

Graduation Rates Definitions

Freshmen

Freshmen include all regularly enrolled students who have earned fewer than 30 semester hours of academic credit.

First-Time Freshmen

Students who enroll in college for the first time in the fall term of a given year (called the cohort year) constitute the first-time freshmen cohort. First-time freshmen include the following:

- A student who has earned no previous college credit hours;
- A student who has earned college credits while in high school through joint enrollment in college courses;
- A student who graduates from high school in the cohort year, then enrolls in a college for the first time that summer and also enrolls in the fall term of the cohort year. The summer and fall enrollments may be in different institutions.

These definitions follow those created by NCES for IPEDS reporting.

Degree-Seeking Freshmen

Degree-seeking freshmen are those who declare the objective of earning a certificate or degree when they enroll for their first term in college. That includes students seeking less-than-one-year and one-year certificates, associate's degrees, and bachelor's degrees.

Full-Time Freshmen

Full-time freshmen are those who are enrolled for 12 or more credit hours in their first fall term in college.

Bachelor's Degree Graduation Rate Base Cohort

The base cohort for calculating bachelor's degree graduation rates includes all undergraduate, bachelor's degree-seeking, first-time, full-time freshmen.

Six-Year Bachelor's Degree Graduation Rates

Six-year bachelor's degree graduation rates are defined as the percentage of the bachelor's graduation rate base cohort that has obtained a degree within six years of matriculation. Graduates are counted through the summer of the sixth year. There are two types of rates for all degree levels:

- *System-Wide Rates.* Students who graduated from a USG institution other than the one they attended during their original matriculation.
- *Institution-Specific Rates.* Students who graduated from the same USG institution as they attended during their original matriculation.

Associate's Degree Graduation Rate Base Cohort

The base cohort for calculating associate's degree graduation rates includes all undergraduate, associate's degree-seeking, first-time, full-time freshmen.

3-Year Associate's Degree Graduation Rates

Three-year associate's degree graduation rates are defined as the percentage of the associate's graduation rate base cohort that has obtained a degree within three years of matriculation. Graduates are counted through the summer of the third year.

Certificate Graduation Rate Base Cohort

The base cohort for calculating certificate graduation rates includes all undergraduate, certificate seeking, first-time, full-time freshmen.

2-Year Certificate Graduation Rates

Two-year certificate graduation rates are defined as the percentage of the certificate graduation rate base cohort that has obtained a degree within two years of matriculation. Graduates are counted through the summer of the second year.

Gender

Gender is either male or female. Gender information is self-reported by the student at the time of application; however, it is not required information on the application. Institutions collect the information at registration if there is no information on the application. The category "unknown" is not allowed in USG reporting. If a student refuses to indicate gender, the institution makes a judgment.

Race/Ethnicity

Race/ethnicity is categorized into one of the following groups. Ethnicity, whether Hispanic or non-Hispanic, is considered like a race for purposes of reporting.

Black, Non-Hispanic—A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa, except those of Hispanic origin.

American Indian/Alaskan Native—A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North America and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.

Asian—A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian Subcontinent.

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander--A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa or other Pacific islands.

Hispanic—A person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.

White, Non-Hispanic—A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa or the Middle East, except those of Hispanic origin.

Two or More Races—A person in more than one of the above categories.

Race/Ethnicity is self-reported by the student at the time of application; however, it is not required information on the application. The category of "unknown" is used to report students whose racial/ethnic category is undeclared.