

AACSB Member Schools are Increasing Online Program Offerings

Using a controlled set of data, including 277 AACSB member schools that reported programs annually from 2001–02 to 2008–09, a clear trend towards more online program delivery at certain education levels was found. Of the 277 schools that participated in all years, 9% reported at least one online program in 2001–02. By 2008–09, 24% of the same set of schools had expanded their offerings to include at least one online program.

In 2001–02, online delivery methods were reported by only 1% of all schools, but by 2008–09 that figure increased to 3% of all reported programs. In comparison, across all programs during the same time frame, the percentage of schools that delivered full-time programs decreased slightly from 92.0% to 91.3%. The largest online program growth was seen at the masters-generalist/MBA level, with an increase from 1% in 2001–02 to 7% in 2008–09. During that time, full-time programs dropped from 80.9% to 79.6%, but all other delivery methods increased in percentage.

While the masters-generalist and masters-specialist programs displayed strong growth, and undergraduate programs continued to increase their online offerings, doctoral programs appeared to not be included in this trend. Of the schools in the data set, zero schools offered a doctoral program online. Whereas, the percentage of full-time doctoral programs increased from 97.9% to 98.5%, while all other delivery methods declined. (See Figure 1.)

Annually, AACSB collects data from its member schools around the globe through the Business School Questionnaire (BSQ). Each program can be listed with multiple delivery methods, including full-time, part-time, evening/weekends, distance education, off-campus, online, and partner programs. Schools are instructed to select “online” only if their program may be completed in full by students enrolled only in courses taught online. This includes programs in which some limited residency is required for orientation or testing. Programs are only to be marked as online if the program can be completed in full online. This does not include programs that offer individual online courses, but the degree cannot be completed fully online.

Figure 1.

