

How is the ACT Composite Score Related to the Likelihood that a Student will Complete a College Degree?

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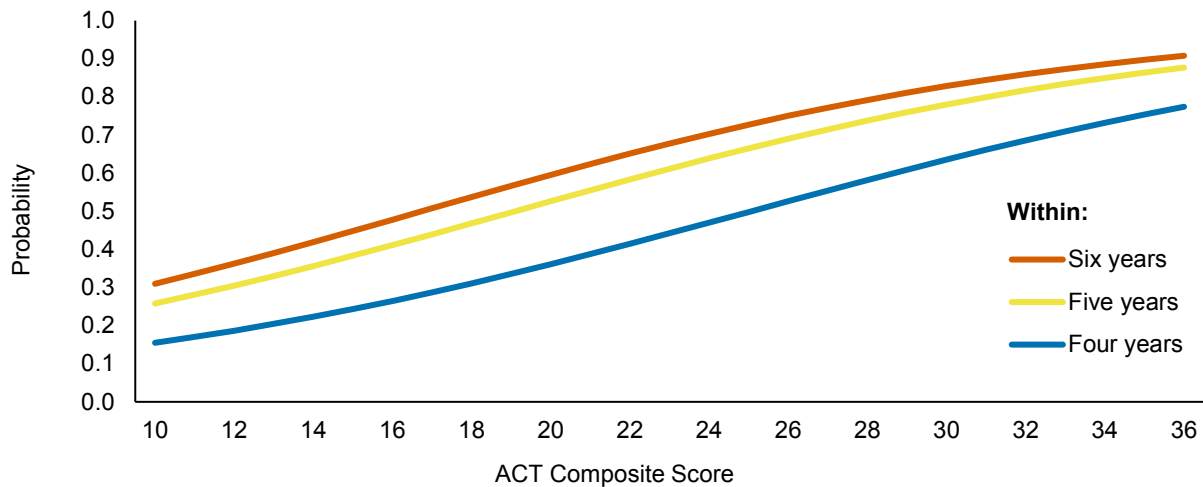
As a student's ACT® Composite score increased, the student's chances of completing an associate's or bachelor's degree increased for ACT-tested 2010 high school graduates who immediately enrolled in a postsecondary institution in fall 2010 (Figure 1).

Based on the models, a student with an ACT Composite score of 28 had a 58% chance of completing an associate's or bachelor's degree within four years of initially enrolling in college, a 74% chance within five years, and a 79% chance within six years. In comparison, the corresponding chances of completing a

college degree for a student with an ACT Composite score of 18 were 31% within four years, 47% within five years, and 54% within six years.

Findings from these analyses highlight the positive effect that academic achievement has on completing a college degree in a timely manner.¹ There are other student characteristics such as academic discipline and other social and emotional learning skills that are also related to persisting in college (e.g., see the 2018 Higher Education Research Digest).²

Figure 1. Likelihood of Completing an Associate's or Bachelor's Degree by ACT Composite Score.³



1. A companion piece describing the relationship between ACT Composite score and a student's chances of persisting in college through year 4 is available at <https://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/pdfs/R1729-college-persistence-2018-11.pdf>.

2. For those interested in learning more about how ACT Composite scores, as well as other student characteristics available on the ACT record, relate to college degree completion nationally and by state and type of initial institution attended, explore the ACT College Completion Database.

3. Based on nearly 1.08 million ACT-tested 2010 high school graduates who enrolled in a postsecondary institution in fall 2010. Students' enrollment and degree information was obtained from the National Student Clearinghouse. Hierarchical logistic regression models with random intercepts were used to estimate students' chances of completing a college degree from any postsecondary institution while statistically controlling for the initial institution attended. The fixed effect parameter estimates for the intercept and slope of ACT Composite score were -2.8227 and 0.1126 within four years, -2.2173 and 0.1161 within five years, and -1.9897 and 0.1188 within six years. The corresponding variance estimates for the random intercepts were 0.6815, 0.7174, and 0.6991, respectively.