**Graduation rates** are calculated by identifying a group of first-time, full-time degree/certificate seeking undergraduate students and tracking their degree completion status over a six year period of time. Research has determined that six years marks 150% of time expected for completing baccalaureate degree requirements. For reporting purposes, typical graduation rates are calculated at the conclusion of the fourth, fifth and sixth years.

In addition to institutional selectivity, remediation needs, ability to maintain a full-time course load earning academic credit for all subsequent terms after initial entrance, research suggests additional factors having a positive impact on graduation rates are: a greater tuition rates; students' (and their parents) expectations of graduating within four years; and employment opportunities.