OVERVIEW

The completion rate is used to track a set of new students with active enrolment records based on the specifically designed identifier that contains students' enrolment information. Students are tracked for a number of years to identify those that complete programs within that grouping.

METHODOLOGY

1. Identifying new students to be included in the starting cohort.
   - To determine if a student is new, we look at the previous active enrolment records for that student. By default, the number of years used to see if a student had previous enrolments is three years.
   - When looking at the previous enrolments, if they didn't have previous active enrolments, then the students would be considered new.
   - All new students then become the starting cohort. Then we start tracking if they complete their programs (or any other credentials in the system) within the completion timeline.
2. Identifying completers from the starting cohort within the completion timeline.
   - Tracking completion in three steps:
     - STEP ONE:
       Track if a student completed the initial credential at the initial institution/sector. Completers in step one are marked and filtered and those who remain in the cohort will be entered in step two.
     - STEP TWO:
       Track if a student completed the initial credential at other institutions/sectors. Completers in step two are marked and filtered and those who remain in the cohort will be entered in step three.
     - STEP THREE:
       Track if a student completed any credit parchment in the system. Completers in step three will be marked and filtered, and those who remain in the cohort after this step will be identified as non-completers.
   - In the first two steps identified above, completion is tracked up to three years[1] after the typical program duration[2]. Typical program durations are defined as follows:
     - Certificate: one year
     - Diploma: two years
     - Degree, Applied & Bachelor's: four years
     - Degree, Masters: three years
     - Degree, Doctoral: six years[3]

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[1] We also calculate completion rates one year after typical program durations for comparison purposes.

[2] If a new student enrolled in 2007-08, we will treat 2007-08 as year one in the process. For example, if this new student enrolled in a Bachelor's program in 2007-08, we will track up to 2013-14 for his/her completion.

[3] Tracking for doctoral programs is limited due to the long completion timeline.

- Typical program durations are used for tracking completions in the first two steps. In the third step, we apply the maximum number of years (seven years)[4] to track the completion of any credential in the system. For example, if a student enrolled in a certificate program, we track up to four years to see if the student completed the certificate program at the initial institution/sector or any other institutions/sectors. If the student did not complete the certificate program, then we track up to seven years to see if the student completed any other credential in the system, i.e. a Bachelor's degree.

KEY DEFINITIONS

Cohort/Starting Cohort: The starting cohort is made up of all new students/records actively enrolled in a combination of identifiers during the cohort year.

Cohort Year: The cohort year is the starting year in which all records are reviewed. For example, if we are tracking certificate students from 2007-08 and tracking when they completed, the cohort year for the data pull is 2007-08.

Completer: To be counted as a completer, the student must have completed a parchment program within the completion timeline. Students who did not complete a parchment program within the completion timeline are defined as non-completers.

Completion Rate: Refers to the percentage of students/records that completed any credential programs within the completion timeline given the number of students/records in the starting cohort.

Completion/Tracking Timeline: This timeline defines where the tracking stops. It is set at three years after typical program durations.

Identifier: Used to identify enrolment records (new students and completers) and remove duplicates. At the institutional level, the identifier contains students' Alberta Student Number, initial institution name, initial credential type and initial program type. At the sector level, the identifier contains students' Alberta Student Number, initial sector name, initial credential type and initial program type.

New Students: A student is deemed to be new if they do not have a previous active enrolment record with the same combination of identifiers in the past three years.

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[4] Nine years for the Doctoral cohorts.

Processing Diagram:

Does the active enrolment record at one institution/sector have the exact matching record(s) at the same institution/sector in the previous three years (matching the identifiers)?

YES → Out of scope as this record is a returning /continuing student

NO → Assign to Starting Cohort

Step One Tracking: At the same institution/sector, within the completion timeline (depending on credentials), had completion record with the initial credential?

YES → Assign to "Step one Completer"

NO → Step Two Tracking: At all other institutions/sectors, within the completion timeline (depending on credentials), had completion record with the initial credential?

YES → Assign to "Step Two Completer"

NO → Step Three Tracking: In the system, within the completion timeline, had completion record with any parchment?

YES → Assign to "Step Three Completer"

NO → Non-completer