TRANSFER AND COMPLETION
SIX-YEAR COMPLETION RATES: NORTH CAROLINA

Percentage of students who completed a certificate, associate degree, or transferred to a four-year institution within six years

AGE AND ENROLLMENT STATUS

AGE

ENROLLMENT STATUS
What Is Measured?
Percentage of students who completed a certificate or associate degree or transferred to a four-year institution within six years

Who Is Counted?
First-time degree-seeking students who entered North Carolina Community Colleges in fall of 2002

What It Tells Us
Among first-time degree-seeking students enrolled in North Carolina Community Colleges in fall 2002, about 41 percent attained a certificate, associate degree, or transferred to a four-year institution within six years. A greater percentage of students transferred without earning a subbaccalaureate degree (14 percent) than transferred with an award (6 percent). Students were also more likely to earn an associate degree than a certificate (12 percent vs. 9 percent). Students age 22 or younger were twice as likely to transfer without attaining a subbaccalaureate degree as students age 23 or older (18 percent vs. 9 percent). Overall, full-time students attained or transferred at a rate that was higher than that of part-time students (48 percent vs. 31 percent).

Why It's Important
At community colleges, graduation means attainment of a certificate or associate degree. However, many students attend community colleges to take lower-division courses for a bachelor’s degree, and some transfer to a four-year institution without obtaining a credential. From the perspective of the community college, these students have finished a curriculum that prepared them for transfer and, therefore, should be considered as having completed. Some states even track and report which community college students graduate from other institutions. Most sources, however, do not specify what proportion of transfer students have finished the coursework required for upper-division standing at the four-year college, and research suggests that many students transfer without reaching this threshold (Moore, Shulock, & Offenstein, 2009, table 3). A completion rate that combines transfer and degree attainment is sometimes referred to as a “success rate.”

ABOUT THE DATA
Degree-seeking students: include students seeking associate degrees, certificates, or diplomas. All degrees and awards lower than an associate degree are included in the certificate category.

Data were obtained from Curriculum Registration, Progress, and Financial Aid Report files for the fall 2002 cohort. Enrollment status was determined at the time of fall registration. The total completed or transferred estimate was calculated using data from the original source but does not appear as such in the original report.

DATA SOURCE