

Agency Mission: To contribute leadership and resources to increase the skills, knowledge, and career opportunities of Oregonians.

KPM #13	ASSOCIATE DEGREE COMPLETION Percentage of students in Associate’s degree programs who obtain an Associate’s degree	Measure since: 2006
Goal	Goal 3: All Oregonians have access to excellent, affordable community college services	
Oregon Context	OBM 25: Postsecondary credentials	
Data source	Oregon Community College Unified Reporting System	
Owner	CCWD Research, 503-378-8648	

1. OUR STRATEGY

CCWD is actively working toward ensuring statewide transferability of postsecondary coursework towards degree requirements. Working in conjunction with community colleges, high schools, and OUS, CCWD aims to eliminate administrative and systemic barriers to transfer and degree completion.

2. ABOUT THE TARGETS

The target for 2007 was set to the performance level in 2004. Targets for 2007-09 were increased by 1% from the prior year’s target. No target was set for 2006 because this measure was created by the Joint Legislative Audit Committee in July of 2006, after the academic year had ended. The 2008 target is 2% higher and the 2009 target is 3% higher than the previous year’s target. Higher is better.

3. HOW WE ARE DOING

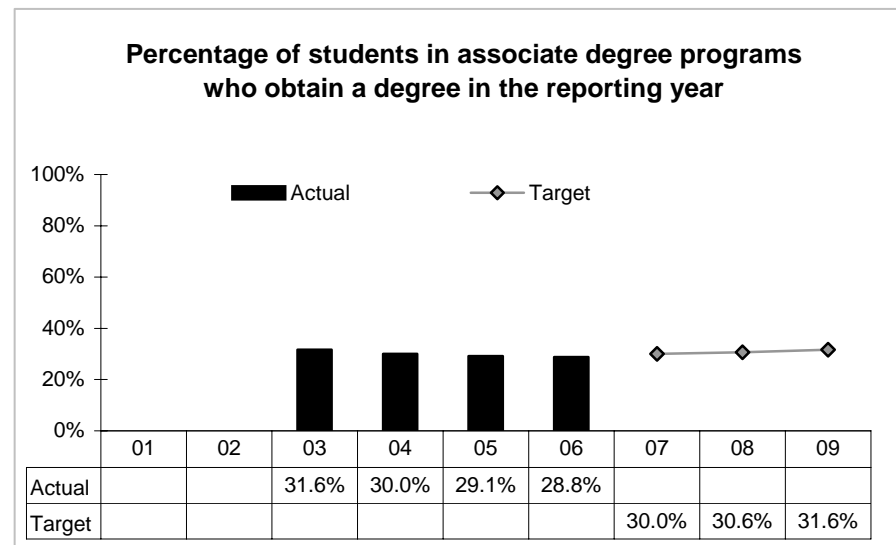
Performance for this measure has been gradually declining over the past four years. However, the decline has been only 2.8 percentage points from 2003 to 2006.

4. HOW WE COMPARE

Washington State reports on a similar measure, although it is not identical. Washington looks at the percentage of students who have graduated or earned 4 or more quarters of credit within 2 years of entering the college. Washington reports that among full-time students in 2005-06, 62% have either graduated or earned 4 or more quarters of credit. Among part-time students, 38% have graduated or earned 4 or more quarters of credit.¹⁴

5. FACTORS AFFECTING RESULTS

Measures using a percentage of students completing associate’s degrees can be misleading indicators of performance. It is extremely difficult to identify a cohort of students to use as the denominator of a percentage calculation. Many community college students do not follow a traditional path of full-time enrollment culminating



¹⁴ State of Washington: State Board of Community and Technical Colleges. “Academic Year Report: 2005-06.” December, 2006. Retrieved on August 28, 2007 from http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/docs/data/research_reports/academic_reports/ayr2005-06/ayr_complete.pdf.

Agency Mission: To contribute leadership and resources to increase the skills, knowledge, and career opportunities of Oregonians.

in an associate's degree in two years. In fact, most community college students attend less than full-time. Many change their enrollment status from full- to part- to half-time depending on personal circumstances, including work, family and other issues.

Not all students within range of earning an associate's degree are seeking to earn a degree. Some students may intend to transfer to a four-year institution or upgrade their workforce skills without earning a degree. Higher tuition and an improving job market have encouraged some students to take fewer classes, which may result in taking longer to earn a degree.

6. WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

The Department is developing several strategies to increase associate's degree completion rates. To facilitate student transfers and simplify degree auditing, CCWD plans to help individual community colleges enhance their degree audit systems and link them to the Articulated Transfer Linked Audit System (ATLAS). Access to and awareness of financial aid are other critical components to improving degree completion rates. CCWD and community colleges are working together to increase the number of community college students, especially part-time students, who take advantage of the financial aid available to them through various federal, state and private resources.

7. ABOUT THE DATA

Reporting cycle: Oregon fiscal year. The measure cohort includes the unduplicated count of all fall credit students with enough credits to possibly complete an Associate's degree by end of spring term. The percentage is calculated by identifying the number of these students who do complete Associate's degree by end of spring term. Students are identified as having "enough credits to potentially complete an Associate's degree" according to their enrollment status in the fall term of the year under consideration. Full-time students (those enrolled in 12 or more credits in the fall term) could potentially complete an associate's degree by the end of spring term of the reporting year if they have earned at least 54 credits by the time they enroll full-time for the fall quarter. Half-time students (those enrolled in 6-11.99 more credits in the fall term) could potentially complete an associate's degree by the end of spring term of the reporting year if they have earned at least 72 credits by the time they enroll half-time for the fall quarter. Part-time students (those enrolled in 1-5.99 more credits in the fall term) could potentially complete an associate's degree by the end of spring term of the reporting year if they have earned at least 81 credits by the time they enroll part-time for the fall quarter.