MOMENTUM
CREDITS EARNED WITHIN ONE YEAR: WASHINGTON

Percentage of first-time students entering Washington Community and Technical Colleges in 2001-02 earning 30 or more credits within one year

What Is Measured?
Percentage of students earning 30 or more credits within one year

Who Is Counted?
First-time students entering Washington Community and Technical Colleges in 2001-02

What It Tells Us
Among first-time Washington Community and Technical College students enrolled in 2001-02, about 21 percent earned a total of 30 or more college-level credits within one year.

Why It’s Important
Researchers generally agree that students need to earn a certain number of credits during their first year to gain momentum toward completion and transfer. Although the probability of completing a certificate or degree increases almost linearly with the number of first-year credits completed (Offenstein et al., 2010, figure 11), the indicators in this measure specify a particular threshold number of credits in the first year. Community college students who earn at least 20 credits in their first year are more likely to complete a certificate or associate degree (Offenstein et al., 2010, figure 12) and to earn a bachelor's degree than those who do not (Adelman, 2005, table 42). Policies that encourage full-time and summer enrollment in the first year can facilitate early credit accumulation.

ABOUT THE DATA
Student unit records were obtained from the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. Estimates include first-time students at Washington Community and Technical Colleges who enrolled in summer 2001 through spring 2002. The total number of first-time college-level students in the cohort was 41,339.

DATA SOURCE