



# National Collegiate Retention and Persistence to Degree Rates

Since 1983, ACT has collected a comprehensive database of first to second year retention rates and persistence to degree rates. These rates provide national benchmarks for institution type and level of selectivity. Data are compiled by ACT from the ACT Institutional Data Questionnaire, an annual survey of information collected from two-year and four-year postsecondary institutions.

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For more information, contact ACT Educational Services at 319/341-2275 or go to our website: [www.act.org](http://www.act.org)

# Important Information About These Tables

Beginning with the 2004 ACT Institutional Data Questionnaire (IDQ), several changes took place in the format, collection, and reporting of these data.

1. The definitions of two important data elements were modified: institutional selectivity and level of degree offerings.
2. The IDQ information was collected online rather than in traditional paper format.
3. Previous tables published by ACT featured “freshman to sophomore dropout rates.” Those rates are now reported as “first to second-year retention rates.” Individuals who compare these results with previous reports or monitor trends in these data should keep this change in mind.
4. These reports are based on data accumulated through 6/1/06.

These changes resulted in a lower-than-usual return rate. Whereas earlier tables included information from 2,500+ institutions, these results are based on just less than 1,800 institutions. Despite this lower submission rate (which will improve in future reports), the data reported here are remarkably similar to results of previous years.

Many of the tables are reported by institutional admission selectivity. The selectivity categories used are based on the general descriptions below.

<b>Selectivity Level</b>	<b>ACT Middle 50%</b>	<b>SAT Middle 50%</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Highly Selective	27-31	1220-1380	Majority admitted from top 10% of H.S. class
Selective	22-27	1030-1220	Majority admitted from top 25% of H.S. class
Traditional	20-23	950-1070	Majority admitted from top 50% of H.S. class
Liberal	18-21	870- 990	Majority admitted from bottom 50% of H.S. class
Open	17-20	830- 950	Generally open to all with H.S. diploma or equivalent

Table 1

## Summary Table: National First to Second Year Retention Rates by Institutional Type

Degree Level/Control	N	SD*	Mean %
Two-year Public	419	15.2	52.5
Two-year Private	47	31.8	60.1
BA/BS Public	50	13.1	69.9
BA/BS Private	287	17.2	70.6
MA/1st Professional Public	173	9.5	71.6
MA/1st Professional Private	387	12.5	74.7
PhD Public	186	12.5	77.3
PhD Private	160	10.9	82.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,709</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>68.7</b>

\* Standard Deviation

Table 2

# First to Second Year Retention Rates for Two-Year Colleges by Admission Selectivity

Admissions Selectivity*	Two-Year Private Institutions			Two-Year Public Institutions			All Institutions in Row		
	Mean	N	SD**	Mean	N	SD**	Mean	N	SD**
Highly Selective	N/A	1	N/A	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	1	N/A
Selective	96.2	5	5.2	N/A	1	N/A	95.7	6	4.8
Traditional	70.9	12	28.9	49.8	9	13.9	61.9	21	25.6
Liberal	53.1	11	24.4	57.3	15	9.1	55.5	26	17.0
Open	44.9	18	31.6	52.3	394	15.2	52.0	412	16.3
All Institutions in Column	60.1	47	31.8	52.5	419	15.2	53.3	466	17.7

\* Highly Selective = ACT Score Range 27-31, SAT Score Range 1220-1380

Selective = ACT Score Range 22-27, SAT Score Range 1030-1220

Traditional = ACT Score Range 20-23, SAT Score Range 950-1070

Liberal = ACT Score Range 18-21, SAT Score Range 870-990

Open = ACT Score Range 17-20, SAT Score Range 830-950

\*\*Standard Deviation

Table 3

# First to Second Year Retention Rates for Four-Year Public Colleges by Admission Selectivity

Admission Selectivity*		Offering Only Bachelors	Offering Bachelors and Masters	Offering Bachelors, Masters and Doctoral	All Institutions in Row
<b>Highly Selective</b>	Mean % =	93.0	91.5	92.6	92.6
	N =	2	2	19	23
	SD** =	1.4	4.9	4.2	3.9
<b>Selective</b>	Mean % =	87.7	81.0	81.7	81.7
	N =	3	28	62	93
	SD** =	4.0	6.5	7.0	6.8
<b>Traditional</b>	Mean % =	72.7	71.3	73.4	72.3
	N =	26	84	72	182
	SD** =	9.0	8.2	7.8	8.2
<b>Liberal</b>	Mean % =	64.7	65.9	69.2	66.3
	N =	6	17	6	29
	SD** =	7.7	6.9	7.4	7.1
<b>Open</b>	Mean % =	59.2	67.3	68.8	66.5
	N =	13	42	27	82
	SD** =	13.4	9.1	21.6	15.1
<b>All Institutions in Column</b>	Mean % =	69.9	71.6	77.3	74.0
	N =	50	173	186	409
	SD** =	13.1	9.5	12.5	11.8

\* See Table 2

\*\* Standard Deviation

Source: ACT Institutional Data File, 2006

Table 4

# First to Second Year Retention Rates for Four-Year Private Colleges by Admission Selectivity

Admission Selectivity*		Offering Only Bachelors	Offering Bachelors and Masters	Offering Bachelors, Masters and Doctoral	All Institutions in Row
<b>Highly Selective</b>	Mean % =	92.6	90.9	92.7	92.2
	N =	26	19	34	79
	SD** =	3.6	5.3	5.6	4.9
<b>Selective</b>	Mean % =	79.6	82.0	84.2	82.0
	N =	46	105	52	203
	SD** =	14.5	6.1	5.2	8.7
<b>Traditional</b>	Mean % =	69.7	73.2	74.4	72.2
	N =	111	173	44	328
	SD** =	11.2	8.8	7.3	9.7
<b>Liberal</b>	Mean % =	59.7	61.8	70.8	61.7
	N =	40	44	8	92
	SD** =	18.4	13.5	14.9	16.0
<b>Open</b>	Mean % =	63.3	69.0	80.1	68.1
	N =	64	46	22	132
	SD** =	19.1	18.0	15.0	19.0
<b>All Institutions in Column</b>	Mean % =	70.6	74.7	82.1	74.7
	N =	287	387	160	834
	SD** =	17.2	12.5	10.9	14.6

\* See Table 2

\*\* Standard Deviation

Source: ACT Institutional Data File, 2006

Table 5

## Summary Table: National Persistence to Degree\* Rates by Institutional Type

<b>Degree Level/Control</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>SD**</b>	<b>Mean %</b>
Two-year Public	283	18.6	28.9
Two-year Private	25	29.9	55.9
BA/BS Public	38	18.2	39.6
BA/BS Private	154	20.8	56.7
MA/1st Professional Public	127	14.1	37.9
MA/1st Professional Private	295	15.7	56.1
PhD Public	165	17.6	47.4
PhD Private	118	17.8	63.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,205</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>46.9</b>

\* Completion in 3 years for Associate Degree; 5 years for BA/BS

\*\* Standard Deviation

Table 6

# Persistence to Degree\* Rates for Two-Year Colleges by Admission Selectivity

Admission Selectivity**		Two-Year Private Institutions	Two-Year Public Institutions	All Institutions In Row
Selective	Mean % =	81.7	N/A	81.7
	N =	3	N/A	3
	SD*** =	6.5	N/A	6.5
Traditional	Mean % =	39.2	22.2	29.9
	N =	5	6	11
	SD*** =	36.0	13.0	26.1
Liberal	Mean % =	65.9	29.5	47.7
	N =	8	8	16
	SD*** =	21.8	21.4	28.1
Open	Mean % =	47.7	26.6	27.3
	N =	9	269	278
	SD*** =	31.7	18.6	19.4
Total	Mean % =	55.9	26.6	28.9
	N =	25	283	308
	SD*** =	29.9	18.6	21.2

\* Completion in 3 years for Associate Degree

\*\* Selective = ACT Score Range 22-27, SAT Score Range 1030-1220

Traditional = ACT Score Range 20-23, SAT Score Range 950-1070

Liberal = ACT Score Range 18-21, SAT Score Range 870-990

Open = ACT Score Range 17-20, SAT Score Range 830-950

\*\*\* Standard Deviation



Table 7

# Persistence to Degree\* Rates for Four-year Public Colleges by Admission Selectivity

Admission Selectivity**		Offering Only Bachelors	Offering Bachelors and Masters	Offering Bachelors, Masters and Doctoral	All Institutions in Row
<b>Highly Selective</b>	Mean % =	74.5	N/A	76.4	76.2
	N =	2	N/A	16	18
	SD*** =	3.5	N/A	8.8	N/A
<b>Selective</b>	Mean % =	N/A	48.5	53.6	52.1
	N =	N/A	22	54	76
	SD*** =	N/A	13.5	15.0	N/A
<b>Traditional</b>	Mean % =	41.1	37.2	39.9	38.9
	N =	24	68	67	159
	SD*** =	12.6	12.3	11.7	N/A
<b>Liberal</b>	Mean % =	31.0	31.2	29.5	30.6
	N =	3	9	6	18
	SD*** =	3.0	11.5	8.6	N/A
<b>Open</b>	Mean % =	27.5	31.7	39.2	34.0
	N =	8	27	22	57
	SD*** =	25.4	13.1	16.0	N/A

\* Completion in 5 years for BA/BS

\*\* Highly Selective = ACT Score Range 27-31, SAT Score Range 1220-1380

Selective = ACT Score Range 22-27, SAT Score Range 1030-1220

Traditional = ACT Score Range 20-23, SAT Score Range 950-1070

Liberal = ACT Score Range 18-21, SAT Score Range 870-990

Open = ACT Score Range 17-20, SAT Score Range 830-950

\*\*\* Standard Deviation

Source: ACT Institutional Data File, 2006

Table 8

# Persistence to Degree\* Rates for Four-Year Private Colleges by Admission Selectivity

Admission Selectivity**		Offering Only Bachelors	Offering Bachelors and Masters	Offering Bachelors, Masters and Doctoral	All Institutions in Row
<b>Highly Selective</b>	Mean % =	84.9	80.3	83.7	83.2
	N =	21	18	27	66
	SD*** =	4.9	9.1	11.4	N/A
<b>Selective</b>	Mean % =	69.0	63.6	66.3	65.4
	N =	34	89	39	162
	SD*** =	7.5	10.7	8.9	N/A
<b>Traditional</b>	Mean % =	47.9	51.6	51.3	50.6
	N =	54	127	35	216
	SD*** =	14.8	11.1	12.1	N/A
<b>Liberal</b>	Mean % =	48.3	43.3	40.0	44.5
	N =	18	35	6	59
	SD*** =	22.0	16.3	7.9	N/A
<b>Open</b>	Mean % =	42.6	53.1	55.5	49.1
	N =	27	26	11	64
	SD*** =	20.9	21.8	22.1	N/A

\* Completion in 5 years for BA/BS

\*\* Highly Selective = ACT Score Range 27-31, SAT Score Range 1220-1380

Selective = ACT Score Range 22-27, SAT Score Range 1030-1220

Traditional = ACT Score Range 20-23, SAT Score Range 950-1070

Liberal = ACT Score Range 18-21, SAT Score Range 870-990

Open = ACT Score Range 17-20, SAT Score Range 830-950

\*\*\* Standard Deviation

Source: ACT Institutional Data File, 2006