

# College Outcomes for High School **CLEP** Test Takers and Dual Enrollment (DE) Students

## Key Findings

- High school CLEP® test takers who score 50 or higher and matriculate to a **four-year college** have generally higher retention and graduation rates than a comparable group of DE students. Both CLEP and DE students outperform students without early credit.<sup>1</sup>
- High school CLEP test takers who score 50 or higher and begin at a **two-year college** have higher transfer rates to a four-year college, higher graduation rates, and higher rates of bachelor's degree completion than a comparable group of DE students. Both CLEP and DE students outperform students without early credit.
- Among **first-generation college-going students** and **underrepresented students**, those earning a CLEP score of 50 or higher have considerably higher graduation and retention rates at colleges as well as higher transfer rates from two- to four-year colleges than comparable groups of DE students and students without early credit.

## DATA SOURCES

This study includes approximately 4,500 CLEP students, 4,500 DE students, and 4,500 students without early credit, who took the SAT®, graduated high school in 2006, 2007, or 2008, and enrolled in a postsecondary institution, according to enrollment records from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC).

## METHODOLOGY

To ensure that differences in college outcomes between CLEP, DE, and no-early-credit students were not due to differing academic or demographic characteristics, we created a sample in which each group of students had near identical academic and demographic characteristics.

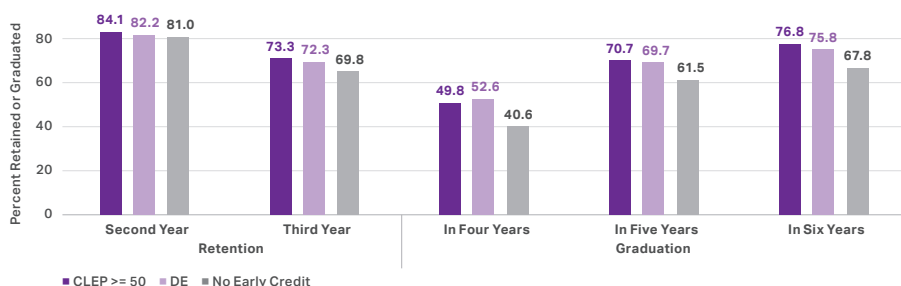
We matched exactly on:

- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Parental Education
- College Sector (2- or 4-year)

and to within 20 points on each SAT section:

- Critical Reading
- Math
- Writing

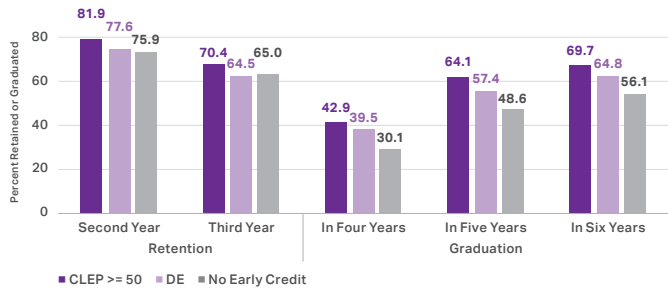
## Figures and Results



**Figure 1: Percent Retained or Graduated at Four-Year Colleges/Universities**

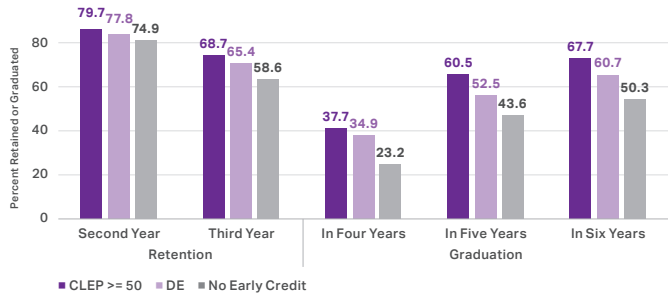
Figure 1 shows the retention and graduation rates for students beginning at a four-year college or university. The CLEP students scoring 50 or higher had the highest retention rates and five- and six-year graduation rates, while DE students had the highest four-year graduation rates.

<sup>1</sup> Early credit is defined as participating in a program that awards college credits for students in high school. Specifically, these students did not take the CLEP or Advanced Placement® (AP) Exams or participate in dual enrollment coursework.



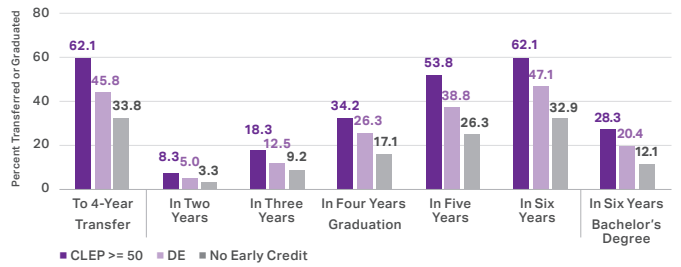
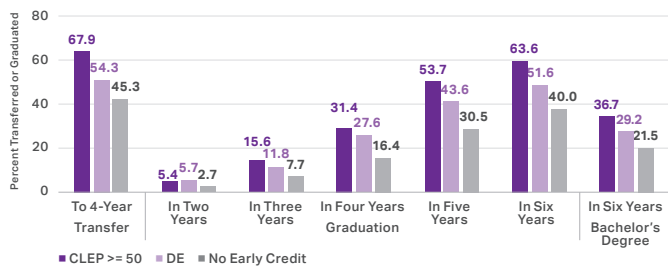
**Figure 2: Percent of First-Generation Students Retained or Graduated at Four-Year Colleges/Universities**

Among first-generation students starting at a four-year institution, CLEP students scoring 50 or higher have the highest retention and graduation rates by a considerable margin. DE students have the second highest retention and graduation rates, while students without early credit had the lowest retention and graduation rates.



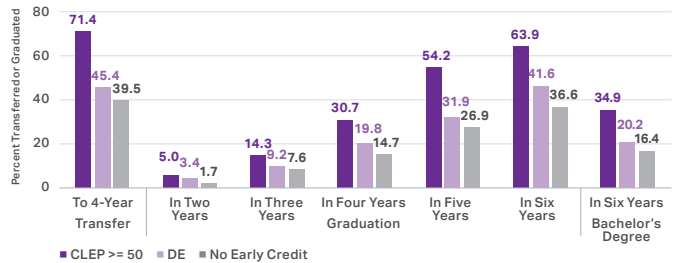
**Figure 3: Percent of Underrepresented Students Retained or Graduated at Four-Year Colleges/Universities**

Among underrepresented students starting at a four-year institution, the CLEP students scoring 50 or higher had the highest retention and graduation rates, followed by DE students and those without early credit. These differences were larger for graduation rates than for retention rates.



**Figure 5: Percent Transferred or Graduated among First-Generation Students at Two-Year Colleges/Universities**

Among first-generation students starting at a two-year institution, CLEP students scoring 50 or higher had the highest rates of transfer to a four-year school, the highest graduation rates, and the highest bachelor's degree completion rates. DE students had the second highest rates, and those without early credit had the lowest rates.



**Figure 6: Percent Transferred or Graduated among Underrepresented Students at Two-Year Colleges/Universities**

Among underrepresented students starting at a two-year institution, CLEP students scoring 50 or higher had the highest rates of transfer to a four-year school, the highest graduation rates, and the highest bachelor's degree completion rates. DE students had the second highest rates, and those without early credit had the lowest rates.

**Figure 4: Percent Transferred or Graduated at Two-Year Colleges/Universities**

Among those starting at a two-year institution, CLEP students had the highest rates of transfer to a four-year school, the highest graduation rates, and the highest rates of bachelor's degree completion, followed by DE students and students without early credit.

**A LINK TO THE REPORT IS COMING SOON!**

Please email [jwyatt@collegeboard.org](mailto:jwyatt@collegeboard.org)

for a copy of the research report.