

Nearly Half of First-Time College Students Aren't Graduating

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Fifty-four percent of students who started college for the first time in 2006 graduated within six years. Photo by Tiziana Fabi/AFP/Getty Images

Just over half—or 54.1 percent, to be exact—of first-time college students starting school in 2006 graduated within six years. That's according to a new report from the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. The full report, which breaks down completion rates by state, age, type of school, and enrollment status (part-time or full-time), shows some notable gaps in completion rates for those categories.

For four-year public colleges, 81 percent of students enrolled full-time for the duration of their college experience graduated within six years—70 percent from the same institution they started with. But just 19 percent of those who attended school part-time graduated within six years. You'd think that's because it may be

taking students longer than six years to complete a four-year degree part-time, right? Not really. Almost 70 percent of exclusively part-time students hadn't graduated and were no longer enrolled at any institution after six years. Meanwhile, mixed-enrollment students had an overall graduation rate of just under 47 percent. Four-year private nonprofit schools had a similar breakdown in graduation rates by enrollment status.

In 13 states, the number of part-time students with no degree and no current enrollment after starting at a four-year public college was more than 75 percent, even worse than the nationwide average. "Traditional age" students (i.e., under 24 years old) had higher graduation rates than older students in pretty much every state. The completion rate gap was the smallest in Arizona at just 1 percent, but largest in Vermont, at 42 percent.

The Chronicle of Higher Education created an interactive map based on the data, which gives a good picture of the state-by-state numbers. Or, you can read the report in full [here](#).

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