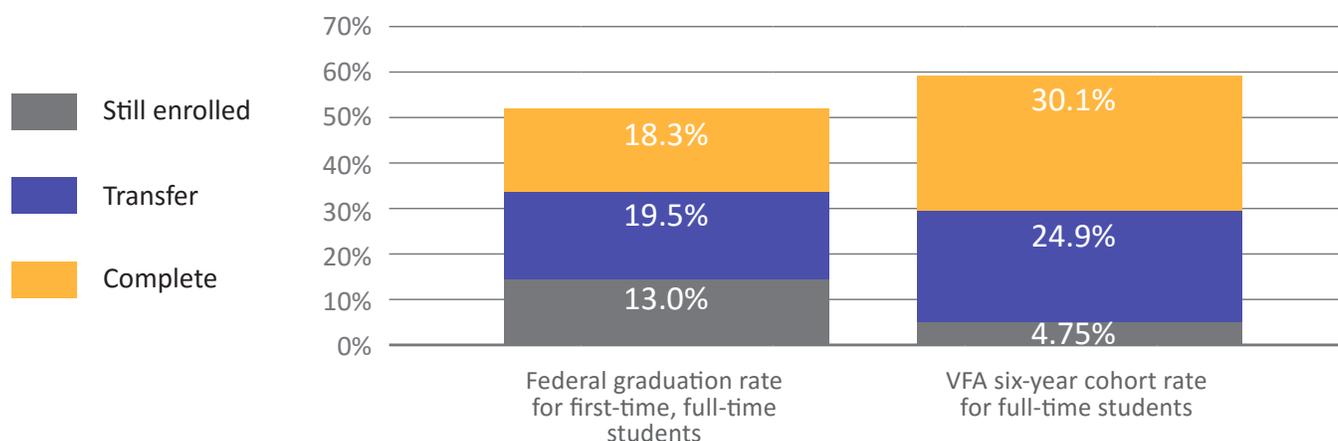


Better outcomes

AACC's Voluntary Framework of Accountability provides better, more comprehensive measures of student outcomes at community colleges.

Student outcomes: Federal three-year data vs. VFA six-year data



Note: Chart is based on median student outcomes of community colleges submitting VFA data. It compares federal three-year outcomes to VFA six-year outcomes.

Source: AACC analysis of VFA data and Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) 2014 graduation rate data files.



The most commonly used metric of student outcomes is the federal graduation rate of completion, which for associate degree granting institutions is based on how full-time students fare within three years of starting college. Supported by data, community colleges have argued that this rate significantly under-represents the outcomes of their students, who often take longer to earn a credential because they typically attend part time and have to balance work, family and school.

The American Association of Community Colleges' Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA) uses a more comprehensive set of measures for community college outcomes based on a more appropriate time frame. The VFA provides data for all fall-entering students (full-time and part-time; first-time and transfer-in) after six years, and it includes intermediate outcomes to better assess progress of students in developmental education, after the first term and over the first two years.

Based on the VFA data, the median value of students who completed or transferred was 55.6 percent, rising to 60.3 percent when still-enrolled students were included. This compares to 39.2 percent and 52.2 percent, respectively, using federal graduation rate data for VFA-participating colleges. [Learn more about VFA](#) or [view the data](#) for participating colleges.

For more information, contact Kent Phillippe, associate vice president for research and student success at the American Association of Community Colleges, at (202) 416-4505 or kphillippe@aacc.nche.edu, or Rahel Tekle, AACC research associate, at (202) 416-4508 or rtekle@aacc.nche.edu.