

# Rationale of Criteria and Thresholds of Acceptability

## Student Success Report

Gadsden State Community College (GSCC) strives to fulfill its mission of preparing students from all backgrounds for success through quality education, innovative workforce development, and inclusive community and global engagement. Gadsden State is a public, open-admissions community college serving six counties that include rural and low-income populations including many who are potential first-generation college students. Our student success improves their ability to transfer to a university, have a successful career, and improves their future economic potential. Gadsden State is committed to meeting students at their educational level and current situation and providing the training and student support services to help them achieve their dreams. The College's curriculum and commitment to quality instruction is based on the belief that our graduates must have foundational knowledge of general education core competencies such as communication, critical thinking, and quantitative (mathematical) reasoning. Adult Education, Workforce Development, Transfer General Education, Dual Enrollment opportunities are offered to provide training to prepare the communities the college serves.

The College has seven goals for student achievement:

- 1) Fall-to-Fall retention rates for first-time, full-time students will exceed 62%
- 2) Twenty-four percent (24%) of GSCC's first-time, full-time, degree/certificate seeking students will graduate within 150% of normal enrollment length. Twenty-percent (20%) of students not graduating within 150% of time will transfer.
- 3) Thirty percent (30%) of GSCC's first-time, full-time, degree/certificate seeking students will graduate within 200% of normal enrollment length (**Key Completion Indicator**)
- 4) Course Pass Rates - Sixty percent (60%) of students will pass in Developmental English and Developmental Math classes with a withdrawal rate of 15% or less in these courses.

Seventy percent (70%) will pass General Education courses with a withdrawal rate of 15% or less in these courses (85% persistence rate).

- 5) Meet or exceed the annual Targeted percentage on the four Core Indicators of the Carl D. Perkins Career/Technical Performance Indicators.
- 6) College Program graduates will meet or exceed agency standard minimum pass rates on licensure exams.
- 7) GSCC student performance on the national ETS Proficiency Profile will be within 1% of meeting the national average for proficiency of 2-year college students.

## Rationale of Criteria and Thresholds of Acceptability

Gadsden State Community College established the initial goals and benchmarks through the college's Executive Cabinet, who examines the rationale behind the chosen criteria and thresholds of acceptability. While the overall benchmarks and performance are still established by the Executive Cabinet, the Institutional Effectiveness Committee also began reviewing the report. Gadsden State Community College established the criteria for the Student Success Report as measure of institutional effectiveness related to four different areas:

- 1) The college’s ability to retain students who enroll at GSCC, as measured by the Fall-to-Fall retention rate
- 2) The college’s ability to prepare students for success through quality education as established in the mission by the graduation rate and Key Completion graduation rate
- 3) The college’s ability to prepare students from all backgrounds for success through quality education and innovative workforce development through developmental pass rates, general education course pass rates and persistence rates, pass rates on licensure exams, and performance on career/technical benchmarks as established by Carl D. Perkins Career/Technical Performance Indicators
- 4) The college’s ability to meet the institutional goal of preparing students with foundational knowledge of general education core requirements with the performance on the national ETS Proficiency Profile for community college students in critical thinking, math, and English.

Gadsden State Community College established the thresholds of acceptability for the Student Success Report by evaluation of student achievement data and measures from peer institutions, national report targets, and national/state exams and licensure exam data using the following rationale:

1. The institutional student achievement goal of “Fall-to-Fall retention rates for first-time, full-time students will exceed 62%” is based on the retention rate definition from the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

The 62% threshold of acceptability was determined by examining the fall-to-fall retention rate from peer community colleges in the Alabama Community College System of similar size and the national retention rate from NCES. The NCES rate for the Fall 2019 cohort was 63%. The overall Alabama Community College System (ACCS) Average for Fall 2019 cohort was 57%. The following table lists the retention rates for seven comparison community colleges in Alabama from the ACCS data system.

College	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Bevill State	62.87%	58.46%	67.08%
Bishop State	51.12%	45.24%	58.11%
Central Alabama	58.73%	59.15%	63.56%
Enterprise State	61.83%	59.33%	65.51%
Northwest-Shoals	60.09%	56.20%	56.20%
Wallace - Hanceville	63.28%	63.50%	63.91%
Wallace - Selma	58.42%	57.02%	62.01%

2. The institutional student achievement goal of “Twenty-four percent (24%) of GSCC’s first-time, full-time, degree/certificate seeking students will graduate within 150% of normal enrollment length” is based on the graduation rate definition from the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS). The threshold of acceptability is based on the recently published national rate of 22%
3. The institutional student achievement goal of “Thirty percent (30%) of GSCC’s first-time, full-time, degree/certificate seeking students will graduate within 200% of normal enrollment length (**Key Completion Indicator**)” is based on the graduation rate definition from the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS). The threshold of acceptability is based on the recently published national rate of 28%.
4. The institutional student achievement goal of “Sixty percent (60%) of students will pass rate in Developmental English and Developmental Math classes with a withdrawal rate of 15% or less in these courses” is based on the pass rate and persistence rates chosen in the QEP project for the college on Developmental Math.

As part of the 2018 class, Gadsden State Community College chose Developmental Math success rates as the topic of its 5-year Quality Enhancement Plan. The large number of students placing into a developmental math class and the low pass rates were a huge barrier for students to proceeding in their plan of study and graduating. Math 098 pass rates and withdrawal rates are the focus of the college’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) for SACSCOC accreditation. The QEP, “Your Math GPS”, focuses on achieving a 60% pass rate and a 15% or less withdrawal rate. The same benchmarks are also being applied in Developmental English.

The institutional student achievement goal of “Seventy percent (70%) will pass General Education courses with a withdrawal rate of 15% or less in these courses (85% persistence rate)” is based on the pass rate and persistence rates chosen by the Dean of Academic Programs and Services following an Alabama Community College System Initiative on Academic Success.

General Education courses are a cornerstone of student graduation. Without passing the required general education courses, many students might leave college without a degree or regular certificate that could potentially result in higher wage jobs. The graduation rates of many of the colleges in the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) were below the national average, so ACCS hired an educator (Tony Holland) to go system-wide and work with the colleges to assist in setting goals and developing strategies to improve course success. The goals for pass rates and persistence were determined based on this review.

5. The institutional student achievement goal of “Meet or exceed the annual Targeted percentage on the four Core Indicators of the Carl D. Perkins Career/Technical Performance Indicators” is based on the percentages distributed annually as targets by the Alabama Community College System as part of the Carl D. Perkins Career/Technical grant awarded to the college.

Data from Gadsden State Community College’s Report on Career and Technical Education (Perkins Report) indicates that the College fulfills its mission and institutional goals (College’s

Institutional Goal 1) with respect to providing educational opportunities that prepare students for successful careers in professional and career technical fields. Each college that receives funding through the Carl D. Perkins Career/Technical grant must complete an annual report that contains performance indicators the college must answer. The four core indicators and the targets are determined by the federal legislation with Congress signing Perkins V in law in 2018. All colleges must reply to these targets and indicators.

6. The institutional student achievement goal of “College Program graduates will meet or exceed agency standard minimum pass rates on licensure exams” is based on the Institutional Goal 5 which addresses promoting career readiness.

The minimum pass rate of graduates is set by each accrediting agency. The following are the current agency pass rates:

- *Cosmetology (Salon and Spa Management) licensure pass rates will be 80% or greater*
  - *Nursing (PN and RN) licensure pass rates will be 80% or greater*
  - *Emergency Medical Services licensure pass rates will be 80% or greater*
  - *Massage Therapy licensure pass rates will be 90% or greater*
  - *Medical Laboratory Technician licensure pass rates will be 75% or greater over a 3-year period*
  - *Radiology Technology licensure pass rate will be 75% or greater*
  - *Diagnostic Medical Sonography licensure pass rate will be 60% or greater*
7. The institutional student achievement goal of “GSCC student performance on the national ETS Proficiency Profile will be within 1% of meeting the national average for proficiency of 2-year college students” is based on the Institutional Goal 2 which addresses preparing students with foundational knowledge of general education core requirements.’

The national average is determined by each annual testing pool for the ETS Proficiency Profile. Gadsden State participates in the tests related to its three general education competencies: communication (English ETS exam), quantitative reasoning (Math ETS exam) and critical thinking (Critical Thinking ETS exam). Exams are given in general education classes in the Spring of each academic year.