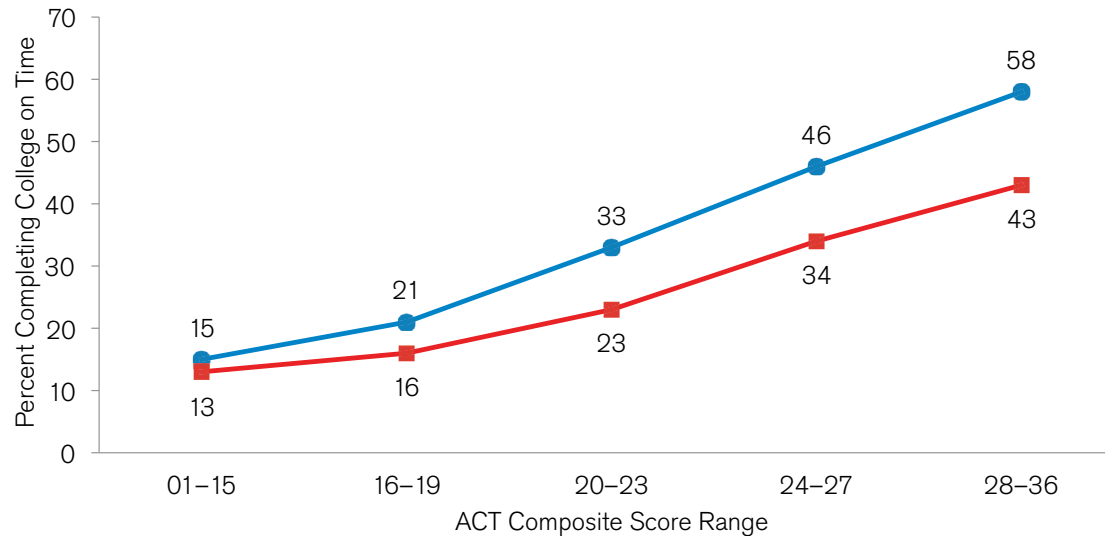


Timely Degree Attainment Rates, by ACT Composite Score Range and Interest-Major Fit

JEFF ALLEN, PHD

Correlation of Interests and Major Profile: ● Positive ■ Negative



For a sample of 3,860 students from 28 postsecondary institutions, the relationship between ACT Composite scores, interest-major fit, and timely degree attainment was examined. Interest-major fit was measured by correlating students' interest scores with the interest profile of their first-year college major. For both students and college majors, interests were measured with respect to Holland's typology of vocational interests (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, Conventional) using the ACT Interest Inventory. Based on a different sample, profiles for majors were calculated as the mean scores of students who were successful in the major. Correlations range from -1 to 1, where values closer to 1 suggest a greater level of fit between a student's interests and the environment of their major.

For students at four-year colleges, timely degree attainment was defined as having earned a bachelor's degree four years after initially enrolling. For students at two-year colleges, timely degree attainment was defined as having earned an associate's degree or certificate two years after initially enrolling.

As expected, degree attainment rates increased with ACT Composite scores. At each ACT Composite score level, degree attainment rates were higher for students with positive correlations between their interests and the interest profile of their first-year college major. ■

Allen, J., & Robbins, S. (2010). Effects of interest-major congruence, motivation, and academic performance on timely degree attainment. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 57*(1), 23-35.

Jeff Allen is a statistician in the Research division at ACT. He specializes in longitudinal research linking test scores to educational outcomes and student growth models.