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Information Brief

Students with higher ACT Composite scores are more likely to earn a college degree within six years of initially enrolling in college.

Relationship Between ACT Composite Score and College Degree Completion

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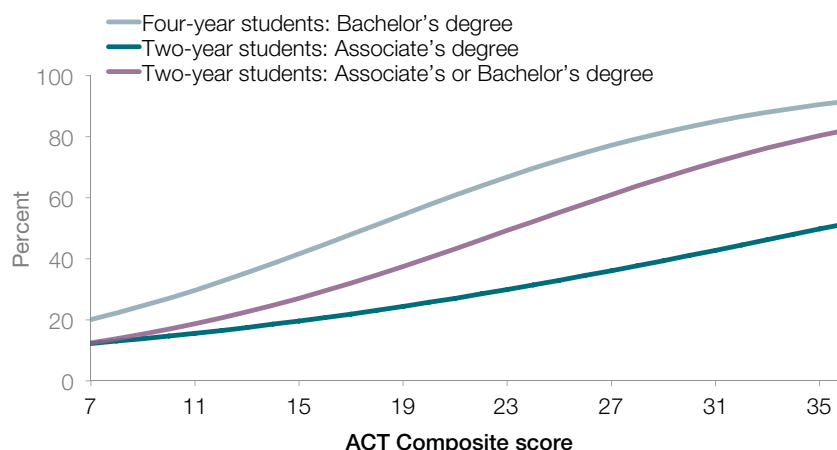
How is the ACT Composite score related to the likelihood that a student will complete a college degree?

As a student's ACT Composite score increased, the student's chances of completing a college degree within six years also increased for ACT-tested 2003 high school graduates who immediately enrolled in a four-year college ("four-year students") or in a two-year college ("two-year students") in fall 2003.

Four-year students with a Composite score above 28 had over an 80% chance of earning a bachelor's degree by the end of year 6; those with a score below 18 had less than a 50% chance of doing so.

Two-year students with a Composite score above 28 had over a 60% chance of earning an associate's or a bachelor's degree by the end of year 6 compared to a less than a 35% chance for students with a score below 18. For two-year students with higher Composite scores, the associate's or bachelor's degree completion rates were substantially higher than associate's degree completion rates, suggesting that these students may be bypassing earning an associate's degree to pursue a bachelor's degree.

Six-Year Degree Completion Rates by ACT Composite Score



Note: Based on data from a random sample of 24,850 ACT-tested 2003 high school graduates who enrolled in college in fall 2003 (18,860 four-year students and 5,990 two-year students). Degree information was obtained from the National Student Clearinghouse. Degree completion rates were model-based estimates. For a more detailed description of the study, see the full ACT Research Report numbered 2012-2 at http://www.act.org/research/researchers/reports/pdf/ACT_RR2012-2.pdf.

infobrief@act.org for more information or to suggest ideas for future ACT Information Briefs.