

Overview: Distance Education and Workforce Development Reports

NC-SARA contracted with the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) to create a new Distance Education and Workforce Development Report for each SARA member state. The goal for these reports is to better help states identify how distance education can be used to meet workforce needs, as well as to identify gaps in state offerings.

These reports incorporate [NC-SARA data](#) on exclusively distance education enrollment and out-of-state learning placement activity, data from IPEDS on distance education programs offered, state educational attainment measures, and workforce development data provided by Lightcast (formerly Emsi Burning Glass). For questions about this report please contact NC-SARA at data@nc-sara.org.

Please note that states may report figures other than those included in this report due to differing methodologies; please refer to the higher education system or state higher education agency for more information.

Definition of Terms:

Distance Education: Education that uses one or more types of technology to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor synchronously or asynchronously.

Distance Education Program: A program for which all the required coursework for program completion can be completed entirely via distance education courses.

Exclusively Distance Education Enrollment (EDEE): Students who are solely taking coursework via distance education.

Out-of-State Learning Placement (OOSLP): Supervised field experiences such as, but not limited to, clinical rotations, internships, or student teaching, offered by SARA-participating institutions in locations outside their home state.

About NC-SARA

The National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) is a nonprofit organization that helps expand students' access to educational opportunities and ensure more efficient, consistent, and effective regulation of distance learning programs.

Today, more than 2,400 institutions participate SARA across 49 member states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands all voluntarily participate in SARA.

About NCHEMS

The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) is a private nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to improve strategic decision making in postsecondary education for states and institutions in the United States and abroad. Its work has touched on topics across a wide spectrum of public policy: strategic planning to finance and resource allocation to the development of new educational delivery models. Throughout its more than 50 years, NCHEMS has been a resource for turning data into usable knowledge for leaders and policymakers at all levels.

Virgin Islands

Distance Education and Workforce Development

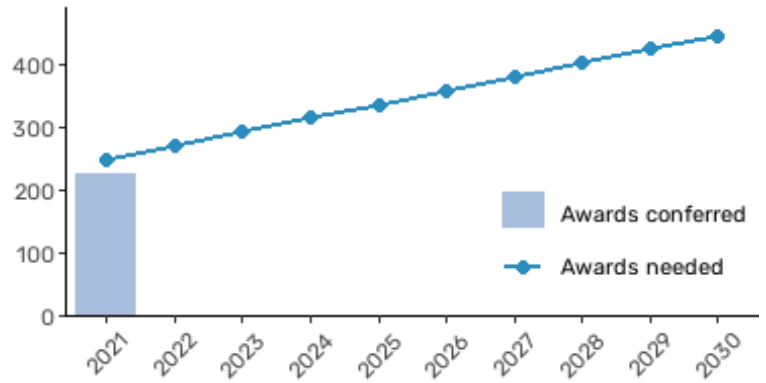
Educational Attainment and the Workforce

The U.S. Virgin Islands have not defined a specific educational attainment goal. In order for 30% of the territory's population aged 25 and over to possess at least an Associate's degree by 2030, awards from U.S. Virgin Islands institutions will need to increase by 7.0% annually.

The industries projected to be the Virgin Islands' largest overall in 2030 are Public Administration, Accommodation and Food Services, and Retail Trade, and the ones projected to grow by the largest percentage are Accommodation and Food Services, Educational Services, and Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation.

This document summarizes how distance education may contribute to meeting the Virgin Islands' workforce needs.

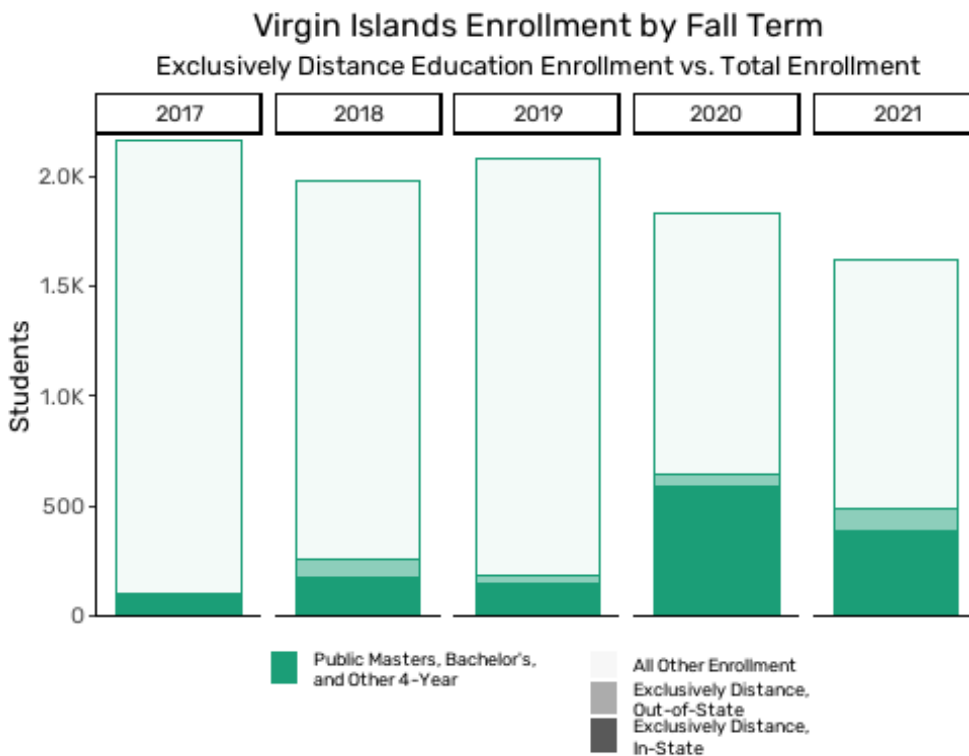
Award Production Needed
to Meet the U.S. Virgin Islands' Attainment Goal by 2030



Sources: IPEDS, U.S. Census Bureau, Lumina Foundation, Georgetown Center for Education and the Workforce

College Enrollment and Distance Education

How much exclusively distance education enrollment is taking place at Virgin Islands colleges and universities?



In line with nationwide trends, overall college and university enrollment in the Virgin Islands has declined; there were 546 fewer students in Fall 2021 compared to Fall 2017. The number of students attending exclusively via distance education, however, grew from 101 (5% of enrollment) in Fall 2017 to 183 (9% of enrollment) in Fall 2019. The pandemic accelerated this trend, and Fall 2021 exclusively distance education enrollment was 489 (30% of enrollment). Of those attending exclusively via distance education in Fall 2021, 79% were in-state students from the Virgin Islands. This is similar to 2019, when the percentage was also 79%.

Source: IPEDS

When reading the chart above, note that the darker bands represent exclusively distance education enrollments.

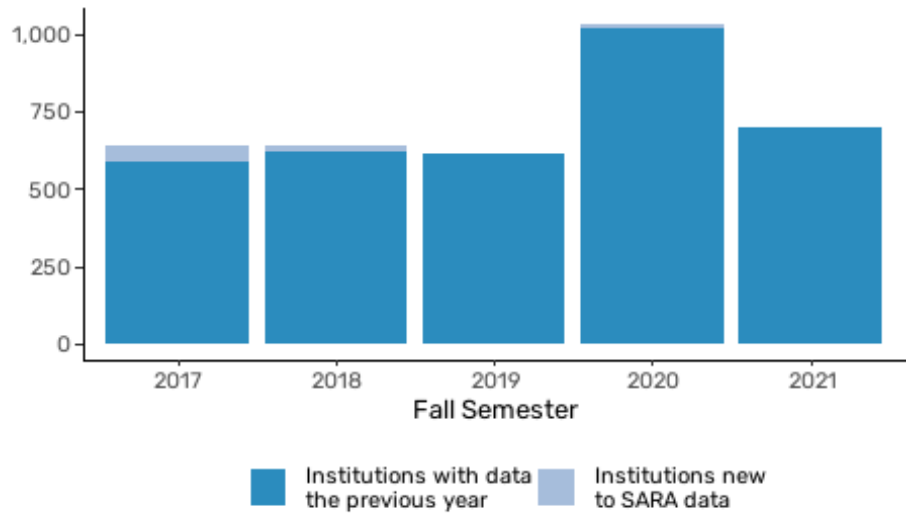
How many Virgin Islands students are studying via distance education at out-of-state institutions?

The number of students from the Virgin Islands who study at out-of-state institutions exclusively via distance education has also increased over time.

According to NC-SARA data, in Fall 2017, 639 Virgin Islands students were attending out-of-state institutions exclusively via distance education. In 2021, that number was 699, which was an increase of 9% over four years.

The NC-SARA data represents enrollments at over 2,300 institutions, or 67% of all postsecondary institutions that offer distance education. In the chart to the right, the light blue areas represent enrollments at institutions new to SARA participation – so any change is because of their inclusion, not an increase in students.

Exclusively Distance Education Enrollment
Virgin Islands Students at Non-Virgin Islands Institutions

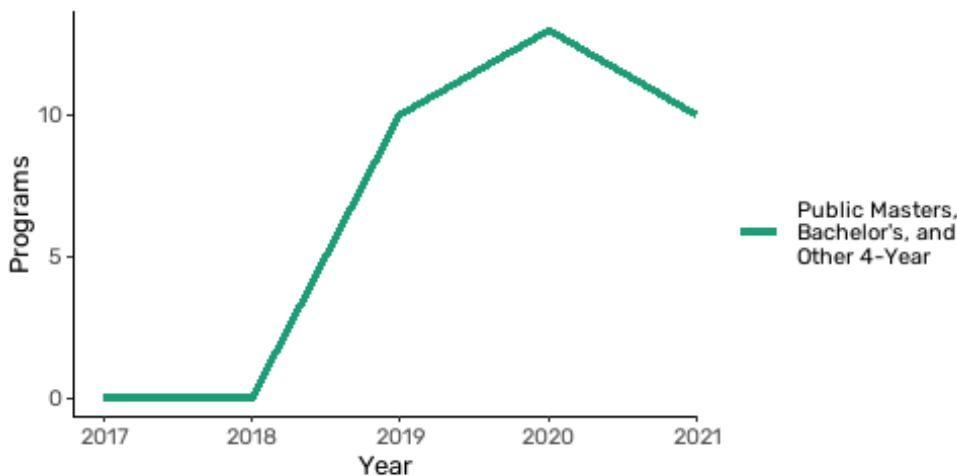


Source: NC-SARA

What are the distance education offerings from Virgin Islands institutions?

Distance Education Programs at Virgin Islands Institutions

Over Time For All Program Levels, by Sector



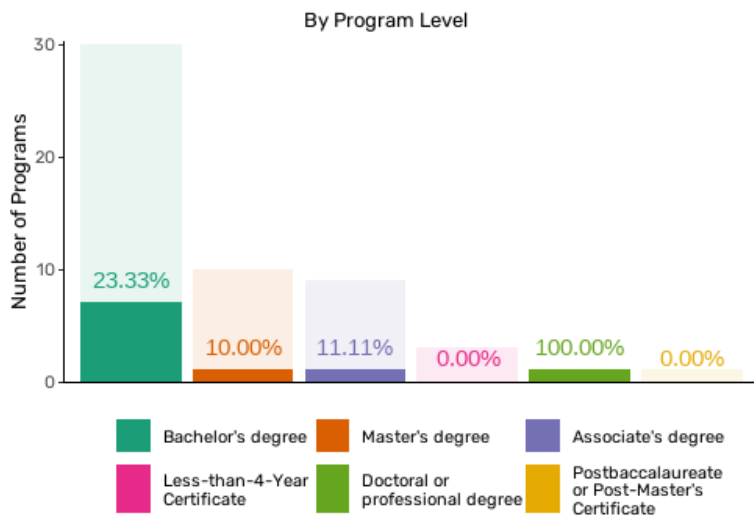
Source: IPEDS

Just as the number of distance education students has grown, the number of distance education programs has also grown, allowing students a wider variety of distance education options. A distance education program is defined as a program for which all the required coursework for program completion can be completed entirely via distance education courses.

In 2018, the University of the Virgin Islands offered no programs that can be completed entirely via distance education. By 2021, that number had grown to 10, which represented 19% of the university's programs.

In 2021, the University of the Virgin Islands offered distance education programs in 5 disciplines. The largest number of distance education programs were available at the Bachelor's degree level; there were 7 such programs. The discipline with the most distance education programs was Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services.

Virgin Islands Programs Available via Distance Education, 2021



Source: IPEDS

Five most common distance education programs in the Virgin Islands, 2021

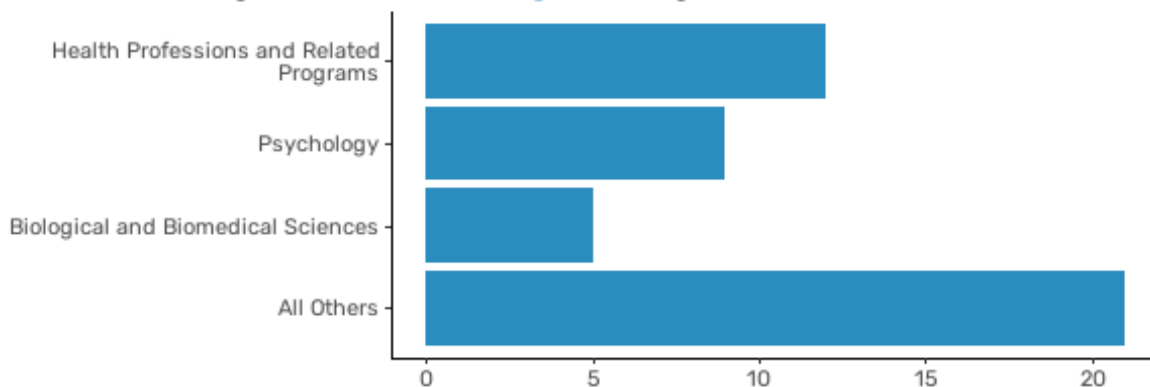
Program Level	Discipline	Distance Education Programs
Bachelor's degree	Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services	3
Bachelor's degree	Engineering/Engineering-related Technologies/Technicians	2
Associate's degree	Engineering/Engineering-related Technologies/Technicians	1
Bachelor's degree	Computer and Information Sciences and Support Services	1
Bachelor's degree	Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies	1
Doctoral or professional degree	Education	1
Master's degree	Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services	1

Out-of-State Learning Placements

These learning placements include supervised field experiences such as, but not limited to, clinical rotations, internships, or student teaching.

In 2021, 47 total incoming students (those attending institutions in other states) participated in learning placements in the Virgin Islands, and no outgoing students attending Virgin Islands institutions participated in learning placements in other states. The higher number of incoming students may indicate that there are job opportunities for new college graduates in the Virgin Islands. It could also be a sign that many Virgin Islands students are attending out-of-state institutions (either via distance education or in person) but doing their learning placements back at home.

Virgin Islands Incoming Learning Placements, 2021

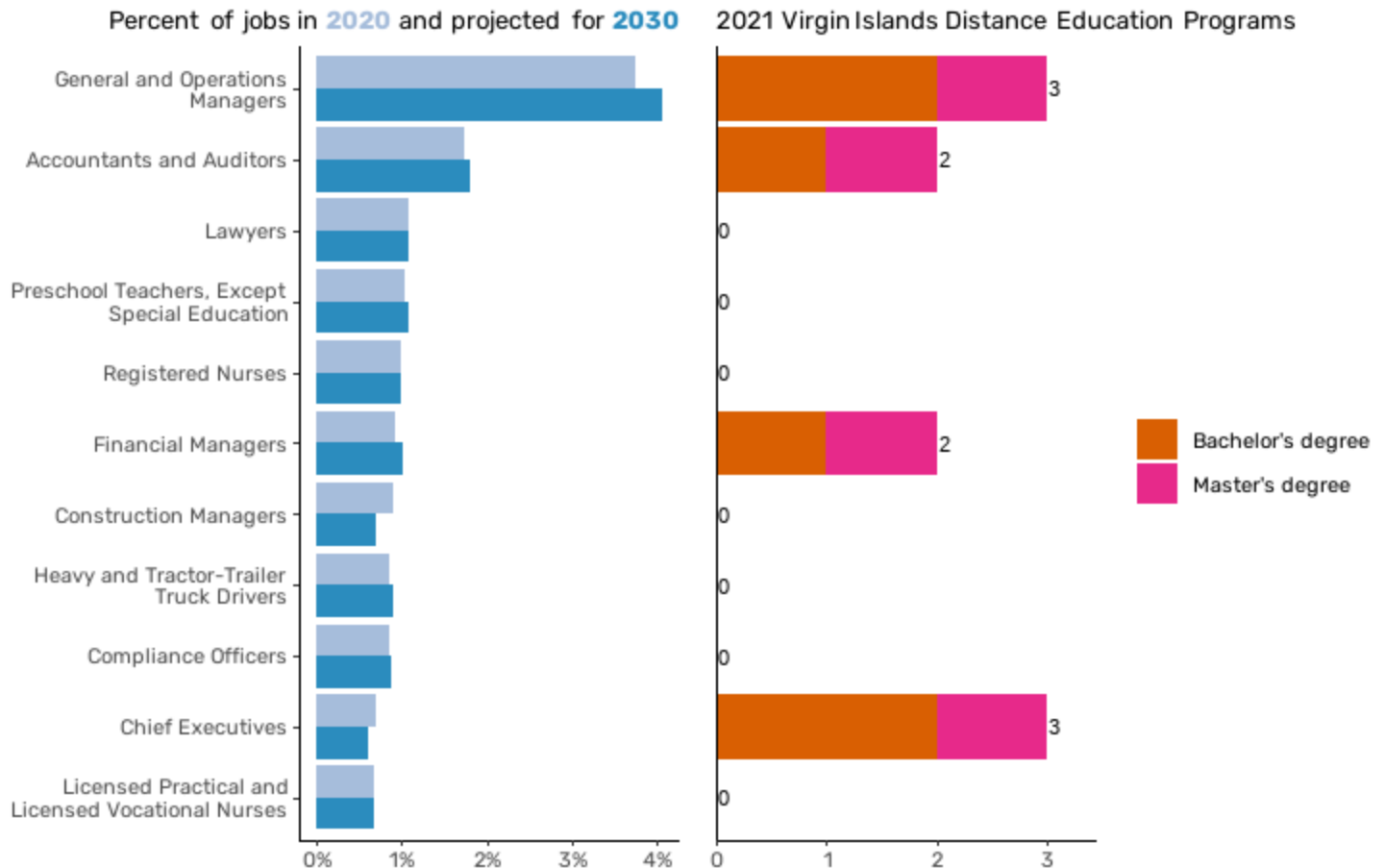


Source: NC-SARA

Workforce Development

What are the top occupations in the Virgin Islands that require a postsecondary credential or degree?

Top Virgin Islands Occupations in That Require Some Postsecondary Education



Sources: Virgin Islands Department of Labor, IPEDS

Many of the largest occupations that require postsecondary education are expected to grow as shares of total employment over time, increasing the need for college-educated workers in the Virgin Islands. Of these eleven occupations, Virgin Islands colleges and universities offer distance education programs at the typical entry level of education, or one level higher, in four of them.

The state's ten largest occupations requiring a post-secondary credential comprised 14% of the Virgin Islands' total jobs in 2020. Among these occupations, the largest is General and Operations Managers, and the one expected to grow by the largest percentage from 2020 to 2030 is Financial Managers.

Data Details:

- The five most common distance education programs may include more than five programs if there are ties.
- In the data on outgoing distance education students, please note that a small amount of the increase in students is due to an increase in the number of institutions participating in SARA and therefore reporting data.
- Outgoing distance education data exclude students studying at institutions in California, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Guam, Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands and American Samoa.
- The out-of-state learning placements graph includes the top three programs, based on 2-digit CIP code, ranked by the number of incoming placements, the top three programs ranked by the number of outgoing placements, and the top three programs with the largest incoming vs. outgoing differences. In many cases, there is overlap in these lists. Data exclude incoming placements from institutions in California and the U.S. Territories listed above.
- The occupation graph includes the top 10 occupations that typically require a post-secondary credential or degree, based on 2021 data and 2026 projections. The top 10 for both time intervals are included, though there is significant overlap. Occupations are based on 6-digit SOC code and ranked by the number of jobs. All types of workers are counted, including those who are self-employed and those not covered by Unemployment Insurance. The distance education programs connected to these occupations are based on Lightcast's CIP-SOC crosswalk. Only programs at each occupation's typical entry level of education plus one level higher are included.