



RESEARCH BRIEF

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Successful Course Completion Rates of NOVA Students by Full-/Part-Time Status

This Research Brief examines successful course completion rates in all courses taken by five cohorts of first-time to NOVA students from Fall 2009 through Fall 2013. Successful course completion is defined as the proportion of students completing a course with a grade of “A,” “B,” “C,” “P,” or “S.” Extended Learning Institute courses were excluded. Data are presented by enrollment status (either full-time or part-time).

Overall, the data show that female students consistently had higher course completion rates than male students, regardless of full- or part-time status. Students ages 18 to 21 generally had the lowest rates of course success, regardless of full- or part-time status. Among both full- and part-time students, Black and Native American students tended to have lower rates of successful course completion compared to other racial/ethnic groups. Asian and Other students generally had the highest rates of successful course completion for full- and part-time students.

Table 1 (below) and Figure 1 (next page) show successful course completion rates for first-time to NOVA students for the Fall 2009 through Fall 2013 cohorts by full-/part-time status. Although course completion rates were similar for full- and part-time students, full-time students had slightly higher completion rates in each cohort. Course completion rates for part-time students generally showed minimal change from year to year with the exception of a four percentage point decrease from the Fall 2012 to Fall 2013 cohorts.

**Table 1. Successful Course Completion Rates by Full-/Part-Time Status:
Fall 2009 through Fall 2013 Cohorts**

| Status | Fall 2009 Cohort | | | Fall 2010 Cohort | | | Fall 2011 Cohort | | | Fall 2012 Cohort | | | Fall 2013 Cohort | | |
|--------------|------------------|---------------|-------------|------------------|---------------|-------------|------------------|---------------|-------------|------------------|---------------|-------------|------------------|---------------|-------------|
| | N | Successful | | N | Successful | | N | Successful | | N | Successful | | N | Successful | |
| | | # | % | | # | % | | # | % | | # | % | | # | % |
| Full-Time | 25,535 | 18,350 | 71.9 | 24,466 | 17,712 | 72.4 | 24,524 | 17,979 | 73.3 | 25,529 | 17,908 | 70.1 | 27,156 | 18,928 | 69.7 |
| Part-Time | 10,398 | 7,427 | 71.4 | 10,610 | 7,589 | 71.5 | 10,088 | 7,198 | 71.4 | 11,484 | 7,968 | 69.4 | 10,643 | 6,893 | 64.8 |
| Total | 35,933 | 25,777 | 71.7 | 35,076 | 25,301 | 72.1 | 34,612 | 25,177 | 72.7 | 37,013 | 25,876 | 69.9 | 37,799 | 25,821 | 68.3 |

**Figure 1. Successful Course Completion Rates by Full-/Part-Time Status:
Fall 2009 through Fall 2013 Cohorts**

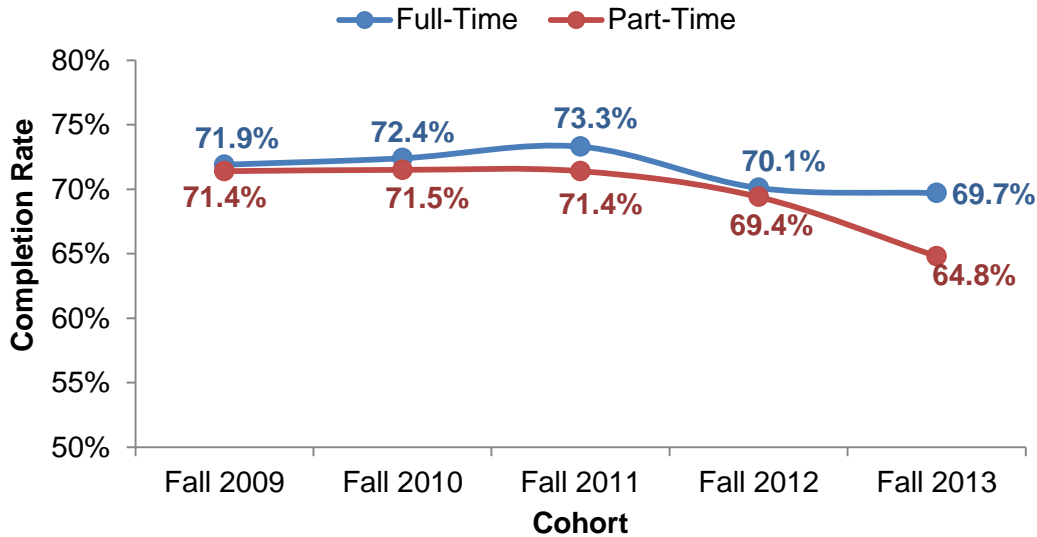


Table 2 and Table 3 below display the course completion rates of first-time to NOVA students by full-/part-time status and gender. For both full-time and part-time students, female students consistently had higher course completion rates than male students. In each cohort, female students successfully completed their courses at rates of 70 to 77 percent, while male students successfully completed their courses at rates of 60 to 70 percent.

**Table 2. Successful Course Completion Rates of Full-Time First-time to NOVA Students by Gender:
Fall 2009 through Fall 2013 Cohorts**

| Gender | Fall 2009 Cohort | | | Fall 2010 Cohort | | | Fall 2011 Cohort | | | Fall 2012 Cohort | | | Fall 2013 Cohort | | |
|--------|------------------|------------|------|------------------|------------|------|------------------|------------|------|------------------|------------|------|------------------|------------|------|
| | N | Successful | | N | Successful | | N | Successful | | N | Successful | | N | Successful | |
| | | # | % | | # | % | | # | % | | # | % | | # | % |
| Male | 13,555 | 9,173 | 67.7 | 13,069 | 8,993 | 68.8 | 13,391 | 9,429 | 70.4 | 13,733 | 9,179 | 66.8 | 14,441 | 9,551 | 66.1 |
| Female | 11,980 | 9,177 | 76.6 | 11,397 | 8,719 | 76.5 | 11,133 | 8,550 | 76.8 | 11,796 | 8,729 | 74.0 | 12,715 | 9,377 | 73.7 |

**Table 3. Successful Course Completion Rates of Part-Time First-time to NOVA Students by Gender:
Fall 2009 through Fall 2013 Cohorts**

| Gender | Fall 2009 Cohort | | | Fall 2010 Cohort | | | Fall 2011 Cohort | | | Fall 2012 Cohort | | | Fall 2013 Cohort | | |
|--------|------------------|------------|------|------------------|------------|------|------------------|------------|------|------------------|------------|------|------------------|------------|------|
| | N | Successful | | N | Successful | | N | Successful | | N | Successful | | N | Successful | |
| | | # | % | | # | % | | # | % | | # | % | | # | % |
| Male | 5,341 | 3,558 | 66.6 | 5,375 | 3,569 | 66.4 | 5,172 | 3,419 | 66.1 | 5,918 | 3,815 | 64.5 | 5,347 | 3,196 | 59.8 |
| Female | 5,057 | 3,869 | 76.5 | 5,235 | 4,020 | 76.8 | 4,916 | 3,779 | 76.9 | 5,566 | 4,153 | 74.6 | 5,296 | 3,697 | 69.8 |

Table 4 presents successful course completion rates of full-time students by age. Among full-time students, older students (ages 30 and over) tended to have higher rates of successful course completion than younger students. However, students under 18 saw the largest increase of any age group, with course completion rates increasing 13 percentage points from Fall 2009 to Fall 2011. Also of note, the course completion rate of full-time students ages 45 and over decreased by 13 percentage points between the Fall 2011 and Fall 2013 cohorts.

Table 4. Successful Course Completion Rates of Full-Time First-time to NOVA Students by Age: Fall 2009 through Fall 2013 Cohorts*

| Age | Fall 2009 Cohort | | | Fall 2010 Cohort | | | Fall 2011 Cohort | | | Fall 2012 Cohort | | | Fall 2013 Cohort | | |
|-----------|------------------|------------|------|------------------|------------|------|------------------|------------|------|------------------|------------|------|------------------|------------|------|
| | N | Successful | | N | Successful | | N | Successful | | N | Successful | | N | Successful | |
| | | # | % | | # | % | | # | % | | # | % | | # | % |
| Under 18 | 412 | 285 | 69.2 | 355 | 271 | 76.3 | 395 | 324 | 82.0 | 407 | 305 | 74.9 | 402 | 302 | 75.1 |
| 18-21 | 21,157 | 14,724 | 69.6 | 20,695 | 14,670 | 70.9 | 20,521 | 14,660 | 71.4 | 21,114 | 14,432 | 68.4 | 23,082 | 15,691 | 68.0 |
| 22-24 | 1,499 | 1,226 | 81.8 | 1,416 | 1,112 | 78.5 | 1,524 | 1,250 | 82.0 | 1,631 | 1,290 | 79.1 | 1,440 | 1,125 | 78.1 |
| 25-29 | 1,220 | 1,028 | 84.3 | 1,108 | 904 | 81.6 | 1,109 | 924 | 83.3 | 1,197 | 956 | 79.9 | 1,068 | 865 | 81.0 |
| 30-44 | 1,034 | 895 | 86.6 | 773 | 656 | 84.9 | 824 | 695 | 84.3 | 921 | 717 | 77.9 | 941 | 790 | 84.0 |
| 45 & Over | 213 | 192 | 90.1 | 119 | 99 | 83.2 | 151 | 126 | 83.4 | 259 | 208 | 80.3 | 223 | 155 | 69.5 |

Table 5 displays the successful course completion rates of part-time students by age. As with full-time students, students ages 18 to 21 had the lowest rates of successful course completion. In contrast to full-time students, however, part-time students under 18 generally had the highest course completion rates of any age group.

Table 5. Successful Course Completion Rates of Part-Time First-time to NOVA Students by Age: Fall 2009 through Fall 2012 Cohorts

| Age | Fall 2009 Cohort | | | Fall 2010 Cohort | | | Fall 2011 Cohort | | | Fall 2012 Cohort | | | Fall 2013 Cohort | | |
|-----------|------------------|------------|------|------------------|------------|------|------------------|------------|------|------------------|------------|------|------------------|------------|------|
| | N | Successful | | N | Successful | | N | Successful | | N | Successful | | N | Successful | |
| | | # | % | | # | % | | # | % | | # | % | | # | % |
| Under 18 | 709 | 610 | 86.0 | 715 | 646 | 90.3 | 434 | 377 | 86.9 | 1,133 | 1,038 | 91.6 | 396 | 315 | 79.5 |
| 18-21 | 5,438 | 3,367 | 61.9 | 5,496 | 3,418 | 62.2 | 5,519 | 3,482 | 63.1 | 6,370 | 3,796 | 59.6 | 6,389 | 3,553 | 55.6 |
| 22-24 | 1,001 | 796 | 79.5 | 1,054 | 793 | 75.2 | 1,061 | 821 | 77.4 | 990 | 716 | 72.3 | 960 | 715 | 74.5 |
| 25-29 | 1,217 | 1,007 | 82.7 | 1,194 | 1,000 | 83.8 | 1,082 | 847 | 78.3 | 1,093 | 902 | 82.5 | 973 | 767 | 78.8 |
| 30-44 | 1,371 | 1,149 | 83.8 | 1,491 | 1,234 | 82.8 | 1,425 | 1,206 | 84.6 | 1,301 | 1,063 | 81.7 | 1,272 | 1,075 | 84.5 |
| 45 & Over | 662 | 498 | 75.2 | 660 | 498 | 75.5 | 567 | 465 | 82.0 | 597 | 453 | 75.9 | 653 | 468 | 71.7 |

Table 6 shows successful course completion rates for full-time students by race/ethnicity. In each cohort except Fall 2013, Asian full-time students had the highest rates of successful course completion. Black students had the lowest rates of successful course completion in the Fall 2009, Fall 2011, and Fall 2013 cohorts; Native Americans had the lowest rates in the Fall 2010 and Fall 2012 cohorts.

Table 6. Successful Course Completion Rates of Full-Time First-time to NOVA Students by Race/Ethnicity: Fall 2009 through Fall 2013 Cohorts*

| Race/ Ethnicity | Fall 2009 Cohort | | | Fall 2010 Cohort | | | Fall 2011 Cohort | | | Fall 2012 Cohort | | | Fall 2013 Cohort | | |
|--------------------|------------------|------------|------|------------------|------------|------|------------------|------------|------|------------------|------------|------|------------------|------------|------|
| | N | Successful | | N | Successful | | N | Successful | | N | Successful | | N | Successful | |
| | | # | % | | # | % | | # | % | | # | % | | | |
| White | 11,367 | 8,038 | 70.7 | 12,304 | 8,790 | 71.4 | 11,696 | 8,534 | 73.0 | 12,321 | 8,635 | 70.1 | 12,556 | 8,794 | 70.0 |
| Black | 3,717 | 2,483 | 66.8 | 3,547 | 2,449 | 69.0 | 4,123 | 2,838 | 68.8 | 4,430 | 2,964 | 66.9 | 4,704 | 3,029 | 64.4 |
| Asian | 4,304 | 3,433 | 79.8 | 4,342 | 3,417 | 78.7 | 4,500 | 3,604 | 80.1 | 4,534 | 3,520 | 77.6 | 4,850 | 3,691 | 76.1 |
| Hispanic | 4,198 | 2,970 | 70.7 | 3,322 | 2,330 | 70.1 | 3,772 | 2,686 | 71.2 | 3,820 | 2,510 | 65.7 | 4,589 | 3,066 | 66.8 |
| Native American | 103 | 70 | 68.0 | 60 | 36 | 60.0 | 73 | 54 | 74.0 | 36 | 17 | 47.2 | 52 | 34 | 65.4 |
| Other | 1,846 | 1,356 | 73.5 | 891 | 690 | 77.4 | 360 | 263 | 73.1 | 388 | 262 | 67.5 | 405 | 314 | 77.5 |

Table 7 presents successful course completion rates for part-time students by race/ethnicity. Among part-time students, Other students had the highest rates of successful course completion in three of the five cohorts, with completion rates that ranged from 74 to 78 percent. The lowest course completion rates were generally among Black and Native American students. Though rates fluctuated between cohorts, course completion rates were lowest for nearly all racial/ethnic groups in the Fall 2013 cohort.

Table 7. Successful Course Completion Rates of Part-Time First-time to NOVA Students by Race/Ethnicity: Fall 2009 through Fall 2013 Cohorts*

| Race/ Ethnicity | Fall 2009 Cohort | | | Fall 2010 Cohort | | | Fall 2011 Cohort | | | Fall 2012 Cohort | | | Fall 2013 Cohort | | |
|--------------------|------------------|------------|------|------------------|------------|------|------------------|------------|------|------------------|------------|------|------------------|------------|------|
| | N | Successful | | N | Successful | | N | Successful | | N | Successful | | N | Successful | |
| | | # | % | | # | % | | # | % | | # | % | | | |
| White | 4,859 | 3,572 | 73.5 | 5,733 | 4,194 | 73.2 | 5,276 | 3,811 | 72.2 | 6,172 | 4,364 | 70.7 | 5,280 | 3,520 | 66.7 |
| Black | 2,010 | 1,324 | 65.9 | 1,906 | 1,275 | 66.9 | 1,811 | 1,255 | 69.3 | 2,167 | 1,413 | 65.2 | 2,123 | 1,296 | 61.0 |
| Asian | 1,192 | 909 | 76.3 | 1,195 | 874 | 73.1 | 1,301 | 978 | 75.2 | 1,406 | 1,023 | 72.8 | 1,333 | 927 | 69.5 |
| Hispanic | 1,609 | 1,063 | 66.1 | 1,413 | 978 | 69.2 | 1,480 | 996 | 67.3 | 1,537 | 1,018 | 66.2 | 1,621 | 940 | 58.0 |
| Native American | 47 | 31 | 66.0 | 23 | 18 | 78.3 | 31 | 18 | 58.1 | 29 | 19 | 65.5 | 31 | 12 | 38.7 |
| Other | 681 | 528 | 77.5 | 340 | 250 | 73.5 | 189 | 140 | 74.1 | 173 | 131 | 75.7 | 255 | 198 | 77.6 |