

Student Achievement Measures

Table 8.1-1 below identifies the overall measures selected for institutional level student achievement outcomes as well as the rationale for the selection of these measures and the overall benchmark levels and improvement goals for each measure that are evaluated annually. Additionally, the table includes the student and program details that are disaggregated for more specific examination and analysis.

Table 8.1-1: Student Achievement Measures and Rationale

Measure	Rationale for Measure	Benchmark and Goals	Disaggregation areas
IPEDS 200% Graduation Rate for First Time In College (FTIC) students (identified as core measure for SACSCOC)	The IPEDS Graduation Rate provides a consistent, and comparable, measure of how the FTIC students enrolling at South University succeed in the associate and bachelor level programs they enroll in. Data can be compared to similar institutions and over time to identify opportunities for improvement for this population of students	South University has set a benchmark level of 13% for on-ground programs and 3% for online programs. These are based on the graduation rates for students who entered in Fall 2010, as reported in the 2019 IPEDS Data Feedback Reports. South University's goal is to improve average graduation rates year over year for both on-ground and online programs.	Gender (Male/Female); Race/Ethnicity (White, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Other Students of Color); Age (<25, 25+); SES/Pell (Eligible/Not Eligible) This measure only represents bachelor degree seeking students, so is not disaggregated by level of program.
Student retention after 90 and 180 days of start date.	This retention measure provides a picture of how well students are beginning their program work and includes students at all levels and in all modalities of program offering. Low retention rates at these two points indicate opportunities for	The overall benchmark level set for 90-day retention for on-ground programs is 82% and for online programs it is 65%. For 180-day retention, on-ground program benchmark is set at 65% and online benchmark is set at 50%. These benchmarks are based on	Gender (Male/Female); Race/Ethnicity (White, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Other Students of Color); Age (<25, 25+); SES/Pell (Eligible/Not Eligible); Program Level (Associate, Bachelor, Master, Doctoral)

	interventions for students at risk of dropping out of their programs.	historical averages for these measures since Quarter 1 of 2020. The goal for 90-day retention in on-ground programs is 85% and is 68% for online programs. For 180-day retention the goal for on-ground programs is 68% and the goal for online programs is 53%.	
Course pass rates	This measure provides information about student successful completion of courses taken for programs at South University. This number is reviewed by faculty leadership in each program in regular program session reviews. Examining this at an institutional level provides insight into potential student challenges with course level, content, or even environmental stressors when examined at multiple levels.	South University has set a benchmark of 88% for courses taught in the on-ground modality and 65% for courses taught in the online modality. These benchmarks are based on past pass rates for programs since Quarter 1, 2020. South University has a goal to reach 91% pass rate for on-ground courses and 68% for online courses.	Gender (Male/Female); Race/Ethnicity (White, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Other Students of Color); Age (<25, 25+); SES/Pell (Eligible/Not Eligible); Student Program Level (Associate, Bachelor, Master, Doctoral); Student Program Type (Clinical, Non-Clinical); Course Level (Undergraduate, Graduate)

Results

Outcome #1 8-year Graduation Rates (IPEDS)

Table 8.1-2 below shows the results of the past four years of aggregate IPEDS information reporting 8-year graduation rates. The Online student graduation rate is quite low, however the benchmark of 3% has been met for the past four years. On ground student graduation rate varies from year to year, likely due to the relatively small number of students making up this student cohort each year when compared to the total number of students at South University. The benchmark rate of 13% has been met for four of the past five years.

Table 8.1-2: 8 year Graduation Rates Compared to Benchmark and Goal

	2010 Cohort	2011 Cohort	2012 Cohort	2013 Cohort	2014 Cohort
ONLINE					
8-year Grad Rate	2%	3% *	3% *	4% *	3% *
Benchmark Rate	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Goal Met (improve year over year)		Met	Not Met	Met	Not Met
ON GROUND					
8-year Grad Rate	15% *	14% *	18% *	12%	13% *
Benchmark Rate	13%	13%	13%	13%	13%
Goal Met (improve year over year)		Not Met	Met	Not Met	Met

* indicates the Benchmark Rate was met

Table 8.1-2a below details the disaggregation of graduation rate data by student demographics for the past two years. The numbers represent the total percentage of all students in each demographic category who graduated within 8 years of starting as a FTIC student.

Table 8.1-2a: 8 year Graduation Rate by Student Demographics

	2013 Cohort	2014 Cohort
ONLINE		
Total	4% (34/841)	3% (33/1173)
Male	2% (7/317)	1% (6/462)
Female	5% (29/528)	4% (27/711)

White Students	3% (11/359)	3% (14/470)
Black/African American Students	4% (11/302)	2% (10/447)
Hispanic/Latinx Students	8% (7/90)	5% (7/138)
Other Students of Color	7% (7/94)	2% (2/85)
Students under 25	3% (11/361)	2% (11/496)
Students 25 and over	6% (25/471)	4% (22/660)
Pell Eligible Students	4% (27/602)	3% (29/915)
Non-Pell Eligible Students	4% (9/243)	2% (4/258)
ON GROUND		
Total	12% (21/176)	15% (14/108)
Male	12% (7/57)	19% (5/36)
Female	13% (16/121)	13% (9/72)
White Students	13% (7/52)	19% (3/24)
Black/African American Students	11% (10/92)	13% (8/61)
Hispanic/Latinx Students	24% (6/25)	12% (2/17)
Other Students of Color	0% (0/9)	17% (1/6)
Students under 25	12% (18/61)	13% (9/73)
Students 25 and over	15% (8/61)	20% (5/34)
Pell Eligible Students	13% (15/116)	15% (10/83)
Non-Pell Eligible Students	13% (8/62)	17% (4/25)

Outcome #2 90- and 180-day retention from starting

Table 8.1-3 below shows the past 3 years, by quarter, of student persistence at 90 days and 180 days after starting classes at South University. For online students, 90-day retention has met or exceeded the benchmark since quarter 1 of 2020-, and 180-day retention has only missed the benchmark once since quarter 1 of 2020. However, the goal for each of these timeframes is less consistent, particularly for the 180-day retention number. The on-ground student retention benchmark and goal levels for 90 days and 180 days are more ambitious than the for online. There is also more variability the retention measures and how well they meet either the benchmarks or goals, for both 90 day and 180-day retention rates.

Table 8.1-3: 90 day and 180-day Retention Rates Compared to Benchmark and Goals

	2020				2021				2022				2023
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1
Online													
90-day retention	68%	68%	68%	74%	67%	69%	69%	74%	67%	72%	68%	70%	66%
Benchmark Met (65%)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Goal Met (68%)	*	*	*	*		*	*	*		*	*	*	
180-day retention	50%	50%	52%	54%	49%	50%	53%	54%	51%	53%	50%	51%	50%
Benchmark Met (50%)	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Goal Met (53%)				*			*	*		*			
On Ground													
90-day retention	87%	89%	97%	92%	86%	83%	96%	88%	78%	81%	85%	79%	82%
Benchmark Met (82%)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*			*		*
Goal Met (85%)	*	*	*	*	*		*	*					
180-day retention	65%	70%	80%	64%	65%	66%	80%	60%	63%	69%	69%	62%	66%
Benchmark Met (65%)	*	*	*		*	*	*			*	*		*
Goal Met (68%)		*	*				*			*	*		

* indicates the Benchmark or Goal measure was met in the quarter

Table 8.1-3a: 90-day and 180-day Retention Rates by Student Demographics

	2022				2023
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1
Online					
90-day retention					
Male	61%	68%	62%	68%	61%

Female	69%	73%	70%	71%	68%
White Students	68%	72%	68%	72%	67%
Black/African American Students	65%	69%	65%	68%	64%
Hispanic/Latinx Students	70%	75%	74%	72%	70%
Other Students of Color	68%	74%	68%	66%	67%
Students under 25	67%	72%	67%	70%	64%
Students 25 and over	67%	72%	68%	70%	67%
Pell Eligible Students	65%	70%	66%	68%	63%
Non-Pell Eligible Students	71%	75%	70%	73%	72%
Associate Student	66%	67%	63%	68%	64%
Bachelor Student	64%	70%	65%	67%	63%
Master Student	76%	80%	79%	78%	78%
Doctoral Student	71%	79%	77%	77%	77%
180-day retention					
Male	44%	47%	44%	46%	45%
Female	53%	54%	52%	52%	51%
White Students	51%	53%	50%	52%	49%
Black/African American Students	48%	49%	48%	49%	47%
Hispanic/Latinx Students	58%	59%	56%	55%	57%
Other Students of Color	49%	52%	49%	49%	52%
Students under 25	48%	47%	47%	45%	44%
Students 25 and over	51%	53%	51%	52%	51%
Pell Eligible Students	47%	49%	48%	47%	45%
Non-Pell Eligible Students	57%	59%	53%	58%	58%
Associate Student	42%	44%	44%	46%	46%
Bachelor Student	47%	49%	46%	46%	45%
Master Student	65%	65%	64%	65%	62%
Doctoral Student	59%	66%	64%	65%	70%

On Ground					
90-day retention					
Male	78%	81%	85%	79%	82%
Female	78%	84%	86%	82%	84%
White Students	79%	86%	88%	83%	80%
Black/African American Students	77%	75%	83%	74%	82%
Hispanic/Latinx Students	78%	81%	80%	79%	83%
Other Students of Color	83%	81%	85%	87%	88%
Students under 25	81%	85%	88%	84%	88%
Students 25 and over	77%	79%	83%	78%	80%
Pell Eligible Students	76%	71%	83%	73%	80%
Non-Pell Eligible Students	80%	86%	86%	83%	83%
Associate Student	71%	46%	69%	71%	73%
Bachelor Student	79%	72%	84%	73%	84%
Master Student	78%	92%	86%	92%	81%
Doctoral Student	99%	94%	100%		100%
180-day retention					
Male	62%	69%	69%	62%	66%
Female	63%	68%	67%	62%	65%
White Students	67%	77%	77%	58%	68%
Black/African American Students	58%	61%	63%	62%	61%
Hispanic/Latinx Students	64%	67%	66%	64%	67%
Other Students of Color	68%	69%	72%	73%	73%
Students under 25	69%	74%	72%	69%	77%
Students 25 and over	61%	66%	67%	60%	61%
Pell Eligible Students	57%	56%	59%	61%	60%
Non-Pell Eligible Students	67%	76%	74%	63%	69%
Associate Student	56%	55%	56%	48%	58%

Bachelor Student	58%	60%	59%	65%	63%
Master Student	71%	82%	76%	65%	70%
Doctoral Student	71%	93%	97%		74%

Outcome #3 Course Pass Rate

Table 8.1-4 below shows the past 3 years, by quarter, of data representing pass rates of students in classes offered in either online or on ground modality. The end of 2022 found a drop-off in overall course pass rates for online students with the actual measures missing the benchmarks as well as the goals. A focus on additional adjustments in online course structure and content, particularly in the general education sequence, seems to have helped as the benchmark was met in quarter 1 of 2023. On ground pass rates have been more consistent when compared to the benchmark rate, but the last two quarters reported have shown course pass rates that met or exceeded both the benchmark and goal for these courses.

Table 8.1-4: Course Pass Rates Compared to Benchmark and Goals

	2020				2021				2022				2023
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1
Online													
Course Pass Rate	68%	70%	69%	69%	70%	69%	67%	66%	67%	64%	64%	62%	65%
Benchmark Met (65%)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*				*
Goal Met (68%)	*	*	*	*	*	*							
On Ground													
Course Pass Rate	92%	91%	87%	88%	90%	89%	86%	90%	89%	94%	86%	93%	93%
Benchmark Met (88%)	*	*		*	*	*		*	*	*		*	*
Goal Met (91%)	*	*								*		*	*

* indicates that the Benchmark or Goal measure was met for the quarter

Table 8.1-4a: Course Pass Rates by Student Demographics

	2022				2023
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1
Online					
Male	64%	60%	61%	59%	61%
Female	68%	65%	65%	63%	66%
White Students	69%	66%	65%	64%	65%
Black/African American Students	64%	60%	60%	59%	62%
Hispanic/Latinx Students	73%	71%	72%	69%	72%
Other Students of Color	69%	62%	63%	62%	66%
Students under 25	63%	58%	58%	57%	60%
Students 25 and over	68%	65%	65%	63%	66%
Pell Eligible Students	61%	58%	58%	55%	58%
Non-Pell Eligible Students	82%	67%	76%	79%	82%
Associate Student	63%	57%	58%	57%	58%
Bachelor Student	61%	59%	58%	56%	60%
Master Student	90%	90%	91%	89%	91%
Doctoral Student	80%	82%	83%	84%	86%
Undergraduate/Clinical	76%	75%	74%	76%	75%
Undergraduate/Non-Clinical	59%	55%	55%	52%	55%
Graduate/ Clinical	92%	92%	94%	93%	93%
Graduate/ Non-Clinical	80%	80%	79%	77%	82%
Undergraduate Level Course	63%	59%	59%	57%	60%
Graduate Level Course	88%	89%	89%	88%	90%
On Ground					
Male	89%	94%	87%	92%	93%
Female	89%	94%	86%	93%	93%
White Students	93%	96%	91%	98%	96%
Black/African American Students	82%	90%	79%	87%	88%

Hispanic/Latinx Students	89%	95%	90%	94%	92%
Other Students of Color	93%	93%	83%	89%	93%
Students under 25	86%	94%	86%	94%	93%
Students 25 and over	90%	94%	86%	92%	93%
Pell Eligible Students	80%	93%	72%	88%	86%
Non-Pell Eligible Students	93%	94%	90%	95%	94%
Associate Student	82%	89%	81%	89%	84%
Bachelor Student	84%	92%	73%	90%	90%
Master Student	97%	97%	93%	98%	97%
Doctoral Student	83%	86%	89%		89%
Undergraduate/Clinical	86%	92%	76%	91%	89%
Undergraduate/Non-Clinical	73%	73%	72%	71%	80%
Graduate/ Clinical	94%	96%	91%	99%	95%
Graduate/ Non-Clinical	95%	95%	93%	93%	95%
Undergraduate Level Course	83%	91%	80%	89%	89%
Graduate Level Course	95%	97%	94%	98%	96%

South University most commonly analyzes enrollment trends and term-to-term retention data for four distinct groups of students: Undergraduate/Non-Clinical, Undergraduate Clinical, Graduate/Non-Clinical, Graduate Clinical. Of the four groups of students, the Undergraduate/Non-Clinical have the lowest term to term retention, particularly in the first three terms of coursework.

Over the past five years, enrollment in Undergraduate/Non-Clinical, Undergraduate/Clinical, Graduate/Non-Clinical and Graduate/Clinical programs has changed. For the Online campus, the Undergraduate/Non-Clinical population has grown, while the Undergraduate and Graduate/Clinical population has decreased. For the ground campuses, the overall population has decreased. This includes the Undergraduate/Clinical, Undergraduate/Non-Clinical and Graduate/Non-Clinical population; the Graduate/Clinical population has increased as the Physician Assistant and Anesthesiology Assisting programs have expanded to additional locations; however, the Master of Science in Nursing program population has significantly decreased.

Additionally, during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, campus-based students' on-campus classes quickly shifted delivery to a live-virtual format ("*South VR*"). On-campus lab courses returned to the classroom in June 2020, and additional clinical program didactic courses returned to the classroom in Fall 2020. Non-clinical program classroom-based instruction (Undergraduate and Graduate) has remained mostly virtual (synchronous and asynchronous) through 2023. This shift in course modality is due student preference realized in the course registration process. To adapt to campus-based students receiving majority of coursework in the virtual learning environment, the campus student support services were required to explore alternative delivery methods for academic and non-academic support services, such as supplementing in-office appointments, programs and workshops with live virtual admissions, financial aid, academic advising, academic support services and career services. The fully online student population experienced growth, particularly in the Undergraduate College of Business and College of Arts and Sciences (Undergraduate/Non-Clinical).

Incorporating efforts to better prepare, support and educate the growing population of Undergraduate/Non-Clinical students Online, the most at-risk population of students, and the support the Clinical and Graduate student populations, the University developed academic and nonacademic support measures intended to improve student achievement.

- Admissions: The Online Admissions department have dedicated teams of Admissions Representatives to assist the Undergraduate/Non-Clinical students through the admissions process. This includes the overview and interview process, selection of a program of study, submission of documents for basis of admission and completing all enrollment tasks. There is a separate admissions team to support the Undergraduate and Graduate/Clinical students and Graduate/Non-Clinical population. Campus based admissions representatives assist all applicants with the exception of the Graduate/Clinical students. Campus based Pharmacy, Master of Physician Assisting and Master of Anesthesiology Assisting students' admissions services are provided by staff within the academic program.
- Orientation: All students are provided a comprehensive orientation program prior to the first day of class. Students with less than 24 completed college credits are required to complete the *College Success Course*, delivering skill building modules for time management, study skills, financial literacy, and computer literacy, among others. All Undergraduate/Non-Clinical students receive an online Orientation to South University, South University resources, and the Learning Management System (LMS), delivered to the student as a course in the LMS. Clinical and Graduate students receive a separate, yet comparable, online Orientation to South University delivered through the LMS that addresses the needs of the clinical and graduate student population. Campus based

students receive an on-campus Orientation program to acclimate to the physical environment of the campus and on-campus resources. Clinical students receive an on-campus Orientation unique to the academic program, outlining policies, procedures, resources, and expectations for the didactic and clinical experiences.

- Academic Advising: All Undergraduate/Non-Clinical, and Graduate/Non-Clinical students are assigned an Academic Counselor to provide academic advising, including advising a student on progression to graduation, identifying barriers to success, and referrals to resources. Undergraduate and Graduate Clinical students receive academic advising by an Academic Counselor, Program Director, Faculty, or a combination of advising resources.
 - Campus based Advising: Academic Counselor: Advisee ratio is approximately 1:165. Undergraduate/Pre-Clinical students receive advising specific to meeting admissions requirements of the clinical programs, provided by Academic Counselors and Information Sessions delivered by the Program Directors. All students in a clinical program (Graduate and Undergraduate) have access to advising provided by a program director and full-time faculty.
 - On Line segmented the Academic Counselors to four separate teams; New Undergraduate/Non-Nursing, Continuing Undergraduate/Non-Nursing, Undergraduate and Graduate Clinical and Graduate/Non-Nursing
 - 19 Academic Counselors work with new Undergraduate/Non-Clinical students through the first 17 weeks of instruction. The Advisor: Advisee load for the Undergraduate/Non-Clinical team is approximately 1:90 students, with approximately 47 new students added to the advising load at the start of each term. In effort to improve the retention and success of this population the Advisor: Advisee student load was reduced to provide additional time for onboarding, engagement and intervention (as necessary).

- When the student progresses to 17 weeks (end of the third 10-week term), the students will transition to the “Continuing Student” Undergraduate/Non-Clinical team (12 Academic Counselors; 1:240 Advisor: Advisee ratio) through graduation.
 - Six Academic Counselors exclusively advise the Undergraduate and Graduate Clinical Students (Nursing), 1:240 Advisor: Advisee ratio. Undergraduate and Graduate/Clinical students receive advising by the Experiential Learning Team, Program Directors and Faculty in addition to the Academic Counselors
 - Two Academic Counselors advise Graduate/Non-Nursing students, with a 1:190 Advisor: Advisee ratio. Graduate/Non-Nursing students receive advising through the program directors and faculty in addition to the Academic Counselors.
- Course Level Retention: South University identifies courses that do not meet student success factors. These factors include low pass rates, high withdrawal rates, and low persistence to the next course (student completes the course however does not persist to the next term). These courses are prioritized by total enrollment, and course improvements are initiated.
 - “Project Yoda” In 2019, University administrators developed a dashboard to identify courses and instructors with both high and low success factors. Courses with low success factors were examined and barriers to success were identified; course improvements were initiated and the courses continued to be examined. The faculty with high success factors (high pass rate, low withdrawal rate, high persistence rate) were found to be those that utilized engagement tools, such as text messaging, use of videos in the asynchronous classroom, and outreach to students experiencing academic or personal struggles in the classroom. These best practices were operationalized and the high success faculty served as models for student-faculty engagement.
 - Course Improvements: Courses with low pass rate, high withdrawal rate and low persistence to the next term are identified and prioritized for course improvements. Because of the high enrollment in the Undergraduate/Non-Clinical programs, and opportunity for retention improvement for the first 90 and 180 days, courses such as Strategies for Success (UVC1000),

Computer and Internet Literacy (ITS1000), and Developmental Composition (ENG099). Course improvements, teaching strategies, student to instructor ratio, high stakes assignments, and mobile-friendly capability for on line courses are analyzed and improved. Additional engagement tools within the D2L Learning Management System were added to the course shells, such as “To-Do Lists” which enhance the instructor-student communication processes. Course completion and persistence data are continuously monitored.