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REPORT

Signature Report 14 State Supplement:
Completing College: A State-Level View
of Student Completion Rates



Project on Academic Success



INDIANA UNIVERSITY

Signature Report 14 State Supplement: Completing College: A State-Level View of Student Completion Rates

In the state supplement to our sixth annual report on national college completion rates, we take a state-by-state look at the six-year outcomes for students who began postsecondary education in fall 2011.

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

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Among the study's findings:

- The national completion rate for the fall 2011 cohort who started in four-year public institutions was 64.7 percent. In 24 states, this percentage was higher than the national average. In eight states (Connecticut, Iowa, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, South Carolina, Vermont, and Virginia), at least three in four students who started at a four-year public institution completed a degree within six years.
- The national completion rate for the fall 2011 cohort who started in two-year public institutions was 37.5 percent. In 24 states, the completion rate was higher than the national average. In three states (Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota), over half of the two-year public starters completed a credential in six years.
- In the majority of states (38 states), more than one in 10 students starting at four-year public institutions completed their first credential at a different institution. In five states (Minnesota, North Dakota, South Carolina, South Dakota, Wisconsin), more than 15 percent of four-year public starters completed their first credential at a different institution.
- Nationally, 15 percent of students who started at a two-year public institution completed a degree at a four-year institution with or without a two-year credential. In Illinois and Kansas one in five two-year public starters finished in a four-year institution in six years.
- The college completion rate for students who started in four-year public institutions increased from the fall 2010 cohort's 62.4 percent to the fall 2011 cohort's 64.7 percent, nationally. In the majority of states (38 states), the college completion rate also increased from 2010 to 2011.
- Nationally, 48.9 percent of adult learners who started in a four-year public institution completed a degree within six years. In Illinois and Texas nearly three-quarters of adult learners completed a degree within the same period.
- The overall completion rate for women who started at four-year public institutions was 68.5 percent whereas for men it was 61.1 percent, resulting in an overall national gender achievement gap at 7.5 percentage points. The gender gap in favor of women was largest in Maryland, North Dakota, and Utah (14 percentage points) and nonexistent in Maine, where both men and women's six-year completion rate was 54 percent.
- The national completion rate for the fall 2011 cohort who started in four-year private nonprofit institutions was 76 percent. In 12 states, more than 80 percent of students who started at a four-year private nonprofit institution completed a degree within six years.

INTRODUCTION

As a supplement to *Completing College: A National View of Student Completion Rates – Fall 2011 Cohort (2017)*, hereafter “*Completing College*,” this report focuses on six-year student success outcomes and college completion rates by state. Three sets of tables organized by institution type display the results, presenting each state’s outcomes for students who started postsecondary education at four-year public institutions, two-year public institutions, and four-year private nonprofit institutions. Each set of tables provides state-level overviews of college completion outcomes.

Further results are included, displaying state-level six-year outcomes for students:

- By enrollment intensity across the six-year study period—exclusively full time (Tables 2, 11, 20), exclusively part time (Tables 3, 12, 21), and mixed (Tables 4, 13, 22);
- By age at first entry to college—age 20 and younger (Tables 5, 14, 23), over age 20 through age 24 (Tables 6, 15, 24), and over age 24 (Tables 7, 16, 25);
- By gender—women and men who started at each institution type (Tables 8, 17, 26 and 9, 18, 27, respectively).

As presented in *Completing College*, the overall six-year completion rate for first-time-in-college degree-seeking students who started college in fall 2011 was 56.9 percent, including 11.5 percent who completed at an institution different from their starting institution. In other words, one in five students who completed a degree did so at an institution other than the one of their initial enrollment. Findings from *Completing College* also showed that gains from completions elsewhere were higher for traditional-age students than for delayed entry students (over age 20 through age 24 at first entry) and adult learners (over age 24 at first entry).

When disaggregated by institution type, the total completion rate was highest for students who started at four-year private nonprofit institutions (76.0 percent), followed by students who started at four-year public institutions (64.7 percent). The completion rate was 37.5 percent for those who started at two-year public institutions, see Table i below (see *Completing College* for further details). The overall proportion of students completing elsewhere, was about the same for students who started at any of these three institution types – about 11 to 12 percent of the starting cohort.

Table i. Six-Year Outcomes by Starting Institution Type (N=2,264,948)

Institution Type	Total Completion Rate (%)	Completion at Same Institution (%)	Completion at Different Institution (%)		Still Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)	Not Enrolled (At Any Institution) (%)
			Two-Year	Four-Year		
Overall	56.86	45.39	3.15	8.32	11.74	31.39
Four-Year Public	64.71	53.48	3.42	7.80	11.10	24.20
Four-Year Private Nonprofit	76.04	63.71	2.29	10.04	7.23	16.73
Four-Year Private For-Profit	35.25	22.08	1.95	11.22	10.62	54.12
Two-Year Public	37.53	26.48	3.35	7.70	15.21	47.26

Building on the findings presented in *Completing College*, this follow-up report examines college completion rates for each state where the Clearinghouse data coverage for the study cohort was at least 65 percent. Both *Completing College* and this supplement report focus on the fall 2011 cohort, following them through June 30, 2017, and highlighting six-year student outcomes including degree and certificate completion and continuing enrollment). Completions were established using a combination of degree/certificate award records submitted by institutions as part of their participation in DegreeVerify and StudentTracker. Details on weighting and the imputation of missing data can be found in Appendix A of *Completing College*.

COHORT AND DATA DEFINITIONS

Over 2.2 million first-time degree-seeking students who started their postsecondary studies in the fall of 2011 make up the cohort examined in this study. First-time status was established by confirming that a student (1) did not show a postsecondary enrollment record prior to summer 2011, unless such prior enrollment happened before the student turned 18 years old (dual enrollment) (2) did not receive a degree or certificate from any postsecondary institution prior to fall 2011, according to Clearinghouse data. Fall 2011 enrollments were defined as enrollment during any term starting August 15 through October 31, inclusive: if the institution had no term begin date during this period then between June 1 and August 14, 2011.

There were two important changes to how the 2011 cohort of first-time degree-seeking students were defined in comparison to previous reports. These include the exclusion of current dual enrolled students and an all years look-back for prior enrollment exclusions.

1. **All-years look-back for prior enrollments:** Data limitations in previous reports limited our ability to search for previous enrollments in order to establish first-time status, to within four years prior to the cohort year. Beginning with this year's report, students with any prior non-dual enrollment, regardless of how far back in the Clearinghouse data that enrollment occurred, were removed from the cohort as non-first-time students.
2. **Exclusion of current dual enrolled students:** Students who were 17 years old or younger during the fall 2011 semester were excluded from the dataset (i.e., current dual enrollment students). This was done to ensure that those who were simultaneously attending high school and post-secondary classes were not considered first-time college students.

Analyses at the national level revealed that these changes had a larger impact on two-year public institutions' outcomes than those of four-year institutions, likely resulting from the exclusion of dually enrolled students who typically enroll in community colleges (see Appendix A in *Completing College* for more details). Specifically, at the national-level, the direction of the change in the overall completion rate and the rates at four-year public and private non-profit institutions was consistent with the changes from 2010 to 2011 under the older cohort definitions. However, the completion rate for students who started at two-year public institutions declined when we applied new definitions, which would have slightly increased from the 2010 results if we had kept the older definitions.

The impact from the cohort definitional changes was similar at the state-level: namely, in those states where a decline in the completion rates of students who started in two-year public institutions was observed, it was mostly the result of the changes made to the cohort definitions.

HIGHLIGHTING STATE-LEVEL RESULTS

This supplemental report presents student outcomes by the state where the students' entering institution was located. Data coverage for the cohort identified in this study varies somewhat across states and institution types within states (see Appendix A of this report for coverage by state and institution type). Accordingly, we have included state-by-state results for four-year public, two-year public, and four-year private nonprofit institutions, including within each of these categories those states

for which the historical data coverage (percentage of enrollments for the state/institution type) for the cohort is 65 percent or higher. Using this approach, we produced tables showing results for 50, 46, and 43 of the 50 states for four-year public, two-year public, and four-year private nonprofit institutions, respectively. Table ii, below, shows states included in the tables presented for each institutional type in this supplement to the national report.

Table ii. Representation of Each State in Results Tables by Institution Type

State	Four-Year Public	Two-Year Public	Four-Year Private Nonprofit
Alabama	X	X	X
Alaska	††		*
Arizona	X		
Arkansas	X	X	X
California	X	X	X
Colorado	X	X	X
Connecticut	X	X	X
Delaware	*	**	*
District of Columbia	*		X
Florida	X	X	X
Georgia	X	X	X
Hawaii	X	X	
Idaho	X	X	*
Illinois	X	X	X
Indiana	X	*	X
Iowa	X	X	X
Kansas	X	X	
Kentucky	X	X	X
Louisiana	X		X
Maine	X	X	X
Maryland	X	X	X
Massachusetts	X	X	X
Michigan	X	X	
Minnesota	X	X	X
Mississippi	X	X	X
Missouri	X	X	X
Montana	X	X	X
Nebraska	X	X	X
Nevada	X	*	

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State	Four-Year Public	Two-Year Public	Four-Year Private Nonprofit
New Hampshire	X	X	X
New Jersey	X	X	X
New Mexico	X	X	*
New York	X	X	X
North Carolina	X	X	X
North Dakota	X	X	X
Ohio	X	X	X
Oklahoma	X	X	X
Oregon	X	X	X
Pennsylvania	X	X	X
Rhode Island	*	*	X
South Carolina	X	X	X
South Dakota	X	X	X
Tennessee	X	X	X
Texas	X	X	X
Utah	X	*	X
Vermont	X	*	X
Virginia	X	X	X
Washington	X	X	X
West Virginia	X		
Wisconsin	X	X	X
Wyoming	*	X	

- X Included in report
- * Fewer than three institutions
- ** Fewer than 50 students
- (blank) Lower than 65% coverage
- †† Results are not reported because the cohort includes both two-year and four-year enrollments.

To further guide readers regarding coverage, and consequently the relative confidence with which results should be interpreted, we grouped the states according to the following three levels of coverage:

- **Low coverage:** States with coverage between 65 and 79 percent
- **Medium coverage:** States with coverage between 80 and 89 percent
- **High Coverage:** States with coverage of 90 percent or higher