

Year-to-Year Persistence for In-State, Full-time, Degree-Seeking, First Year Students at Ohio's State-Supported Colleges and Universities

Question: What is the rate at which in-state, full time, degree seeking first year students return to higher education (or persist) the following year? Does this rate vary by type of college or by institution?

Why look at year-to-year persistence? Many factors could determine whether a first year student is still enrolled one year later. A full-time degree-seeking student may:

- “Stop out” of higher education due to economic reasons or family circumstances with the intention of returning later.
- Decide that his or her career interests are best met outside of higher education (this is a “drop out”).
- Transfer to another institution.

There are instances, however, when a student stops out, drops out, or transfers out of college for reasons that may have been within the control of the college. The first-year experience is, in part, a function of the services that a college or university is able to provide to students to help them be successful. Such services might include: tutoring services, mentoring services, assistance in scheduling classes, or a variety of other services. In the case of transfer, families may be quite comfortable with a decision to transfer to another institution, as long as the student is still pursuing a degree in higher education. Prospective students and their families may view year to year persistence for first-year students (either at the same institution or at any institution) as a measure of the likelihood that they will be able to complete college in a timely and successful manner.

Note on campuses included in report: This year's chapter on persistence rates encompasses only in-state students at Ohio's state-supported colleges and universities. Next year, persistence rates will be requested of independent campuses. Next year's report is projected to include persistence rates for in-state and out-of-state full time, degree seeking, first year students at Ohio's state –supported and independent colleges and universities.

A cautionary note on persistence rates: Several qualifications about persistence rates must be noted. Traditionally defined "Institution Persistence" is the percentage of an entering class (full time degree seekers) who are enrolled the next year. As noted in [Chapter 10](#), almost 60% of students receiving baccalaureate degrees in the 1990's attended more than one school in pursuit of that degree. In Ohio, many students enter two-year colleges seeking associate degrees but transfer to four-year colleges to complete their baccalaureate degrees before they complete their associate degrees. State policies even encourage such mobility. When students do transfer after the first term of enrollment, this has a negative effect on an institution's persistence rates even though many of these students are enrolled in college in their second year and their transfers are greatly facilitated by cooperative planning and scheduling between sending and receiving institutions. Due to this limitation, we advocate use of a "statewide persistence rate" which holds a sending institution harmless from such transfers.

Second, many students enter college without the declared intention of seeking a college degree. Some of these students are still enrolled a second year at the same or a different institution. These students' return to college is not reflected in any persistence rate. Ohio's two-year colleges collect data on the academic intention of entering students. At these institutions, in Fall, 2000, only 30% of beginning first time, first year students expressed the intention of obtaining an associate degree to be used for employment purposes. An additional 17% expressed the intention of obtaining an associate degree for transfer to a four-year institution, but many of these might decide at a later date to transfer before completion of the degree:

Academic Intention of Beginning First Time, First Year Students – Two-year Colleges Fall, 2000 Data Gathered During Students' First Term of Study

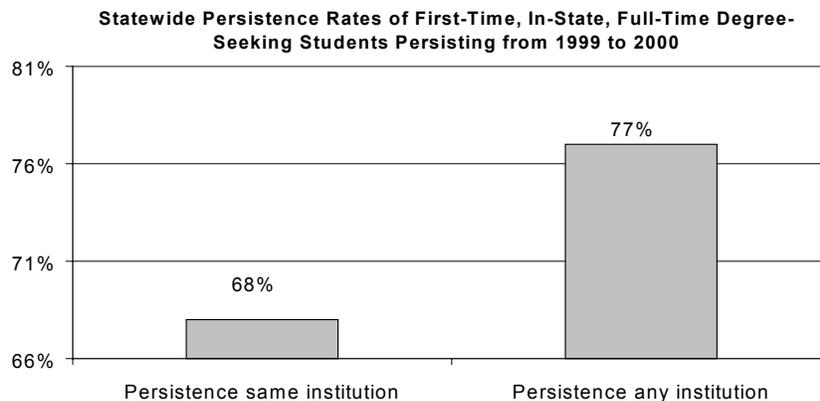
Academic Intention	Students	%
To obtain knowledge for personal interest	2,141	7%
To upgrade skills for current job by taking only selected courses	1,301	4%
To train for a new career by taking only selected courses	1,389	5%
To transfer before completing a degree or certificate	4,142	13%
To obtain a certificate	1,568	5%
To obtain an associate degree for transfer	5,215	17%
To obtain an associate degree for the job market	9,084	30%
Unknown	5,912	19%
Total	30,752	100%

Third, as noted in many other chapters of this report, colleges and universities vary greatly in their admissions practices. All of Ohio's two-year institutions and many universities are open admissions, meaning that any student with a high school degree is eligible to enter. It has been shown in this report that campuses with the most selective admissions practices have students with better academic preparation and this might result in higher reported persistence rates. Many campus personnel believe that persistence rates are most relevant for selective four-year universities.

National Answers: National freshmen-to-sophomore persistence rates vary greatly by type of institution and by the admissions criteria used by institutions.

- The freshmen-to-sophomore persistence rate, as reported to ACT for 2000-2001 was:
 - 51.8% for two-year public institutions;
 - 78.2% - 80.4% for selective four-year public institutions;
 - 54.9% - 64% for open admissions four-year public institutions;
 - 81.8% - 85.1% for selective four-year private institutions; and
 - 63.5% for open admissions four-year private institutions.

Statewide Answers for In-State Students: In-State, full-time degree-seeking first-year students persisted to a second-year of study at rates approximating the national average. A statewide persistence rate of 70% at the same institution and 79% at any institution was recorded for 1999 to 2000 persistence. In state-supported two-year institutions, the first to second year persistence rate is approximately 55%. In open admissions four-year institutions, the first to second year persistence rates exceed the national average, ranging from 55% to 71%. In selective four-year institutions, the first to second year persistence rate is approximately 70% to 90%.



- For In-State students:
 - Seventy percent (68%) of full-time degree-seeking first year students who began their study in 1999 were still enrolled at the same institution the following fall.
 - Seventy-nine percent (77%) were enrolled at either the same institution or a different state-supported college or university the following fall.
 - **Note:** From a statewide perspective this 77% persistence rate is noteworthy as it reflects the facts that Ohio's state-supported campuses have been successful in their efforts to ensure that students wishing to transfer are able to do so with ease.
- Many first-year students do not enroll full-time (twelve or more hours) or are not defined by colleges or universities as degree-seeking. Sixty-three percent (63%) of first-time freshmen in 1999 in state-supported institutions were full-time degree seekers.

Sector Answers for In-State Students: Persistence rates for full-time degree-seeking first-year students vary greatly by type of college in Ohio, just as they do nationally.

- For In-State students:
 - The persistence rate for full-time degree-seeking first year students was the highest for students enrolled at selective university main campuses.
 - University branch campuses recorded 68% statewide persistence rates, and community colleges, state community colleges, and technical colleges recorded 59%-60% statewide persistence.
 - Full-time, degree-seeking first-year students are a small proportion of all freshmen served by the community colleges (29%), state community colleges (28%), and technical colleges (47%).
 - Full-time, degree-seeking first-year students represent a majority of first-year students on the university main campuses (93%).

1999 to 2000 Persistence for In-State, Full-Time Degree-Seeking, First Year Students

Admissions Policy	Type of College	Size of First-year Class	Count of First-time, Full-time Degree-seeking First-year Students	Persistence Rate- same Institution	Statewide Persistence rate - any State-Supported College or University or an Ohio Independent Campus	% of First-time First-year Students who are Degree-seeking and Full-time (Fall, 99)
Open Admissions	Community Colleges	12,808	3,711	54%	59%	29%
	State Community Colleges	12,744	3,603	53%	60%	28%
	Technical Colleges	5,323	2,500	54%	60%	47%
	University Branches	9,110	6,350	59%	68%	70%
Open & Selective Admissions	University Main Campuses	31,433	29,108	75%	84%	93%
	Statewide Totals	71,418	45,272	68%	77%	63%

Campus Answers for In-State Students: Persistence rates for first-time, full-time degree-seeking students varied greatly by campus.

- Statewide persistence rates for first-year students (the percentage of first-year students who are enrolled somewhere in a state-supported institution one year later) range from a high of 70% to a low of 42% for the community colleges.
- Statewide persistence rates for first-year students for the state community colleges range from a high of 68% to a low of 53%.
- The technical college statewide persistence rates range from a high of 63% to a low of 55%.
- The university branch campuses had statewide persistence rates ranging from a high of 79% to a low of 55%.
- The university main campuses had a high of 94% to a low of 61% for statewide persistence rates.

1999 to 2000 Persistence for First-Time, In-State, Full-Time Degree-Seeking Students

Community Colleges

Admissions Policy	Campus	Persistence Rate same Institution	Persistence Rate any State-supported College or University or an Ohio Independent Campus	% of First-time First-year Students who are Degree-seeking and Full-time (Fall, 99)
Open Admissions	Cuyahoga Community College, Eastern Campus	46%	52%	20%
	Cuyahoga Community College, Metro Campus	39%	42%	28%
	Cuyahoga Community College, Western Campus	54%	58%	23%
	Jefferson Community College	62%	67%	41%
	Lakeland Community College	58%	70%	34%
	Lorain County Community College	57%	63%	39%
	Rio Grande Community College	NA	NA	NA
	Sinclair Community College	57%	61%	34%

State Community Colleges

Open Admissions	Cincinnati State Technical & Community College	50%	58%	14%
	Clark State Community College	52%	66%	27%
	Columbus State Community College	53%	60%	40%
	Edison State Community College	49%	58%	31%
	Northwest State Community College	58%	68%	49%
	Owens State Community College, Findlay Campus	51%	58%	18%
	Owens State Community College, Toledo Campus	53%	58%	20%
	Southern State Community College, Central Campus	62%	67%	30%
	Southern State Community College, North Campus	48%	55%	24%
	Southern State Community College, South Campus	45%	55%	41%
	Terra State Community College	49%	58%	24%
	Washington State Community College	54%	57%	53%

Technical Colleges

Open Admissions	Belmont Technical College	51%	55%	38%
	Central Ohio Technical College	53%	57%	38%
	Hocking Technical College	55%	61%	59%
	Lima Technical College	58%	60%	59%
	Muskingum Area Technical College	50%	56%	34%
	Marion Technical College	55%	62%	39%
	North Central State College	51%	55%	37%
	Stark State College of Technology	56%	63%	43%

1999 to 2000 Persistence for First-Time, In-State, Full-Time Degree-Seeking Students (Continued)

University Branch Campuses

Admissions Policy	Campus	Persistence Rate same Institution	Persistence Rate any State-supported College or University or an Ohio Independent Campus	% of First-time First-year Students who are Degree-seeking and Full-time (Fall, 99)
Open Admissions	Bowling Green State University, Firelands Campus	62%	70%	51%
	Kent State University, Ashtabula Campus	51%	58%	66%
	Kent State University, East Liverpool Campus	49%	58%	77%
	Kent State University, Geauga Campus	68%	72%	52%
	Kent State University, Salem Campus	55%	59%	70%
	Kent State University, Stark Campus	55%	66%	83%
	Kent State University, Trumbull Campus	60%	67%	66%
	Kent State University, Tuscarawas Campus	63%	69%	76%
	Miami University, Hamilton Campus	62%	69%	76%
	Miami University, Middletown Campus	60%	67%	74%
	Ohio State University, Agricultural Technical Institute	62%	69%	96%
	Ohio State University, Lima Campus	54%	72%	94%
	Ohio State University, Mansfield Campus	57%	75%	86%
	Ohio State University, Marion Campus	68%	75%	87%
	Ohio State University, Newark Campus	58%	73%	88%
	Ohio University, Chillicothe Campus	46%	58%	60%
	Ohio University, Eastern Campus	60%	76%	83%
	Ohio University, Lancaster Campus	58%	71%	76%
	Ohio University, Southern Campus	56%	62%	46%
	Ohio University, Zanesville Campus	55%	69%	62%
	University of Akron, Wayne Campus	63%	65%	29%
	University of Cincinnati, Clermont Campus	60%	65%	59%
	University of Cincinnati, Raymond Walters Campus	60%	64%	50%
Wright State University, Lake Campus	60%	79%	78%	

University Main Campuses

Selective Admissions	Bowling Green State University	77%	89%	97%
	University of Cincinnati	70%	78%	89%
	Kent State University	72%	83%	96%
	Miami University	90%	96%	99%
	Ohio State University	86%	92%	99%
	Ohio University	84%	94%	99%

University Main Campuses (Continued)

Open Admissions	University of Akron	65%	73%	87%
	Cleveland State University	60%	74%	66%
	Central State University	59%	68%	98%
	Shawnee State University	55%	64%	78%
	University of Toledo	70%	83%	86%
	Wright State University	67%	81%	98%
	Youngstown State University	67%	73%	93%