



Trends in NCAA Division I Graduation Rates

November 2025



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Summary



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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 athletics 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- The federal calculation has long been considered an outdated graduation measure in part due to its failure to account for transfer (transfers-out are counted as nongraduates; transfers-in are not included in the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 with 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.



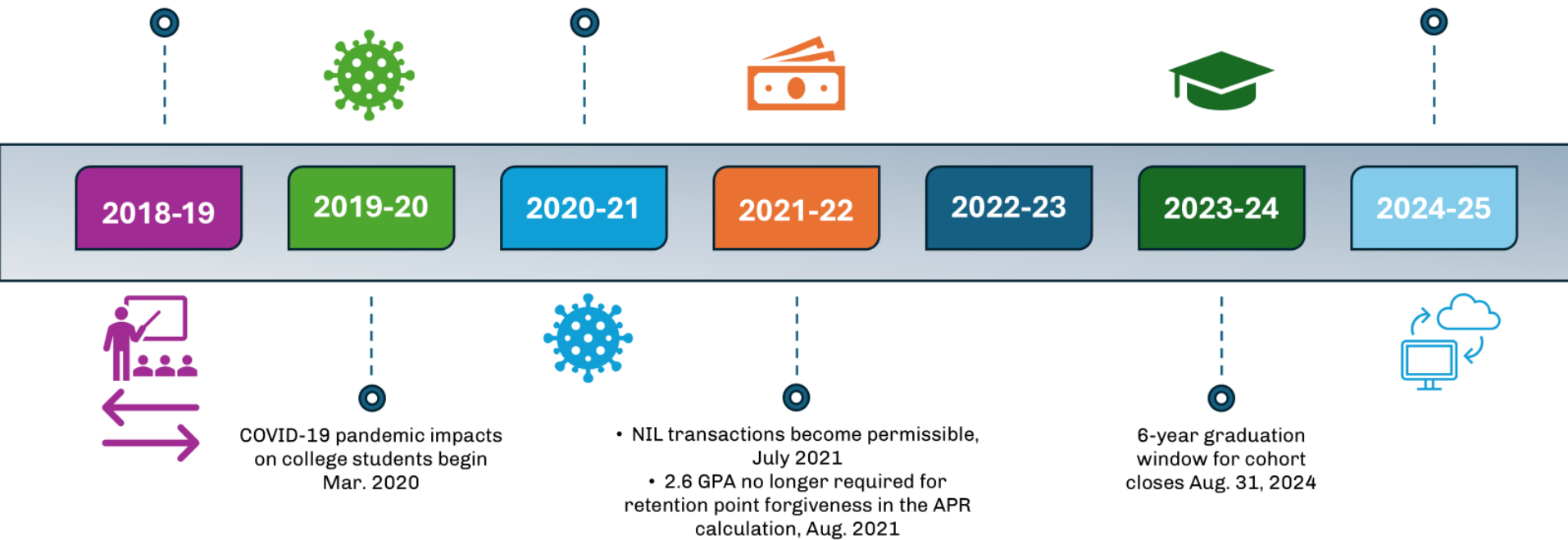
Graduation Rates Timeline for the Most Recent Cohort to Enter the Calculation

(November 2025 Report)

- Cohort enters college summer / fall 2018
 - Transfer Portal launches, Oct. 15, 2018

- COVID-19 continues to impact course delivery, athletics, NCAA eligibility, etc.
 - APR penalties paused
- One-time transfer exception becomes available in all DI sports, Apr. 2021

Graduation outcome data submitted to federal government (Feb. 2025) and NCAA (June 2025)



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2025 Four-Cohort Division I Graduation Rates

(Aggregate six-year graduation rates for 2015-2018 entering cohorts)

	Student-Athletes		Student Body
	GSR	Federal Rate	Federal Rate
DI Overall	90% +0	68% +0	70% +0
DI Men	86% +0	61% -1	67% +0
DI Women	95% +0	74% +0	72% +0

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 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025).

Summary

- The students in the most-recently added cohort (2018 entry) would typically have been in the second semester of their sophomore 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 90%.
 - Black student-athletes — 56% to 81%.
 - Hispanic/Latinx student-athletes — 64% to 89%.
 - Black FBS football student-athletes — 54% to 80%.
 - Black men's basketball student-athletes — 46% to 81%.



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 and Black women student-athletes have an aggregate federal graduation rate that is 7 and 9 percentage points higher than observed among the Black men and Black women student body, respectively. Likewise, Hispanic/Latinx women student-athletes outperform their student body peers by 4 percentage points.
- While Division I has seen an increase in transfer behavior, which negatively impacts the federal graduation rate, the four-cohort federal graduation rates for several subgroups remains higher for student-athletes than the student body.



Number of Division I Student-Athlete Graduates

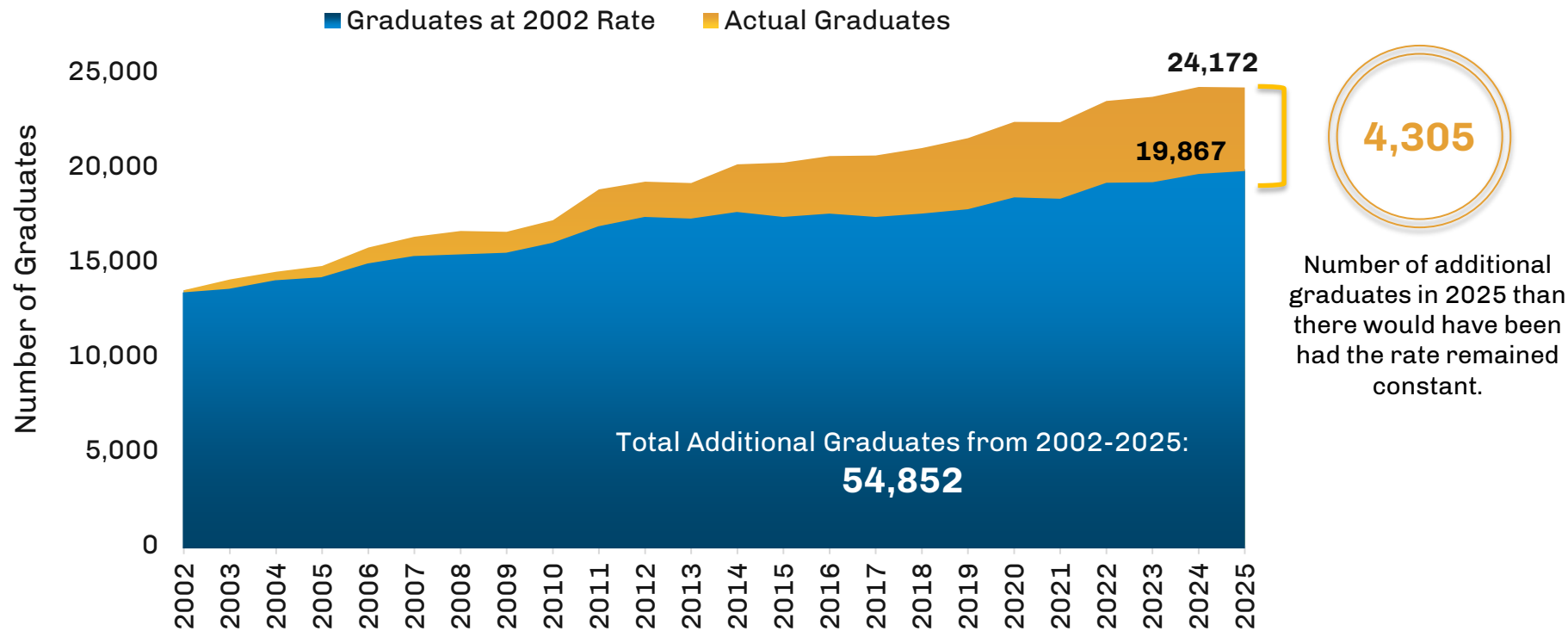
(GSR numerator for the cohort added in that reporting year)

Reporting Year	# Grads
2002	13,474
2005	14,755
2010	17,166
2015	20,210
2020	22,357
2025	24,172



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



Four-Cohort Graduation Success Rates (GSR)



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2025 Four-Cohort Division I Graduation Success Rate

(Aggregate six-year graduation rates for 2015-2018 entering cohorts)

Student-Athlete Group	GSR
Overall	90% +0
Black	81% +0
Hispanic/Latinx	89% +0
White	94% +0
Black Men	78% +1
Hispanic/Latinx Men	85% +1
White Men	92% +1
Black Women	89% +0
Hispanic/Latinx Women	93% +0
White Women	97% +0



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2025 Four-Cohort GSR for Division I Men's Sports

(Aggregate six-year graduation rates for 2015-2018 entering cohorts)

SPORT	GSR
Baseball	90%
Basketball	85%
Cross Country/Track	84%
Fencing	92%
Football (FBS)	84%
Football (FCS)	79%
Golf	93%
Gymnastics	96%
Ice Hockey	93%
Lacrosse	93%
Rifle	94%
Skiing	93%
Soccer	89%
Swimming	92%
Tennis	94%
Volleyball	93%
Water Polo	91%
Wrestling	87%



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2025 Four-Cohort GSR for Division I Women's Sports

(Aggregate six-year graduation rates for 2015-2018 entering cohorts)

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



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2025 Four-Cohort GSR – FBS Football and Basketball

(Aggregate six-year graduation rates for 2015-2018 entering cohorts)

Student-Athlete Group	GSR
Football (FBS)	84% +1
Black Football (FBS)	81% +1
White Football (FBS)	93% +0
Men's Basketball	85% +0
Black Men's Basketball	82% +0
White Men's Basketball	93% +0
Women's Basketball	92% -1
Black Women's Basketball	89% -1
White Women's Basketball	97% +0



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Trends in Single-Cohort Graduation Success Rates (GSR)



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Division I Graduation Success Rate Trends

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

Student-Athlete Group	2002 GSR	2025 GSR
Overall	74%	90%
Black	56%	81%
Hispanic/Latinx	64%	89%
White	81%	94%
Black Men	51%	77%
Hispanic/Latinx Men	56%	85%
White Men	76%	91%
Black Women	71%	88%
Hispanic/Latinx Women	79%	93%
White Women	88%	96%



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GSR Trends for Division I Men's Sports

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

SPORT	2002 GSR	2025 GSR
Baseball	66%	89%
Basketball	56%	83%
Cross Country/Track	72%	84%
Football (FBS)	63%	83%
Football (FCS)	62%	80%
Golf	77%	93%
Ice Hockey	78%	92%
Lacrosse	91%	95%
Soccer	75%	89%
Swimming	81%	91%
Tennis	85%	94%
Wrestling	61%	87%

Note: Only those sports with more than 150 Division I graduates in 2025 are shown.



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GSR Trends for Division I Women's Sports

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

SPORT	2002 GSR	2025 GSR
Basketball	80%	90%
Cross Country/Track	82%	91%
Field Hockey	93%	96%
Golf	88%	97%
Gymnastics	93%	98%
Lacrosse	94%	98%
Rowing	90%	95%
Soccer	86%	95%
Softball	82%	93%
Swimming	91%	96%
Tennis	86%	96%
Volleyball	83%	94%

Note: Only those sports with more than 150 Division I graduates in 2025 are shown.



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Division I GSR Trends in FBS Football and Basketball

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

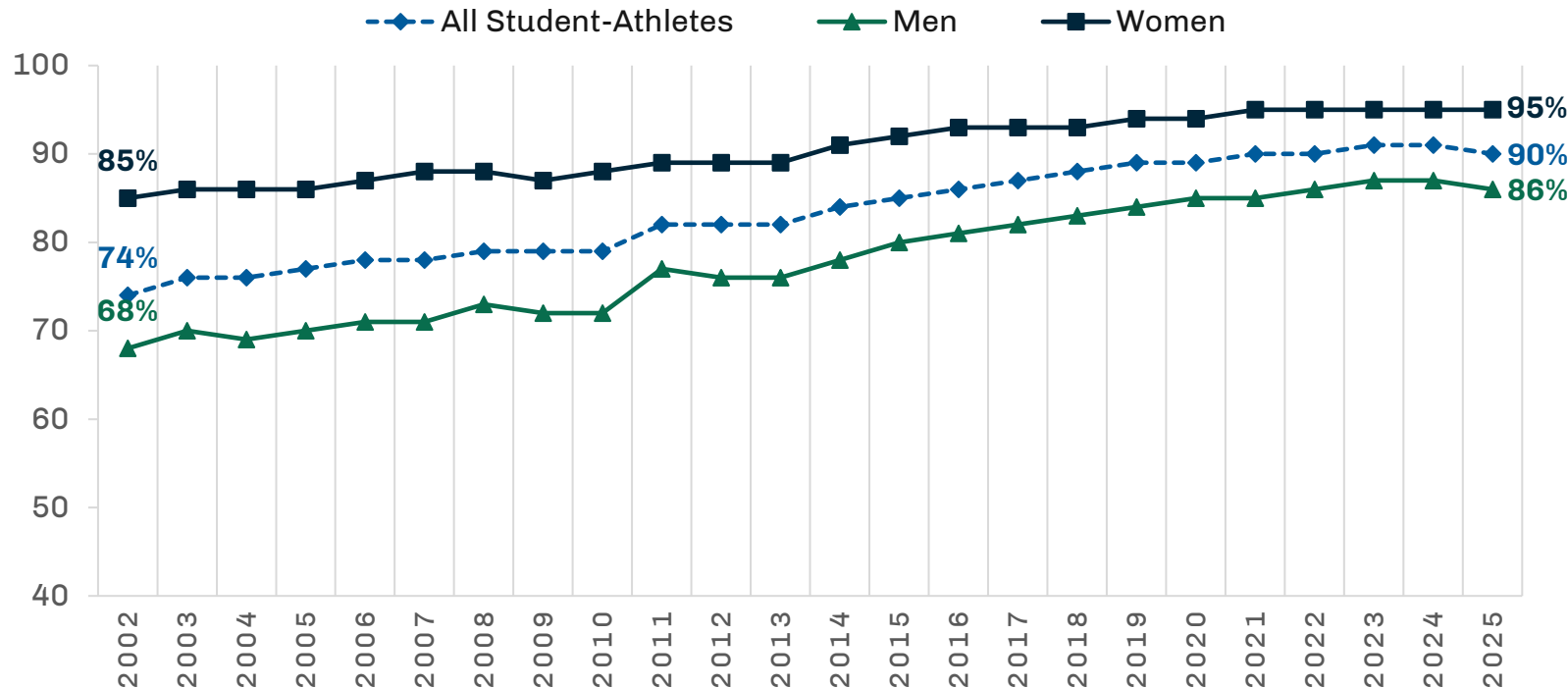
Student-Athlete Group	2002 GSR	2025 GSR
Football (FBS)	63%	83%
Black Football (FBS)	54%	80%
White Football (FBS)	76%	92%
Men's Basketball	56%	83%
Black Men's Basketball	46%	81%
White Men's Basketball	76%	92%
Women's Basketball	80%	90%
Black Women's Basketball	70%	85%
White Women's Basketball	87%	96%



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

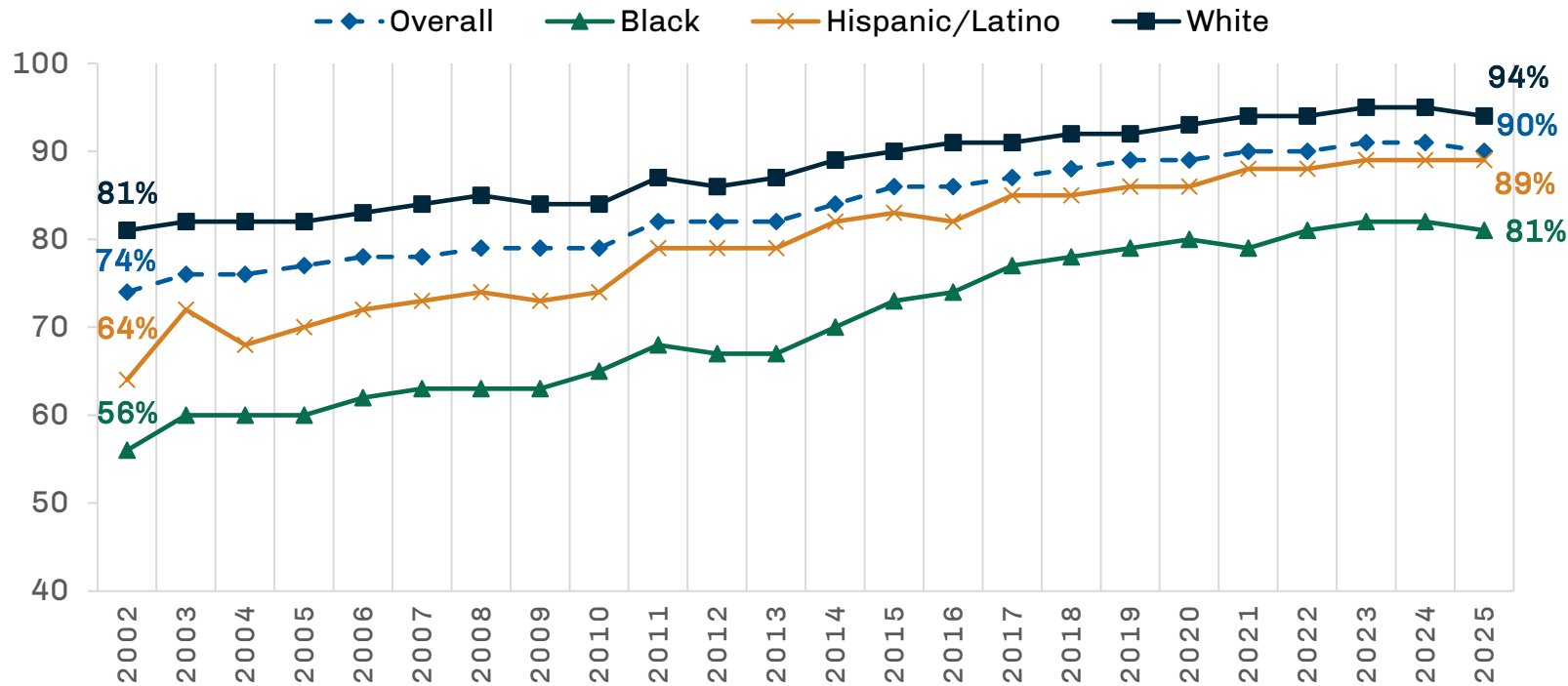
(Single-cohort six-year graduation rates)



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

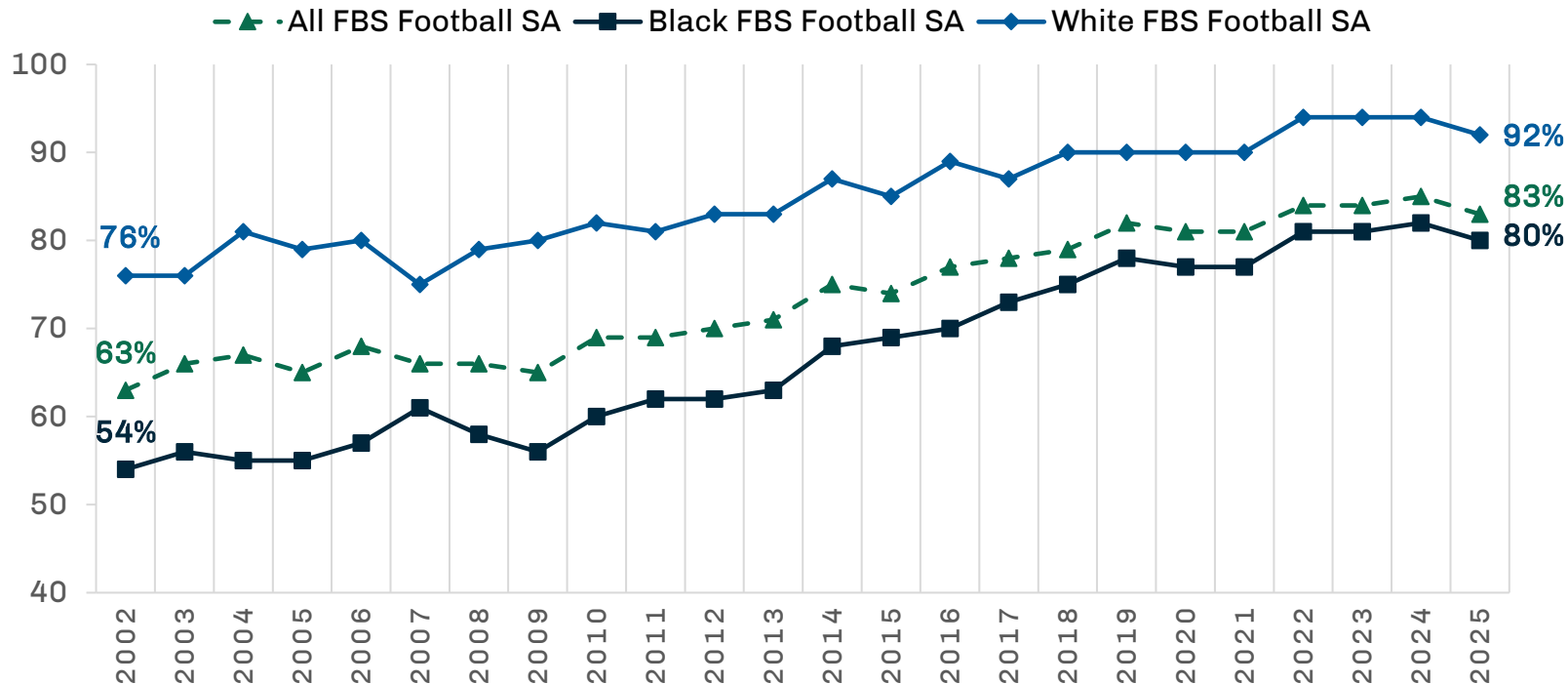
(Single-cohort six-year graduation rates by race/ethnicity)



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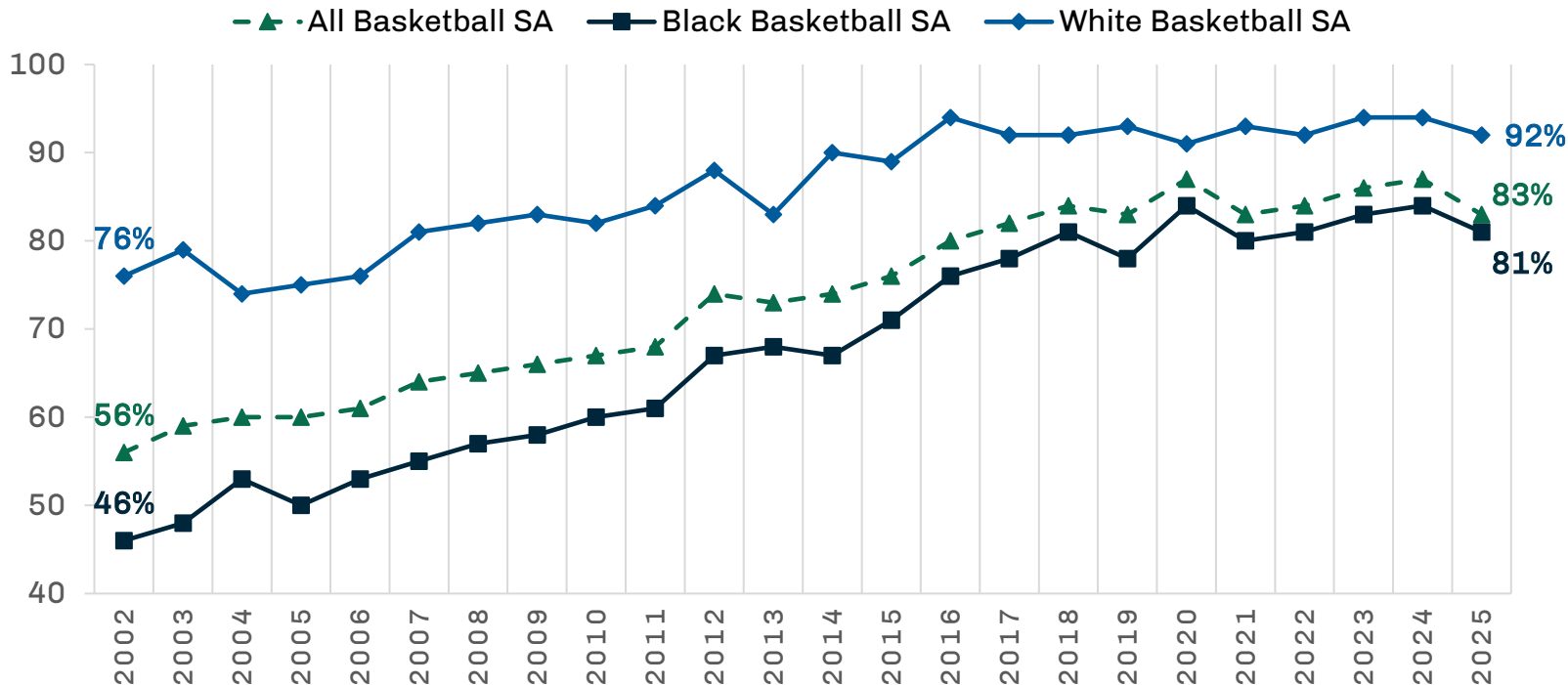
Graduation Success Rate (GSR) Trends of FBS Football Players

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



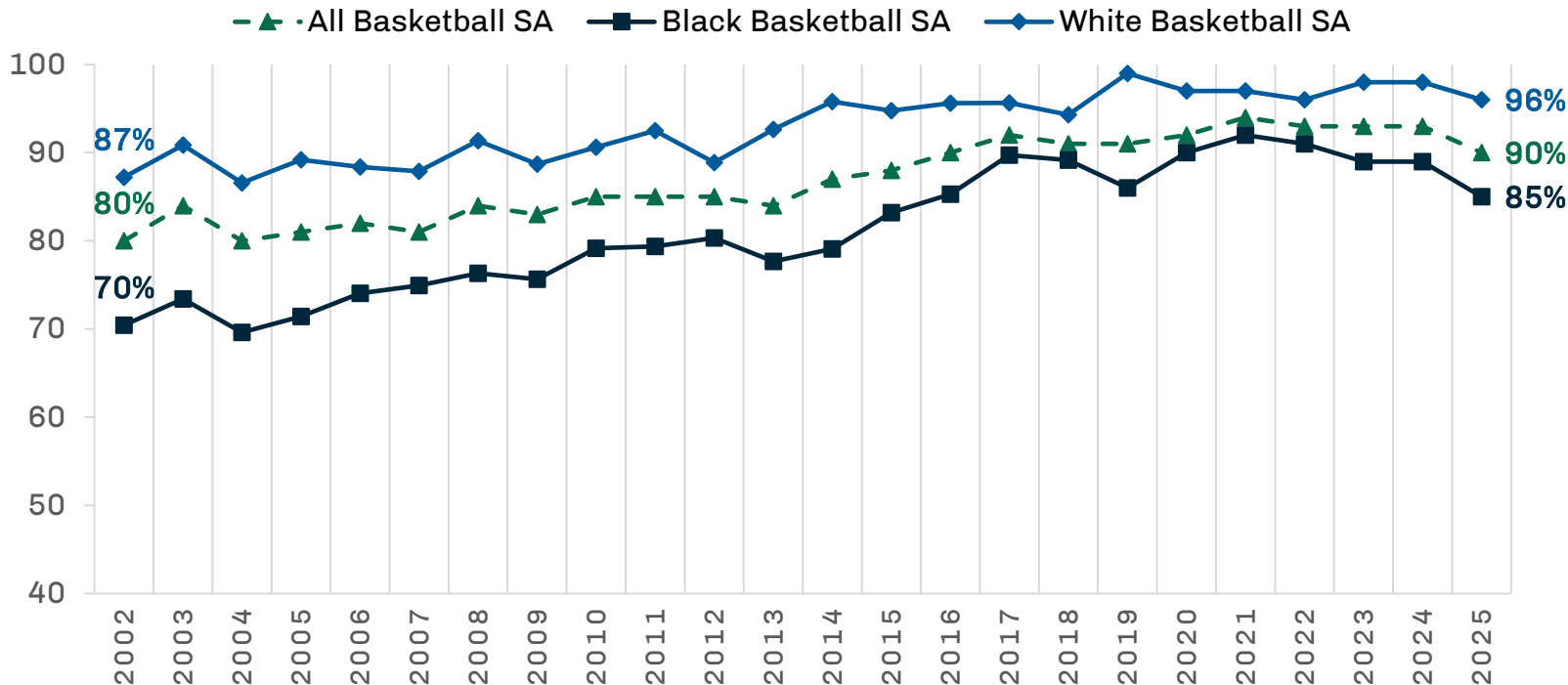
Graduation Success Rate (GSR) Trends of Division I Men's Basketball Players

(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)



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Federal Graduation Rates



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2025 Comparison of Four-Cohort Federal Graduation Rates (FGR) of Division I Student-Athletes with Student Body

(Aggregate six-year FGR for 2015-2018 entering cohorts)

Population Group	Student-Athlete Federal Rate	Student Body Federal Rate
Overall	68%	70%
Men	61%	67%
Women	74%	72%
Black	57%	52%
Hispanic/Latino	65%	64%
White	73%	73%
Black Men	53%	46%
Hispanic/Latino Men	58%	60%
White Men	68%	70%
Black Women	65%	56%
Hispanic/Latino Women	71%	67%
White Women	77%	75%

Division I Federal Graduation Rate (FGR) Trends

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

Student-Athlete Group	1991 Federal Rate	2025 Federal Rate
Overall	52%	65%
Black	35%	53%
Hispanic/Latino	43%	64%
White	59%	72%
Black Men	33%	48%
Hispanic/Latino Men	40%	55%
White Men	55%	66%
Black Women	45%	62%
Hispanic/Latino Women	48%	71%
White Women	66%	76%



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Division I Federal Graduation Rate (FGR) Trends in FBS Football and Basketball

(Differences in single-cohort six-year Federal Graduation Rates since first FGR Report)

Student-Athlete Group	1991 Federal Rate	2025 Federal Rate
Football (FBS)	47%	57%
Black Football (FBS)	35%	52%
White Football (FBS)	56%	74%
Men's Basketball	38%	34%
Black Men's Basketball	29%	29%
White Men's Basketball	53%	43%
Women's Basketball	57%	55%
Black Women's Basketball	42%	49%
White Women's Basketball	66%	65%



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Definitions and Methods



Methods

- Detailed information on graduation reporting requirements and graduation rate calculations, as well as links to school reports and an interactive data dashboard, can be found on the NCAA research website (graduation rates tab) or at 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 2022-2025 refer to the reporting years of the cohorts that entered college in 2015-2018. In the 2025 reporting year, the 2018-19 entering cohort was added; in the 2024 reporting year, the 2017-18 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 data 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 GSR metric was developed by NCAA presidents.
- The calculation is mandated for Division I 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 student-athletes 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 academically 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

(2022-2025 Reporting Cohorts)

	Federal Rate	GSR
Enrolled (Under Federal Definition)	98,926	98,926
Enrolled as First-Year in January	0	4,613
Two-Year College Transfers	0	11,464
Four-Year College Transfers	0	11,856
Nonscholarship Athletes (Only at Schools Not Offering Aid)	0	11,845
Total Enrolled	98,926	138,704 (+40%)
Allowable Exclusions (Death, Military, Church Mission, etc.)	190	262
Left Eligible	0	30,436
Participants on Teams No Longer Sponsored by School	0	1,747
Total Denominator	98,736	106,259 (+8%)



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