DEAC GRADUATION RATE BENCHMARKS

DEAC values the use of data in evaluating institutional effectiveness and considers data from multiple sources as part of its ongoing practice for monitoring and evaluating student achievement. As a starting point, DEAC-accredited institutions provide data on every program offering through the submission of annual reports. Analysis of the data support the benchmarking process and enables both DEAC and its members to gain greater insights into enrollment patterns, program performance, institutional effectiveness, and student learning in distance education programs. DEAC is continuing with its historical practice of setting graduation rate benchmarks at approximately 15 points below the average for the total number of students in all institutions at each degree level. The data collected from DEAC-accredited institutions serves as a baseline for developing empirical, quantitative measures of improvement. DEAC reviews the data it receives each year in annual report submissions, aggregates the data, considers any new trends, and determines if adjustments to the benchmarks are needed. Comparisons are made to prior year data along with analysis of the aggregated data for the most recent annual reporting year and across multiple years. This practice is intended to accommodate both annual fluctuations within institutions as well as variable factors across institutions and programs.

The degree program benchmarks are set forth in the table below.

	Average Graduation Rate	*Graduation Rate*
Associate Degree Programs		
Distance Education	47%	32%
Correspondence/Competency-Based	28%	*
Bachelor Degree Programs	58%	43%
Master's Degree Programs	69%	54%
First Professional Degree Programs	77%	62%
Doctorate Degree Programs	55%	40%

*The Commission does not set a benchmark at 15 points below the average. However, it recognizes that different factors could fairly account for an institution reporting a rate below the 28% average. Accordingly, with respect to institutions reporting a lower rate, the Commission will conduct a secondary analysis of individual course completion rates, evaluation of student portfolios, evidence of competencies achieved, and other information that would reasonably demonstrate institutional effectiveness.

Data on student persistence and completion in shorter-term, non-degree educational programs offered at DEAC-accredited institutions are submitted and reviewed on an annual basis. Based upon a longitudinal review of these data, DEAC continues to set a completion rate benchmark at 60% for these programs.

	Average Completion Rate	*Completion Rate*
Non-degree Programs	80%	60%

DEAC embraces other quantifiable means of evaluating institutional effectiveness. In addition to data annually reported to DEAC, institutions may provide completion rate data for the IPEDS overall graduation rate (within 150 percent of the program timeframe), data using the IPEDS Outcome Measures 8-year award rate, or the National Student Clearinghouse total completion rate (6-year graduation rate).