

# Postsecondary Data Partnership Tableau Dashboard Analysis Quick Guide

## Gateway Course Completion Dashboard

American Institutes for Research

March 2020

## Overview

The [Postsecondary Data Partnership \(PDP\) Tableau dashboard tool](#) reports key performance indicator (KPI) and other key data. The dashboards are intended to aid in the discovery of notable trends and insights in the data and to facilitate communicating these findings to institutional stakeholders, identifying areas for improvement, setting goals, and designing and implementing initiatives. Each dashboard allows you to look at an institution's progress toward student success through the lens of a different KPI or other important metric. The dashboards also allow you to filter and disaggregate the data across a variety of relevant student-level characteristics.

This quick guide focuses on the gateway course completion dashboard which provides the proportion of students who completed their required math or English gateway courses in their first year of enrollment by cohort year. It is limited to students who were required to complete math or English gateway courses.

For general information on using the [PDP Tableau dashboard tool](#), see the [Postsecondary Data Partnership Tableau Dashboard Analysis Quick Guide: Dashboard Tool Overview](#) document. This document contains the general purpose of the dashboards, a menu of the available suite of dashboards, definitions for KPIs and other important PDP concepts, information on the student-level filters and dimensions available to refine and disaggregate the dashboards, subgroup gap analysis, and important considerations to keep in mind when using the dashboards.

For questions regarding technical support for the [PDP Tableau dashboard tool](#) (e.g., login issues), contact PDP customer support at [PDPService@studentclearinghouse.org](mailto:PDPService@studentclearinghouse.org). You can reach the Postsecondary Partnership Research Center at 703-742-4427.

## Gateway Course Completion Dashboard

### Description and Purpose

This dashboard tracks the count of and rate at which students are completing gateway courses in math and English. The data are limited to students who were required by the institution to take these courses.<sup>1</sup> Students count as completing gateway courses if they have finished all the gateway courses they are required to take. For example, a student who is required to take both math and English gateway courses but who completes only their English gateway courses has not completed the requirement. Gateway course completion is a useful metric in tracking on-time progression, as research shows that it is linked to student success outcomes.<sup>2</sup> It also may be an indicator of college readiness or lack thereof. That is, students who cannot complete these courses may not be academically prepared to

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<sup>1</sup> As stated in the [National Student Clearinghouse PDP: Data Submission Guide](#) some students may be exempt from gateway coursework; for example, those transferring from another institution where they completed the requirement, or students fulfilling the requirement by successful completion of Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or similar high school coursework. Also, some majors/program areas may not require a gateway course.

<sup>2</sup> Flanders, G. R. (2017). The effect of gateway course completion on freshman college student retention. *Theory & Practice*, 19(1), 2–24. [doi:10.1177/1521025115611396](https://doi.org/10.1177/1521025115611396)

take on the rigor of a college-level curriculum. Understanding differential success patterns in gateway courses may identify areas where institutions can target support. If completion rates are low in general, this may suggest reconsidering how the courses are structured and the needs that they are meeting. If these courses are developmental and completion rates are low, it may be a signal that students are not prepared for college-level courses. Findings from this dashboard may be of particular use to institutional stakeholders engaged in work related to first-year success or developmental education and those in departments offering gateway courses.

## Key Questions

This section provides a list of key questions to ask as you begin to use the dashboard. These are intended as a jumping-off point to facilitate your use of the dashboard tool.

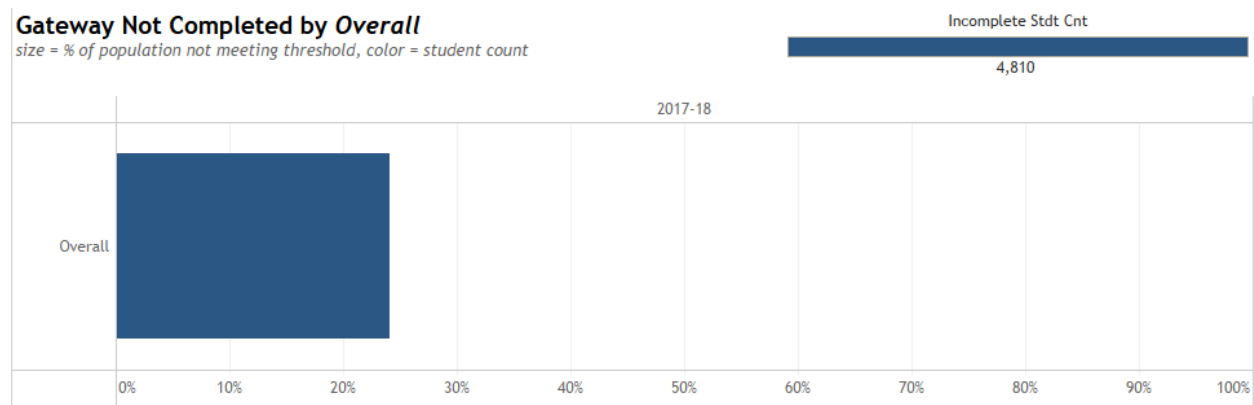
- What proportion of your students are starting college on the right track by completing required gateway math and English courses?
- Which student subgroups are (and are not) finding success?

## A Practical Application

This section provides a look at how a fictitious institution of higher education successfully used the dashboard data to inform a student success initiative. The example uses fabricated data for illustrative purposes only.

Pendleton State University was interested in whether gateway course completion differed by the set of gateway courses they required students to take. As shown in Exhibit 1, they found that one-quarter of those students required to take gateway courses in the 2017–18 cohort did not complete them in their first year.

### Exhibit 1. Gateway Course Completion Dashboard View 1: Pendleton State University, Gateway Not Completed by Overall

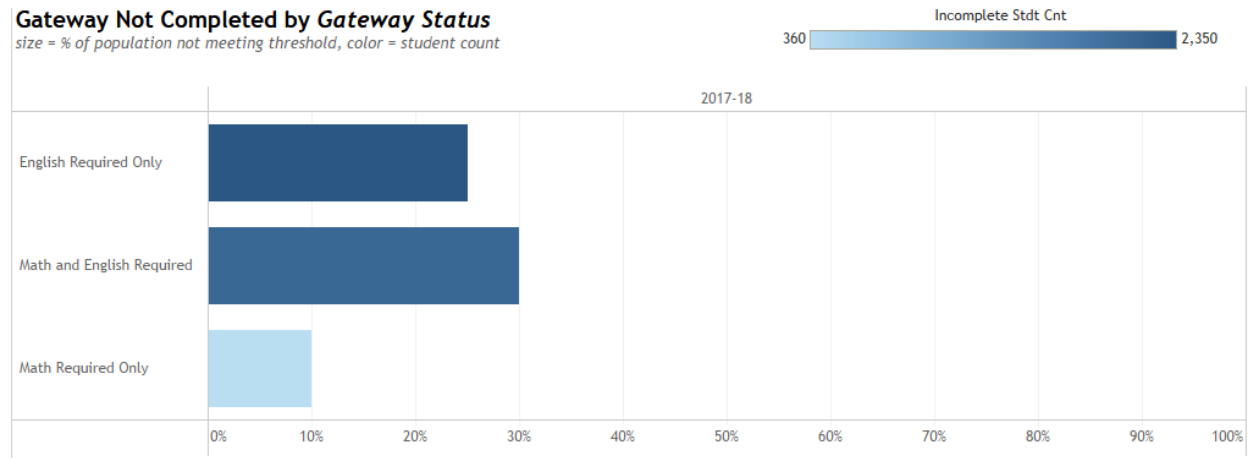


When stakeholders used *Select Dimension* to disaggregate the data by “Gateway Status,” they discovered a significant disparity in gateway course completion. They noticed that 10% of students required to take only math gateway courses did not complete them. However, much larger percentages of the other groups did not complete their required courses (25% English only and 30% math and English; Exhibit 2).

## Exhibit 2. Gateway Course Completion Dashboard View 2: Pendleton State University, Gateway Not Completed by Gateway Status

### Gateway Not Completed by Gateway Status

size = % of population not meeting threshold, color = student count



This finding prompted Pendleton State to take a deeper look at the makeup of the different gateway status groups to identify where targeted support was needed.