UC undergraduate non-completion

Although the universitywide six-year graduation rate (84 percent) is higher compared to non-UC American Association of Universities (AAU) public institutions (79 percent), it is important to understand who the students are who do not complete their bachelor’s degree at UC.

Over 50,000 undergraduates enter UC each year, and nearly 90 percent go on to complete a bachelor’s degree. Of those students who complete a degree, about 95 percent graduate from a UC and 5 percent graduate from another institution. Between 1999 and 2011, 68,000 (or just over 5,000 each cohort) never completed a bachelor’s degree.

Entering UC students and location of degree completion

When comparing students who did not graduate with students who graduated, there was no significant difference in the proportion of Pell Grant recipients (40 percent vs. 39 percent). However, there is a higher proportion of first generation students (45 percent vs. 37 percent) and students from underrepresented groups, e.g., identify as African American/Black, American Indian, or Hispanic/Latina(o), (28 percent vs. 18 percent) among those who did not complete their bachelor’s degree.

GPA, units completed, and major

When compared to UC graduates, students who did not finish their bachelor’s degree tend to leave UC with lower grade point averages (2.25 versus 3.15).

1 For more about UC undergraduate graduation rates: https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/infocenter/ug-outcomes
The majority of students who did not finish their bachelor’s degree completed at least one academic year of units (30-45) at UC. More than half (61 percent) complete more than 50 units at UC before they leave.

Students who do not finish their bachelor’s degree also major in different disciplines. Almost a quarter of students (22 percent) have an undeclared major when they leave UC.

### Degree completion

Although students may leave UC without a degree, just over a quarter complete their bachelor’s degree elsewhere. Of the students who began at UC between 1999 and 2011 and exited without a degree, 27 percent finished and earned their bachelor’s degree elsewhere (around half at a California State University and the other half at another four-year institution). The remaining 72 percent have not yet earned a bachelor’s degree.