



UTAH SYSTEM OF  
HIGHER EDUCATION

# MEMORANDUM

October 21, 2022

## Completion Definition

The Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) Strategic Plan defines priorities and goals for system leadership, access, affordability, completion, workforce alignment, and research. The goals for completion are to increase the timely completion of degrees and awards by 3% in 5 years and underrepresented students by 4% in 5 years.

Completion, with regard to the USHE strategic plan, performance metrics, and other system-related data, reflects graduates. Historically, technical colleges used a different definition of completion, aligning with the definition used by the Council on Occupational Education (COE), the body that accredits technical colleges. This definition is:

A student who has demonstrated the competencies required for a program and has been awarded the appropriate credential (graduate completer) **or** has acquired sufficient competencies through a program to become employed in the field of education pursued or a related field as evidenced by such employment (non-graduate completer).

The COE definition of completion represents graduates and students who did not graduate but became employed in a field related to their program of study. This discrepancy confuses stakeholders and causes discrepancies in data reported.

To alleviate confusion and discrepancies, technical college leaders were asked not to promote COE completion data and instead to use USHE graduation data. In turn, USHE will use the term graduation to clarify the information reported to stakeholders.

### Commissioner's Recommendation

This is an information item only; no action is required.