

Student Achievement

MEASURES OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The University of South Carolina (USC) Upstate identifies, evaluates, and publishes goals and outcomes for student achievement appropriate to the institution's mission, the nature of the students it serves, and the kinds of programs offered. The institution uses multiple measures to document student success.

The USC Upstate *Strategic Plan 2018-2023 Up Together* forms the basis for how USC Upstate identifies, evaluates, and publishes goals and outcomes. The Strategic Plan led to the creation of scorecards at the University level, Cabinet level, and in Academic Affairs at the college/school level. These scorecards align with Continuous Improvement Blueprints for both academic programs and functional units. The scorecards include measurable goals aligned with University strategic plan priorities and objectives, the data source for the measure, a 1-5 scale that includes a baseline for an annual target (3) plus a strategic aspirational target (5), annual results that are color-coded to indicate progress, and current action steps based on results.

Goals and outcomes for student achievement identified in the University scorecard include retention rates (first-time full-time students, transfer students, graduate students), graduation rates (first-time full-time 4- and 6-year, and transfer 4-year), and placement rates. The Academic Affairs scorecard and college/school scorecards further break down the student achievement data by subgroups appropriate to USC Upstate's student population including merit scholarship, Pell/Pell-eligible, adult learners, and graduate students.

The four student achievement indicators selected represent a comprehensive measure of student success that USC Upstate uses for monitoring its effectiveness:

- Retention Rates
- Graduation Rates
- Placement Rates
- Total Student Completion Indicator

Retention Rates

USC Upstate tracks fall-to-fall retention to determine student progression. Fall-to-fall retention rates are accepted as an industry standard and represent students who continue enrollment in the subsequent fall semester.

Undergraduate

USC Upstate aspires to increase retention rates for all students including full-time degree-seeking undergraduate students, transfer students, adult learners, merit scholars and Pell/Pelleligible students.

Undergraduate Student Category	Peers (N=5) First-Time Full-Time	First-Time Full-Time	Transfer	Adult Learners	Merit Scholars	Pell/ Pell Eligible
Aspirational Goal		69% or above	86% or above	85% or above	85% or above	83% or above
Acceptability Threshold		65%-65.9%	84% - 84.9%	83%-83.9%	83%-83.9%	81% - 81.9%
Fall Semester 2017 % Retained	71.6%	65.0% (570/877)	84.3% (1,453/1,724)	83.3% (620/744)	83.1% (1,652/1,987)	80.5% (1,916/2,380)
Fall Semester 2018 % Retained	72.0%	67.1% (679/1,012)	86.1% (1,533/1,780)	86.5% (632/731)	82.9% (1,784/2,151)	80.2% (2,026/2,527)
Fall Semester 2019 % Retained	NA	71.8% (633/882)	87.2% (1,522/1,746)	84.2% (631/749)	86.1% (1,811/2,104)	82.7% (1,950/2,358)

Graduate

USC Upstate aspires to increase retention rates for all graduate students and reports retention numbers on the University and Academic Affairs scorecards. The goal is to increase the fall-to-fall retention rate for degree-seeking graduate students each fall over the next five years. Thresholds were set based on the 2016-2017 fall semester retention rate.

	2017 Retained Next Fall	2018 Retained Next Fall	2019 Retained Next Fall
Aspirational Goal	75% or above	75% or above	75% or above
Acceptability Threshold	65 to 69%	65 to 69%	65 to 69%
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences	83.3% (5/6)	42.9% (3/7)	66.7% (2/3)
College of Science and Technology	91.7% (11/12)	100.0% (9/9)	71.4% (5/7)
School of Education, Human Performance and Health	72.0% (18/25)	50.0% (15/30)	84.6% (270/319)
Johnson College of Business and Economics			52.9% (9/17)
Mary Black School of Nursing	76.9% (10/13)	88.9% (8/9)	70.0% (7/10)
Graduate Total	78.6% (44/56)	63.6% (35/55)	82.3% (293/356)

Graduation Rates

Graduation Rates are based on a cohort of first-time full-time undergraduate students continuously enrolled until graduation and does not include transfer students or continuing students. Graduation is a critical component of the University and Academic Affairs scorecards. Four-year and six-year graduation rate acceptability thresholds were set based on historical institutional graduation rates.

4-Year Graduation Rates

The table below shows 2014, 2015, and 2016 cohort 4-year graduation rates disaggregated into the following student categories: first-time full-time, first-time full-time merit scholars, and full-time transfer students.

Undergraduate Student Category	First-Time Full-Time	First-Time Full-Time Merit Scholars	Full-Time Transfers
Aspirational Goal	32% or above	34% or above	79% or above
Acceptability Threshold	30%-30.9%	32%-32.9%	77%-77.9%
Fall 2014 Cohort	30.3% (235/775)	32.9% (211/642)	77.9% (1,226/1,574)
Fall 2015 Cohort	31.4% (261/831)	33.6% (234/697)	76.2% (1,314/1,724)
Fall 2016 Cohort	39.8% (303/761)	42.1% (270/641)	70.0% (1,175/1,678)

6-Year Graduation Rates

The following table shows 2012, 2013, and 2014 cohort 6-year graduation rates disaggregated into the following student categories: first-time full-time, and first-time full-time Pell/Pell-eligible students. The University also compares 6-year graduation rates against USC Upstate's peer institutions' average graduation rates.

6-Year Graduation Rates by Undergraduate Student Category	First-Time Full-Time Peer Average (N=5)	First-Time Full-Time	First-Time Full-Time Pell/Pell-eligible
Aspirational Goal		45% or above	47% or above
Acceptability Threshold		43%-43.9%	45%-45.9%
Fall 2012 Cohort	45.1%	46.6% (357/766)	45.1% (172/381)
Fall 2013 Cohort	47.5%	48.1% (363/754)	45.0% (182/404)
Fall 2014 Cohort	NA	47.6% (369/775)	43.4% (177/408)

Placement Rates

As part of the strategic planning process, an alumni survey is administered to graduates 3-months after graduation every year. Placement data are collected from those who respond to the 3-month-out alumni survey and graduates' employment and post-baccalaureate education placement information are also found through sources like LinkedIn, National Student Clearinghouse and social media. Alumni with no employment information are removed. In 2018, this process yielded a total placement sample of 49% and in 2019, this process yielded a total placement sample of 48%.

College/School	2018 Graduates	2018 Total Sample	Employed in Field	Post-Baccalaureate Education
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences	320	149	55% (82)	13% (20)
College of Science and Technology	146	88	75% (66)	7% (6)
Johnson College of Business and Economics	215	118	69% (90)	14% (17)
Mary Black School of Nursing	327	150	92% (138)	6% (9)
School of Education, Human Performance and Health	193	86	80% (69)	13% (11)
University College	97	49	61% (30)	6% (3)
TOTAL	1,298	640	74% (475)	10% (66)

College/School	2019 Graduates	2019 Total Sample	Employed in Field	Post-Baccalaureate Education
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences	333	165	60%(99)	15% (25)
College of Science and Technology	120	81	60%(49)	17% (14)
Johnson College of Business and Economics	159	82	67%(55)	19% (16)
Mary Black School of Nursing	354	118	88%(104)	12% (14)
School of Education, Human Performance and Health	222	138	80%(110)	9% (12)
University College	89	34	91%(31)	24% (8)
TOTAL	1,277	618	72%(448)	14% (89)

Student Completion Indicator

In accordance with Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) requirements and in response to U.S. Department of Education directives regarding student success, USC Upstate identified the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) Total 6-Year Completion Rate. This metric looks at students who start their course of study at USC Upstate and complete their 4-year degree in six years at USC Upstate or at another institution.

NSC 6-Year Completion Rate			
Aspirational Goal – 63.0% and above			
Acceptability Threshold -59.0% – 60.9%			
	USC Upstate	South Carolina 4-Year Public Institutions	National 4-Year Public Institutions
2018	55.06% (424/770)	58.10%	59.10%
2019	59.02% (445/754)	59.90%	60.40%
2020	58.06% (450/775)	59.90%	60.90%