

RESEARCH BRIEF

No. 46-17

May 2017

Four-Year Graduation Rates by Initial Degree Program Placement at NOVA: Fall 2010 through Fall 2012 Cohorts

This Research Brief examines data on how many students earned a degree in the program in which they initially enrolled at NOVA. The data presented are the four-year graduation rates for three cohorts of first-time in college (FTIC) students who were program placed in an A.A. or A.S. degree program in their first semester at NOVA.

Overall, the data show that among FTIC students who enrolled in an A.A. or A.S. program in their first term, 24 to 25 percent earned a credential of some kind (degree or certificate) within four years (Table 1). However, only 10 to 13 percent earned a degree from the program in which they initially enrolled.

- From Fall 2010 to Fall 2012, 23 to 24 percent of students who initially enrolled in an A.A. degree program earned either a degree or certificate within four years. However, only 7 to 9 percent of students who enrolled in an A.A. degree program in their first semester actually earned an A.A. degree within four years (Figure 1).
- Over the same time period, 11 to 13 percent of students who enrolled in an A.S. degree program in their first semester earned an A.S. degree within four years (24 to 26 percent earned any degree or certificate).

Figure 1. Four-Year Graduation Rate by Initial Degree Program Placement: Fall 2010 through Fall 2012 Cohorts

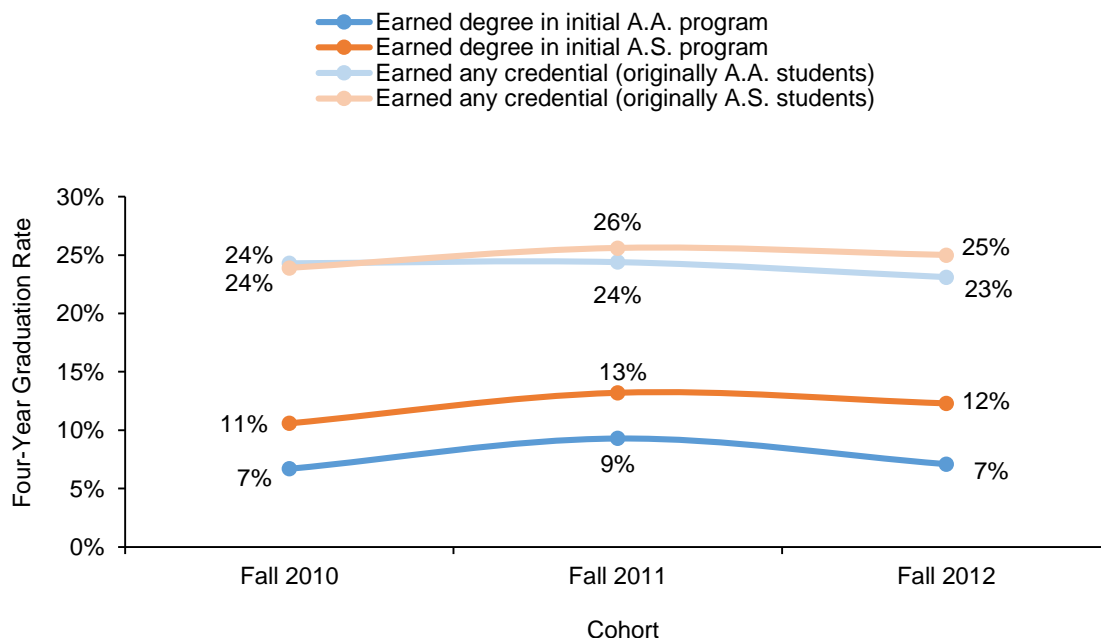


Figure 2 examines only the Fall 2012 cohort in order to compare the overall four-year graduation rate of FTIC students by program and the graduation rate among students who earned a degree in the same program in which they initially enrolled.

- Some degree programs had high graduation rates but relatively low percentages of students who earned a degree in the program they selected in their first term. For example, although students who initially enrolled in the Engineering A.S. degree program had high graduation rates relative to students in other programs (29 percent), only 9 percent of these students actually went on to earn an Engineering A.S. degree.
- In contrast, 21 percent of students who initially enrolled in the Business Administration program actually earned an A.S. degree in Business Administration.¹

Figure 2. Four-Year Graduation Rate by Initial Degree Program Placement: Fall 2012 Cohort

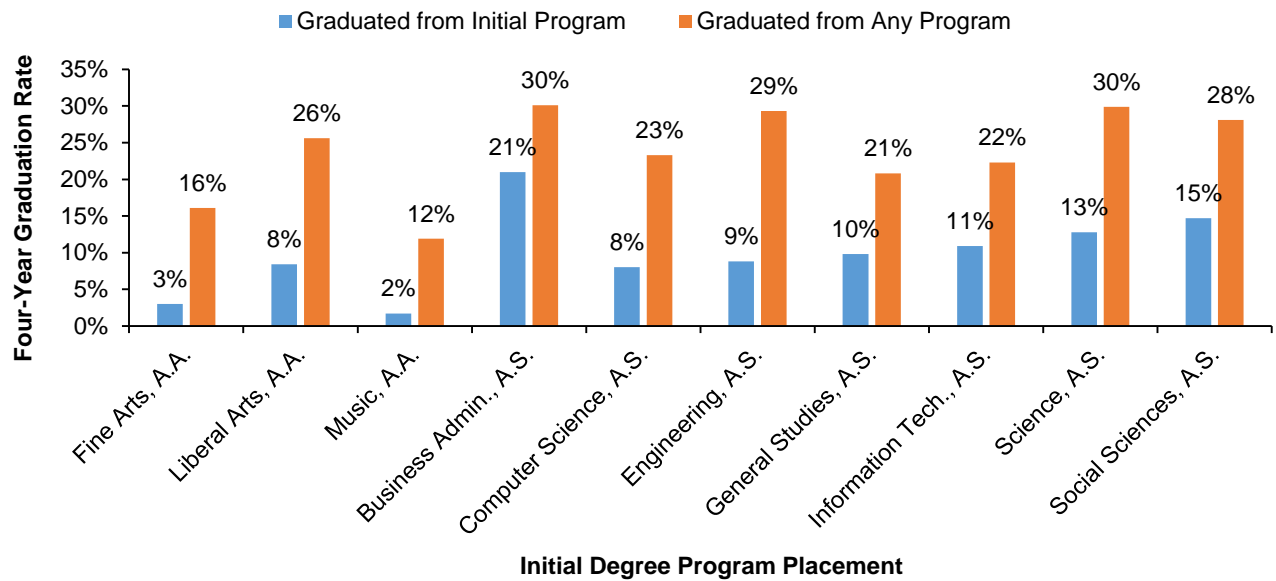


Table 1. FTIC Students Who Graduated from Initial Program within Four Years: Fall 2010 through Fall 2012 Cohorts

Initial Program Placement	Fall 2010					Fall 2011					Fall 2012				
	FTIC	Graduated w/in 4 Years		Graduated from Initial Program		FTIC	Graduated w/in 4 Years		Graduated from Initial Program		FTIC	Graduated w/in 4 Years		Graduated from Initial Program	
		#	%	#	%		#	%	#	%		#	%	#	%
Fine Arts, A.A.	116	24	20.7	3	2.6	131	28	21.4	8	6.1	168	27	16.1	5	3.0
Liberal Arts, A.A.	728	183	25.1	55	7.6	754	189	25.1	76	10.1	722	185	25.6	61	8.4
Music, A.A.	63	13	20.6	3	4.8	59	13	22.0	4	6.8	59	7	11.9	1	1.7
Total A.A. Degrees	907	220	24.3	61	6.7	944	230	24.4	88	9.3	949	219	23.1	67	7.1
Business Administration, A.S.	463	143	30.9	98	21.2	590	196	33.2	136	23.1	632	190	30.1	133	21.0
Computer Science, A.S.	172	33	19.2	10	5.8	235	53	22.6	19	8.1	275	64	23.3	22	8.0
Engineering, A.S.	214	53	24.8	12	5.6	268	75	28.0	26	9.7	317	93	29.3	28	8.8
General Studies, A.S.	1,779	358	20.1	149	8.4	1,802	364	20.2	183	10.2	1,972	410	20.8	194	9.8
Information Technology, A.S.	148	43	29.1	27	18.2	262	59	22.5	39	14.9	238	53	22.3	26	10.9
Science, A.S.	384	115	29.9	46	12.0	553	183	33.1	81	14.6	588	176	29.9	75	12.8
Social Sciences, A.S.	436	115	26.4	38	8.7	486	145	29.8	69	14.2	604	170	28.1	89	14.7
Total A.S. Degrees	3,596	860	23.9	380	10.6	4,196	1,075	25.6	553	13.2	4,626	1,156	25.0	567	12.3
Total A.S. & A.A. Degrees	4,503	1,080	24.0	441	9.8	5,140	1,305	25.4	641	12.5	5,575	1,375	24.7	634	11.4

¹ These differences may be due in part to variations in degree requirements across programs. For example, the Engineering A.S. program has 15 core courses and requires 67 to 68 credits to graduate, while the Business Administration A.S. program has 10 core courses and requires 61 to 65 credits to graduate.