

Graduation Rates (GR) Who to Report 2024-25 Data Collection

This tutorial discusses who to include, cohort revisions, and non-completers when reporting graduation rate data.

The cohort for graduation rate data includes full-time, first-time degree- or certificate-seeking undergraduate students.

Students who enroll for the first time in the preceding summer term and students entering with advanced standing by earning college credits before graduating from high school are also considered first-time students.

Report all degree or certificate seeking students by race/ethnicity and gender. Degree or certificate seeking includes students enrolled in courses for credit who are seeking a degree, certificate, or other formal award. This includes students enrolled in vocational or occupational programs, those enrolled in off-campus centers, and those enrolled in distance learning/home study programs. High school students also enrolled in postsecondary courses for credit are not considered degree/certificate-seeking.

For four-year institutions, the graduation rate cohort is divided into two sub-cohorts. The first group includes students who upon entry are seeking a bachelor's or equivalent degree. The second group includes students who are seeking some other undergraduate award besides a bachelor's or equivalent degree.

For less-than four-year institutions, all eligible students are counted as one cohort. Students taking remedial education courses are considered part of the graduation rate cohort if they are considered degree/certificate-seeking for the purposes of financial aid.

For institutions with a traditional calendar system, an initial cohort is preloaded for them, based on data reported in a previous IPEDS Enrollment survey. Institutions with non-traditional calendar systems do not have data preloaded for their cohorts. These schools will report cohort-eligible students from the full year as their initial cohort.

It is important to remember that a student remains in the cohort even if their status changes after they enter. For example, if they become a part-time student after their first semester or they transfer to another institution, they are still considered as part of the cohort.

However, institutions have the option to revise their preloaded cohort if:

- There are eligible students they omitted in the past.
- If students were originally included in the cohort by mistake. For example, a student was included that was first-time or full-time.
- If better information regarding race/ethnicity or gender is found on eligible students. This could be due to someone originally classified in the wrong category, or changes resulting from the new race/ethnicity categories that have been established since the original cohort was formed.

Cohort revisions should not be made for students who have transferred out of the institution, dropped out, or who fall into one of the exclusion categories. Those students should all be reported in their appropriate column.

Institutions should be prepared to provide an explanation for any cohort revision of over 20 percent.

Non-completers are the students in the cohort that do not fall into any of the following categories:

- Completers
- Transfers-out
- Exclusions
- Students still enrolled

Non-completers are those students who either dropped out before completion or who took longer than 150 percent of normal time to complete their program.

A common mistake occurs when institutions try to report all of their students as either completers, transfer-outs, or exclusions, leaving zero students as non-completers. This situation will trigger an explanation edit for the institution to resolve.

If only completers and exclusions have been reported, an edit stating that the institution has reported a 100 percent graduation rate will appear for the respondent to resolve.

For more information on the material presented in this tutorial, please contact the IPEDS Help Desk.