

COLLEGE COMPLETION DATABASE

USER GUIDE

This user guide provides an overview of ACT's College Completion Database, including the topics addressed, the types of charts provided and how to interpret them, and the dropdown menus you can use to refine the information provided in the dashboards. Currently, the database houses information on the ACT-tested high school graduating class of 2010 who enrolled in college during the fall immediately after high school. You can access the database from act.org/researchdigest.

TOPICS

There are three primary topics covered in the database, each represented by a single dashboard.

100% Normal Time to Degree: The percentage of ACT-tested college-enrolled students who earned a bachelor's degree within 4 years of first enrolling in college or received an associate's degree within 2 years of first enrolling in college.

150% Normal Time to Degree: The percentage of ACT-tested college-enrolled students who earned a bachelor's degree within 6 years of first enrolling in college or received an associate's degree within 3 years of first enrolling in college.

Highest Degree Earned: The percentage of ACT-tested college-enrolled students by their highest degree earned status: bachelor's degree, associate's degree, or no degree within six years of first enrollment.

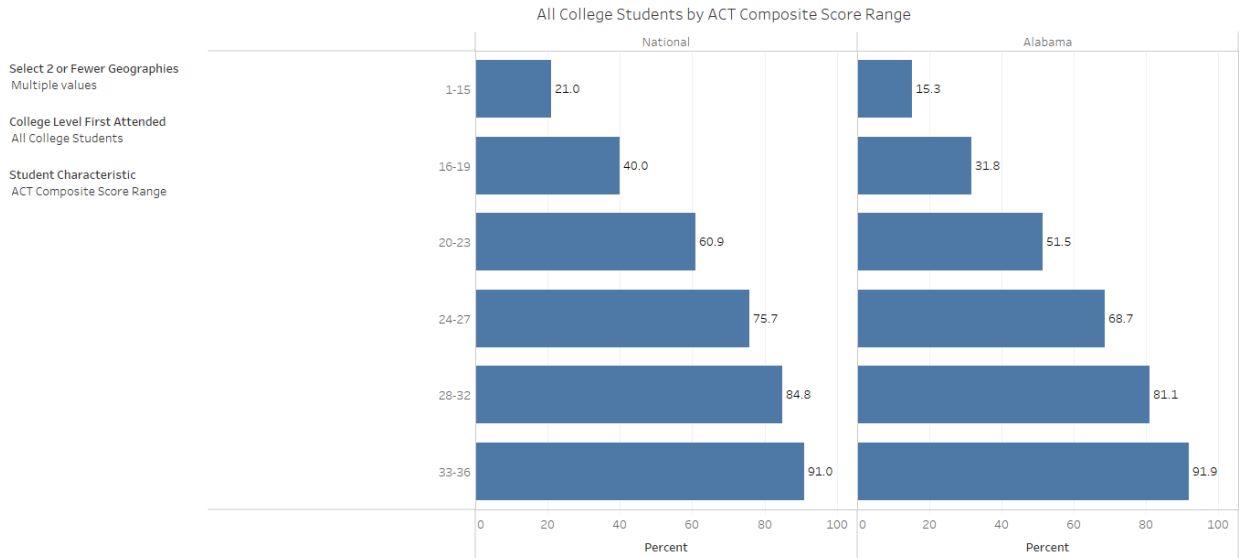
Students do not have to earn a degree from the institution at which they began their college education in order for that degree to count toward these definitions.

CHART TYPES AND INTERPRETATION

There are two types of charts provided in the database:

Simple bar chart: The first two dashboards provide a simple bar chart showing the percentage of students who earn a degree within a set amount of time of first enrollment. The first dashboard covers 100% normal time to degree, whereas the second dashboard covers 150% normal time to degree. For example, the chart below shows that, nationally, 75.7% of ACT-tested students in the score range of 24-27 earned a degree within 150% of normal time to degree; in Alabama, only 68.7% of students in this score range earned a degree within that same time span. Although percentages are shown in the chart, you can access the number of students who earned a degree by hovering over the bar for that category.

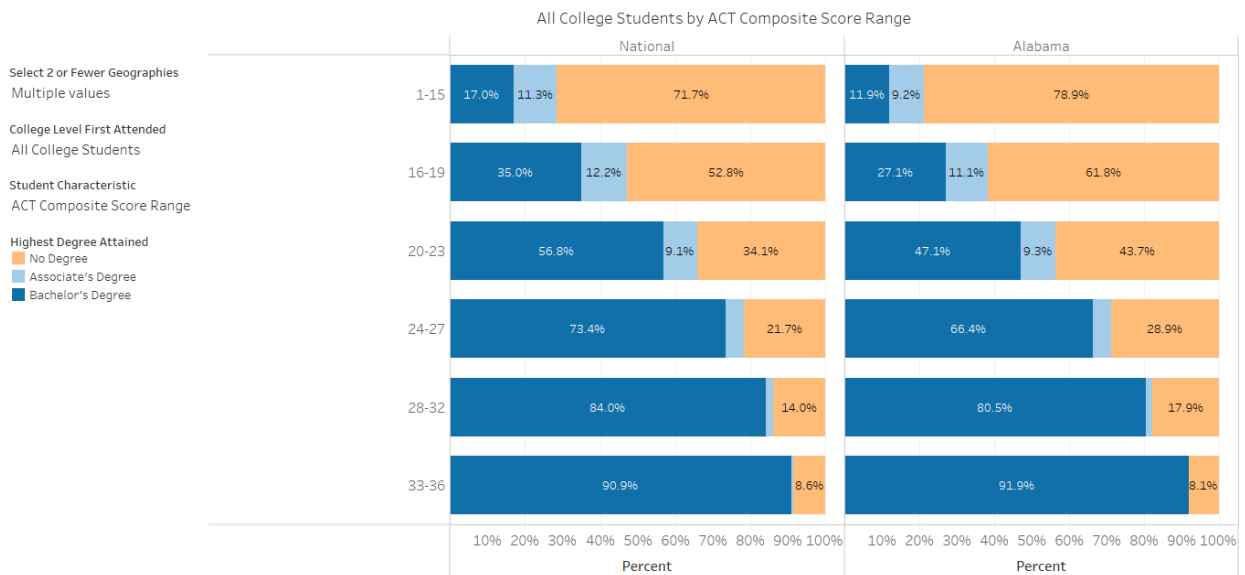
Percent Earning a Degree Within 150% of Normal Time to Degree



Earning a degree within 150% of normal time to degree is defined as receiving a bachelor's degree within 6 years of first enrolling in college or receiving an associate's degree within 3 years of first enrolling in college. Students do not have to earn a degree from the institution at which they began their college education in order for that degree to count toward this definition. The geographic entity provided is the state or region in which students graduated from high school; this entity may differ from the state or region in which students first attended college. Data are from the ACT-tested graduating class of 2010 that enrolled in college directly after high school.

Stacked bar chart: The third dashboard provides a stacked bar chart showing the percentage of students that earned either a bachelor's degree, associate's degree, or no degree within six years of first enrolling in college. Percentages for each student category should sum to 100%. For example, the chart below shows that, of those students from the national ACT-tested graduating class of 2010 who enrolled in college directly after high school, 56.8% of students in the ACT score range of 24-27 earned a bachelor's degree, whereas 9.1% of the students in that score range earned an associate's degree and 34.1% did not earn a degree. Among ACT-tested college enrollees from the state of Alabama in that same ACT score range, 47.1% of students earned a bachelor's degree, 9.3% of the students earned an associate's degree, and 43.7% did not earn a degree.

Highest Degree Attained Within Six Years of First Enrollment



Students do not have to earn a degree from the institution at which they began their college education in order for that degree to count toward this definition. The geographic entity provided is the state or region in which students graduated from high school; this entity may differ from the state or region in which students first attended college. Data are from the ACT-tested graduating class of 2010 that enrolled in college directly after high school.

REFINING YOUR ANSWER

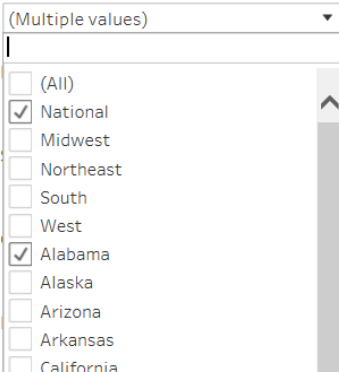
Each chart will be pre-populated with particular information by default. For example, the chart will present information for the National and Alabama ACT-tested population by default unless some other student population is chosen. All three dashboards contain the same three dropdown menus to help refine the information presented in the chart.

Select 2 or Fewer Geographies. This dropdown menu (as shown below) will allow you to limit the information presented to include only those students who reside within the particular geographic areas chosen. Options to choose from include national, any of the four US geographic regions (i.e., Northeast, Midwest, South, West), and any of the fifty states or the District of Columbia. To choose a geography from the menu, click on the downward arrow on the right side of the box, and click on the geography of interest. Information in the chart will update to reflect your change. Only up to two geographic areas can be displayed at one time.

The geographic regions provided in the database are defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as the following:

- Northeast: CT, ME, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT
- Midwest: IL, IN, IA, KS, MI, MN, MO, NE, OH, ND, SD, WI
- South: AL, AR, DE, DC, FL, GA, KY, LA, MD, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, VA, WV
- West: AL, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NV, NM, OR, UT, WA, WY

Select 2 or Fewer Geographies

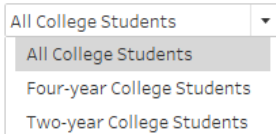


(Multiple values)

- (All)
- National
- Midwest
- Northeast
- South
- West
- Alabama
- Alaska
- Arizona
- Arkansas
- California

College Level First Attended. This dropdown menu (as shown below) allows you to either limit or expand the population by college type. Options include all ACT-tested college students, those students that attended four-year colleges, and those students who attended two-year colleges. To choose an option from the menu, click on the downward arrow on the right side of the box, and then click on the option of interest. Information in the chart will update to reflect your change. Only one selection can be made at a time.

College Level First Attended



All College Students

- All College Students
- Four-year College Students
- Two-year College Students

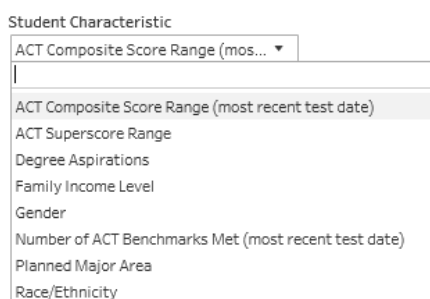
Student Characteristic. This dropdown menu (as shown below) allows you to examine the information shown by a particular student characteristic. The student characteristics available in this dashboard can be organized into three different themes: Academic achievement, student background, and college plans and preferences.

1. Academic Achievement
 - ACT Composite score range (most recent test date)
 - ACT Superscore range ***New in 2020**
 - Number of ACT Benchmarks met (most recent test date)

2. Student Background
 - Family income
 - Gender
 - Race/ethnicity

3. College Plans and Preferences
 - Degree aspirations
 - Planned major area

To choose a characteristic from the menu, click on the downward arrow on the right side of the box, and then click on the characteristic of interest. Information in the chart will update to reflect your change. Only one student characteristic can be selected at a time.



STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS FOR AN EXAMPLE QUESTION

In this example, you work in the Office of Enrollment Management at a university in North Carolina. You are interested in examining the relationship between students’ ACT Composite score and their probability of earning a degree within 150% of normal time to degree for four-year college students from your state and across all southern states.

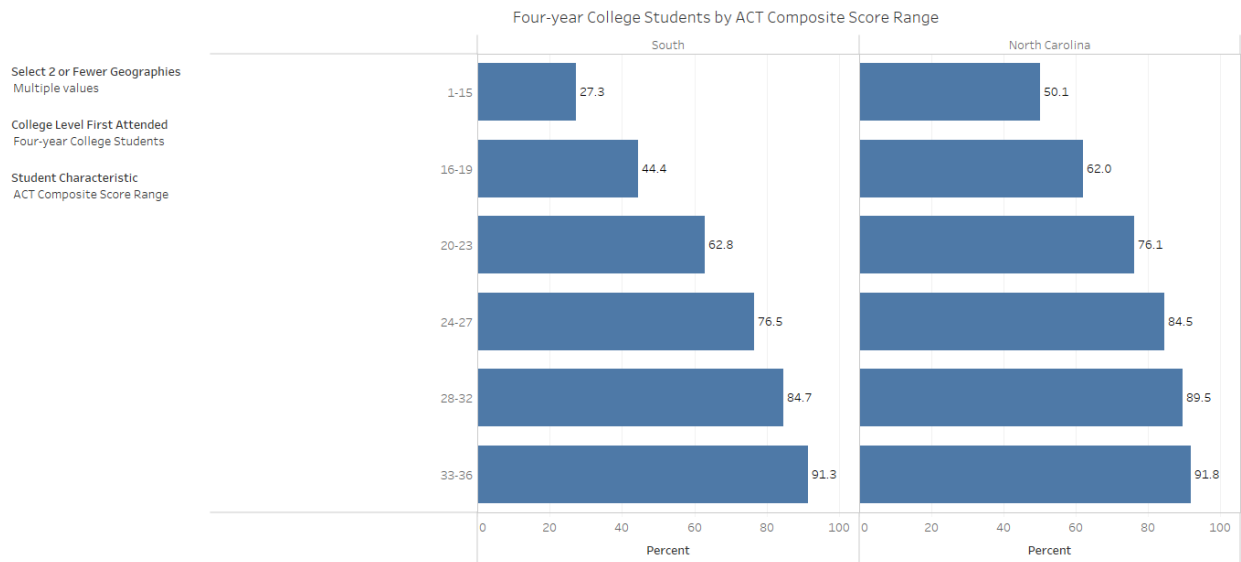
Step 1: Select Geography Since you are interested in making a comparison between North Carolina and the ACT-tested population in southern states, select ‘North Carolina’ and ‘South’ from the dropdown menu.

Step 2: Select College Level First Attended Since you are interested in limiting your analysis to students attending four-year colleges, select “Four-year College Students” from the dropdown menu.

Step 3: Select Student Characteristic Since you are interested in graduation rates by entering academic achievement, select 'ACT Composite Score Range' from the dropdown menu.

After following the three steps, the interface should display the information found in the chart below. As the dashboard illustrates, in all ACT Composite score ranges except 33–36, ACT-tested students from North Carolina who began their college education at a four-year institution were more likely to earn a degree within a 150% of normal time to degree compared to their peers from across all southern states (including North Carolina). This gap between North Carolina and the South decreases as the ACT Composite score range increases.

Percent Earning a Degree Within 150% of Normal Time to Degree



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