COLLEGE MILESTONES
SIX-YEAR CREDIT COMPLETION: UNITED STATES

Percentage of U.S. community college students who completed six-year credit milestones, by demographic and enrollment characteristics

OVERALL

GENDER

AGE WHEN FIRST ENROLLED
Demographic and enrollment characteristics

- **RACE/ETHNICITY**
  - White
  - African American
  - Hispanic/Latino
  - Asian American
  - Other race

- **INCOME PERCENTILE RANK WHEN FIRST ENROLLED**
  - Lowest income
  - Middle income
  - Highest income

- **PARENTS’ EDUCATION**
What Is Measured?
Percentage of students who completed 12 or more credits or 30 or more credits after six years

Who Is Counted?
First-time college students who first enrolled in U.S. community colleges in the 2003-04 academic year as of spring 2009

What It Tells Us
About four-fifths (80 percent) of U.S. community college students completed 12 or more credits within six years, while about three-fifths (61 percent) completed 30 or more credits over the same time period. As would be expected, students who attended exclusively full time were more likely to reach these six-year credit milestones than students who attended exclusively part time (87 percent vs. 51 percent; 72 percent vs. 21 percent). Students who took a developmental education course within six years reached these credit milestones at a higher rate than students who did not take developmental education (84 percent vs. 72 percent; 63 percent vs. 55 percent).

Why It’s Important
Students who intend to complete a program and obtain a credential or transfer to a four-year college must complete a required number of course credits. Even after the first year, earning a specific number of credits is a milestone that is associated with future success (Calgano et al., 2006, table 4; Offenstein, Moore, & Shulock, 2010, figure 12). For students who do not intend to graduate or transfer but may be more interested in improving their workforce skills or cultivating personal interests, earning a certain number of college-level credits may constitute a goal in and of itself.

ABOUT THE DATA
Credits: were normalized by placing hours or credit units received for a course on a common scale so that credit units can be compared across students and institutions.

Race/ethnicity: Other includes Native American, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and individuals who indicated Other or Two or more races. Race categories exclude Hispanic/Latino origin unless specified.

Income percentile rank: Income percentile rank is calculated separately for dependent and independent students and then combined. Each ranking thus compares the respondent only to other respondents of the same dependency status. Uses parents’ income if respondent is dependent and uses respondent’s own income if respondent is independent.
Social sciences and humanities: includes cultural and gender studies; visual and performing arts; English language and literature; family and consumer sciences; philosophy, theology, and religious studies; psychology; social sciences and history; and liberal arts, general studies, and humanities.

STEM: includes agricultural and natural resource studies; biological and biomedical sciences; computer and information sciences and support; engineering; mathematics and statistics; physical sciences; science technologies and technicians; and engineering technologies and related fields.

Full-time/part-time enrollment: indicates student's cumulative enrollment through 2009. Full-time is defined as 12 or more credit hours per semester.

DATA SOURCE