TRANSFER AND COMPLETION
SIX-YEAR PERSISTENCE RATES: CALIFORNIA

Persistence rates for first-time degree-seeking California Community College students entering in 1998-99, 2000-01, and 2002-03

What Is Measured?
Percentage of students who completed 30 or more units or were still enrolled without a degree

Who Is Counted?
First-time degree-seeking students who entered California Community Colleges in 1998-99, 2000-01, and 2002-03 and who did not complete within six years

What It Tells Us
Among first-time degree-seeking students who entered California Community Colleges in 2002-03 but did not complete a degree, 5 percent were still enrolled six years later. One-quarter had completed 30 or more units toward a degree.

Why It’s Important
Traditionally, students must study full time for two years in community college to earn an associate degree or complete a lower-division curriculum for transfer to a four-year college (and usually less than one year to earn a certificate). But less than half of community college students enroll full time in their first term (Offenstein & Shulock, 2009), and even fewer enroll full time for two consecutive years (Clery, 2010). Because many part-time students enroll less than half time, and most must take at least one developmental education course that does not count toward a degree or transfer, some have argued that even six years is not sufficiently long for community students to meet their educational goals (Moltz, 2011). This measure represents the proportion of community college students who were not able to complete or transfer within six years but still may do so.

ABOUT THE DATA
First-time students: include students enrolled in California Community Colleges for the first time six years prior to the specified year and who have no previous college degree. Students concurrently enrolled in high school are excluded.

Degree-seekers: Defined in one of three ways: (1) by age (17-19); (2) by goal (desire to transfer to four-year college or earn a degree/certificate); or (3) by course taking (completed 12 units and attempted a transfer-level mathematics or English course).

Outcomes are not mutually exclusive, so students could have earned 30 or more units and be enrolled after six years.


DATA SOURCE