

Roughly two-thirds of all first-time freshmen in the fall of 2016 arrived at Tennessee's public colleges and universities with ACT scores indicating they had academic deficiencies. Public higher education institutions across Tennessee offer these students extra academic assistance – called learning support – designed to ensure success in entry-level college courses. The more college credit a student earns in the first year of enrollment, the more likely that student is to earn a postsecondary credential. Thus, succeeding with learning support is linked to increasing the number of Tennesseans with a postsecondary credential.

KEY POINTS

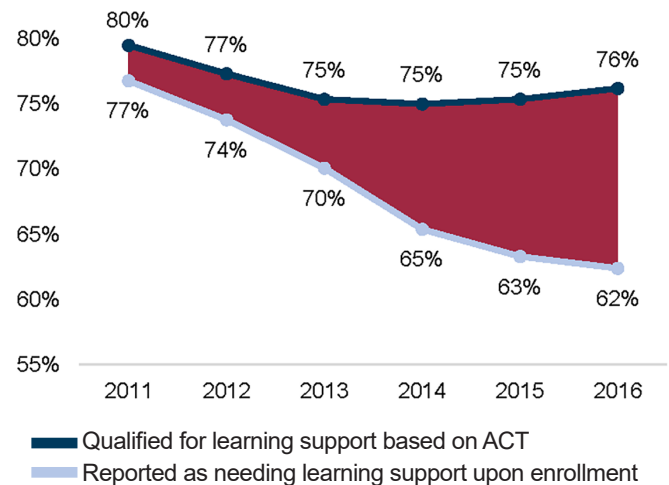
The percent of first-time freshmen whose ACT scores qualified them for learning support decreased from 2010 to 2016, though remained largely the same from 2013 through 2016.

Since 2010 several programs have been implemented to allow students whose ACT scores qualify them for learning support the chance to receive extra academic assistance before enrolling in their first semester of college (e.g., SAILS and summer bridge). **Between 2010 and 2016, the percent of first-time freshmen who required learning support at one of Tennessee's community colleges has decreased by 15 percentage points,** and this decrease is most likely the result of students increasingly taking advantage of SAILS and Summer Bridge programs.

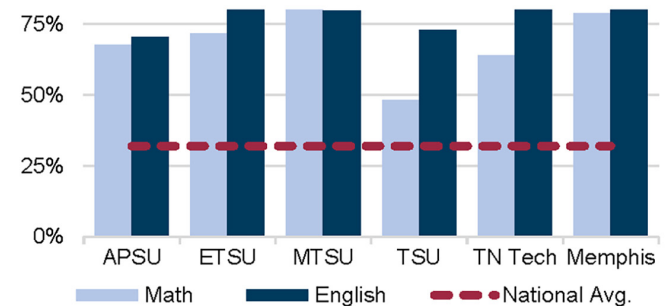
Public higher education institutions have implemented new methods of learning support and have improved student success rates.

The Office of Research and Education Accountability's analysis identified institutions with higher success rates of students completing gateway courses, despite students' similar demographic characteristics. Further analysis of the factors leading to higher success rates and sharing of best practices would continue to improve student success.

Percentage of students who qualify for learning support based on ACT and percent who need learning support upon enrollment at the Community Colleges



Success rates of learning support students in their first college-level courses at locally governed institutions, 2015



View the full report at: www.comptroller.tn.gov/OREA