

## TRENDS IN GRADUATE EDUCATION FOR UNCG BACCALAUREATE DEGREE HOLDERS

Mark A. Davenport, PhD

### SUMMARY

The National Student Clearinghouse (NSC, or, the Clearinghouse) has been the primary repository of post-secondary academic activity since 1993 (National Student Clearinghouse, 2023). UNCG has been providing data to the NSC for many years, going back to at least 2000. A common use of the NSC data is for an institution to examine what the Clearinghouse records have for any student's subsequent enrollment after they leave that institution. We pulled this 'subsequent enrollment' data for a 10-year period to see how many of our bachelors' graduates were enrolled in or graduated from graduate degree programs either here at UNCG or at another institution.

### DATA

We pulled the cohort of baccalaureate degree holders from the 2006-07 academic year to 2015-16 from our student data system, one degree per student, resulting in a file of 27,280 students. This cohort was submitted to the NSC and the return data was matched to the original cohort data.

### METHODOLOGY

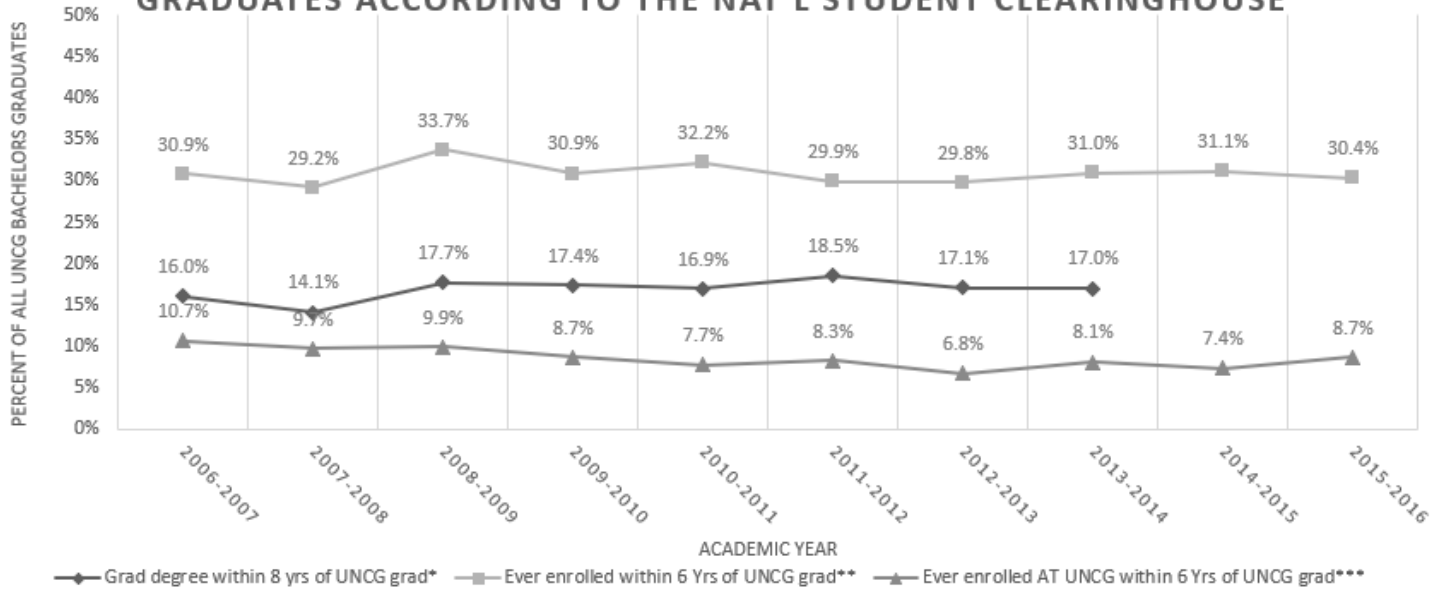
We used the subsequent enrollment detail report data from the NSC to create Table 1. To assess enrollment in any master's or doctoral/first-professional program, we used the detail file data showing the earliest term that a student was enrolled in what would be their first reported graduate program. We were only interested in degrees, so certificates and specialist credentials were excluded. We then counted the time between the students' baccalaureate graduation and their first term in graduate school. This became the 'time-to-enrollment' indicator. For the 'time-to-graduation' indicator, we used the graduation date for the graduate degree provided by the NSC.

### RESULTS

Table 1 shows that, on average, 8.6% of UNCG baccalaureates enter UNCG's Graduate School as master's or doctorate degree-seekers within six years of graduating with a bachelor's degree; with the high rate of 10.7% for the 2006-07 graduating cohort and a low of 6.8% for the 2012-13 cohort. Based on Clearinghouse data, about 31% of UNCG bachelors' graduates enrolled in a graduate degree program somewhere in the US within six years of graduating; the high rate being 33.7% for the 2008-09 cohort and a low of 29.2% for the 2007-08 cohort. This trend is remarkably flat given the ten-year span of the data.

As for the cohort members that actually received graduate degrees from any US institution, the average graduation rate within eight-years of their bachelors' graduation was roughly 16.6%; the low being 14.1% for the 2007-08 cohort and a high of 18.5% for the 2011-12 cohort. Again, this rate was remarkably flat given the time period we studied.

**TABLE 1: CONTINUED ACADEMIC ACTIVITY OF UNCG BACHELORS GRADUATES ACCORDING TO THE NAT'L STUDENT CLEARINGHOUSE**



Includes only degrees. Certificates and Specialist credentials are not included. However, post-docs are included in case the Clearinghouse missed the terminal degree.

\*NSC indicates that the student COMPLETED a master's or doctorate/1<sup>st</sup> professional/post-doc degree program within 8 years of graduating from UNCG with a bachelor's degree. The last bachelor's cohort for which this is possible is the 2013-2014 cohort.

\*\*NSC indicates that the student began a graduate degree program within 6 years of graduating from UNCG with a bachelor's degree. The last bachelor's cohort for which this is possible is the 2015-2016 cohort.

## LIMITATIONS

Our experience with NSC data tells us that the data can be less accurate as you go back in time, if, for no other reason, fewer institutions were providing data. We found that counts for UNCG data tended to 'stabilize' around 2006 so we used that as a data floor. Additionally, it appears that the return data provided by the NSC is given as it was reported by the institution. The crosswalk table for mapping degree names to credential type (BA, MA, etc.), as of 2021, contains over 62,000 rows. We found that, in many cases, the crosswalk table either did not code a particular credential correctly as a master's or doctoral-level degree, or it did not code it by level at all. In these cases, we added missing level data or corrected obviously mis-coded credentials within the crosswalk. We will be working to improve this crosswalk for our use in future research.

If you have questions or comments about this brief, please contact: Mark Davenport at [M\\_Davenport@uncg.edu](mailto:M_Davenport@uncg.edu)

## REFERENCES

National Student Clearinghouse (2023) <https://www.studentclearinghouse.org/about/>