

Illinois Community College Board Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT IS THE GRADUATION RATE FOR ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGES?

Graduation rates provide one useful measure to help inform the public and policymakers about how colleges are performing in their efforts to graduate individuals who begin their studies pursuing a traditional enrollment pattern. The primary postsecondary graduation rate collected through the U.S. Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) provides the percentage of first-time, full-time students who graduate within 150% of catalog time (e.g. 3 years for an associate degree which could be completed in 2 years of uninterrupted full-time study – fall and spring semesters). IPEDS also collects a 200% of catalog time graduation rate (e.g., 4 years for an associate degree) to provide some additional time for graduates to emerge from the entering cohort. Figure 1 contains the number of first-time, full-time entrants and the graduates who emerge from that group at 150% and 200% of catalog time. Community college students often switch to part-time attendance or enroll on an intermittent basis.

Figure 1: First-Time, Full-Time Entering Cohort at Illinois Community College Students who Graduated within 150 & 200 Percent of Catalog Program Time

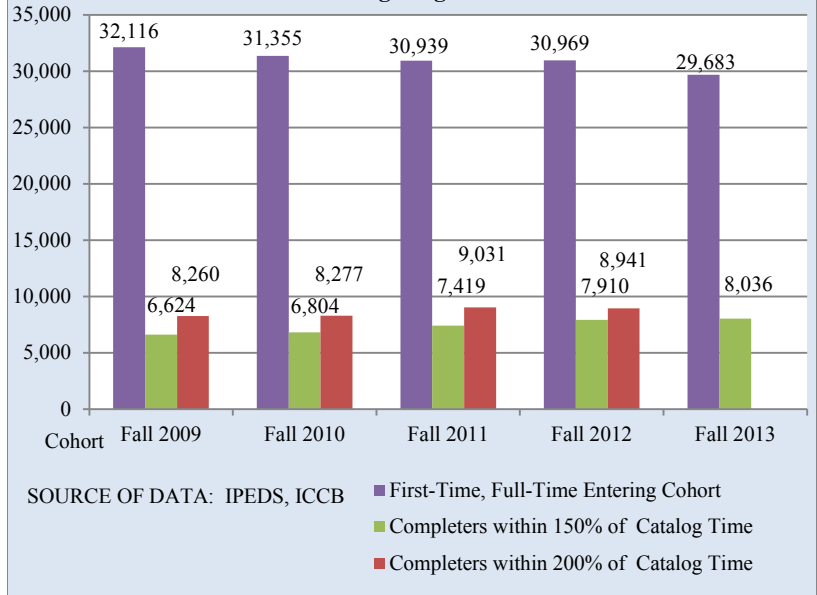
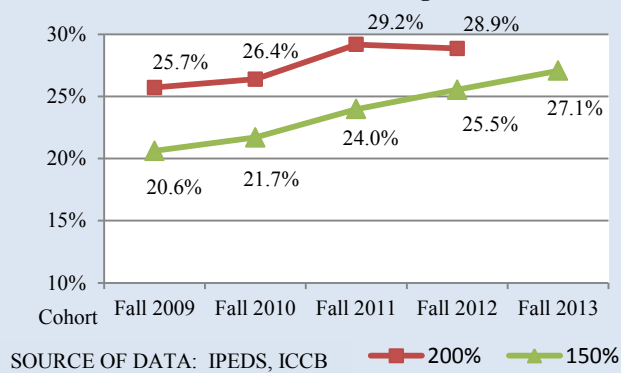


Figure 2: Percent of First-Time, Full-Time Entering Cohort at Illinois Community Colleges who Graduated within 150 & 200 Percent of Program Time



The trend data in Figure 2 show that overall statewide **graduation rates** among first-time, full-time Illinois community college students have continued to **increase** for both the 150% and 200% calculations.

Over the past five years the **graduation rate** of Illinois community college students who completed within **150% of catalog time** increased from 20.6 percent in fiscal year 2012 (Fall 2009 cohort) to **27.1 percent in fiscal year 2016** (Fall 2013 cohort). That means for fiscal year 2016, more than one in four (N = 8,036/29,683) who began their studies as first-time, full-time students at Illinois community colleges in Fall 2013 graduated by Summer 2016. In fiscal year 2016 the number of graduates saw an increase to reach 8,036 from 7,910 in fiscal year 2015. During this same time period, the graduation rate increased 1.5 percent from 25.5 percent.

Focusing on the Fall 2012 cohort shows that when the length of time to graduate is increased to **200% of catalog time**, the statewide Illinois graduation rate increased 3.4 percentage points as 1,031 additional students earned degrees or certificates. For the Fall 2012 entering cohort, 25.5 percent completed by Summer 2015 (150% of program time), while **28.9 percent completed by Summer 2016** (200% of program time).

The most recent national data available from the National Center for Education Statistics shows that twenty-two percent of students at public 2-year institutions graduate with a certificate or associate degree within 150% of catalog time (<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2017/2017144.pdf>, See Indicator 4.6, Figure 4).

To locate a Community College near you, visit <http://iccbdsrv.iccb.org/zipcodes/home.cfm>.
For a map of district boundaries, visit https://www.iccb.org/iccb/?page_id=990.

Collaborating with the System to Inform Statewide Community College Issues

