

The Florida College System Transparency, Accountability, Progress, and Performance

HOW DOES THE FLORIDA COLLEGE SYSTEM COMPARE TO OTHER SOUTHERN STATES ON MEASURES RELATING TO DEGREE COMPLETION? TIME-TO-DEGREE? CREDITS-TO-DEGREE?

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that works with 16 member states (Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia) to strengthen public education from pre-kindergarten through graduate school. [SREB Data Exchange](#) member states report on and have access to benchmarking data on high-impact measures from neighboring southern states. Completion rates, time-to-degree and average credits-to-degree are focal points in conversations about the importance of a college-educated population for the United States and how each individual state can gain a competitive advantage in the global marketplace. **The Florida College System (FCS) consistently performs above average on the SREB completion-related metrics.**

Completion Rate Table 1 figures show that the completion rate for the FCS 2008 cohort is 17.6 percentage points above the SREB state average. **The FCS has consistently ranked first among SREB states in completion rates. Over the last five years, the gap between Florida and the SREB average has widened as FCS institutions outpace their peers in the southern states.** The

percentage of Florida students who completed awards increased 6.3 percentage points over five years. The SREB state average increased less than half as much with a 2.9 percentage point growth rate over the same five-year period.

Time-to-Degree A few years ago, the [SREB](#) data-collection initiative added two efficiency measures to capture time-to-degree and credits-to-degree. Table 2 shows the average time-to-degree in years for the Florida College System and among Southern Regional Education Board states. Results are reported separately for students with and without acceleration-earned credit hours (i.e., dual-enrollment credits earned at the same institution in which the degree was received). **Among students with acceleration hours, Florida's full-time students consistently performed better than the SREB state average** (2.8 years versus 3.1 years in the latest data). In comparison to the SREB states, Florida's part-time students with acceleration hours registered average performance in the latest data (both 3.8 years).

Category	2004 Cohort Tracked Through 2007	2005 Cohort Tracked Through 2008	2006 Cohort Tracked Through 2009	2007 Cohort Tracked Through 2010	2008 Cohort Tracked Through 2011
Florida College System	30.4	31.0	34.4	35.5	36.7
SREB State Average	16.2	17.4	17.8	18.4	19.1
<i>Difference</i>	<i>14.2</i>	<i>13.6</i>	<i>16.6</i>	<i>17.1</i>	<i>17.6</i>
Source: SREB-State Data Exchange and Division of Florida Colleges Research & Analytics					

Category	2008-09		2009-10		2010-11	
	FT*	PT*	FT*	PT*	FT*	PT*
FCS Rank Among States Reporting Acceleration Hours (9 in 2008-09, 10 in 2009-10 and 11 in 2010-11)	3 rd	5 th	3 rd	4 th	4 th	6 th
FCS Years With Acceleration Hours	2.8	3.6	2.9	3.6	2.8	3.8
SREB State Average Years With Acceleration Hours	3.2	3.8	3.3	4.0	3.1	3.8
<i>Difference</i>	<i>-0.4</i>	<i>-0.2</i>	<i>-0.4</i>	<i>-0.4</i>	<i>-0.3</i>	<i>0.0</i>
*Full and part-time status is determined based on student's first enrollment at graduating college. Source: SREB-State Data Exchange and Division of Florida Colleges Research & Analytics						

Table 2 Continued: Average Years to Degree Florida College System and Southern Regional Education Board States For Students WITHOUT Acceleration Hours

Category	FT*	PT*	FT*	PT*	FT*	PT*
FCS Rank Among States Without Acceleration Hours (9 in 2008-09, 10 in 2009-10 and 11 in 2010-11)	3 rd (tie)	6 th	3 rd	6 th	4 th	6 th
FCS Years Without Acceleration Hours	3.9	5.3	4.0	5.5	4.0	5.5
SREB State Average Years Without Acceleration Hours	4.2	5.3	4.3	5.5	4.3	5.5
<i>Difference</i>	-0.3	0.0	-0.3	0.0	-0.3	0.0

*Full and part-time status is determined based on student's first enrollment at graduating college.
Source: SREB-State Data Exchange and Division of Florida Colleges Research & Analytics

As anticipated, **the length of time to completion increases across the board for students without acceleration credit hours.** It took an extra 1.2 years for full-time starters to graduate and an extra 1.7 years for part-time starters to graduate. Extended time-to-degree results were the same for both FCS students and the SREB cross-state average. Florida's relative performance to SREB states changes little for students with acceleration hours and those without acceleration hours. Florida's full-time students without acceleration hours consistently performed better than the SREB state average (4.0 years versus 4.3 years in the latest data). Florida's part-time students without acceleration hours matched the SREB state average for time-to-degree in the latest data (both 5.5 years).

Credits-to-Degree

Table 3 contains average credits-to-degree for the FCS and SREB states. Few states provided credits-to-degree data. In all but one instance, **Florida students took fewer credit hours to complete their associate degrees than the SREB state average.** In the latest figures for Florida, full-time students averaged 73.8 credits with acceleration hours and 77.1 credits without acceleration hours. Among SREB states, full-time students averaged 76.2 credits with acceleration hours and 83.1 credits without acceleration hours. Florida part-time students averaged 73.1 with acceleration hours and 77.9 without hours. The corresponding SREB state part-time student average was 74.0 with acceleration hours and 80.2 without acceleration hours. Sixty credits are typically required for associate degree completion. Reasons for taking additional hours vary including: change of major, developmental education, and adding courses that, while not required, may be beneficial for a student's chosen career path, etc.

Table 3: Average Credits-to-DegreeFlorida College System and Southern Regional Education Board States for Students WITH Acceleration Hours**

Category	2008-09		2009-10		2010-11	
	FT*	PT*	FT*	PT*	FT*	PT*
FCS Rank Among States Reporting With Acceleration Credits (5 in 2008-09, 6 in 2009-10 and 5 in 2010-11)	1 st	3 rd	3 rd	3 rd	2 nd	2 nd
FCS Credits With Acceleration Hours	73.1	72.9	73.9	72.6	73.8	73.1
SREB State Average Credits With Acceleration Hours	75.1	72.8	77.1	75.1	76.2	74.0
<i>Difference</i>	-2.0	0.1	-3.2	-2.5	-2.4	-0.9

Average Credits-to-Degree for Students WITHOUT Acceleration Hours

Category	FT*	PT*	FT*	PT*	FT*	PT*
FCS Rank Among States Reporting Without Acceleration Credits (2 in 2008-09, 7 in 2009-10 and 6 in 2010-11)	1 st	1 st	3 rd	3 rd	2 nd	3 rd
FCS Credits Without Acceleration Hours	81.3	81.4	77.3	78.0	77.1	77.9
SREB State Average Credits Without Acceleration	86.2	88.7	83.7	79.7	83.1	80.2
<i>Difference</i>	-4.9	-7.3	-6.4	-1.7	-6.0	-2.3

*Full and part-time status is determined based on student's first enrollment at graduating college.

**60 hours required for an associate degree in Florida.

Source: SREB-State Data Exchange and Division of Florida Colleges Research & Analytics.