



Student Achievement Report 2015/2016

Amberton University evaluates success with respect to student achievement consistent with its mission. Evaluation criteria include those items appropriate for the adult learner and consistent with the mission of the University, including course completion, graduation rates, and state licensing examinations, surveys of recent graduates, and longitudinal surveys of graduates.

Amberton University's mission statement describes the University as a specialized institution designed to meet specific educational needs of mature students. Amberton University is committed to the continuous transformation of the educational process in direct response to the needs of the student and the community, when financially and academically feasible. As a part of this process, the University monitors the performance of its adult students during their time at the University and after graduation.

Course Completion

Each session, the Office for Institutional Effectiveness produces a report on grade distribution by course. This report gives a breakdown of grades given for each course taught for the session. As a part of this report, the percentage of withdrawals for the courses is reported. At year's end, a summary report is provided for grades awarded to students enrolled for the academic year. The administration reviews these reports each session and at year's end looking for courses that have a pattern of higher than normal withdrawals.

Adult students often have work and family responsibilities that prevent them from successful course completion. Amberton University faculty works with these students on an individual basis to help them successfully complete the course; however, sometimes the best decision is to withdraw and to re-take the course at another time.

The following chart represents a seven- year history of course completion rates for undergraduate

and graduate students from academic years 2009/2010 through 2015/2016 derived from the annual reports of grade distributions. A course is counted as completed if the student did not drop and earned academic credit. Because of the unique nature of Amberton University and its primary focus on the adult learner, sources for comparative data are insufficient. In determining an acceptable threshold for course completion rates, the University relies on its historical data for trends and benchmarks.

Seven Year History of Course Completion Rates														
	2009/10		2010/11		2011/12		2012/13		2013/14		2014/15		2015/16	
	UG	G												
Completion Rate	87%	92%	87%	91%	86%	90%	85%	89%	85%	90%	85%	90%	83%	89%

The course completion data for the past seven years shows a consistency in rates for undergraduates and graduates. Undergraduates complete courses within a range of 83% to 87% while graduate students complete at a rate of 89% to 92%. It is to be expected that undergraduate students would have a slightly lower completion rate than graduate students because they tend to take more hours per session. In reviewing course completion data, the University seeks to achieve greater than an 80% completion rate for undergraduates and graduates.

Amberton University also monitors course completion by academic division – Business, Human Development, and Interdisciplinary. These three divisions reflect the emphasis of the University’s degree programs on both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Courses in the Business Division include Accounting, Business, Economics, Finance, Management, Management Information Systems, and Marketing. Human Development courses include Counseling, Human Behavior and Development, and Psychology. Interdisciplinary courses include Communication, English, History, Human Resources and Training, Humanities, Math, Religion, Required Graduate Studies (Ethics/Research) and Science.

The following chart reflects course completion by academic division for the past three years. Results are divided further by courses taken at the undergraduate and graduate levels. As in the previous chart, a course is counted as completed if the student did not drop and earned academic credit.

Amberton University Three Year History of Course Completion by Academic Division						
Divisions	2013/14		2014/15		2015/16	
	UG	G	UG	G	UG	G
Business	86%	90%	87%	92%	84%	89%
Human Development	86%	91%	88%	92%	83%	93%
Interdisciplinary	83%	87%	82%	85%	81%	84%

A review of the three-year data by academic division shows that in all categories, the University met its goal of a course completion rate of greater than 80%. In the category of Interdisciplinary studies – Undergraduate students for year 2015/2016, the rate was 81%, which is borderline acceptable. A further review of the data for this period showed that a significant number of the course withdrawals came from computational courses (freshman level mathematics) and writing intensive courses offered online. The Vice President for Academic Services is addressing the issue of keeping students engaged throughout the session in order to decrease the number of withdrawals.

Graduation Rates

Amberton University monitors student achievement through graduation rates. The most recent data shows that the average graduation rate for new students entering in the academic year 2007/2008 is approximately 46% for graduate and undergraduate students combined based on a completion timeframe of eight years and allowing for the fact that the students were enrolled part-time. Disaggregated by academic level, the data shows a graduation rate of 47% for graduates and a 43% graduation rate for undergraduates. The chart presented below shows graduation rates for the periods of four, six, and eight years. The graduation rates are affected by the number of hours accepted in transfer, especially for the undergraduate student, and the length of the program. For this calculation, the University's graduate programs ranged from a minimum of 36 hours to a maximum of 48 hours depending on degree program requirements.

Amberton University Graduation Rates Undergraduates and Graduates			
	Four Years	Six Years	Eight Years
Undergraduates	38%	41%	43%
Graduates	44%	46%	47%

Obtaining suitable comparative data for the non-traditional, part-time adult student is challenging as the information supplied through IPEDS and the Department of Education is for first-time, full-time students seeking bachelor's degrees. The University was able to obtain some comparative data through Complete College America for the state of Texas but only for bachelor's degree seeking students. Established in 2009, Complete College America is a national nonprofit with a single mission: to work with states to increase significantly the number of Americans with quality career certificates or college degrees and to close attainment gaps for traditionally underrepresented populations.

According to the data supplied by the State of Texas to Complete College America, new students entering in 2002, attending part-time and in the age group of 25 and over had a graduation rate of 18.3% within eight years. Amberton University's graduation rate for new students entering in 2002, attending part-time and seeking a bachelor's degree was 37% within eight years, roughly twice the rate reported by public universities in the State of Texas. Comparing the graduation rates for 2002 with the ones reported above for 2007 shows an improvement of 6% for Amberton undergraduate students.

A study referenced in an article published in 2014 by Inside Higher Ed was based on National Student Clearinghouse Research Center data for non-first time students who returned to college between 2005 and 2008. The study showed a completion rate of 33.7% for students re-entering public four-year and community colleges. The study also provided completion rates by state with Texas showing completion rates between 37% and 40% for non-first time students.

State Licensing Exams

Amberton University uses state licensing examinations as a measure of student achievement for two of the University's graduate programs – the Master of Arts in Professional Counseling and the Master of Arts in School Counseling.

National Counselor Examination for Licensure and Certification (NCE)

Amberton University's Master of Arts in Professional Counseling prepares students for the National Counselor Examination for Licensure and Certification (NCE). The NCE is used for two purposes: national counselor certification and state counselor licensure. The State of Texas uses the NCE for state credentialing for Licensed Professional Counselors. The purpose of the NCE is to assess knowledge, skills, and abilities viewed as important for providing effective counseling services. The NCE is designed to be general in nature. The 200 question, multiple-choice exam is designed to assess cognitive knowledge, which should be known by all counselors regardless of their individual professional specialties.

The Amberton University NCE pass rates for the dates noted below (10/18/2014, 04/18/15, and 10/17/2015) are provided in the following table. The University had an overall 88% pass rate for this period. Of the 59 students sitting for the exam, 52 students passed and 7 failed.

NCE Pass Rate for October 2014 through October 2015				
Exam Date	# Tested	# Passed	# Failed	Pass Rate %
October 18, 2014	26	24	2	92%
April 18, 2015	15	13	2	87%
October 17, 2015	18	15	3	83%
Total	59	52	7	88%

It should be noted that the majority of the students who sat for the NCE at these testing dates were currently enrolled Amberton students who were completing the last six hours of practicum required for the Master of Arts in Professional Counseling. Amberton University is an approved site for NCE testing and makes this opportunity available to its students who wish to sit for the exam prior to graduation. The NCE exam is a fully proctored exam given according to specific instructions provided by the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC). The exams are sent to NBCC for grading and scoring.

Texas Examinations of Educator Standards (TEXES Exam)

Amberton University's Master of Arts in School Counseling provides the academic credential necessary for certification as a School Counselor in the State of Texas. The program also prepares the

student to perform successfully on the state credentialing exam as specified by the State Board of Educator Certification. Students in the Master of Arts in School Counseling program are required to pass the TExES Exam for School Counseling Professionals before advancing to the final course in the program, Practicum in School Counseling. The TExES tests are criterion-referenced examinations designed to measure a candidate's knowledge in relation to an established criterion rather than to the performance of other candidates. All of the tests in the TExES program contain multiple-choice questions. Passing of the TExES exam for School Counseling Professionals is required before a candidate can be certified as a School Counselor in the State of Texas.

Amberton University students consistently perform well on the TExES exam. The following chart shows a three -year history of pass rates for Amberton students.

Amberton University History of Pass Rates for TExES Exam 2013-2016			
Academic Year	Total Takers	Total Passed	Percentage Passed
2013-2014	31	30	97%
2014-2015	32	28	88%
2015-2016	43	42	98%
Total	106	100	94%

Job Placement

Since the majority of Amberton students are employed when they enroll, the University uses other, more relevant measures for student achievement. However, the University does track the percentage of employed students. For the 2015/16 academic year, the University had 2145 unduplicated students. The percentage of employed students was 91%. Of the 274 students listing no employer, 34% were international students who cannot work because of their Visa status (F1) and 4% were retired persons not seeking employment. The remaining 171 students did not indicate their employment status.

Surveys of Recent Graduates

While the University does not use job placement rates, students are surveyed at the time of graduation and asked questions related to job status changes. Students are asked to indicate whether they have encountered a job status change since their enrollment and to what extent their additional education

contributed to a significant salary increase or promotion since enrollment at Amberton. This information, broken down by degree received, is gathered as a part of the University's institutional research. Charts showing results for the past three years reflect somewhat improving economic conditions especially for students newly achieving a bachelor's degree. (Recent Graduates 2013/14, Recent Graduates 2014/15, Recent Graduates 2015/16).

For the year 2013/14, 42.4% of undergraduates reported no job status change compared to 32.8% in 2014/15 and 32.5% in 2015/16. For the same reporting periods, graduate students reported no job status change in the following percentages: 44.1% (2013/14), 53.7% (2014/15), and 48.9% (2015/16).

However, the data does show that a substantial percentage of Amberton graduates during this time period did receive promotions or significant salary increases while they were enrolled and completing their degrees. For undergraduates, approximately 44% to 60% credited their additional education as a reason for their positive job status change. For graduates, the percentage ranged from 35% to 45%.

Longitudinal Survey of Graduates

Amberton University uses longitudinal data on Amberton graduates to document student achievement and success. For the most recent study, data on Amberton graduates were collected and included approximately 5888 graduates from the past fifteen years. Responses were collected by mailed surveys and online survey tools. The primary emphasis was on the amount of success the graduates had achieved in their professional lives following completion of their degrees. The survey respondents were divided into three groups depending on the number of years since graduation. Group 1 included graduates for 2010 – 2015, Group 2 included graduates for 2005-2009, and Group 3 included graduates from 2000 - 2004.

Impact of Amberton Degree

Amberton graduates were polled to determine to what extent completion of their Amberton degree influenced certain aspects of their lives. The influence included items determining if their degree had satisfied the major reason for obtaining a degree, whether they had received recent pay raises or

promotions, and/or helped them personally or professionally. The survey also asked if the graduate had sought further educational attainment. Overall, the responses were positive.

Survey Response of Graduates by Year of Graduation
(Expressed in percent of affirmative agreement)

Graduates indicating earning their Amberton University degree:

	<u>Group 1</u> (2010 – 15 Grads)	<u>Group 2</u> (2005-09 Grads)	<u>Group 3</u> (2000-04 Grads)
Fulfilled their major goal or purpose for seeking a degree:	96%	97%	97%
Received a recent job promotion:	58%	64%	52%
Received a recent salary increase:	85%	84%	79%
Has not contributed to their career or personal life:	4%	3%	3%
Completed further credential(s):	34%	42%	38%
Master's:	23%	34%	20%
Certifications/Licenses:	66%	63%	67%
Professional Degree:	4%	-0-	3%
Doctoral Degree:	16%	17%	20%

Over 96% of all three groups indicated earning a degree from Amberton University fulfilled their major goal or purpose for seeking a degree, with Group2 and Group 3 showing the highest degree of satisfaction. The responses indicating recent job promotions and salary increases were aligned closely among all three groups with the exception of responses for Group 3 – salary increase. The lower percentage may indicate that graduates in this group have been in their positions for a longer time and have advanced as far as they can go in their respective organizations. This group also had a number of respondents who indicated they had retired from employment. It is important to note that 4% or less of the groups felt that their Amberton University degree had no impact on their careers or personal lives. The survey also asked graduates if they had earned any other degrees or certifications, since their time at Amberton. Group 2 had the largest percent with 42% of the graduates indicating they had pursued

advanced degrees or certifications. A breakdown of credentials completed is provided for those graduates affirming completion of additional degrees or licenses.

Graduate Earnings

The survey also tracked responses to current pay scales for the graduates. The highest paid group (\$80,000 and above) is Group 2. The group with the most graduates in the mid-range \$40,000 - \$60,000 is Group 1 with the least amount of years since graduation.

Survey Responses on Graduate Pay Scale By Year of Graduation			
	Group 1 (2010–15 Grads)	Group 2 (2005-09 Grads)	Group 3 (2000-04 Grads)
Graduates earning:			
\$40,000 or less	14%	4%	15%
\$40,001 - \$60,000	28%	19%	18%
\$60,001 - \$80,000	22%	27%	20%
\$80,000-\$100,000	17%	19%	15%
Greater than \$100,000	19%	31%	32%

Mode of Program Delivery

As a part of the longitudinal survey, graduates were asked what method of delivery best described how they completed their degree with Amberton University. 52% stated they completed their degree by taking a combination of distance-learning courses and campus-based courses while 15% attended only courses held on-campus. 32% indicated they had completed their degree completely online.

A study was made of students who completed their courses through these methods of program delivery to see if there were any marked differences in their responses.

Survey Response of Graduates by Method of Program Delivery (Expressed in percent of affirmative agreement)

Graduates indicating earning their Amberton University degree:

	Online Only	Online & Campus	Campus Only
Fulfilled their major goal or purpose for seeking a degree:	96%	98%	97%

Received a recent job promotion:	63%	56%	60%
Received a recent salary increase:	86%	84%	80%
Has not contributed to career or life:	4%	1%	3%
Completed further credentials(s):	55%	37%	43%
Credentials Completed:			
Master's:	23%	22%	31%
Certifications/Licenses:	53%	64%	53%
Professional Degree:	3%	1%	2%
Doctoral Degree:	21%	13%	14%

All three groups showed a high level of satisfaction with the manner in which Amberton degrees fulfilled the major goal or purpose for degree attainment with the Online and Campus group showing the highest level at 98%. There are slight differences in the percentages on job promotions and salary increases with the Online Only group having the highest percentage in both categories. The largest difference came in the area of additional educational pursuits. The Online Only group showed the highest percentage of graduates pursuing additional degrees or certifications after earning degrees from Amberton. Possible reasons for this finding are this particular group is well suited to online learning and these students were able to take advantage of the increasing availability of distance-learning programs. Having achieved success at Amberton, these graduates were confident in pursuing other degrees or certifications elsewhere, most likely online. This group also had the highest percentage of completing doctoral programs.

Conclusion

Amberton University students show a high level of achievement and success evidenced by performance on licensing exams, state certifications, employment, and professional advancement. The University is equally proud that the majority of alumni feel their time at Amberton University was productive and contributed greatly to their career and attainment of personal goals and self-worth. These factors are in keeping with the mission of Amberton University as a specialized institution designed to meet specific educational needs of mature students.