

## Graduation Rate Report Definition of Variables *Last Update: October 2021*

---

This document provides definitions of the variables displayed in the Graduation Rate reports. The graduation rate is the percentage of students in a given cohort who completed their degree within a specified time frame. Cohorts are created following the IPEDS definition of first-time freshman (shown below).

*Note: A student is only counted as graduated if the student earned the same degree level that they sought as a first-time freshman.*

Many of the variables used in this report are defined in detail at [https://www.usg.edu/research/reporting\\_resources](https://www.usg.edu/research/reporting_resources) in the ADC Functional and Technical Definitions of Derived Variables document.

### **FTF IPEDS**

A degree-seeking (*Degree Level Code* not equal to 'N' or 'X') undergraduate student (*Student Level Number* equal to 10, 20, 30, 40) who enrolls in college for the first time in a fall term, or the preceding summer term. To be IPEDS FTF, the student must meet one of the following conditions:

- i. Does not have any valid transfer college records
- ii. Does have valid transfer college records but graduated from high school in the calendar year preceding the enrollment fiscal year. E.g. Student graduated high school in 2015 and enrolled in Summer 15 or Fall 2015 (which equates to an enrollment fiscal year and term of 20161 or 20162).
- iii. Does have valid transfer college records but all records occurred in the years prior to (and including) the high school graduation year, e.g., student graduated from high school in 2015 and all transfer records occurred in 2015 or prior years.

This definition is set forth by the National Center for Education Statistics, which maintains the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). *Conditions (ii) and (iii) allow for former dual enrollment students to be counted as FTF.*

Graduation rates can be specified by fall cohort year, degree type, number of years, full-time status, race/ethnicity, and gender. These are defined below.

### **Contents**

**Page 2: Report Options—Fall Cohort Year, Type of Degree, Number of Years, Full-time and Part-time, Gender**

**Page 3: Report Options—Race/Ethnicity**

**Page 4: Report Results – column definitions**

## Report Options

### *Fall Cohort Year*

The cohort year is the year of matriculation. A degree-seeking first-time freshman entering a USG institution in the fall of 2019 would be included in the 2019 cohort.

### *Type of Degree*

The report can be narrowed to a specific certificate or degree level. The options include bachelor's degree, associate degree, all certificates, one-year certificates, less than one-year certificates, or two-year certificates.

### *Number of Years*

Graduation rates can be calculated for up to a ten-year window (depending on available data) and are counted through the summer of the last year. The decision for number of years should be based on the degree levels included and purpose of the report.

### *Full-time and Part-time Status*

Full-time first-time freshmen are those who are enrolled for 12 or more credit hours in their first fall term (of their cohort year). Part-time first-time freshman are those enrolled for fewer than 12 hours in their first fall term.

### *Gender*

Gender is either male or female. Gender information is self-reported by the student at the time of application; however, it is not required information on the application. Institutions collect the information at registration if there is no information on the application. The category "unknown" is not allowed in USG reporting. If a student refuses to indicate gender, the institution makes a judgment.

## **Race/Ethnicity**

Race/Ethnicity is self-reported by the student at the time of application; however, it is not required information on the application. These categories are used to describe groups to which individuals belong, identify with, or belong in the eyes of the community. The categories do not denote scientific definitions of anthropological origins. A student that identifies as being of Hispanic ethnicity is classified as Hispanic. All students that are not Hispanic are classified as a specific race if they only indicate one race, and as Two or more races/multi-racial if they select more than one race. The category of "Race and Ethnicity Unknown" is used to report students whose racial/ethnic category is undeclared. *Note: This report does not use the IPEDS category of 'Non-resident alien.'*

### **American Indian/Alaskan Native**

A person identifying as having origins in any of the original peoples of North America and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.

### **Asian**

A person identifying as having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian Subcontinent.

### **Black or African American (Non-Hispanic)**

A person identifying as having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa, except those of Hispanic origin.

### **Hispanic or Latino**

A person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.

### **Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander**

A person identifying as having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific islands.

### **Race and Ethnicity Unknown**

A category used to classify students whose race/ethnicity is not known and whom institutions are unable to place in one of the specified racial/ethnic categories.

### **Two or More Races**

A person identifying as having origins from two or more races.

### **White (Non-Hispanic)**

A person identifying as having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa or the Middle East, except those of Hispanic origin.

## **Report Results**

### **Institution Name**

The USG institution where the student first enrolled in their cohort year. The institutions are categorized by sector—research universities, comprehensive universities, state universities, and state colleges.

### **Total Beginning Cohort**

This is the total number of degree-seeking first time freshman in a chosen cohort who meet any other criteria selected for the report (for example, full-time). Students are assigned to a degree-level cohort based on the degree level sought at matriculation.

### **Number Graduated**

This is the number of students who graduated within the specified time period and earned the same degree level that they sought as a first-time freshman. For example, a first-time freshman seeking a bachelor's degree will get counted as having graduated if they receive a bachelor's degree but will not be counting as having graduated if they receive an associate degree. Two numbers are reported here: the institution-specific number of students who graduated and the system-wide number.

**Institution-specific:** The number of students in the cohort who graduated from the same institution of matriculation.

**System-wide:** The number of degree-seeking first-time freshman in the cohort who graduated from any institution in the USG system, including the institution of matriculation.

### **Graduation Rate**

The graduation rate is the percentage of students from a given cohort who graduated from a USG institution within a specified term (for example, one year later). The total beginning cohort is the denominator of the rate; the number of students graduated is the numerator of the rate calculation. Two rates are reported here: the institution-specific rate and the system-wide rate.

**Institution-specific:** For the institution-specific graduation rate, the institution-specific number of cohort members who graduated is divided by the total cohort number.

**System-wide:** For the system-wide graduation rate, the system-wide number of cohort members who graduated is divided by the total cohort number.