

Graduation Rates

What if my school/program has part-time and full-time students?

Most universities set a maximum time for completion of degrees (eg, 5 or 7 years). Schools and programs should track students over the full period of time allowed. It is not necessary to separate part-time and full-time students, since both have the same *maximum* allowable time to graduate.

How do I count students who take a leave of absence?

Most universities have policies related to leaves of absence and the amount of time credits can count toward a degree. If a student takes a leave of absence, you can remove him/her from the original cohort for the purposes of calculating graduation rates. Once the leave is completed, place the student in the appropriate cohort for his/her “new” year for maximum time to graduation.

How do I count students who change degrees?

Students who transfer to another degree within the school or program should not be counted in the denominator for the original degree. They should be retrospectively added to the entering enrollment number of the degree they transferred into.

Students who transfer to a degree that is not part of the accredited school or program should remain in the denominator and be counted as withdrawn. Schools and programs may choose to track these students separately so that they can document the destination of students who transfer to a degree program outside of the accredited unit, but this is not required.

How do I count students who leave to accept a residency?

These students should remain in the denominator and be counted as withdrawn. As above, the school or program may wish to track these students as a distinct category among all students who have withdrawn from the school/program, though this is not required.

How do I count students who first enrolled in a certificate program and then transitioned to the full MPH degree?

Students who enroll in a degree should be added to the entering enrollment number of the degree they transferred into in the year in which they matriculated into the program.

How do I count students who are accepted on a conditional basis (eg, based on GPA, GRE scores, etc.)?

Begin counting these students when the university classifies them as majors in the school or program. Place these students in the appropriate cohort based on their maximum allowable time to graduate and track these students until they graduate or withdraw. As above, the school or program may wish to track these students as a distinct category among all students who have withdrawn from the school/program, though this is not required.

How do I count undergraduate students who declare a major in public health but never take a course or see an advisor?

Begin counting these students when they have declared public health to be their major and have completed 90 semester-credit hours of coursework toward their public health degree.

How do I count undergraduate students who change their major after variable amounts of time as public health majors?

If undergraduate students leave the public health major before earning 90 semester-credit hours toward their degree, do not include them in any calculations. If the change in major is declared after 90 semester-credit hours have been earned, count them as withdrawn.

At what point do I start counting undergraduate students who become a public health major after several years of studying other academic fields or having an undeclared major? These students may not receive their degree until they have been in undergraduate training for six or seven years.

Begin counting all undergraduate students who enter a public health major when they have completed 90 semester-credit hours of coursework toward their public health degree.

How do I count students who are part of a combined degree program at the graduate level (eg, MPH-MD, MPH-JD, MPH-MSN)? What if both programs must be completed before a degree is awarded, but students complete the MPH requirements first?

Track these students based on their maximum allowable time to graduate, and count them in the MPH student cohort that aligns with this final year.

For example, if standalone MPH students have a four-year maximum allowable time to graduate and combined degree students have a six-year maximum allowable time to graduate, then you would count combined degree students who entered in 2020-2021 with standalone MPH students who entered in 2022-2023.

How do I count students who are part of a combined undergraduate/graduate program (ie, 3 years of undergraduate/2 years of graduate work)?

As with other combined degree programs, these students should be tracked according to their maximum allowable time to graduate and then counted with the student cohort that aligns with this final year.

These students should be reported with the highest-level degree earned within the school or program. For example, if students are earning a BSPH/MPH, then count these students in the MPH cohort. If students are earning an MPH/DrPH, then count these students in the DrPH cohort.

The following table provides an example of how to track graduation rates for each degree by cohort.

Template B2-1 Degree completion

Template B2-1. Students in X Degree, by Cohorts Entering Between 20xx-xx and 20xx-xx								
	Cohort of Students	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
2003-04	# Students entered	100						
	# Students withdrew, dropped, etc.	5						
	# Students graduated	0						
	Cumulative graduation rate	0%						
2004-05	# Students continuing at beginning of this school year (or # entering for newest cohort)	95	80					
	# Students withdrew, dropped, etc.	10	2					
	# Students graduated	75	0					
	Cumulative graduation rate	75%	0%					
2005-06	# Students continuing at beginning of this school year (or # entering for newest cohort)	10	78					
	# Students withdrew, dropped, etc.	3	3					
	# Students graduated	5	40					
	Cumulative graduation rate	80%	50%					
2006-07	# Students continuing at beginning of this school year (or # entering for newest cohort)	2	35					

	# Students withdrew, dropped, etc.	1	4					
	# Students graduated	1	26					
	Cumulative graduation rate	81%	83%					
2007-08	# Students continuing at beginning of this school year (or # entering for newest cohort)	0	5					
	# Students withdrew, dropped, etc.	---	0					
	# Students graduated	---	5					
	Cumulative graduation rate	81%	89%					
2008-09	# Students continuing at beginning of this school year (or # entering for newest cohort)	---	---					
	# Students withdrew, dropped, etc.	---	---					
	# Students graduated	---	---					
	Cumulative graduation rate	81%	89%					
2009-10	# Students continuing at beginning of this school year (or # entering for newest cohort)	---	---					
	# Students withdrew, dropped, etc.	---	---					
	# Students graduated	---	---					
	Cumulative graduation rate	81%	89%					

Note: Values highlighted in yellow are provided for example purposes only. Table is based on an allowable time to graduation of seven years; add or delete rows and columns as appropriate (eg. if five years is the maximum allowable time to graduate, present the last five years of data).

Track students vertically by column (ie, not across each row).

The school or program tracks the students who enter each degree school or program via a defined entry point (enrollment in the first semester of classes, completion of a certain number of prerequisite credits, etc.). The number of entering students, as defined here, constitutes a cohort for the purpose of calculating graduation rates.

The school or program follows the members of the cohort until they reach a defined outcome: graduation, withdrawal, transfer to a different degree or dismissal. Dismissal is assumed to be the outcome when the cohort reaches the maximum allowable time to graduation without achieving one of the other outcomes, except in special circumstances. The school or program documents all special circumstances.

At the maximum allowable time to graduation for each degree, which is typically defined by the university, the school or program calculates a graduation rate by dividing the number of students with graduation as the outcome (numerator) by the total number of students in the cohort (denominator).

The school or program may subtract students who transferred to a different degree from the total number of students when calculating the graduation rate, but the school or program must provide evidence that it is tracking and evaluating the reasons for transfers.

If the maximum time to graduation for the MPH degree is seven years, the school or program would calculate the graduation rate for MPH students who entered the graduation rate calculation cohort in 2015 in the year 2022.

Definitions:

Degree: Complete one template for each public health degree offered (eg, BS, MPH, MS, PhD). SPH only: For all degrees (eg, BS) in which the SPH offers a mix of public health concentrations and “other” concentrations, the SPH should present data ONLY for the public health concentrations. SPHs that include such “mixed” degrees should list the specific concentrations that are included in each data set. See “Degree Classification Key,” available on the CEPH website.

Students entered: The number of newly matriculated students enrolled in this degree in a cohort year. Students who transfer into this degree from another degree within the school or program should be retrospectively added to the cohort.

Students withdrew, dropped, etc.: The number of students from the entering cohort who, through official notice or failure to enroll, resigned from the program before completing the degree.

Students graduated: The number of students from the entering cohort who successfully completed the requirements for graduation.

Students continuing at beginning of this school year: The number of students from the entering cohort who remained enrolled after subtracting out those who graduated and those who withdrew.

Cumulative graduation rate: Students who withdraw from the program (through official notice or failure to enroll) should be counted in the denominator of this calculation. Students who transfer to another degree within the school or program should not be counted in the denominator for the original degree. They should be retrospectively added to the entering enrollment number of the degree they transferred into.