

NATIONAL STUDENT CLEARINGHOUSE[®]
RESEARCH CENTER[™]

Signature[™]
REPORT

Completing College:
A State-Level View of Student
Completion Rates—Fall 2012 Cohort



Project on Academic Success



INDIANA UNIVERSITY

Signature Report 16 State Supplement Completing College: A State-Level View of Student Completion Rates

Suggested Citation: Shapiro, D., Dundar, A., Huie, F., Wakhungu, P., Bhimdiwala, A., & Wilson, S. (2019, March). Completing College: A State-Level View of Student Completion Rates (Signature Report No. 16a). Herndon, VA: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Authors

National Student Clearinghouse Research Center

Doug Shapiro
Afet Dunder
Faye Huie

Project on Academic Success, Indiana University

Phoebe Khasiala Wakhungu
Ayesha Bhimdiwala
Sean Eric Wilson

[Download the state-level result tables here.](#) Included in the state result tables are completion rate statistics disaggregated by demographic variables (i.e., age, gender, and race and ethnicity), enrollment intensity, school type, and school level (i.e., two-year public, four-year public, and four-year private nonprofit). Outcomes by race and ethnicity are available only for students who started in four-year public institutions due to uneven coverage rates of the race and ethnicity data for other institution types across states. In-and out-of-state completion analyses are also included.

The following completion statistics are reported in each table for four-year schools:

- 1) Total completion rate
- 2) Completion rate at the same institution
- 3) Completion rate at a different four-year institution
- 4) Completion rate at a different two-year institution
- 5) Percent still enrolled (at any institution)
- 6) Percent no longer enrolled (at any institution)

For two-year schools, two additional statistics are included:

- 1) Subsequent completion rate at a four-year institution
- 2) Total four-year completion rate

AMONG THE STUDY'S FINDINGS:

The national completion rate for the fall 2012 cohort who started in four-year public institutions was 65.7 percent. This overall rate includes full-time, part-time and mixed-time students. In 27 states, the rate was higher than the national average. In seven states (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 2012 cohort who started in two-year public institutions was 39.2 percent. This overall rate includes full-time, part-time and mixed-time students. In 24 states, the completion rate was higher than the national average. In four states (Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota), over half of the two-year public starters completed a credential in six years.

In most states (38), more than one in 10 students starting at four-year public institutions transferred and completed their first credential at an institution other than the starting institution. In five states (Georgia, North Dakota, South Carolina, South Dakota, and Wisconsin), more than 15 percent of four-year public starters completed their first credential at a different institution.

Nationally, 16 percent of students who started at a two-year public institution transferred and completed a degree at a four-year institution, including those who did so with and without first earning a two-year credential. This overall rate includes full-time, part-time and mixed-time students. In Florida, Illinois, Maryland, New Jersey, and Kansas, one in five two-year public starters finished in a four-year institution in six years.

The national completion rate for the fall 2012 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. These overall rates include full-time, part-time and mixed-time students.

The overall completion rate for women who started at four-year public institutions was 69.9 percent whereas for men it was 62.1 percent, resulting in an overall national gender attainment gap of 7.7 percentage points. The

gender gap in favor of women was largest in Maryland, North Dakota, and Utah. The completion rate for men surpassed the completion rate for women in only one state, Maine, where men graduated at higher rates than women by 1.7 percentage points.

NEW THIS YEAR: STATE-LEVEL COMPLETION RESULTS BY RACE AND ETHNICITY FOR FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

National results by race and ethnicity show a gap of 25 percentage points between the overall completion rates of Black and white students who started in four-year public institutions. In 20 states, the achievement gap was narrower than the national average. In two states (Massachusetts and Oregon), that gap was below 15 percentage points.

The national completion gap for Hispanic and white students who started at four-year public institutions was 15 percentage points. In 15 states, this gap was less than 10 percentage points and in four states (Kentucky, Louisiana, South Carolina, and West Virginia), the gap was below 5 percentage points.

The overall national four-year completion rate for Black students was 48 percent. In 17 states, the completion rate for Black students was above the national average and in six states (Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Carolina, and Virginia) it was higher than 60 percent.

The national average completion rate for Hispanic students who started in four-year public institutions was 57 percent. In 22 states, Hispanic students had a higher completion rate than the national average and in five states (Mississippi, New Hampshire, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia), the completion rate was greater than 70 percent.

Nationally, Asian and white students at four-year public institutions had completion rates at 77 and 72 percent, respectively. The completion rate surpassed 80 percent for Asian and white students in six states (California, New Jersey, North Carolina, South Carolina, Vermont, and Virginia).

ABOUT THIS REPORT

As a supplement to *Completing College: A National View of Student Completion Rates – Fall 2012 Cohort (2018)*, hereafter “*Completing College*,” this report focuses on six-year student outcomes 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. For the first time this year, outcomes by race and ethnicity are also reported for four-year public institutions.

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, 12, 21), exclusively part time (Tables 3, 13, 22), and mixed (Tables 4, 14, 23);
- By age at first entry to college—age 20 and younger (Tables 5, 15, 24), over age 20 through age 24 (Tables 6, 16, 25), and over age 24 (Tables 7, 17, 26);
- By gender—women and men who started at each institution type (Tables 8, 18, 27 and 9, 19, 28, respectively); and
- By race and ethnicity (Table 10).

As presented in *Completing College*, the overall six-year completion rate for first-time-in-college degree-seeking students who started college in fall 2012 was 58.3 percent. This overall rate includes full-time, part-time and mixed-time students. Also included are the 11.4 percent who transferred and completed at an institution different from their starting institution. In other words, nearly one in five students who completed a degree did so at an institution other than the one of their initial enrollment.

When disaggregated by institution type, the total completion rate was highest for students who started at four-year private nonprofit institutions (76.1 percent), followed by students who started at four-year public institutions (65.7 percent). The completion rate was 39.2 percent for those who started at two-year public institutions (see Table i below and *Completing College* for further details). The overall proportion of students transferring and completing elsewhere was about the same for each of the three institution types – about 11 to 12 percent of the starting cohort.

Building on the national results, this supplement examines college completion rates for each state. Both *Completing College* and this report focus on the fall 2012 starting cohort, following them through June 30, 2018, and highlighting six-year student outcomes including degree and certificate completion and continuing enrollment. Outcome definitions and other methodological details on defining the cohort, completions weighting, and the imputation of missing data can be found in Appendix A of [Completing College](#).

Table i. Six-Year Outcomes by Starting Institution Type (N=2,259,497)

	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		
Four-Year Public	65.66	54.54	3.28	7.84	10.46	23.88
Four-Year Private Nonprofit	76.06	64.05	2.12	9.89	6.87	17.07
Four-Year Private For-Profit	37.31	26.42	1.85	9.04	10.46	52.23
Two-Year Public	39.22	27.88	3.29	8.05	14.59	46.19

HIGHLIGHTING STATE-LEVEL RESULTS

This report presents student outcomes by the state where the students' entering institution was located. It does not take into account the state of student residency. Data coverage varies across states and across institution types within states (see Appendix A for coverage by state and institution type). We have included results for states with data coverage rates (percentage of enrollments for each state/institution type) of 65 percent or higher for the study cohort.

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