

**ACADEMIC INFORMATION AND PLANNING**  
 State University of New York at Buffalo

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**BRIEF: FIRST-TIME, FULL-TIME FRESHMAN  
 PERSISTENCE TO GRADUATION**

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As a follow-up to graduation rates run on a 6-year cohort of freshmen who entered UB in 1985 to 1987, a new study was done on the graduation rates of first-time, full-time freshmen who began UB in the fall semesters of 1990, 1991, or 1992. This latest cohort consisted of 5530 freshmen who had scores for all quantitative admission criteria at UB (Total SAT, HS Average, and a T-score).

Table 1 - Cumulative Percent of Freshmen Graduating Within Four, Five, and Six Years

Entry Cohort	4 Years	5 Years	6 Years
1990	31.1	59.2	64.2
1991	31.4	58.9	63.2
1992	34.0	58.3	62.1
Weighted average	32.2	58.8	63.3

Compared to the earlier cohort, the rate of students graduating within 4-6 years increased slightly over the three years of these data. The average four year graduation rate was up 3% over the earlier cohort; the five year rate increased 8%; and the six year rate was up 7%. It should be noted that UB reduced the number of incoming freshmen in these years. Consequently, the number graduating within this cohort, dropped markedly (approximately 1000 students per year between 1985-87 and 1990-1992).

Selected demographics do have a relationship to graduation. The graduating class has proportionally fewer men and underrepresented minorities than the entering class, meaning that Whites, Asians and females are more likely to persist to graduation. This is consistent with the preponderance of the literature on the relationship between gender, ethnicity and graduation.

Table 2- Distribution, by Percent, of Selected Characteristics  
 Of UB Students in the 1990-1992 Cohort

	Entering	Graduating
Number in cohort	5530	3501
Gender		
Male	57.8	56.3
Female	42.2	43.7
Ethnicity		
White	76.5	78.7
Asian	8.7	9.0
Under-represented minority	8.6	6.4
Unknown	6.2	5.9

Of the students in this cohort, 63.3% indicated an intended major. The remaining 36.7% did not state an intended major field when they entered as freshmen. Declaring an intended major had no relationship to whether the student graduated from the University at Buffalo within the six years.

Table 3 - Percent of Graduates and Non-graduates Who Declared a Major Field on Entry to UB

Declared a major on admission to UB	Graduated	Did not graduate
Yes	64.2	35.8
No	63.1	36.9

Table 3 should NOT be interpreted as meaning that students graduated within the SAME major that they initially declared.

Table 4 - Percent of Students Graduating Within Same Major Selected at Time of Entry to UB

Intended Faculty or School at Entry as Freshmen*	% Graduating Within			Total N
	Same Faculty or School		Different Faculty or School	
	Same Major	Different Major		
Architecture	21.8	8.5	69.7	201
Arts & Letters	44.4	12.8	42.8	180
Engineering and Applied Science	23.5	29.9	46.6	877
Health Related Professions	23.4	20.9	55.7	201
Management	55.4	2.0	42.6	390
Medicine & Biomed	11.8	2.0	86.2	51
Natural Science & Math	27.4	7.6	65.0	442
Nursing	62.5	---	37.5	24
Pharmacy	35.4	13.4	51.2	127
Social Science	43.5	34.5	22.0	432
Subtotal	33.1	18.9	48.0	2925
Undecided	---	---	100	576
Total Grads	27.7	15.8	56.5	3501

\*In 1990, 1991, 1992, the current College of Arts and Sciences was organized as the Faculties of Arts & Letters, Natural Science & Mathematics, and Social Science.

A great deal of change occurred over this six year period. More than half of those who graduated (56.5%), did so in a different school/faculty from that intended on admission. Approximately 28% of the incoming freshmen graduated within the same school/faculty, and in the same major, as they had intended when they entered UB. Of the total entering freshman cohort, 72% either did not graduate in six years or graduated in a different school or faculty than intended at the time of entry.