top barriers overall facing immigrant students are cost and concerns about access to



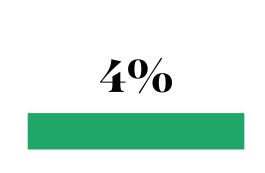


Working part-time while studying

that is far from home



Attending an institution Family responsibilities (such as childcare or eldercare)



My ability to take coursework in English



Immigrant student numbers are growing in U.S. colleges and universities.<sup>1</sup>



Domestic enrollment in U.S. higher education is declining.<sup>2</sup>

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Immigrant students bring diverse perspectives and can help meet internationalization goals.



Immigrants add economic and social value to their communities.

. Higher Ed Immigration Portal. (n.d.). Immigrant and International Students in Higher Education. https://www.higheredimmigrationportal.org/national/national-data/ . Meyer, K. (2023, June 5). The case for college: Promising solutions to reverse college enrollment declines. *Brookings Institution*.

https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-case-for-college-promising-solutions-to-reverse-college-enrollment-declines/.

Provide varied and flexible course options.

Refer students to resources that help with entrance exam preparation, where needed. • Deal directly with issues of cost where possible.

