

Protect your college or university from cyberthreats

The pressure to modernize and meet the needs and expectations of students, faculty, staff, donors and alumni is driving higher education to embrace new technology — including Internet of Things (IoT) devices, online learning platforms and smart classroom tools.

While these innovations can enhance learning and improve operations, they can also expand the attack surface for cybercriminals and make institutions more vulnerable.

549% The increase in web distributed denial of service (DDoS) attacks between 2023 and 2024.¹

Understand why higher education is at risk

Colleges and universities can be a target due to their large attack surface, the amount of personally identifiable information (PII) they collect, staffing shortfalls and limited funding for cybersecurity.

70% of cybersecurity and privacy professionals in higher education say their institutions do not have enough staff to meet their goals.²

90% of cybersecurity professionals identify one or more skills gaps on their cybersecurity teams.³

50% The average cybersecurity spending increase at higher education organizations between 2019 and 2023.⁴

Track the evolving threat profile

The threats targeting institutions of higher learning are constantly changing as hackers develop workarounds to gain entry to systems and bypass security responses. Top threats affecting colleges and universities are:

- Social engineering**
Phishing attacks impersonate legitimate entities to steal data. One survey of higher education institutions revealed 100% said they had experienced phishing attempts.⁵
- AI-powered cyberthreats**
AI is being used to create automated attacks that are harder to detect and thwart. Nearly half of organizations worldwide consider the advance of adversarial capabilities to be the biggest security concern surrounding AI.⁶
- Ransomware and other malware**
Attackers increasingly use malware that encrypts critical data to bring operations to a standstill before extorting payments. In 2024, the average ransom demand in the education industry was \$847,000.⁷
- DDoS attacks**
Colleges and universities are experiencing a surge in these exploits. Denial of service assaults now affect 40% of higher education institutions.⁸
- Data breaches**
Unauthorized access or use of confidential data remains a risk for colleges and universities. The average cost of a data breach in the education sector was \$3.8 million as of 2025.⁹



Know where you're vulnerable

Three types of higher education data often breached:

Student records
PII is the most common type of data stolen or compromised.¹⁰

Financial and operational data
Across U.S. educational institutions, 6.7 million individual records were impacted by ransomware attacks between 2018 and 2024.¹¹

Payment systems
In one 30-day period, educational institutions reported 4,361 phishing threats originating from 40 unique sender domains.¹²

Find comprehensive coverage and support

Widespread, coordinated network protection can keep you one step ahead of evolving higher education network threats.

Discover how you can help safeguard your systems, students and staff with security solutions from Spectrum Business®, a Charter Communications brand.

[Learn more](#)

1. "2025 Global Threat Analysis Report," Radware, 2025.
 2. Nicole Muscanell, "2025 EDUCAUSE Cybersecurity and Privacy Workforce in Higher Education," June 9, 2025.
 3. "2024 ISC2 Cybersecurity Workforce Study," ISC2, October 31, 2024.
 4. "Cyber Budgets Increase, Executive Overview Improves, but Challenges Lurk Under the Surface," Moody's Ratings, September 26, 2023.
 5. Javvad Malik, "[Heads Up] Your Kid's School Cybersecurity Gets Worse at an Alarming Rate," KnowBe4, June 10, 2025.
 6. "Global Cybersecurity Outlook 2025," World Economic Forum, January 13, 2025.
 7. Rebecca Moody, "Ransomware Roundup: 2024 End-of-Year Report," Comparitech, January 9, 2025.
 8. Malik, "[Heads Up] Your Kid's School Cybersecurity Gets Worse at an Alarming Rate."
 9. "Cost of a Data Breach Report 2025: The AI Oversight Gap," Ponemon Institute and IBM Security, July 2025.
 10. Ibid.
 11. Paul Bischoff, "On Average, US Schools & Colleges Lose \$500K per Day to Downtime From Ransomware Attacks," Comparitech, August 27, 2024.
 12. Martin Kraemer, "Schools in Session: Surge in Phishing Attacks Targeting the Education Sector," KnowBe4, March 4, 2025.