

# Elapsed time-to-degree

**Time-to-degree:** for exiting cohorts of students who received a degree between July 1 and the following June 30, a time period consistent with the IPEDS Completions survey and WASC. Median time-to-degree is calculated as the calendar time elapsed between matriculation date and posted graduation date. The average time-to-degree will be calculated alongside the median to show if the data is skewed, and in which direction the data is skewed in.

When reporting time-to-degree data for undergraduate students it is imperative that we separate our student cohorts by level at matriculation. Level at matriculation refers to how many credit hours a student matriculates with. For example, a first-time, freshmen student matriculates with 0 credit units; a lower division transfer student matriculates with 0-59 credit units, and an upper division transfer student with 60-120 credit units. Separating our student cohorts by level at matriculation will prevent skewing the data.

The Elapsed time to degree report serves a dual purpose: (1) to illustrate the number of graduates during a given reporting year, and (2) to track how long it takes the average student to graduate with a degree from his/her program.

This report is disaggregated by gender, race, and citizen status. Pell and Cal grant recipients are tracked in the undergraduate tables. For Pell and Grant recipients, a student is included in this category if at any time during his/her tenure at UWest he/she received student aid from one of or both of these grant agencies. The state of California has asked UWest to provide this number in the past and soon so will the federal government. As a result, it is imperative that we being setting up the infrastructure to track these students and incorporate this group into a structured reporting cycle.

**Expected time-to-degree:** The following chart illustrates the expected number of years to graduate for first-time, full-time students. Students that transfer into a program, or are enrolled in a program part-time will graduate at different rates than first-time, full-time students.

Bachelor of Arts Degree	4 years
Masters of Business Administration	2 years
Masters of Divinity	3 years
Master of Arts in Psychology	3 years
Master of Arts in Religious Studies	3 years
PhD in Religious Studies	5 years

Establishing an “Expected years to Graduate” standard allows us to dictate which year a cohort should be established for each corresponding program. For example, if we wanted to track graduation rates for the MBA program for the fall 2013 semester, we would need to establish a cohort for all MBA students that matriculated during the fall 2011 semester.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> We are not implying that all students graduate within this time frame, we are simply insinuating that this is the expected time-to-degree, and a good place to start the cohort year.

Notes:

**Department of Religious Studies:**

A student that transferred from the M.A. in REL program to the Ph.D. in REL program will maintain his/ hers original start date for when he/ she first matriculated in the M.A. in REL program. Thus, we will get an accurate reading on the number of years it took this student to complete their Ph.D. in REL degree.

A student that drops from the PhD in REL program for a duration of time, but then returns will keep the same start date when first matriculated in program.

**Master of Divinity:**

A student that transferred from the M.A. in REL program to the MDIV program will maintain their original start date for when they first matriculated in the M.A. in REL program.

**Undergraduate Students:**

Undergraduate students will be separated into three distinct categories based on status when student matriculated.

1. *Freshmen*: a student who enrolls at UWest for the first-time with no post-secondary experience.
2. *Lower division transfer*: a student that transfers to UWest with some post-secondary experience, but less than 60 credit units are transferred.
3. *Upper division transfer*: a student that transfers to UWest with 60 or more credit units from a previous post-secondary institution.

In essence, the reason for separating our undergraduate population into three different cohort groups is to prevent upper division transfer students from skewing our data. Naturally, a student that enrolls at UWest for the first-time with 60 credit units is going to graduate before a student that enters at the same cohort year with zero post-secondary credits.