



Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Description & Definitions

This document provides an overview and definitions of key performance indicators (KPIs) that will be used with the twenty California Guided Pathways Project Colleges to establish a baseline and then monitor student progress as work proceeds on designing and implementing pathways at scale. This task will recur annually throughout the Project and begins with baseline reporting as advance work for the first Pathways Institute. The Educational Results Partnership (ERP), at the direction of the California Community College Chancellor's Office, will provide summary tables on the KPIs listed below to each of the 20 CAGP colleges using the Cal-PASS Plus database. This is a significant development; the 30 colleges on the national California Guided Pathways Project had to collect, analyze and submit this data, which was a somewhat time-consuming task. We are grateful to both the CCCCO and ERP for their assistance in making this much easier for the 20 CAGP colleges.

Community College Research Center (CCRC), a national partner in the California Guided Pathways Project, is responsible for analyzing the KPIs and essential practices assessment reports from each participating college and for synthesizing and analyzing trends across all of the colleges.

Overview

On the participation agreement each college signed, the California Guided Pathways Project colleges have agreed to report data on student outcomes using a selected set of key performance indicators, or KPIs. These KPIs will enable each college, the partner organizations, and the funders to determine whether student outcomes are improving at a given institution. Based on reports by the colleges about the changes in practice they are implementing, project researchers will be able to assess whether any changes in KPIs could be the result of such reforms. *Listed below are the KPIs colleges that will be utilized on the project, along with definitions that will be used in calculating them.*

Given the relatively short timeframe of the project, partners and colleges will focus on KPIs that can be measured in one year or less and yet that research indicates are correlated with a greater likelihood of timely completion. Specifically, college trends will be analyzed on the following KPIs. (Supporting research for each is indicated in endnotes.) Please see the appendix at the end of the document - "KPIs Defined" - for more detailed descriptions of these indicators.

- 1) Early momentum KPIs:¹
 - a) Earned 6+ college credits in 1st term
 - b) Earned 12+ college credits in 1st term
 - c) Earned 15+ college credits in year 1
 - d) Earned 24+ college credits in year 1
 - e) Earned 30+ college credits in year 1
- 2) Gateway math and English completion KPIs:²
 - a) Completed college math in year 1
 - b) Completed college English in year 1
 - c) Completed both college math and English in year 1
- 3) Persistence KPIs:³
 - a) Persisted from term 1 to term 2
- 4) College course completion KPI:⁴
 - a) College-level course completion rate in students' first academic year
- 5) Attempted credits KPIs:
 - a) Attempted 15+ credits (developmental or college level) in the first term
 - b) Attempted 30+ credits (developmental or college level) in the first year

Cohorts. ERP will be reporting these measures using data on cohorts of *students who enrolled in higher education for the first time at each college with no previous college credits or degrees ("FTEIC students") in the fall terms of each of five "baseline" years* prior to and including the first year the colleges participate in the Pathways Institutes and for each of the remaining years of the project (fall 2012 through summer 2020). ERP will report KPIs for the students in each cohort over one academic year (fall through summer terms). ERP will also report on a limited number of student demographic statistics for each cohort to allow researchers to see if any changes in outcomes might be due to changes over time in cohort composition.

Data on the near-term KPIs for these cohorts will allow partners and colleges to get at least a high-level sense of whether a college is improving performance without having to wait a long time for the results. If colleges are successful in increasing rates of student progression on these near-term measures that research suggests are correlated with longer-term degree completion, it is reasonable to expect to see improvements in student success rates over time.

Still, given the descriptive nature of the data, project researchers will not be able to attribute any changes in KPIs to reforms implemented by the colleges as a result of participating in the Pathways Institutes (or any other reforms, for that matter). However, it is feasible to assess whether the reforms colleges implement are of sufficient scale and scope to have *the potential* to effect improvements in KPIs. If colleges fail to implement reforms that could affect students at scale, or if they implement reforms that are unlikely to affect particular KPIs, then all parties should assume that any improvements in KPIs are not the result of such reforms. Conversely, if colleges implement large-scale changes that affect large numbers of students, then partners and colleges are in a stronger position to argue that improvements in KPIs could be related to such reforms.

To document the reforms implemented by the colleges, colleges will be asked in a separate assignment to report information on the nature, scale, and timing of guided pathways reforms for the baseline period prior to the project and at the end of each of the three years of the

project. For this purpose, the project provides a reporting template designed to enable colleges to assess the scale at which essential guided pathways practices have been implemented (see the Institute 1 Advanced Homework Assignment, “Guided *Pathways Essential Practices: Scale of Adoption Assessment Tool*”).

For information and assistance on the KPI definitions or any KPI-related questions, contact Hana Lahr of the Community College Research Center at lahr@tc.columbia.edu.

ENDNOTES

¹ On early credit accumulation as a correlate to student completion, see Paul Attewell, Scott Heil, & Liza Reisel, What Is Academic Momentum? And Does It Matter? *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 34(1), 27-44, 2012. On the correlation between early entry into a program of study and completion or transfer, see: Davis Jenkins and Sun-Woo Cho, Get With the Program...And Finish It: Building Guided Pathways to Accelerate Student Learning And Success. In B.C. Phillips, & J.E. Horowitz, Eds., *New Directions for Community Colleges*. (Special Issue: The College Completion Agenda: Practical Approaches for Reaching the Big Goal.) San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. 2013(164): 27-35.

² On the correlation between completing college-level math and English and degree completion, see Juan Carlos Calcagno, Peter Crosta, Thomas R. Bailey, & Davis Jenkins.. Does Age of Entrance Affect Community College Completion Probabilities? Evidence from a Discrete-Time Hazard Model. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*. 22(3) (September), 2007. <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/age-of-entrance-completion-probabilities.html>.

³ On the importance for completion of enrollment continuity, see Peter M. Crosta, Intensity and Attachment: How the Chaotic Enrollment Patterns of Community College Students Affect Educational Outcomes, *Community College Review*, 42(2) (April 2014) 118-142.

⁴ On the correlation between course completion rates and completion, see Matthew Zeidenberg, Davis Jenkins, & Marc Scott, *Not Just Math and English: Courses That Pose Obstacles to Community College Completion*. (CCRC Working Paper No. 52). New York: Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University (November), 2012.

Appendix A: KPIs defined

KPIs	Definition
1) <i>Early momentum</i>	
Earned 6+ college credits in 1 st term	Number and % of fall cohort students who earned 6 or more college-level (i.e., non-developmental) credits (with grade A-D or P) in first term
Earned 12+ college credits in 1 st term	Number and % of fall cohort students who earned 12 or more college-level (i.e., non-developmental) credits (with grade A-D or P) in first term
Earned 15+ college credits in year 1	Number and % of fall cohort students who earned 15 or more college-level (i.e., non-developmental) credits (with grade A-D or P) in first full academic year
Earned 24+ college credits in year 1	Number and % of fall cohort students who earned 24 or more college-level (i.e., non-developmental) credits (with grade A-D or P) in first full academic year
Earned 30+ college credits in year 1	Number and % of fall cohort students who earned 30 or more college-level (i.e., non-developmental) credits (with grade A-D or P) in first full academic year
2) <i>Gateway math and English completion</i>	
Completed college math in year 1	Number and % of fall cohort students who attempted and passed at least one college level (i.e., non-developmental) math course (with grade A-D or P) in the first full academic year. <u>Withdrawals should be counted as attempting but not passing the course.</u>
Completed college English in year 1	Number and % of fall cohort students who attempted and passed at least one college level (i.e., non-developmental) English course (with grade A-D or P) in the first full academic year. <u>Withdrawals should be counted as attempting but not passing the course.</u>
Completed both college English and math in year 1	Number and % of fall cohort students who attempted and passed at least one college level (i.e., non-developmental) course in Math and English (with grade A-D or P) in the first full academic year. <u>Withdrawals should be counted as attempting but not passing the course.</u>
3) <i>Persistence</i>	
Persisted from term 1 to term 2	Number and % of fall cohort students who enrolled in at least one credit-bearing course (including remedial) in term 2 (spring term)
4) <i>College course completion</i>	

Completed college credits	Number of college-level (i.e., non-remedial) credits earned (with grade A-D or P) by fall cohort students in their first full academic year divided by the total number of college-level credits attempted by these students. <u>Withdrawals should be counted as attempted credits but not credits earned.</u>
<i>5) Attempted credits</i>	
Attempted 15+ credits (developmental or college level) in the first term	Number and % of fall cohort students who attempted 15 or more college-level or developmental credits in first full academic term
Attempted 30+ credits (developmental or college level) in the first year	Number and % of fall cohort students who attempted 30 or more college-level or developmental credits in first full academic year