

A traditional, on-campus student who stops attending a university without earning a qualification or who does not return to campus after a break is statistically unlikely to continue in the program and is therefore qualified—within a prescribed period of time—as a dropout. By contrast, a student studying in an online modality, designed specifically for working adults or non-traditional students, generally takes one module at a time and does not progress seamlessly from module-to-module to graduation but rather follows a more flexible enrollment pattern, stepping in and out of the program based on work-life requirements. This is the most fundamental difference between the two models of learning; an on-campus student generally completes the program more predictably and within a set timeframe whereas an online student, by design, is less predictable and takes as little or as much time as needed to earn a degree.

The very value proposition of an online degree is its flexible format that lets learners reconcile their personal and professional lives with earning a higher education credential on their own time.

While some students choose to rush through their degree programs, the majority take their time due to a variety of factors, including financial considerations, life events or professional obligations. As an example, school teachers take as many modules during their summer break as possible while nurses in online or blended nursing degree programs like to take a break during the summer, resuming their studies in the autumn.

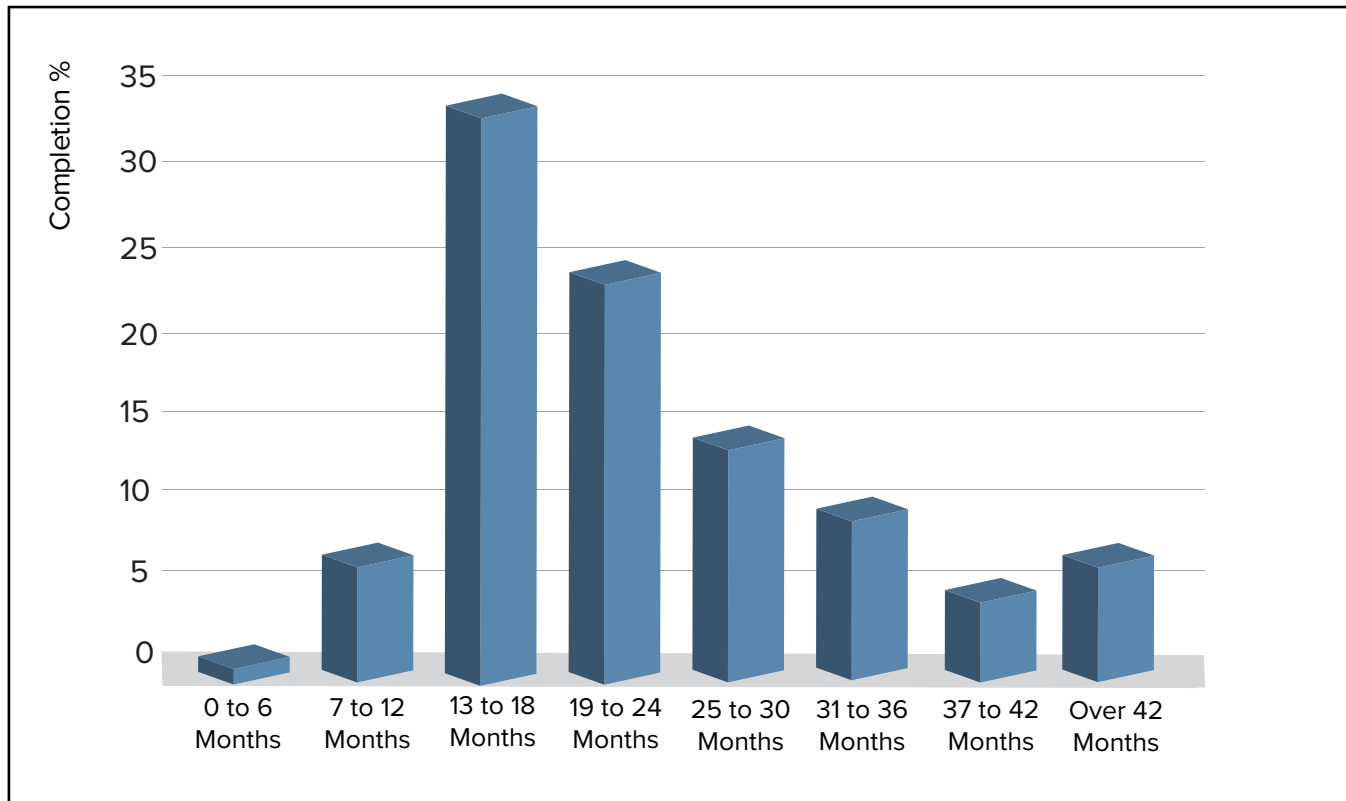
There is a big difference between students dropping out from their on-campus studies and stepping out from their online studies. The latter do so by design as their online programs lend themselves to multiple step-ins and step-outs, however, most online learners do earn a degree but take much longer to do so. The former, by contrast, simply move on with their lives and don't go back to a face-to-face university life.

Under the HEP model, when an online student completes a module in an online degree program, HEP's retention team engages the module-completer to ensure s/he continues to the next one and persists in the program until completion. In practice, this means that our team constantly re-recruits online students for subsequent modules, making retention one of our core value propositions. The graduating cohort, given the dynamics of an online student progression—non-linear and much longer due to frequent step-ins and step-outs—combines various student “vintages” from across multiple years and start dates, unlike traditional campus-based graduating class which consists of the same students who started at the same time.

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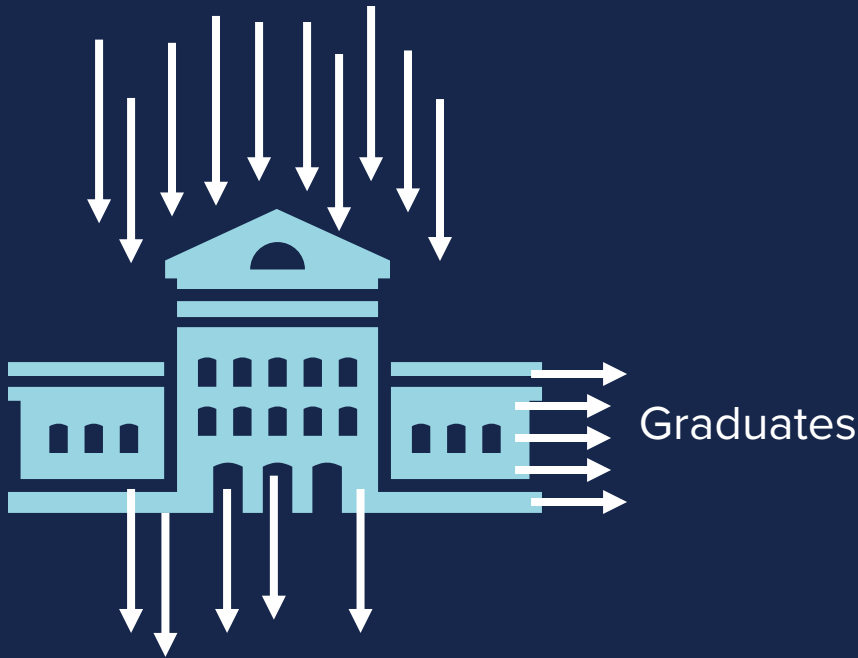
UTA RN-BSN Online Students Completion Rates

In longitudinal studies at the University of Texas Arlington (UTA) in cohorts of Registered Nurses earning a Bachelor in the Science of Nursing (RN to BSN), all students had graduated by the end of the 8th year as follows: 90% of nurses graduated within 36 months and the balance over the following 42 months....



Online Students Never Dropout

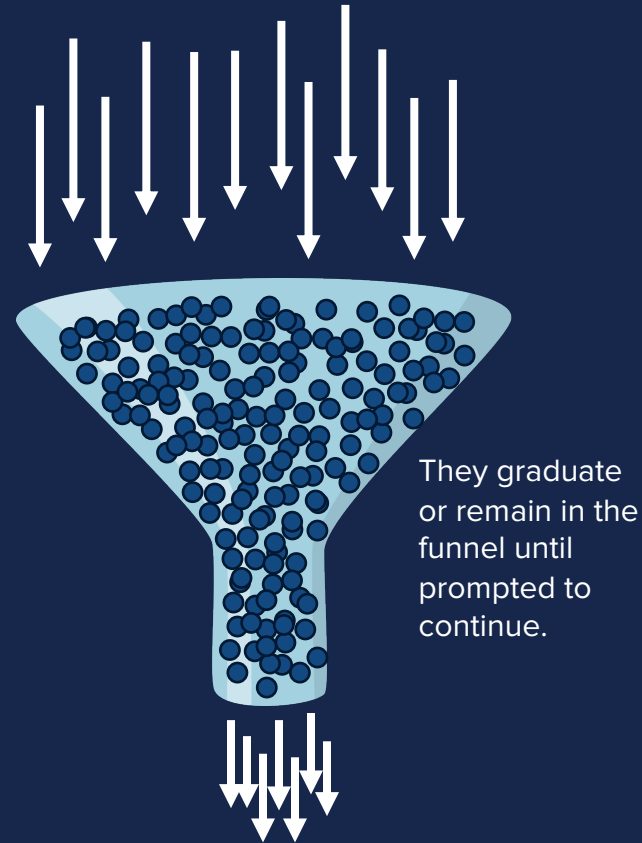
Enrolments



Dropouts

On-Campus

Enrolments



Graduates

Online