DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION PLACEMENT
PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENTAL COURSES: UNITED STATES

Percentage of United States community college students who took one or more developmental courses, by demographic and enrollment characteristics

DEGREE OR CERTIFICATE PROGRAM WHEN FIRST ENROLLED

FULL-TIME/PART-TIME ENROLLMENT STATUS

GENDER
Demographic and enrollment characteristics

AGE, FIRST YEAR ENROLLED

Race/Ethnicity

Parents' Education
What Is Measured?
The percentage of U.S. community college students taking one or more developmental courses from entry through spring 2009.

Who Is Counted?
First-time college students who first enrolled in U.S. community colleges in the 2003-04 academic year as of spring 2009.

What It Tells Us
Some 62 percent of U.S. community college students had taken at least one developmental education course within six years of their initial enrollment. Students who started in an associate degree program were more likely to do so (64 percent) than students who were not pursuing a certificate or degree when they first enrolled (56 percent). Income was negatively associated with taking developmental education courses: those in lowest-income group were more likely to take such courses than students in the high middle- and highest-income groups.

Why It’s Important
For students in need of developmental education, enrolling in specific courses mandated by the placement test is the first step toward advancement to a college-level program. Many students never enroll in developmental courses at the level at which they are assessed, however (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010). Because placements are not always binding, many students enroll in higher- or lower-level courses. Some may skip courses in the remedial sequence or skip developmental education altogether (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010). As a result, the rates at which students enroll in developmental courses provide an incomplete picture of the need for remediation. Placement information, however, is rarely available, leaving enrollment rates as the only measure for gauging students’ college readiness.

Developmental education courses: coded as remedial based on a transcript notation indicating that the course was remedial, the course numbering system, the course description, and/or the number of credits awarded for the course. For more information, see the complete 2010 College Course Map (CCM2010): http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pets/ccm.asp.

Race/ethnicity: Other includes Native American, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and individuals who indicated Other or Two or more races. Race categories exclude Hispanic/Latino origin unless specified.

Income percentile rank: calculated separately for dependent and independent students and then combined. Each ranking thus compares the
respondent only to other respondents of the same dependency status. Uses parents’ income if respondent is dependent and uses respondent’s own
income if respondent is independent.

Full-time/part-time enrollment: indicates students’ enrollment from fall 2003 through spring 2009. Full-time enrollment is defined as enrollment in 12 or
more credit hours per semester.

DATA SOURCE
U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003-04 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study, Second Follow-
up (BPS:04/09) Postsecondary Education Transcript Study (PETS:09).