

REQUIREMENT 8.1 STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The institution identifies, evaluates, and publishes goals and outcomes for student achievement appropriate to the institution's mission, the nature of the students it serves, and the kinds of programs offered. The institution uses multiple measures to document student success.

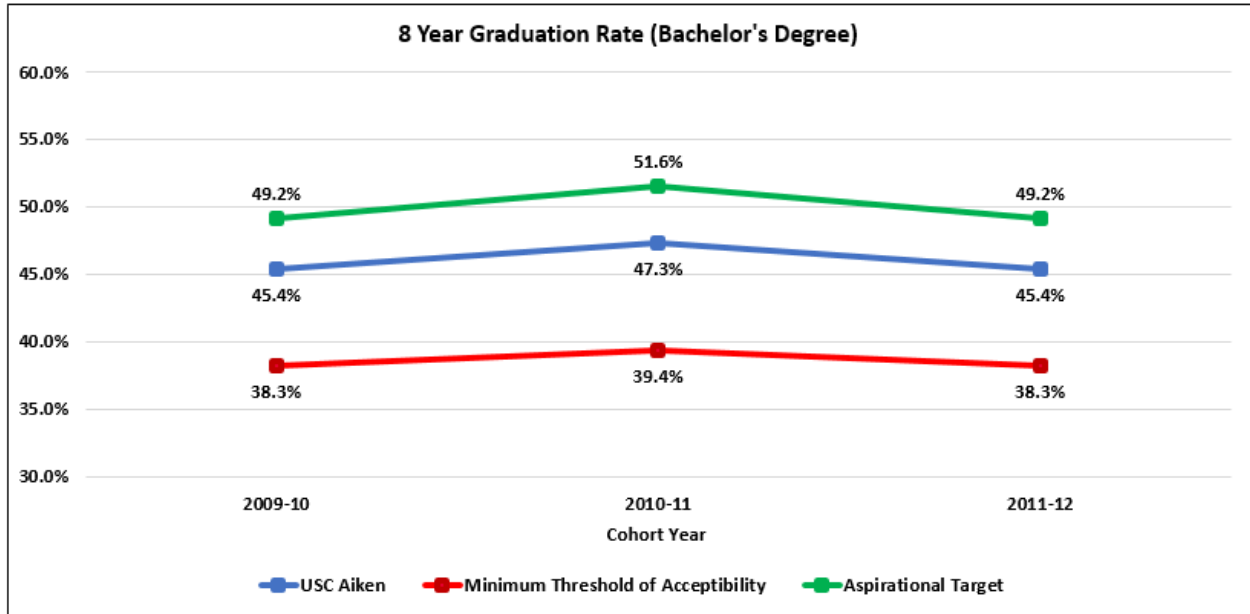
Institutional Response

As required by federal regulations, USC Aiken tracks and annually reports the 8-year outcomes metric to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) via Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) surveys. The 8-year outcomes metric documents the status of students eight years after entering the institution. The metric includes a report of the enrollment and completion status of all students who started throughout the year from July 1st through June 30th, regardless of when they entered and regardless of whether they are first-time students, transfer students, full-time students, or part-time students. The IPEDS survey requires the disaggregation of students first-time, full-time students; first-time-part-time students; transfer, full-time students; and transfer, part-time students. The IPEDS survey also requires a separate disaggregation of students as either Pell or not Pell grant recipients.

Like many other outcome measures, USC Aiken compares its performance on the 8-year outcome metric to the average performance of a [national group of 84 comparable and aspirational peers](#).^[S1] Strategically, our aim is to become more like our aspirational peers on the 8-year outcome metric by achieving or exceeding the median value of our national aspirational peer group (i.e., be at or above 50% of our aspirational peers on the measure). In recognition that there will be year-to-year and inter-institutional variability in a metric due to factors completely outside the control of institutions (e.g., a pandemic, or increasing mobility of students across the nation) and that small year-to-year fluctuations may not represent meaningful change or differences, USC Aiken has set a minimum threshold of acceptability at the 25th percentile of its comparable national peer group. The minimum threshold of acceptability was selected to ensure USC Aiken does not fall within the bottom quadrant of its national comparable

peers. Figure 8.1-1 shows USC Aiken's 8-year graduation outcome for the past three years relative to the national peer group target and the minimum threshold of achievement.

Figure 8.1-1 USC Aiken Overall 8-year Graduation Rate



This graph and the data used to create them are compiled by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, and Compliance and published on its [Retention and Progression website](#) ^[S2] and [Student Achievement website](#).^[S3] A break-out of the data by Pell-grant vs non-Pell grant recipients, first-time vs transfer-in student, and full-time vs part-time initial enrollment status relative to the national peer group targets and minimum threshold of acceptability are also available as tables from the website and are provided here for the [2009-10](#), ^[S4] [2010-11](#), ^[S5] and [2011-12](#) ^[S6] entering cohort years. USC Aiken's 8-year outcome data are also provided to the public through the [NCES's College Navigator website](#).^[S7] This website allows individuals to search for institutions, based on characteristics of the institution, and then compare the institution with others.

Like persistence and the 6-year graduation rate data, the 8-year outcome metrics are used as an important performance indicator. The University's Retention,

Progression, and Graduation Implementation Committee has examined the institutional data and has made specific recommendations of actions that can be undertaken to improve persistence and graduation and to move us toward our strategic, aspirational target. Recommendations and initiatives identified in the Compliance Certification report for the persistence and graduation metric such as placement testing, course sequencing, tutoring, and academic advisement are all relevant to the 8-year outcomes metric. Implemented initiatives impact all students regardless of when they initiate their studies with USC Aiken or their status as full-time / part-time, first-time / transfer, or Pell-grant recipient / non-Pell grant recipient. Many of the initiatives are expected to impact retention in the first two years of a student's tenure. The impact of the initiatives on the 8-year outcomes metric will not be immediate; they are not expected to be seen for another 5-6 years.

Additional Supporting Documentation

- S1. [National Group of 84 Similar and Aspirational Peers](#)
- S2. [USC Aiken Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research and Compliance Analytic Reports Website](#)
- S3. [USC Aiken Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research and Compliance Student Achievement Website](#)
- S4. [Eight-year Outcomes Metric for 2009-10 Cohort Year](#)
- S5. [Eight-year Outcomes Metric for 2010-11 Cohort Year](#)
- S6. [Eight-year Outcomes Metric for 2011-12 Cohort Year](#)
- S7. [College Navigator Website](#)