



# Trends in NCAA Division I Graduation Rates

November 2024



RESEARCH

# Summary

# Notes on the Graduation Rates Presented

- All graduation rates presented here are based on completion within six years of entry into college (see federal Student-Right-To-Know Act, 1990).
- The Federal Graduation Rate (FGR) is required by law to be calculated and published for all full-time college students and separately for student-athletes who receive athletically-related aid.
- The federal calculation has long been considered an outdated graduation measure in part due to its failure to account for transfer (transfers-out are counted as non-graduates; transfers-in are not included in the calculation). FGR is best characterized as the percentage of students entering directly from high school who graduate from their initial college.
- FGR, with these major limitations, is the only rate for which we can currently compare students with student-athletes at Division I schools.

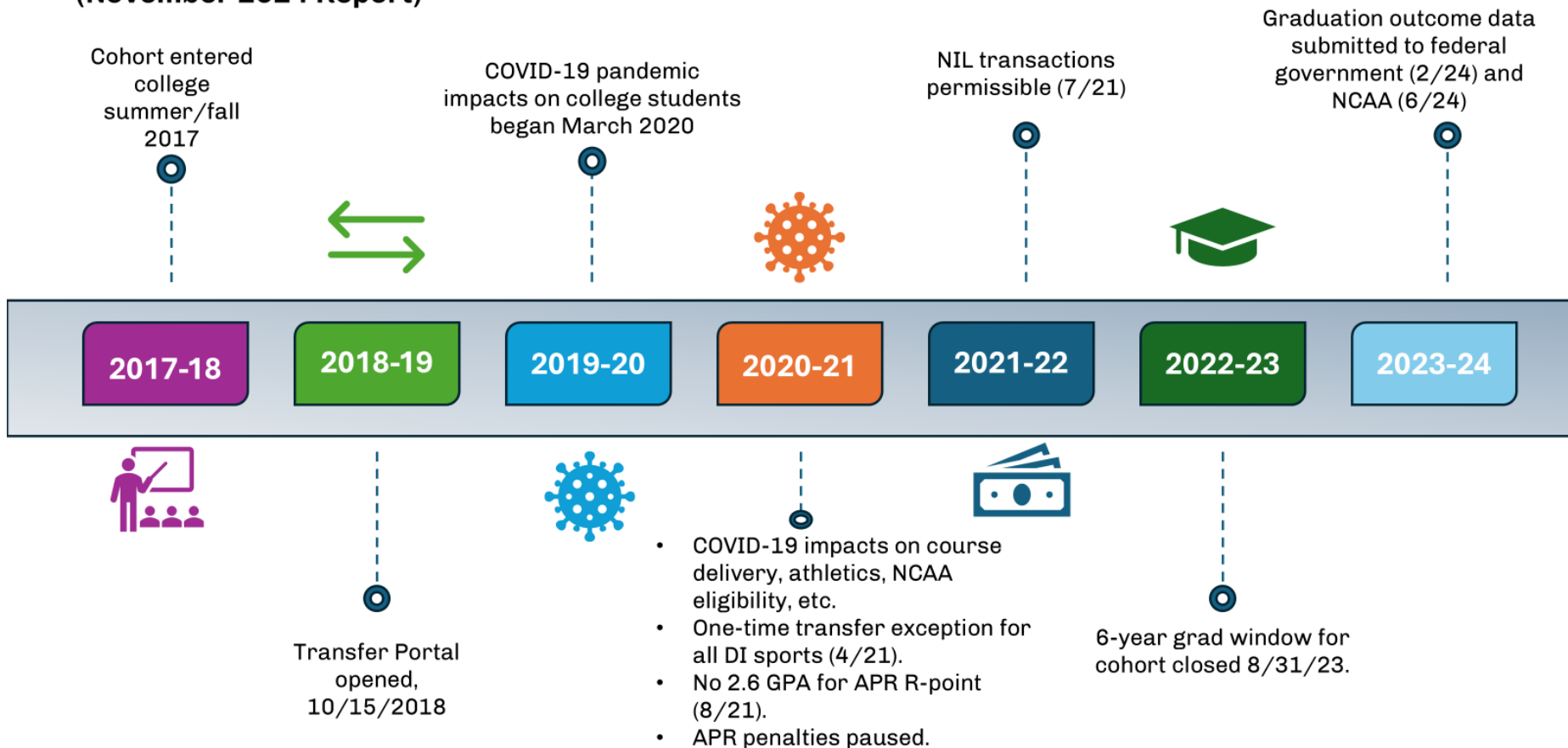


# Notes on the Graduation Rates Presented

- The Graduation Success Rate (GSR) is a calculation required by the NCAA for all Division I student-athletes. This rate was designed to approximate a true student-centered measure of graduation (the student graduated from any four-year college within the six-year window) by essentially passing likely transfers from one college's cohort to another's cohort. GSR calculations also deal better with circumstances such as mid-year college entry (such entrants are not included in the FGR).
- For both FGR and GSR, four-cohort aggregations are used here for group comparisons or when describing rates in isolation. Single-cohort rates are more appropriate for examining change over time.
- It is typically not appropriate to compare a GSR with an FGR.



# Graduation Rates Timeline for the Most Recent Cohort to Enter the Calculation (November 2024 Report)



# 2024 Four-Cohort Division I Graduation Rates

(Aggregate six-year graduation rates for 2014-2017 entering cohorts)

	Student-Athletes		Student Body
	GSR	Federal Rate	Federal Rate
<b>DI Overall</b>	90% <small>+0</small>	68% <small>-1</small>	70% <small>+1</small>
<b>DI Men</b>	86% <small>+0</small>	62% <small>-1</small>	67% <small>+1</small>
<b>DI Women</b>	95% <small>+0</small>	74% <small>-1</small>	72% <small>+0</small>

Notes: GSR = Graduation Success Rate. The four-cohort rates reported above are based on the last four single-year cohorts with six-year outcomes available (those first reported in 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024). Numbers in blue indicate percentage point differences in four-cohort rates from those reported in 2023.

# Summary

- The students in the most-recently added cohort (2017 entry) would typically have been in the second semester of their 3<sup>rd</sup> academic year when the COVID-19 pandemic began in March 2020. See the previous chart for a historical timeline relative to when this cohort was in college.
- Since the implementation of Division I academic reform initiatives in the early 2000s, long-term graduation rate increases have been observed. These initiatives included modified initial eligibility and progress-toward-degree standards, as well as application of the Academic Performance Program.



# Summary

- Notable increases in single-cohort Graduation Success Rate (GSR) over the 20+ years of calculating this rate in Division I:
  - Overall student-athletes — 74% to 91%.
  - Black student-athletes — 56% to 82%.
  - Hispanic/Latino student-athletes — 64% to 89%.
  - Black FBS football student-athletes — 54% to 82%.
  - Black men's basketball student-athletes — 46% to 84%.





# Summary

- Using the federal graduation rate to examine student-athlete vs. student body graduation from initial school in Division I, we see that Black men who are student-athletes have an aggregate federal graduation rate that is 9 percentage points higher than observed among Black men generally at those same schools. The federal rate for Black women favors student-athletes by 11 percentage points.
- Even though Division I has seen an increase in transfer behavior, which negatively impacts the federal graduation rate, many subgroup federal graduation rates continue to trend higher for student-athletes.



# Number of Division I Student-Athlete Graduates

(GSR numerator for the cohort added in that reporting year)

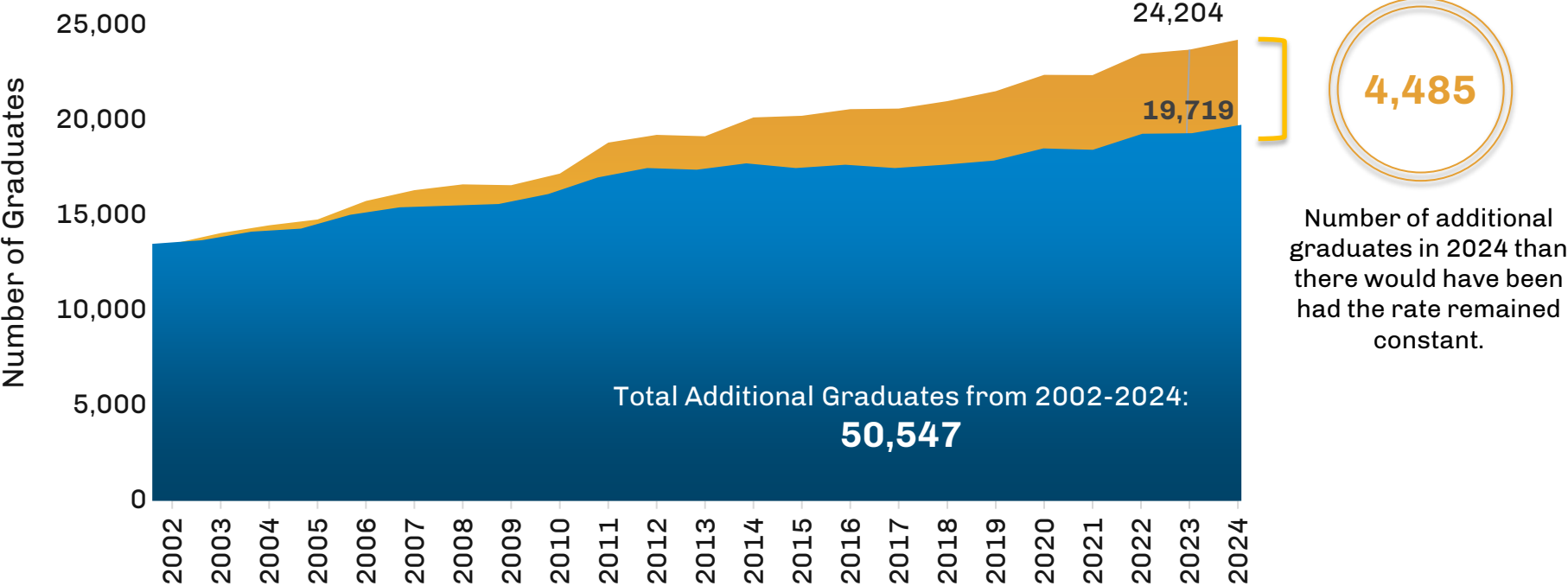
Reporting Year	# Grads
2002	13,474
2004	14,455
2006	15,732
2008	16,607
2010	17,166
2012	19,206
2014	20,122
2016	20,556
2018	20,974
2020	22,357
2022	23,458
2024	24,204



RESEARCH

# Number of Actual Graduates Since 2002 vs. Number Who Would Have Graduated With No Increase in GSR

■ Graduates at 2002 Rate   ■ Actual Graduates



4,485

Number of additional graduates in 2024 than there would have been had the rate remained constant.

Total Additional Graduates from 2002-2024:  
**50,547**

# **Four-Cohort Graduation Success Rates (GSR)**

# 2024 Four-Cohort Division I Graduation Success Rate

(Aggregate six-year graduation rates for 2014-2017 entering cohorts)

<b>Student-Athlete Group</b>	<b>GSR</b>
<b>Overall</b>	90% +0
<b>Black</b>	81% +0
<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	89% +1
<b>White</b>	94% +0
<b>Black Men</b>	77% +0
<b>Hispanic/Latino Men</b>	84% +0
<b>White Men</b>	91% +0
<b>Black Women</b>	89% +0
<b>Hispanic/Latino Women</b>	93% +1
<b>White Women</b>	97% +0

# 2024 Four-Cohort GSR for Division I Women's Sports

(Aggregate six-year graduation rates for 2014-2017 entering cohorts)

<b>SPORT</b>	<b>GSR</b>
<b>Basketball</b>	93%
<b>Bowling</b>	96%
<b>Cross Country/Track</b>	92%
<b>Fencing</b>	98%
<b>Field Hockey</b>	97%
<b>Golf</b>	96%
<b>Gymnastics</b>	99%
<b>Ice Hockey</b>	97%
<b>Lacrosse</b>	98%
<b>Rowing</b>	96%
<b>Skiing</b>	100%
<b>Soccer</b>	96%
<b>Softball</b>	94%
<b>Swimming</b>	97%
<b>Tennis</b>	97%
<b>Volleyball</b>	95%
<b>Water Polo</b>	92%



RESEARCH

# 2024 Four-Cohort GSR for Division I Men's Sports

(Aggregate six-year graduation rates for 2014-2017 entering cohorts)

<b>SPORT</b>	<b>GSR</b>
Baseball	90%
Basketball	85%
Cross Country/Track	84%
Fencing	94%
Football (FBS)	83%
Football (FCS)	79%
Golf	92%
Gymnastics	96%
Ice Hockey	93%
Lacrosse	93%
Rifle	94%
Skiing	93%
Soccer	89%
Swimming	92%
Tennis	94%
Volleyball	92%
Water Polo	90%
Wrestling	87%



RESEARCH

# 2024 Four-Cohort GSR – Division I Football and Basketball

(Aggregate six-year graduation rates for 2014-2017 entering cohorts)

<b>Student-Athlete Group</b>	<b>GSR</b>
<b>Football (FBS)</b>	83% <span>+1</span>
<b>Black Football (FBS)</b>	80% <span>+1</span>
<b>White Football (FBS)</b>	93% <span>+1</span>
<b>Men's Basketball</b>	85% <span>+0</span>
<b>Black Men's Basketball</b>	82% <span>+0</span>
<b>White Men's Basketball</b>	93% <span>+0</span>
<b>Women's Basketball</b>	93% <span>+0</span>
<b>Black Women's Basketball</b>	90% <span>+0</span>
<b>White Women's Basketball</b>	97% <span>+0</span>



# Trends in Single-Cohort Graduation Success Rates (GSR)

# Division I Graduation Success Rate Trends

(Differences in single-cohort six-year graduation rates since introduction of GSR calculation)

<b>Student-Athlete Group</b>	<b>2002 GSR</b>	<b>2024 GSR</b>
<b>Overall</b>	74%	91%
<b>Black</b>	56%	82%
<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	64%	89%
<b>White</b>	81%	95%
<b>Black Men</b>	51%	79%
<b>Hispanic/Latino Men</b>	56%	86%
<b>White Men</b>	76%	92%
<b>Black Women</b>	71%	88%
<b>Hispanic/Latino Women</b>	79%	93%
<b>White Women</b>	88%	97%

# Division I GSR Trends in Football and Basketball

(Differences in single-cohort six-year graduation rates since introduction of GSR calculation)

<b>Student-Athlete Group</b>	<b>2002 GSR</b>	<b>2024 GSR</b>
<b>Football (FBS)</b>	63%	85%
<b>Black Football (FBS)</b>	54%	82%
<b>White Football (FBS)</b>	76%	94%
<b>Men's Basketball</b>	56%	87%
<b>Black Men's Basketball</b>	46%	84%
<b>White Men's Basketball</b>	76%	94%
<b>Women's Basketball</b>	80%	93%
<b>Black Women's Basketball</b>	70%	89%
<b>White Women's Basketball</b>	87%	98%

# GSR Trends for Division I Women's Sports

(Differences in single-cohort six-year graduation rates since introduction of GSR calculation)

<b>SPORT</b>	<b>2002 GSR</b>	<b>2024 GSR</b>
<b>Basketball</b>	80%	93%
<b>Cross Country/Track</b>	82%	92%
<b>Field Hockey</b>	93%	98%
<b>Golf</b>	88%	97%
<b>Gymnastics</b>	93%	99%
<b>Lacrosse</b>	94%	99%
<b>Rowing</b>	90%	96%
<b>Soccer</b>	86%	96%
<b>Softball</b>	82%	94%
<b>Swimming</b>	91%	97%
<b>Tennis</b>	86%	97%
<b>Volleyball</b>	83%	95%

Note: Only those sports with more than 150 Division I graduates in 2024 are shown.



RESEARCH

# GSR Trends for Division I Men's Sports

(Differences in single-cohort six-year graduation rates since introduction of GSR calculation)

<b>SPORT</b>	<b>2002 GSR</b>	<b>2024 GSR</b>
<b>Baseball</b>	66%	91%
<b>Basketball</b>	56%	87%
<b>Cross Country/Track</b>	72%	83%
<b>Football (FBS)</b>	63%	85%
<b>Football (FCS)</b>	62%	80%
<b>Golf</b>	77%	94%
<b>Ice Hockey</b>	78%	93%
<b>Lacrosse</b>	91%	94%
<b>Soccer</b>	75%	88%
<b>Swimming</b>	81%	94%
<b>Tennis</b>	85%	95%
<b>Wrestling</b>	61%	88%

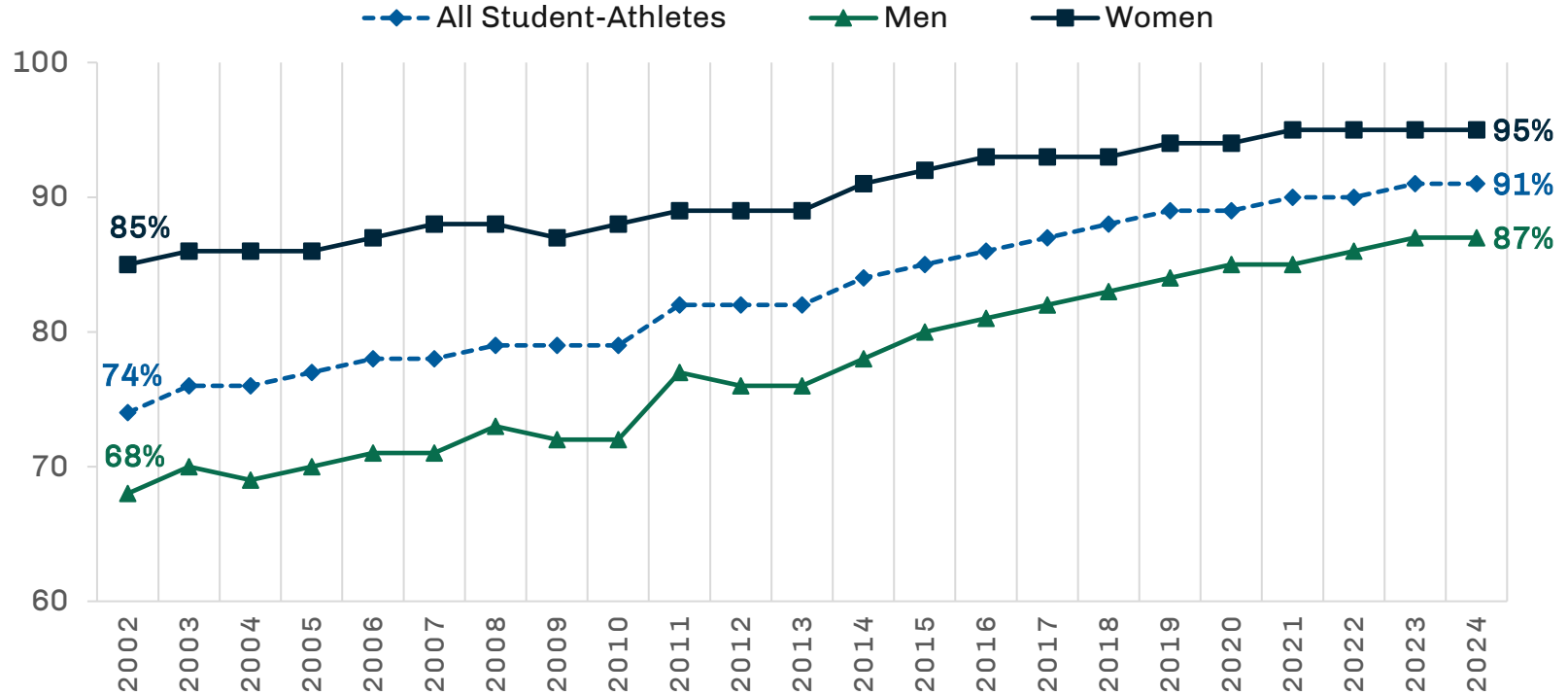
Note: Only those sports with more than 150 Division I graduates in 2024 are shown.



RESEARCH

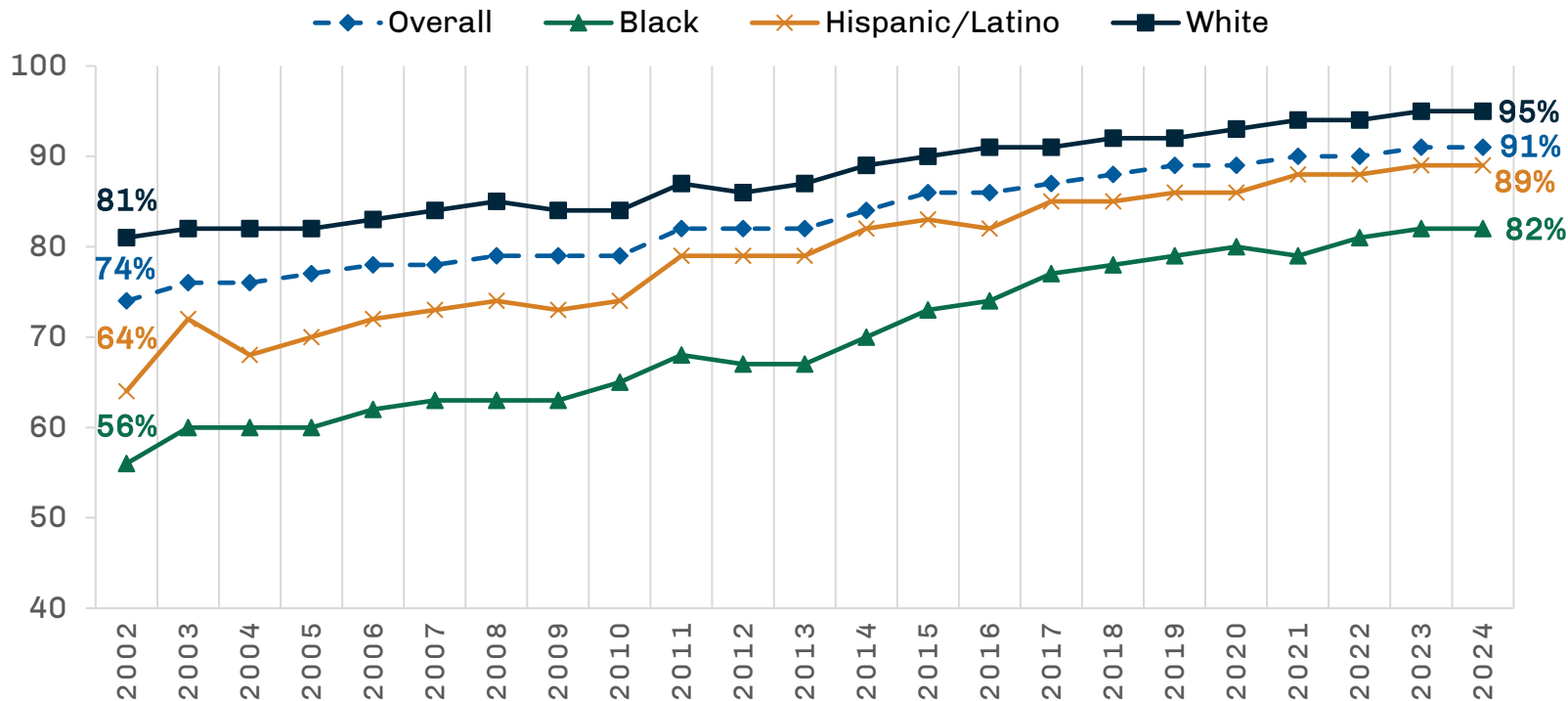
# Graduation Success Rate (GSR) Trends of Division I Student-Athletes

(Single-cohort six-year graduation rates)



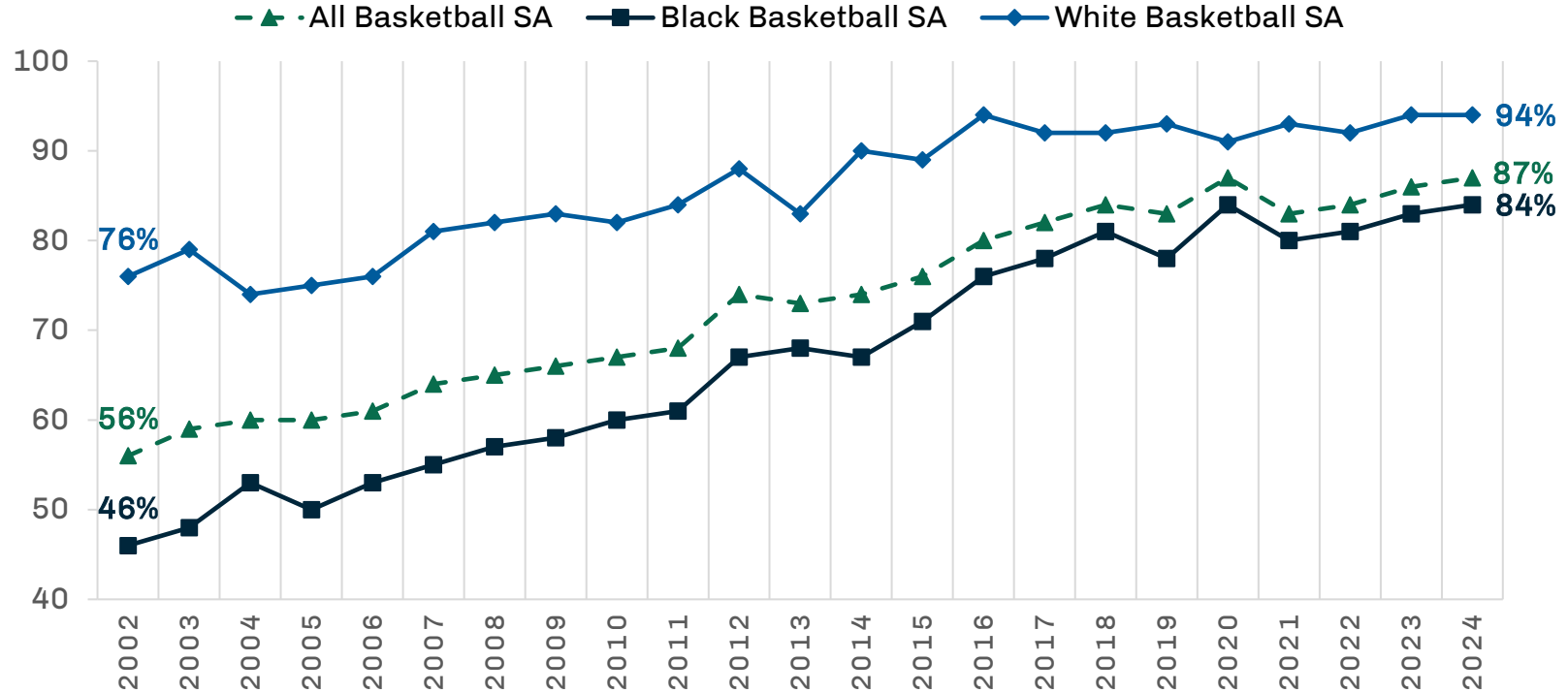
# Graduation Success Rate (GSR) Trends of Division I Student-Athletes

(Single-cohort six-year graduation rates by race/ethnicity)



# Graduation Success Rate (GSR) Trends of Division I Men's Basketball Players

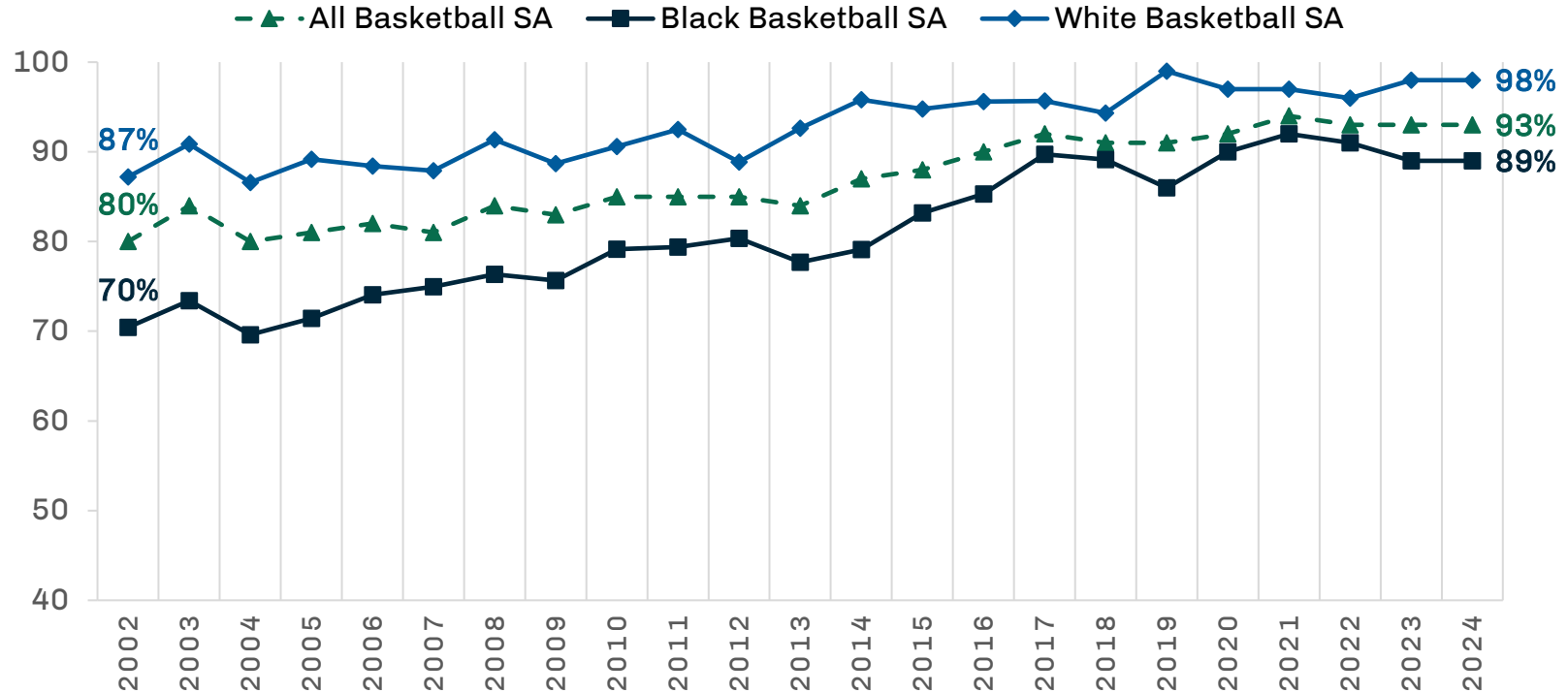
(Single-cohort six-year graduation rates by race/ethnicity)





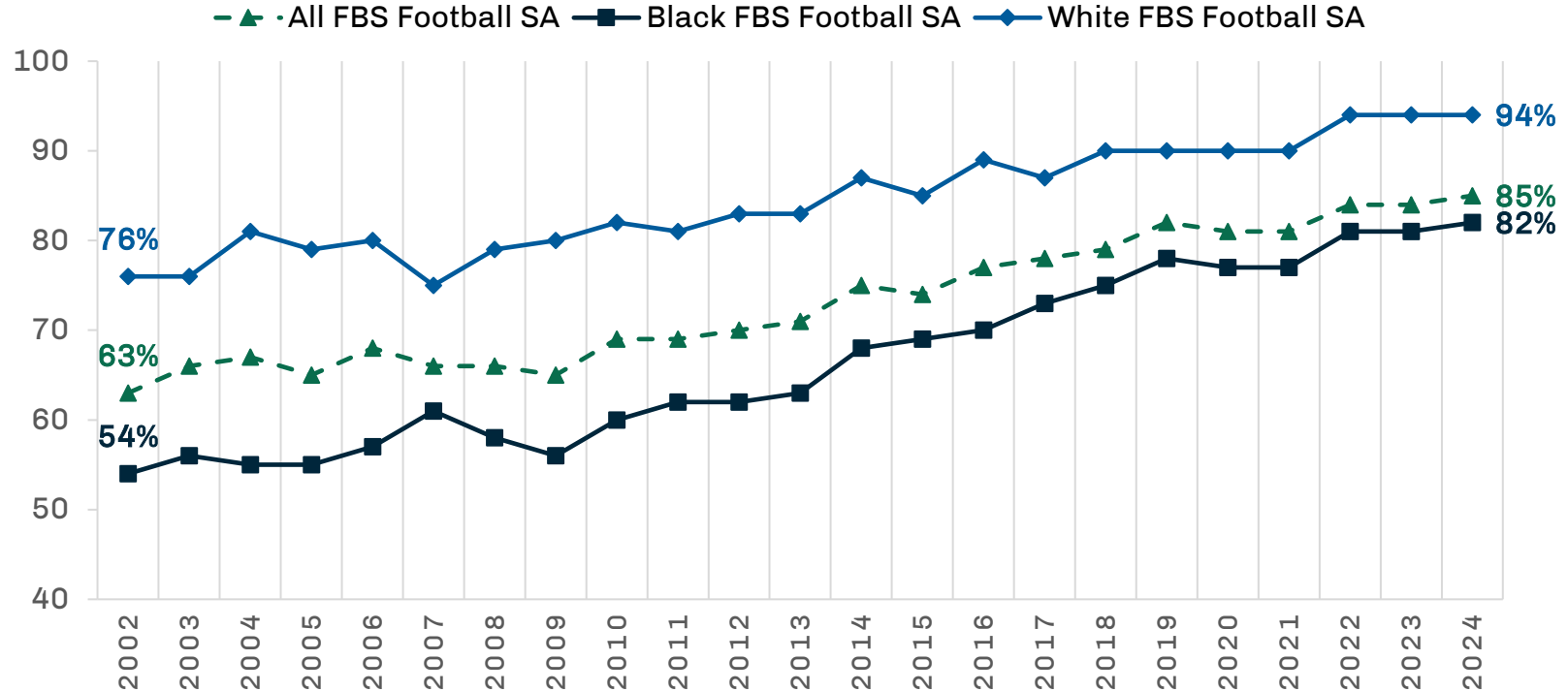
# Graduation Success Rate (GSR) Trends of Division I Women's Basketball Players

(Single-cohort six-year graduation rates by race/ethnicity)



# Graduation Success Rate (GSR) Trends of FBS Football Players

(Single-cohort six-year graduation rates by race/ethnicity)



# Federal Graduation Rates

# 2024 Comparison of Four-Cohort Federal Graduation Rates (FGR) of Division I Student-Athletes with Student Body

(Aggregate six-year FGR for 2014-2017 entering cohorts)

Population Group	Student-Athlete Federal Rate	Student Body Federal Rate
<b>Overall</b>	68%	70%
<b>Men</b>	62%	67%
<b>Women</b>	74%	72%
<b>Black</b>	59%	52%
<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	66%	64%
<b>White</b>	74%	72%
<b>Black Men</b>	55%	46%
<b>Hispanic/Latino Men</b>	59%	60%
<b>White Men</b>	68%	69%
<b>Black Women</b>	66%	55%
<b>Hispanic/Latino Women</b>	72%	67%
<b>White Women</b>	78%	75%

# Division I Federal Graduation Rate (FGR) Trends

(Differences in single-cohort six-year Federal Graduation Rates)

Student-Athlete Group	1991 Federal Rate	2024 Federal Rate
<b>Overall</b>	52%	68%
<b>Black</b>	35%	57%
<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	43%	65%
<b>White</b>	59%	74%
<b>Black Men</b>	33%	53%
<b>Hispanic/Latino Men</b>	40%	58%
<b>White Men</b>	55%	69%
<b>Black Women</b>	45%	64%
<b>Hispanic/Latino Women</b>	48%	71%
<b>White Women</b>	66%	77%

# Division I FGR Trends in Football and Basketball

(Differences in single-cohort six-year Federal Graduation Rates)

<b>Student-Athlete Group</b>	<b>1991 Federal Rate</b>	<b>2024 Federal Rate</b>
<b>Football (FBS)</b>	47%	64%
<b>Black Football (FBS)</b>	35%	60%
<b>White Football (FBS)</b>	56%	81%
<b>Men's Basketball</b>	38%	42%
<b>Black Men's Basketball</b>	29%	41%
<b>White Men's Basketball</b>	53%	50%
<b>Women's Basketball</b>	57%	59%
<b>Black Women's Basketball</b>	42%	57%
<b>White Women's Basketball</b>	66%	70%

# Definitions and Methods

# Methods

- Detailed information on graduation reporting requirements and graduation rate calculations, as well as links to school reports and an interactive analysis dashboard, can be found on the NCAA research website (graduation rates tab) or at [ncaa.org/about/resources/research/graduation-rates](https://ncaa.org/about/resources/research/graduation-rates).
- Generally, four-cohort aggregations are used for reporting rates in isolation; single-cohort rates are used for examining trends over time.
- The years 2021-2024 refer to the reporting years of the cohorts that entered college in 2014-2017. In the 2024 reporting year, the 2017-18 entering cohort was added; in the 2023 reporting year, the 2016-17 entering cohort was added, etc.
- Schools can submit student-athlete outcome adjustments for the past four years; all updates are reflected in this report and on the [interactive analysis dashboard](#).





# Federal Graduation Rate Calculation

- The federal graduation rate is federally mandated reporting of student body and student-athlete (if on athletics aid) graduation from an initial college/university. The rate essentially measures retention at that school.
- Graduation must occur within six years of initial entry.
- The federal rate makes no accommodation for transfers into or out of a school. Transfers out are recorded as academic failures. Transfers into the school are not tracked.
- The federal rate is the only published rate that allows a direct comparison between student-athletes and the general student body.



# Graduation Success Rate Calculation

- The graduation metric was developed by NCAA presidents.
- The calculation is mandated for student-athletes only. It should not be compared with the federal rate.
- Graduation must occur within six years of initial entry.
- The GSR is more inclusive than the federal rate because it includes transfers into the school, midyear enrollees and nonscholarship students at schools that do not offer athletics aid.
- Student-athletes who leave school while academically eligible to compete are removed from the calculation (assumed transfers passed on to another school's cohort). Student-athletes who leave school while ineligible to compete are coded as nongraduates (even though many are known to transfer). Both assumptions are imperfect but lead to a graduation rate that better approximates a true student-centered rate (student earns a degree from some college within six years of entering higher education).



# Comparison of Graduation Success Rate and Federal Rate Cohorts

(2021-2024 Reporting Cohorts)

	Federal Rate	GSR
Enrolled (Under Federal Definition)	98,051	98,051
Enrolled as Freshman in January	0	4,261
Two-Year College Transfers	0	11,297
Four-Year College Transfers	0	10,282
Nonscholarship Athletes (Only at Schools Not Offering Aid)	0	11,877
<b>Total Enrolled</b>	<b>98,051</b>	<b>135,768 (+38%)</b>
Allowable Exclusions (Death, Military, Church Mission, etc.)	218	298
Left Eligible	0	28,653
Participants on Teams No Longer Sponsored by School	0	1,891
<b>Total Denominator</b>	<b>97,833</b>	<b>104,926 (+7%)</b>



# RESEARCH

[ncaa.org/research](https://ncaa.org/research)

@ncaaresearch | 