

El Camino College

Time to Degree and Certificate Completion



2016-2017

Executive Summary

- This report utilizes a new methodology tracking time to completion for first-time degree and certificate recipients. Previous versions of this report tracked all degree and certificate completions, including those earned after a prior award. These secondary awards skewed time to completion high. Because of this, this report should not be compared to previous versions of this report. Award counts will also differ from the Degree and Certificate report, which does include all awards earned.
- The median time to completion for first-time degree or certificate recipients during the 2016-17 school year was 3.8 years. The average time to completion was 5.2 years, but that includes several outliers, some of whom took more than 20 years to complete their first award.
- Just 8% of students complete a degree or certificate within the expected completion time of two years.
- The median time to completion for African Americans is one year longer (4.8 years) than the median time to completion for the college as a whole (3.8 years).
- Most graduates are earning more degree applicable units than are necessary to complete their programs.
- The number of units enrolled in the first year of study is associated with time to completion. Students enrolled at least full-time (24 units) during their first year at the college have higher 4-year completion rates than students who started less than full-time.

Introduction

This report examines the time to completion rates for students receiving an award from El Camino College during the 2016-17 school year. Time to completion refers to the length of time required for a student to achieve their educational goal at El Camino College (ECC). While a student can have a number of goals, including personal enrichment or transfer, this report focuses on the length of time taken for students who have completed their first degree or certificate during the 2016-17 school year. This report excludes students who have not completed a degree or certificate.

During the 2016-17 academic year, El Camino College students received 2,616 AA/AS degrees and 511 Certificates for totaling 3,127 program awards. This report only considers students who were receiving their first award from ECC to get a truer sense of the time required for completion. Students who returned to ECC for an additional award are excluded from this report.

Time to completion is a focal point in the [Chancellor's Vision for Success \(2017\)](#) as well as the College's Guided Pathways initiative. Reducing the time it takes for students to achieve their goal moves them forward in their education as well as allows them greater opportunities in the workforce sooner.

Methodology

Degree and certificate recipients for the 2016-17 school year were identified. Students previously awarded a degree or certificate were removed from the sample in order to determine time to completion for first-time recipients.

Time to completion is calculated by number of years required to finish from start of the first term to award date. Rates are demonstrated two ways. *Normal time to completion* is based on the expected length of time needed to complete the award. For degrees, normal time to completion is two years. Although most certificates are indicated as requiring three years to complete for Federal Gainful Employment reporting purposes, this report calculates normal time to completion for certificates as two years, also. Rates for completion are shown as the percent of award recipients who receive their award within two years (100% of *normal time to completion*), three years (150% of *normal time to completion*), and four years (200% of *normal time to completion*). The second way is the *median time to completion*. This is the amount of time needed for at least half of the students to achieve their first award. In the past, average (mean) was also used, but this metric always skews high because there are some students who take an extraordinary number of years to earn their first award.

Demographic data is disaggregated by the status of the student during their first term enrolled rather than status at graduation.

Results

Altogether, El Camino College students earned 3,127 awards during the 2016-17 school year. There were 3,078 awards earned by 2,133 first time degree recipients. This report will only examine the students receiving their first award.

Time to Completion

During the 2016-17 school year, 6% of degree earners were able to complete their educational goal within the 2-year normal time (Table 1). Fifty-four percent of degree earners were able to complete their educational goal within four years (200% of normal time). For certificate earners, 17% were able to complete within two years and 55% earned their award within four years. The median time to completion for both degrees and certificates is 3.8 years.

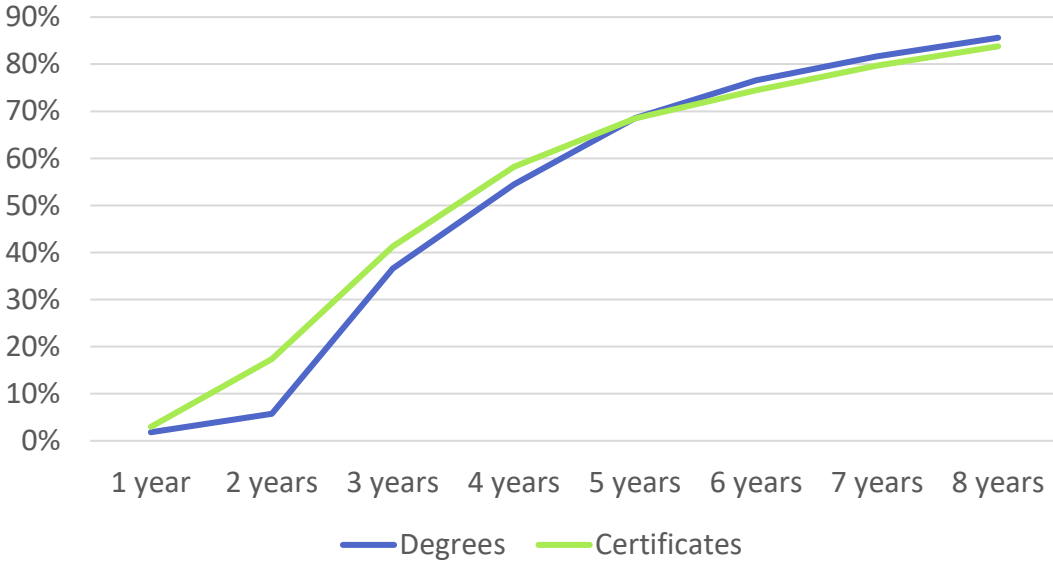
Table 1: Time to Completion by Award Type

Award Type	Total Awards	Students	Normal Time to Completion			Median Years
			100%	150%	200%	
Degrees	2,583	1,862	6%	37%	54%	3.8
Certificates	495	438	17%	41%	58%	3.8
Total	3,078	2,300*	8%	37%	55%	3.8

*Students earning Degrees and Certificates will not add up to Total students because 32 students earned a Degree and Certificate.

Figure 1 shows the percentage of degree and certificates completed as a function of years enrolled. Initially, a greater proportion of certificate earners completed their award. By the fifth year, similar percentages of degree and certificate earners, approximately 70%, had completed their award. Over 80% of degree and certificate earners were able to complete by the end of their eighth year.

Figure 1: Cumulative Time to Completion



Early enrollment patterns are associated with on time completion for both degree (Figure 2) and certificate (Figure 3) recipients. Over 70% of degree earners who enrolled full-time in their first year, meaning those who enrolled in at least 24 units, completed their degree within four years. Eighty percent of degree earners who enrolled in 30 units during their first year completed within four years, with 60% finishing within three. Conversely, less than 50% of degree earners enrolled in less than 24 units in their first year were able to complete their degree within four years.

The same pattern holds for certificate recipients, but with increased rates of completion. Over 60% of certificate earners who enrolled in at least 30 units during their first year were able to finish within two years. Eighty-seven percent of these certificate earners finished within four years. The gap in time to certificate completion based on first-year units enrolled is not as pronounced as it is for degree earners, but there is a noticeable difference, especially in the early years.

Figure 2: Cumulative Time to Degree by First-year Units Enrolled

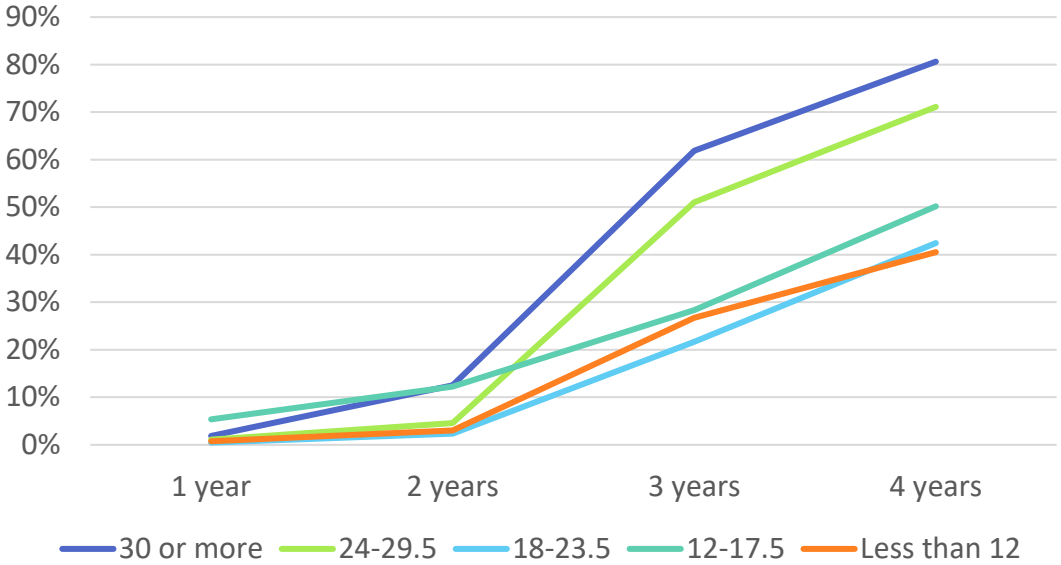
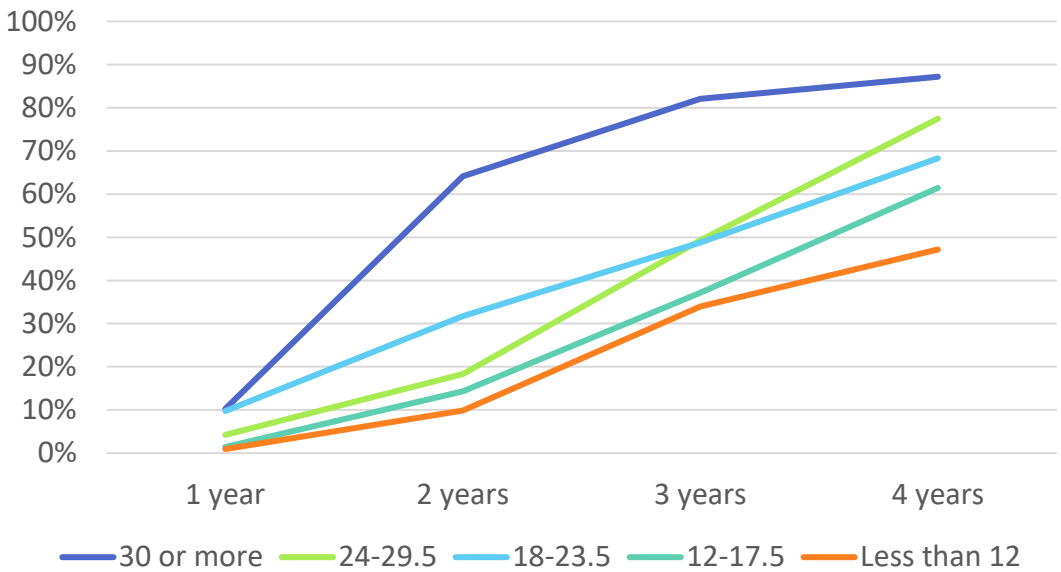


Figure 3: Cumulative Time to Certificate by First-year Units Enrolled

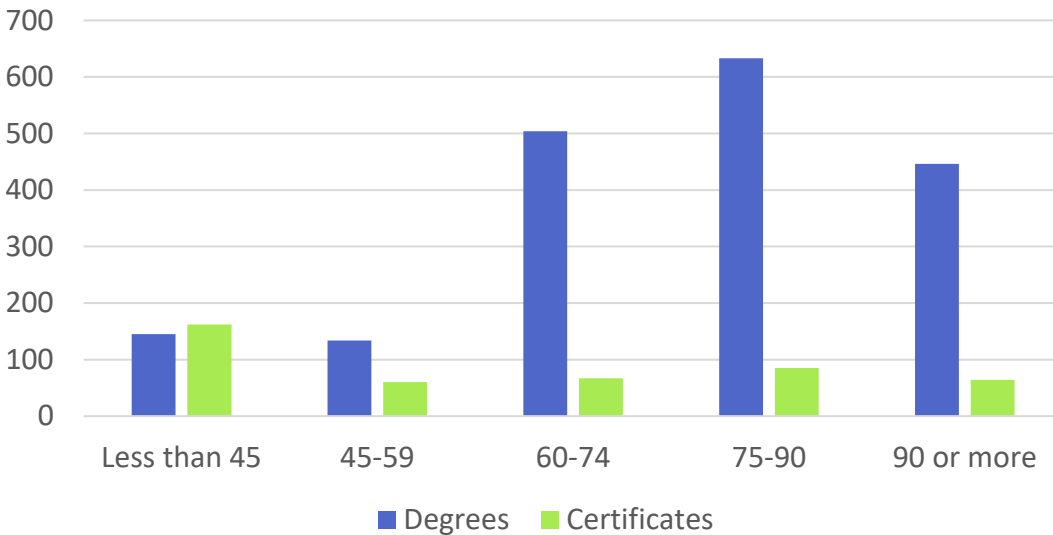


Units Earned

El Camino College degrees require a minimum of 60 completed degree applicable units. Some of these units can be earned at other institutions, but at least 12 units must come from El Camino. Most El Camino certificates require 18 to 30 units, but some require 30 to 60 units.

Figure 4 shows the number of units earned by increments for degree and certificate earners. Degree earners with less than 60 units accumulated at ECC have likely fulfilled additional requirements elsewhere. More than half earn at least 15 units more than is necessary to graduate. A third of the certificate earners completed at least 75 units before earning their award.

Figure 4: Units Earned by Award Recipients



Demographic Outcomes

In order to make sure the college is addressing various groups equitably, data for time to completion is disaggregated by gender, race/ethnicity, and age group.

In terms of gender, females have time to completion rates similar to the overall population for both degrees and certificates. Males have higher than average time to completion rates for certificates, but lower than average time to completion rates for degrees (Table 2). This is most visible in the short term where 24% of male certificate recipients complete within two years and 61% complete within four. Conversely, only 51% of male degree recipients complete within four years, compared to 57% for females.

Table 2: Time to Completion by Gender

Gender	Type	Awards	Students	Normal Time			Median Years
				100%	150%	200%	
Female	Deg	1,489	1,096	6%	39%	57%	3.8
	Cert	214	207	11%	35%	56%	3.8
Male	Deg	1,083	756	6%	34%	51%	4.0
	Cert	279	229	24%	48%	61%	3.4
Total		3,065	2,288	8%	37%	55%	3.8

There are differences in outcomes when it comes to Racial/Ethnic groups, particularly for African Americans (Table 3). The median time to completion for African Americans is 4.8 years, whereas the median for Asians and Whites is 3.8 years and 4.0 years for Latinos. Forty percent of African Americans complete degrees within four years, which is the lowest rate of all racial/ethnic groups. White graduates complete certificates at higher rates than the institution average. Thirty-four percent of White certificate recipients complete programs within two years. Conversely, only 44% of African American certificate earners complete programs within four years. Graduates on student visas had the highest time to completion rates. Over 80% of these students complete degree programs in four years.

Table 3: Time to Completion by Race/Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Type	Awards	Students	Normal Time			Median Years
				100%	150%	200%	
African American	Deg	235	189	5%	24%	40%	4.8
	Cert	47	41	10%	22%	44%	4.8
Asian	Deg	419	289	6%	45%	62%	3.8
	Cert	54	46	13%	41%	57%	3.8
Latino	Deg	1,259	891	4%	33%	52%	4.0
	Cert	251	217	11%	35%	53%	3.8
White	Deg	380	262	5%	39%	56%	3.8
	Cert	93	88	34%	57%	70%	2.9
Two or More Ethnicities	Deg	112	83	7%	55%	73%	3.0
	Cert	11	*	*	*	*	2.7
Student Visa	Deg	112	92	24%	67%	85%	3.0
	Cert	23	22	36%	82%	95%	2.0
Total		3,078	2,300	8%	37%	55%	3.8

Four-year outcomes disaggregated by age group are similar (Table 4). Students who began as special admit students or those who started under the age of 17 took longer than other groups, but that is expected for students who may still have to finish other programs before completing the college program. Other age groups fall along the college average, with a median 3.8 years to completion. Students starting at younger ages have lower two-year completion rates, with only 3% of completers from the 17 to 19 age group completing degrees within normal time, but this group also has the highest four-year degree completion rates. Older age groups have higher than average two-year degree completion rates. Working age adult certificate earners, those between the ages of 25 and 49, have the highest time to completion rates. Over 36% of these adults complete their certificate programs in two years, and over 75% complete in four years.

Table 4: Time to Completion by Age Group

Award Type	Type	Awards	Students	Normal Time			Median Years
				100%	150%	200%	
16 and under	Deg	33	22	9%	45%	45%	5.1
	Cert	*	*	*	*	*	*
17 to 19	Deg	1,698	1,184	3%	41%	60%	3.8
	Cert	219	193	5%	36%	53%	3.8
20 to 24	Deg	359	275	13%	35%	54%	3.8
	Cert	77	69	20%	39%	55%	3.8
25 to 29	Deg	138	115	16%	35%	52%	4.0
	Cert	90	76	36%	55%	74%	2.9
30 to 49	Deg	99	84	10%	31%	49%	4.4
	Cert	68	61	38%	61%	77%	2.0
50+	Deg	12	*	*	*	*	3.8
	Cert	10	*	*	*	*	2.0
Special Admit	Deg	233	163	0%	10%	26%	6.0
	Cert	27	26	0%	0%	15%	6.9
Total		3,078	2,300	8%	37%	55%	3.8

*Rates and counts suppressed.

Initiative Programs

El Camino College is tracking three special initiatives. The College provides Science, Engineering, Technology and Math (STEM) programs; Science, Engineering and Math (SEM) programs; and Career Technical Education (CTE) programs. There is some overlap in these categories. Many CTE and SEM programs can be found under the STEM umbrella. Because of this, there is little difference seen in the time to completion rates for these groups when compared to each other or the overall graduate rate.

Table 5: Time to Completion by Program Initiative

Initiative	Total Awards	Students	Normal Time			Median Years
			100%	150%	200%	
STEM	763	340	9%	38%	56%	3.8
SEM	481	231	11%	40%	58%	3.8
CTE	1,235	624	10%	36%	55%	3.8

Conclusions

Half of the 2016-17 graduates were able to complete their degree or certificate within 3.8 years. Overall, only 8% of graduates were able to complete their degree or certificate within the two-year timeframe associated with community college attendance. The time it took a student to complete can be associated with the student's initial behaviors on campus. Regardless of the

number of units earned, graduates who attempted 30 or more units in the first year at the college completed their programs at faster rates than did students with lesser-unit enrollments.

The only area where there is a considerable difference in terms of group outcomes is with African Americans, and to some extent, Latinos, when compared to everyone else. The median time to completion for African Americans is a year longer than the median for the institution. It has already been shown that number of units enrolled in the first year relates to time to completion. Over half of the African American graduates (52%) in 2016-17 enrolled in less than 12 units during their first term. Compare this to 41% for the next highest group; the White graduates. There are potentially many reasons why African American students did not enroll in more units at the beginning of their academic careers and the College could try to help students increase the number of units enrolled early in their academic careers to reach parity with other groups, thus decreasing the time to completion gap.