



## University of St. Thomas: Student Achievement

As an institution accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), the University of St. Thomas (UST) is required to provide “statements of its goals for student achievement and the success of students in achieving those goals. Information on student success may include reliable information in retention, graduation, course completion, licensure examinations, and job placement rates and other measures of student success appropriate to institutional mission.”

An important part of our mission is to “educate students to think critically, communicate effectively, succeed professionally, and lead ethically.” UST assesses its success with respect to student achievement in relationship to its mission through enrollment data, student retention data, graduation rates, and passing rates for The Texas Education Agency (TEA) and NCLEX\_RN licensure exams. UST continuously collects data on these variables in order to monitor student success and measure the university’s progression toward achieving its mission.

### Enrollment

#### Total Undergraduate Enrollment

Undergraduate enrollment is the total number of fall semester undergraduate students at the University of St. Thomas, including new, incoming students as well as the retention of returning undergraduate students.

#### Criterion of Student Success and Threshold of Acceptability

Student enrollment is crucial to realizing the mission of the University of St. Thomas (UST). The University selected undergraduate enrollment as a criterion of student success because it is a significant indicator of how well the University’s academic programs serve the academic and career needs of current and prospective students. Accordingly, UST’s Integrated Plan, *The Call Toward Tomorrow*, set forth Goal #7 to increase undergraduate enrollment to 5,000 by 2023.

In the enrollment cycle that concluded in Fall 2021, UST set a **goal of 2,500 undergraduates with a minimum threshold of acceptability of 2,200** based on the following:

- Enrollment pool size for the given enrollment cycle
- Rolling average of 5-year undergraduate enrollment (2,259)
- Historical new student enrollment rates, and
- Undergraduate retention rates

#### Rationale

This goal of 2,500 students with a minimum threshold of acceptability of 2,200 students reflects intended growth toward the 2023 goal of 5,000 students and takes into consideration the challenges and uncertainty associated with the COVID 19 pandemic.

The following table presents UST’s total undergraduate enrollment from Fall 2017 to Fall 2021, compared to undergraduate enrollment at peer institutions for the same period:

Group	2017 Fall	2018 Fall	2019 Fall	2020 Fall	2021 Fall
UST	1,864	2,047	2,180	2,463	2,739
Peer Institutions	3,626	3,706	3,681	3,575	N/A

Note: Peer institution data were obtained from IPEDS. Fall 2021 data were not available at the time of this report submission.

### Review of Enrollment Outcome Data and Action Steps

While the goal of 2,500 undergraduate students was exceeded and the minimum expected threshold was met, the University implemented a new Client Relationship Management (CRM) system to ensure continued growth and the attainment of the goal of 5,000 undergraduate students. Following a review of undergraduate enrollment data, the Enrollment Management Leadership team, in collaboration with the office of Information Technology, Marketing, and other University stakeholders, selected the new CRM system, Slate. Slate is designed and developed exclusively for higher education and will enhance the University's ability to recruit a larger number of students while providing greater recruitment flexibility. Enrollment numbers and strategy are discussed regularly at the President's Cabinet meetings and at Board of Directors meetings.

### Total Graduate Enrollment

The total graduate enrollment is the total number of graduate students at the University of St. Thomas, which includes new incoming graduate students as well as the retention of current returning graduate students.

### Criteria of Student Success and Threshold of Acceptability

UST's Integrated Plan, *The Call Toward Tomorrow*, set forth Goal #9 to increase graduate enrollment to 2,000 by 2023. In the enrollment cycle that concluded in Fall 2021, UST set a **goal of 1,300 graduate students with a minimum threshold of acceptability of 1,200 graduate students** based on the following:

- Enrollment pool size for the given enrollment cycle
- Historical graduate student enrollment rates, and
- Graduate student retention rates

### Rationale

This goal of 1,300 graduate students with a minimum threshold of acceptability of 1,200 students reflects intended growth toward the 2023 goal of 2,000 graduate students and takes into consideration the challenges and uncertainty associated with the COVID 19 pandemic.

The following table provides UST's total graduate enrollment from Fall 2017 to Fall 2021:

	2017 Fall	2018 Fall	2019 Fall	2020 Fall	2021 Fall
<b>Graduate Enrollment</b>	1,373	1,267	1,343	1,302	1,236

### Retention Rates

UST uses two retention rates to measure student success. One measures the rate of return of first-time, full-time freshmen from fall to fall. The second rate measures the retention rate of undergraduate fall semester transfer students re-enrolling the following fall semester.

#### Retention – First-time, Full-time Freshmen

### Criterion of Student Success and Threshold of Acceptability

The first-time, full-time freshman retention rate is defined as the number of students re-enrolling at UST from their first fall semester to the next fall semester. The University selected retention rates as a criterion for student success because retention rates reflect students' commitment to UST in the belief that the programs of study and the University's support systems are aligned with their academic success. The measure is required as part of the

Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and provides the ability to compare rates to other universities of similar size, mission, demographics, and resources.

For the first-time, full-time freshman retention rate, the University has selected a **goal of 80%, with a threshold of acceptability of 78%**.

#### Rationale

The first-time, full-time freshman retention goal and threshold of acceptability were determined by examining historical first-time, full-time UST freshman retention rates and by comparing institutions of similar size, demographics, mission, and resources.

The following table presents the first-time, full-time freshman retention rates from Fall 2017 to Fall 2021 at UST, compared to the average first-time, full-time freshman retention rates at peer institutions for the same period.

<b>Group</b>	<b>2017 - 2018</b>	<b>2018 - 2019</b>	<b>2019 - 2020</b>	<b>2020 - 2021</b>
UST	82%	84%	84%	80%
Peer Institutions	86%	84%	84%	N/A

Note: Peer institution data have been obtained from IPEDS. Data for 2020-2021 were not available at the time of this report submission.

#### Review of First-time, Full-time Retention Outcome Data and Action Steps

Retention rates have met or exceeded the goal of 80% for the past four years. Retention rates and strategies are discussed regularly at President Cabinet meetings and at Board of Directors meetings.

#### Retention – Transfer Students

##### Criterion of Student Success and Threshold of Acceptability

The one-year undergraduate retention rate for transfers is defined as the number of transfer students who re-enroll at UST from their first fall semester to the next fall semester. For the transfer retention rate, the University has selected a **goal of 80%, with a threshold of acceptability of 74%**.

#### Rationale

This goal and threshold of acceptability were determined by examining historical retention rate data for UST transfer students.

The following table presents UST undergraduate transfer student retention rates from Fall 2017 to Fall 2021.

<b>Group</b>	<b>2017 - 2018</b>	<b>2018 - 2019</b>	<b>2019 - 2020</b>	<b>2020 - 2021</b>
UST	80%	82%	83%	82%

Note: Comparison data for transfer retention rates at peer institutions not available in IPEDS.

#### Review of Transfer Retention Outcome Data and Action Steps

Transfer retention rates have exceeded the goal. For continuous improvement, the University aims to increase transfer persistence by implementing a Peer Success Coach model that trains upperclassmen students to serve as a resource for incoming transfer students. In addition, the University redesigned its transfer orientation to better onboard incoming transfer students.

#### **Graduation Rate - First-time Full-time Freshman 6-year Graduation Rate**

##### Criterion of Student Success and Threshold of Acceptability

The University of St. Thomas selected the IPEDS six-year graduation rate as a criterion of student success because it is an indicator of how many students complete their undergraduate bachelor degree in a timely

manner once they enroll and provides a national peer comparison group. The IPEDS six-year graduation rate is calculated as the sum of completers within 150% normal time to completion, divided by the sum of the adjusted cohort.

The six-year graduation rate for first-time full-time freshmen is the number of students within the cohort who successfully obtain a bachelor degree from UST within six years. For this outcome, the university has selected a **goal of 85% of our peer institution comparison group's average graduation rate, with an absolute threshold of acceptability of 58%.**

Rationale for Six-Year Graduation Rate

This goal and threshold were established by reviewing UST's historical six-year graduation rate and by comparing this rate with institutions of similar demographics, size, mission, and resources. The threshold of 58% is the average of graduation rates across the first four years since our previous reaffirmation (2015-2018) and is an absolute threshold, without reference to peer institutions' graduation rates. The goal of 85% of peer institutions' graduation rate takes into account trends in graduation rates within our comparison groups. The goal of 85% also takes into consideration factors that affect graduation, including the high percentage of commuter students at UST and the high percentage of PELL grant recipients.

The table below provides six-year graduation rate trends for UST in comparison to the same rate for peer institutions.

**Six-Year Graduation Rate (Full-time, First-time Freshman)**

Group	Cohort						2015 - 2021
	2009 - 2015	2010 - 2016	2011 - 2017	2012 - 2018	2013 - 2019	2014 - 2020	
UST	58%	60%	58%	57%	68%	66%	62%
85% of Peer Institution Average	62%	62%	62%	63%	64%	64%	N/A
Peer Institution Average	73%	73%	73%	74%	75%	75%	N/A

Note: IPEDS peer institution graduation rate not available for the cohort graduating in 2021 at the time of this report.

Rationale for Disaggregation of Six-Year Graduation Rate Data

UST disaggregates graduation rates by gender, ethnicity, and first-generation student status. Disaggregating by gender, ethnicity and first-generation students supports diversity and inclusion and isolates trends for specific student groups. The disaggregation is also in support of the university's mission and vision to foster engagement in a diverse, collaborative community. Lastly, the disaggregation methodology aligns with the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

The tables below provide six-year graduation rate trends disaggregated by selected student groups.

**Six-Year Graduation Rate - Disaggregated by Gender (Full-time, First-time Freshman)**

Admission Type	Gender	Cohort						2015-2021
		2009-2015	2010-2016	2011-2017	2012-2018	2013-2019	2014-2020	
Freshman	Female	60%	67%	59%	66%	71%	68%	66%
Freshman	Male	55%	47%	56%	40%	61%	62%	51%

**Six-Year Graduation Rate - Disaggregated by Ethnicity** (Full-time, First-time Freshman and Full-time Transfer)

Admission Type	Ethnicity	Cohort						
		2009-2015	2010-2016	2011-2017	2012-2018	2013-2019	2014-2020	2015-2021
Freshman	American Indian/Alaska Native		100%					100%
Freshman	Asian	63%	61%	59%	66%	74%	75%	68%
Freshman	Black/African American	50%	29%	20%	21%	43%	67%	69%
Freshman	Hispanic of any race	50%	64%	60%	55%	65%	59%	59%
Freshman	Native Hawaiian/Oth Pac Island	0%		100%		100%		
Freshman	Non-resident Alien	42%	57%	50%	42%	75%	75%	67%
Freshman	Race and Ethnicity unknown	100%	33%	40%	0%	50%	40%	75%
Freshman	Two or More	25%	40%	60%	50%	100%	64%	75%
Freshman	White	68%	64%	62%	63%	71%	68%	56%

**Six-Year Graduation Rate - Disaggregated by First-generation Status** (Full-time, First-time Freshman and Full-time Transfer)

Admission Type	First Generation Status	Cohort						
		2009-2015	2010-2016	2011-2017	2012-2018	2013-2019	2014-2020	2015-2021
Freshman	First Generation	61%	54%	52%	55%	61%	78%	61%
Freshman	Not First Generation	57%	62%	59%	57%	70%	63%	62%

Review of Graduation Rate Data and Action Steps

Overall, six-year graduation rates at UST have met or exceeded the threshold of acceptability (58%) for six of the seven cohorts included in this report. We have met or exceeded our goal of 85% of the peer institution average with the two most recent cohorts for which there are peer institution comparison data.

An examination of the disaggregated data reveals the graduation rate among female students has met or exceeded the University graduation rate goal for five of the past seven cohorts, while the graduation rate among male students has not met the goal for any of the seven cohorts. Although graduation rates among many of UST's racial and ethnic groups have improved over time, graduation rates for key groups (particularly Hispanic students and Black/African American students) lag behind overall graduation rates for the past three cohorts.

Graduation rates among non-first-generation students have surpassed graduation rates among first-generation students for five of the past seven cohorts. The two most recent cohorts have shown improvement, with first-generation students surpassing non-first-generation students in the 2014-2020 cohort and a gap of only one percentage point in the 2015-2021 cohort.

To address graduation rates that fell below the University's goal, a number of continuous improvement initiatives have been introduced.

- Academic: Degree plans were adjusted so that the number of credits required to graduate was decreased from 126 to 120 in 2019. In addition, the number of hours required for students to declare a major was decreased in 2017.
- Financial: Banded tuition went into effect in 2019-2020, which allowed students to take more courses for a lower per-course price.
- Student engagement: [Student success coaching](#) was introduced in 2020 to support retention as a precursor to graduation.

In addition, initiatives to improve student success have focused on student groups who are at risk of not graduating within the six-year timespan. These initiatives include: [UST's Freshman Symposium](#), allows incoming students the ability to create new bonds, experience what it means to be a UST Celt, and learn more about the foundation of UST's Catholic mission; the [Mendenhall Summer Institute](#), a preparatory summer bridge program for incoming freshmen; the [Rising Stars program](#), a work-study program that pairs students with corporate sponsors for both tuition support and career development; and [distribution of tablet technology](#) to all incoming freshmen in 2020 to assist with distance learning.

### **School of Education and Human Services Certification**

Students in certification-bearing programs in the School of Education and Human Services (SEHS) take certification exams at the end of their program. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) regulates these exams, sets passing scores, and reports statewide pass rates as well as individual institution pass rates. TEA defines pass rate as the number of individuals who passed an examination on their first or second attempt, divided by the number of individuals who passed an examination on their first attempt plus those who passed or failed on their second attempt.

#### **Initial Certification**

##### **Criteria of Student Success and Thresholds of Acceptability**

Students in initial certification programs must pass the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR – EC-12) exam and pass the relevant content area exams for their specific certification. SEHS leadership has set **a pass rate goal of 90% for each initial certification exam and a threshold of acceptability of 85% for the PPR exam and 75% for content area exams.** The goal and threshold were reaffirmed in 2022.

##### **Rationale**

To maintain TEA accreditation status, each Texas Educator Preparation Program must achieve a minimum pass rate of 85% on the Professional Pedagogy and Responsibilities (PPR) exam and a minimum pass rate of 75% for content area exams. These minimums constitute the thresholds of acceptability for SEHS initial certification programs.

Performance goals are reflective of consistently high performance on this examination for the past decade. The content exam pass rates across different areas of certification have waivered. Based upon the inconsistencies of pass rates within certain programs, an overall goal of 90% was set because new initiatives have resulted in more robust test preparation that has been implemented and is expected to assist all students in successfully passing the examinations. Test preparation includes the online program that students subscribe to and renovated seminar courses which include test preparation that is specific to each student's respective area of certification. Coursework requires students to familiarize themselves with and create test preparation materials that are aligned with state standards that are included in the certification examinations. Also, pass rate goals are set based upon the passing rate of the prior year.

The table below presents goals and outcomes for initial certification exams for 2019-2021.

<b>Certification Exam Area</b>	<b>Threshold</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Number of students</b>
Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities Exam	85%	2019	90%	96.7%	30

		2020		100%	21
		2021		90.9%	22
Bilingual Education Supplemental	75%	2019	90%	100%	9
		2020		100%	6
		2021		83.3%	6
Bilingual Target Language Proficiency Test – Spanish	75%	2019	90%	100%	8
		2020		100%	5
		2021		87.5%	8
Core Subjects EC-6	75%	2019	90%	63.3%	30
		2020		52.6%	19
		2021		68.8%	16
		2021		100%	5
English Language Arts and Reading 4-8	75%	2019	90%	100%	1
		2020			0
		2021	90%	100%	1
English Language Arts and Reading 7-12	75%	2019			0
		2020	90%	100%	1
		2021			0
English as a Second Language Supplemental	75%	2019	90%	100%	2
		2020			0
		2021			0
Mathematics 7-12	75%	2019	90%	100%	1
		2020		100%	1
		2021			0
Music EC-12	75%	2019	90%	100%	1
		2020		100%	2
		2021			0
Science 4-8	75%	2019			0
		2020	90%	100%	1
		2021			0
Science 7-12	75%	2019	90%	100%	1
		2020			0
		2021			0
Science of Teaching Reading1	75%	2021	90%	100%	15
Special Education EC-12	75%	2019			0
		2020	90%	100%	1
		2021			0

1Science of Teaching Reading was introduced in 2021.

Note: The Core EC-6 exam changed in 2021. The table reflect results from the two iterations of this exam.

### Review of Education and Human Services Initial Certification Data and Action Steps

Overall, student achievement goals in initial certification were met or exceeded during the three-year reporting period. However, there were areas where improvement is needed. For example, the goal was not met in Core Subjects EC-6 for three years in a row.

Because passing rates have not represented an alignment with performance-based assessment scores, it was determined that students were not always able to transfer what it is they were learning in their coursework to the actual state exam. It was recognized that test preparation was necessary. Students are now required to achieve an 80% on the mandatory practice test in their certification area. The program adopted the Certify Teacher online testing platform, which includes not only practice tests in several different areas both content and PPR, but also assignments and test preparation materials for the students based upon the areas of deficiency that they may have shown in the practice test.

## Graduate-level Certification

### Criteria of Student Success and Thresholds of Acceptability

Students in graduate-level certification programs (e.g., Educational Diagnostician, Principal, and School Counselor) must pass content-specific certification exams. SEHS leadership has set a **pass rate goal of 85% and a threshold of acceptability of 75% for each graduate-level certification exam**. The goal and threshold were reaffirmed in 2022.

### Rationale

TEA requires a minimum pass rate of 75% to maintain accreditation. This minimum constitutes the thresholds of acceptability for SEHS graduate-level certification programs. The performance goal of 85% pass rate for each certification exam is based on historical data and student performance in the previous year.

The table below presents goals and outcomes for graduate-level certification exams for 2019-2021.

Certification Exam Area	Threshold	Year	Goal	Outcome	Number of students
Educational Diagnostician	75%	2019	85%	100%	20
		2020		100%	31
		2021		87%	23
		2021		100%	5
Performance Assessment for School Leaders <sup>1</sup>	75%	2020	85%	100%	1
		2021		100%	12
Principal <sup>2</sup>	75%	2019		67.1%	73
Principal as Instructional Leader <sup>3</sup>	75%	2020	85%	85.7%	7
		2021		100%	13
Reading Specialist	75%	2019	85%	100%	2
		2020		100%	7
		2021		100%	3
School Counselor	75%	2019	85%	96.8%	31
		2020		92.3%	36
		2021		98.6%	70
Superintendent	75%	2019			0
		2020	85%	100%	1
		2021			0

<sup>1</sup> 2020 was the first year that the Performance Assessment for School Leaders was administered.

<sup>2</sup> 2019 was the last year that a single Principal exam was administered.

<sup>3</sup> 2020 was the first year that the Principal as Instructional Leader was administered.

Note: The Educational Diagnostician exam changed in 2021; results in the table reflect the two iterations of the exam.



### Review of Education and Human Services Graduate-level Certification Data and Action Steps

Overall, student achievement goals in graduate-level certification programs were met or exceeded. Although the goal for the Principal exam was not met in 2019, this exam was replaced with two new exams (Performance Assessment for School Leaders and Principal as Instructional Leader), and goals have been met on both since 2020.

### Peavy School of Nursing (PSON) NCLEX-RN Licensure

#### Criteria of Success and Threshold of Acceptability

The PSON has chosen the **National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN)** first attempt pass rate as its criterion of success. PSON faculty have set a threshold of acceptability of 80% and a goal of >80% for NCLEX first attempt pass rate.

#### Rationale

The threshold of acceptability was determined by the benchmark set by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE, 2018) accreditation standard IV-C, which requires programs to demonstrate a yearly licensure pass rate of 80%. The goal of >80% was determined by PSON leadership prior to the most recent self-study for CCNE accreditation and reaffirmed in 2022.

The table below presents licensure first-attempt pass rates for Bachelor of Science in Nursing graduates from 2019 to 2021.

	2019	2020	2021
<b>NCLEX-RN Pass Rate</b>	91%	87.5%	81.5%

#### Review of NCLEX Licensure Data and Action Steps

The program has exceeded its goal for three years. However, to address the decline in licensure exam pass rate from 2020 to 2021, PSON faculty have implemented changes in Exit exam and NCLEX preparation requirements. BSN students now begin test preparation in the fall semester of their senior year, rather than in the spring, which allows for additional remediation as needed.

As part of its self-review of outcomes, PSON regularly conducts a comprehensive program evaluation process in conjunction with standardized formative course evaluations and prospective planning.