

Nelson University Student Achievement Goals and Outcomes

2024 Annual Report

Goal: Graduation Rate (Key Student Completion Indicator)

Nelson University maintains an aspirational goal that 50% of degree-seeking freshmen will complete their degree program within a six-year span of studies. Nelson University’s Key Student Completion Indicator (KSCI) for traditional, undergraduate programs is the IPEDS six-year graduation rate of incoming first-time, full-time, degree-seeking students. Nelson University’s maintains a minimum threshold of 41% graduation rate based on that measure.

Rationale:

The FTFT (First-Time, Full-Time) Degree-Seeking Six Year Graduation Rate, also known as the Overall Graduation Rate metric accounts for all incoming degree-seeking first-time freshmen regardless of initial award level (Associate or Bachelors). The FTFT Degree-Seeking Six Year Graduation Rate provides Nelson University with a standard measure of student achievement that includes students in Conditional Acceptance programs who must begin with specific Associate degrees until they meet the academic terms of full acceptance. Nelson University sees actual degree completion as the primary measure of success in students’ academic endeavors. Because Nelson University has such an open admissions policy, it is important that student achievement measures in the conditional acceptance program are carefully monitored to determine if Nelson University needs to adjust its policies or procedures. Nelson University maintains a very liberal enrollment policy, accepting many “provisionally accepted” students who might not otherwise have opportunities to attempt a bachelor’s degree. Nelson University sets its aspirational goal of 50% based upon IPEDS data from peer schools, along with considerations of the historical performance of Nelson University. Nelson University sets its minimum threshold based on the 2018 baseline (2016 data) set when SACSCOC began the 8.1 review process. Nelson University would see an overall graduation rate below 41% as requiring significant actions to address declining graduation rates.

Process:

Graduation rate data is reviewed annually by the President’s Cabinet and improvement efforts are overseen by the Retention Committee.

Goal Assessment Data:

Fall 2018 Cohort: FTFT Bachelor-Seeking Six Year Graduation Rate			
Student Category	#Entered	#Graduated	#6 year Rate
<i>All FTFT Degree-Seeking</i>	174	84	48%

Analysis:

Nelson University experienced an improvement in the 2018 student cohort (2024 data) in the 6-year graduation percentages over the 2017 student cohort rate of 42%. The 6-year graduation rate of 48% is six percent above the previous cohort. This result for the general population is 7% above the minimum threshold.

Goal: Retention Rate

Seventy-five percent (75%) of Full-time First-time (FTFT) Bachelor’s degree-seeking freshmen who begin in the fall semester will return to continue their degree program at Nelson University the following fall semester. Nelson University maintains a minimum acceptable threshold of a 65% first-year retention rate for all FTFT Bachelor’s degree seeking freshmen.

Rationale:

Nelson University desires to provide students with the best opportunities for success in their academic pursuits. One indicator of potential success is students returning for a second year to continue their degree programs. Nelson University sets the goals and minimum thresholds for retention rates based upon IPEDS data from peer schools along with considerations of the historical performance of Nelson University (Retention Rates- Peer Institutions Comparison). Nelson University maintains very "open" acceptance standards and, therefore, carefully monitors its retention rates. The Retention Committee reviews the retention rates of FTFT Bachelor's degree-seeking freshmen who begin in the fall semester and then return the next fall. The committee had set a previous goal of 70%, but since that was achieved in the 2013 cohort, the official goal was raised to 75%. Nelson University’s minimum acceptable threshold of 65% is the point at which the President’s Cabinet would call for research into possible causes and remedies for declining retention.

Process:

Retention Rate data is reviewed annually by the Nelson University's Retention Committee. Retention Committee members discuss potential improvements suggested by this review and make recommendations to the President's Cabinet for consideration.

Goal Assessment Data:

Fall 2021 Cohort			Fall 2022 Cohort			Fall 2023 Cohort		
# Entered	# Return	First Year Retention	# Entered	# Return	First Year Retention	# Entered	# Return	First Year Retention
137	105	77%	144	117	81%	153	115	75%

Analysis:

Nelson University has maintained a retention rate at or above the target operational range for the past three years, but continues to institute new policies and innovations to meet the goal of maintaining on-going 75% Or above retention. Nelson University’s Quality Enhancement Plan, the L3 Peer Mentor program for freshman students is working to improve student retention.

Goal: Course Completion Rates

Nelson University maintains goals that students will complete 70% of attempted course hours at the freshman level (1000 courses) and will complete 80% of attempted course hours at all other undergraduate levels (2000, 3000, 4000 course). These percentages constitute Nelson University's goal for satisfactory progress toward degree completion. Nelson University maintains a minimum acceptable threshold of 65% of attempted course hours at the freshman level (1000 courses) and 75% of attempted course hours at all other undergraduate levels (2000, 3000, 4000 course).

Rationale:

Course completion is an important measure demonstrating student progress toward degree completion. Statistically, students who receive failing grades or incompletes take longer to complete their degree (and, therefore, have a higher cost for their degree), are at risk of losing their financial aid or scholarships, and are less likely to complete a degree. Course completion also serves as a means to better understand retention rates. Nelson University has set a course completion rate goal at 70% for freshman courses and 80% for all other undergrad levels. The difference in goal levels is based on historical data and student tendencies to struggle in their first year for non-academic reasons (financial, personal, emotional, etc.). These issues often manifest in first-year classes as absences or failing grades as students attempt to integrate into the higher-education environment. Nelson University's expectation for course completion increases in the terms after students have had time to familiarize themselves with higher education motifs and work through other preparedness issues with the help of Nelson University's academic support services. Nelson University's minimum acceptable thresholds are the yearly percentages that would trigger Nelson University Office of Academic Services to research possible causes for low rates and create improvement plans for low student completion outcomes.

Process:

Course Completion Rate data is reviewed by Nelson University's Office of Academic Services. Academic Services team members discuss potential improvements suggested by this review and, when necessary, make recommendations to the Office of Academics for consideration.

Goal Assessment Data:

Course Completion Rates 2023-24			
Course Level	Total Course Enrollments	Completed Courses	Course Completion Percentage
1000	5001	4305	86%
2000	3671	3317	90.3%
3000	2672	2402	90%
4000	1332	1220	91.6%

Analysis:

As shown by the 2023-24 data, Nelson University continues to maintain an aggregate course completion rate well above the 70% goal for freshman-level courses and above the 80% goal for all other undergraduate courses. These course completion rates serve as one indicator of student progress and success in the efforts to complete degree programs in their chosen field of study.

Goal: Texas Accountability System for Educator Preparation Pass Rate

Nelson University’s Education Department maintains a goal of 95% pass rate for students completing the Texas Accountability System for Educator Preparation exam: a score of 80 is considered “Passing.” Nelson University’s minimum acceptable threshold is an 80% pass rate in a given year.

Rationale:

The Nelson University Teacher Education Department is responsible for monitoring the progress of its students through the state educator certification process of Texas as well as through the instructional component of the student experience. One of the methods the Department uses to fulfill this responsibility is by tracking and publishing the Accountability System for Educator Preparation (ASEP) pass rates. Nelson University maintains a goal of 95% pass rate for ASEP. Nelson University’s goal is based upon balancing the desire for a 100% pass rate with the realities of varied student testing abilities and other factors that make 100% an unrealistic target. ASEP pass rates represent the percentage of Nelson University education program-approved students who have passed the two Texas educator certification exams--Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) exam and the content exams (Non-PPR) for their specific discipline. These students are then eligible to apply for Texas Educator Certification. Therefore, ASEP pass rates signify Nelson University’s ability to effectively instruct students, academically and professionally, who have chosen to be educators. Nelson University’s minimum acceptable threshold of 80% of students passing their exam in a given year is based on historical data. Nelson University has not dropped below that pass rate in the past decade and would consider that the percentage which would trigger the Nelson University Education Department to take significant steps to improve student success in the following year.

Process:

ASEP Pass Rate data is reviewed annually by Nelson University's Director of Education Certification who reports the results to the Education Department. Education department members discuss potential improvements suggested by this data and, if necessary, make recommendations to the dean for consideration.

Goal Assessment Data:

Educator Certification Online System

Southwestern Assemblies of God University (070501)

Test Pass Rates for the Completion Year 2023 (First 2 Attempts)

Period	All	Female	Male	African American	Hispanic	Other	White
9/1/2022-8/31/2023 — Pedagogy Tests	95%(21)	100%(16)	80%(5)	100%(1)	100%(3)		94%(17)
9/1/2022-8/31/2023 — Content Pedagogy Tests	86%(27)	90%(23)	60%(4)	100%(1)	100%(2)		84%(24)

Analysis:

Nelson University’s 2024 pass rate for students taking the ASEP Texas State Licensure exam, 95%, met our aspirational goal and the content tests remained above the minimum threshold. Department faculty noted that the State of Texas is changing its licensure procedures and will no longer administer the ASEP. The department will create a new measure in 2025 to match the new licensing processes.

Goal: Nelson University Bible Core Exam Improvement Rate

Nelson University maintains a goal of an average of 25 points improvement for students between their Nelson University Bible Core Exam pre-test (taken during their first semester) and post-test (taken before graduation). Nelson University's minimum acceptable threshold is that students will show at least an average of 20 points improvement in their pre-test to post-test scores.

Rationale:

Nelson University's mission includes growth in spiritual as well as academic elements of life. Bible-based Education is one of Nelson University's Core Values; students are expected to deepen their understanding of Scripture and develop well-founded theological convictions for a life of Christian service. All Nelson University students, regardless of major, are required to complete an 18-hour component in biblical and theological studies. To track student achievement in biblical and theological learning, the University gives a Bible Core exam to all students. Nelson University's goal is based on an average outcome among students in the past ten semesters and represents significant growth in biblical and theological understanding through engagement in coursework in the Nelson University Bible Core curriculum. The 20-point minimum acceptable threshold is set based on the expectation of two-letter-grade improvement. Should student data fall below this level for two consecutive semesters, it would trigger improvement responses from the Bible Department.

Process:

Core Exam Improvement Rate data is reviewed and assessed annually by the Dean of the College of Bible and Church Ministries (CBCM). The CBCM Dean reviews and records the results and, if necessary, makes improvement recommendations to the Academics Committee for consideration.

Goal Assessment Data:

Cohort year	Pre-test average	Post-test average	Percentage Improvement
2018-2022	38.1	77.4	39.1
2019-2023	38.4	64.6	26.2
2020-2024	38.6	64.4	25.8

Analysis:

The improvement rates for students on the Bible core exam have met Nelson University's goal in each of the last three years. The overall improvement rates demonstrate success and growth on the part of students in their understanding of biblical and theological concerns due to their engagement in Nelson University's Bible Core curriculum.