



Building momentum for postsecondary success



**EDUCATION COMMISSION  
OF THE STATES**  
Your education policy team.

# The University System of Georgia: Early Progress

LEARNING FROM  
**THE REFORM**   
from STRONG START TO FINISH

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**August 2020**

## Acknowledgements

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## About Strong Start to Finish

Right now, a first-year student sits in a college classroom being ill-served by remedial math. And if we fail them, they most likely will not earn their degree. There is a persistent trend among students placed in remedial or developmental courses—particularly math and English. They are not completing the courses and, in most cases, should not be taking them in the first place. This should not be their path.

We are a network of like-minded individuals and organizations from the policy, research, and practice spaces who've come together for one reason—to help all students, not just the select few, find success in postsecondary education.

[Strong Start to Finish](#), an initiative of [Education Commission of the States](#), was created to better the chances of low-income students, students of color, and returning adult students to create a fundamental shift in the outcome of their college journey. We have networked higher education leaders, policy entrepreneurs, institutions, and technical assistance providers to drive toward an outcome where all students pass their first credit-bearing English and math courses during the first year of study.

# Introduction

Since 2012, the Governor’s Complete College Georgia (CCG) initiative has provided a consistent statewide plan for increasing opportunity for a high-quality postsecondary credential, especially for historically underrepresented Georgians. As part of this overall plan, the University System of Georgia (USG) has committed to increasing the number of Georgians with quality degrees by 20% between 2012 and 2025. The system has seen some recent success, as degrees conferred have increased over

time. However, there is a recognition that further improvement will require even more efforts to increase the rates of underrepresented students such as students of color, low-income, first-generation, and veteran students. To this end, USG has been expanding a number of existing programs, policies, and innovations, such as corequisite remediation instruction, articulation agreements for credit transfer, new advising practices, credit intensity, and analytics, both descriptive and predictive. Collectively, these efforts have resulted in what is known as the “[Momentum Year](#)” Initiative.

Timeline of Reform	
2012	Complete College Georgia (CCG) Initiative
2017	Launch of USG Momentum Year Initiative
2018	Launch of USG-Strong Start to Finish
2018	First Momentum Year Summit
2019	Expansion to Momentum Year Approach

## The Momentum Year Initiative

The USG Momentum Year initiative comprises a combination of strategies to support students in their first year of college, through an evidence-based model that focuses on specific steps students can take to move forward on their paths toward completion: making an intentional choice in an academic area of interest; beginning with an academic mindset; and following clearly sequenced program maps, such as specific math pathways. These strategies are supported by the concept of academic focus areas, which groups programs together so that students get more exposure to majors and are able to refine their academic interests.

The USG Momentum Year work first began in summer 2017 with strong support from the USG Chancellor’s Office, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and other units. In practice, the Momentum Year strategies are being implemented through a “networked integration” of institutions—in other words, integrating USG institutions through a number of activities and communication mechanisms and including stakeholders from a range of levels and experiences. In February 2018, the first Momentum Year Summit brought together cabinet-level leadership teams from all institutions, along with national thought leaders, where

they reviewed data and participated in discussions about opportunities for change. The teams agreed on the core principles of purposeful choice, productive academic mindset, clearly sequenced program maps, academic focus areas, and credit hour accumulation. Participants left the Summit with an important task: developing 18-month implementation plans within the next 30 days. Since then, campus teams have been moving forward with planned activities.

In March 2019, USG officially launched the Momentum Approach, which expands the Momentum Year into a broader paradigm that focuses on student success from first contact through completion. USG-Strong Start to Finish has provided the resources and motivation to transition from the original Momentum Year initiative into the expanded Momentum Approach, which also integrates the Complete College Georgia efforts.

## USG-Strong Start to Finish

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Building on the success of the first Summit and subsequent efforts, the goal for the USG-Strong Start to Finish project has been to expand the Momentum Year initiative systemwide so that all incoming students complete gateway courses in math and English and select an academic focus area in their first year. The project continues to focus on several priority action areas to build upon the work of the first Momentum Summit. Each USG institution creates strategies that help incoming students:

1. Make a purposeful program choice;
2. Attempt as much of the first 30 hours of a clear degree pathway as possible;
3. Enroll in at least three courses within their area of focus;
4. Create a productive academic mindset; and
5. Successfully complete both a freshman English and math class.

Thus, students are being encouraged to develop a productive academic mindset and asked to attempt 30 credit hours in a program pathway, including a minimum of three courses in their chosen academic focus area. The efforts also include intentional “onboarding” before enrollment through changes in the intake/advising process. Finally, the work includes extra support for students who need it, provided through corequisite instruction. Beyond improving the first-year experience, future years are being designed to include ongoing supports with the goal of continuing momentum toward on-time completion. All 26 institutions in the USG system are engaged in the USG-Strong Start to Finish work, and collectively they serve more than 44,000 first-time students each year.

Participating institutions have committed to a carefully designed set of activities as part of the project, including faculty and staff participation in convenings and trainings, development and implementation of course redesigns and corequisite offerings, expansion of advising structures and program maps, and involvement in analysis of academic mindset research with the goal of developing new interventions.

The institutions are being supported in this work by a number of partners. For example, the USG-Strong Start to Finish project team coordinates campus leaders, Regents Advisory Committees, and a Partner Council that includes representation from all of the partners supporting the project work. For example,

- Complete College America (CCA) assists with implementing project activities, including hosting academies on the topics of advising and corequisite instruction, providing national content experts, and dissemination of project findings;
- The Community College Research Center (CCRC) provides research expertise and data analyses;
- The Charles A. Dana Center (Dana Center) is continuing its ongoing collaboration with USG for implementation of math pathways;
- Motivate Lab continues to partner with USG on Academic Mindset research; and
- The John Gardner Institute is continuing its relationship with USG in developing course redesigns.

The following sections describe the context of reform within the state, the current status of project activities, and some early insights coming out of the work.

## Policy Background

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### K-12 State Policies

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Several state and system policies have an impact on students’ postsecondary experiences in their first year. For example, as a result of a 2010 state law (20-2-327), by 8th grade students in Georgia must develop an individual graduation plan that takes into account academic skills and broad career interests; high school students receive ongoing guidance and advising to help them update their plans and transition into postsecondary education or employment. The plans also consider opportunities for experiential learning and dual enrollment.



# USG Core Curriculum and Placement Policies

USG system policies also have broad impact on students entering postsecondary education. For example, efforts have been made to ensure that the core curriculum is consistent for all USG institutions and credits are fully transferable. System policy requires that degree-seeking students must be assessed for placement in English (reading/writing) and math; [Math and English Placement Indexes](#) are calculated based on high school GPA, SAT or ACT and in some cases a placement test. USG institutions can admit students who fall below the USG college-level placement standards but they must offer Learning Support courses, which are intended to help students who need additional support with college-level work in mathematics or English (reading/writing). Students below college-level placement standards are placed in the Learning Support programs, and each USG institution must provide a program to support the needs of these students. A designated [Learning Support](#) Coordinator ensures that the appropriate courses are available and coordinates faculty and staff training.

## Learning Support Programs

Before 2013, USG institutions used a traditional approach to Learning Support programs, with a sequence of remedial courses before students could move into credit-bearing work. In 2013, however, two task forces (math and English/reading) convened to discuss changes in remediation. These task forces issued recommendations, followed by discussions held throughout the state, which led to [changes in the way remediation instruction was delivered](#).

Beginning in 2015, institutions could use either a “foundations” model—consisting of a one-semester remedial class before transitioning to credit courses—or a corequisite model, where students enroll in credit-bearing classes but also attend supplementary support classes. Since then, the corequisite model gradually increased to about half of remedial instruction, and data demonstrated significant improvements in passing gateway classes. As a result, the decision was made to phase out the foundations model and focus on the corequisite model. As of fall 2018, any student within the 26 USG institutions who

has Learning Support requirements is placed into corequisite instruction.

## Related Initiatives

A number of relevant voluntary guidelines and/or programs have been implemented by USG faculty and campus leaders, including the Guided Pathways to Success initiative, the Dana Center Math Pathways model, and the 15 to Finish initiative.

- [Guided Pathways to Success](#) is an initiative of Complete College America that encourages ways of providing guidance to students to complete degrees efficiently, without accumulating excess credits, by using degree maps, meta-majors, and intrusive advising.
- [Math Pathways](#) is also focused on degree maps and the importance of clear math course sequences for students with different program goals. In July 2013, the USG Task Force on Transforming College Mathematics issued a [report](#) with several recommendations, including alignment of gateway course sequences in math to programs of study and developing year-long math pathways for students who are less prepared. USG now has four [mathematics pathways](#), each defined by the first mathematics courses that students take.
- [15 to Finish](#) is an initiative that encourages students—especially students enrolled in 12-14 hours—to take 15 credits per semester in order to finish degrees “on time.”

As can be seen by these initiatives, USG has developed a number of reform efforts and now needs to ensure that the strategies of the Momentum Year initiative are implemented fully across the system. To support the expansion and refinement of reforms, the project provides resources for communication and dissemination through convenings, faculty professional development and training, consulting expertise, collaborative course redesign, and other activities.

# Priority Action Areas

USG-Strong Start to Finish is providing resources and activities that target changes to various components of students' first-year experiences:

- The initial student intake/advising stage and students' choice of program of study or academic focus area
- Development of program maps and math pathways
- Development of redesigned gateway courses
- Identification of the appropriate corequisite support for those gateway courses
- Research into students' academic mindset to identify interventions that will help students succeed in first-year courses

The project is also using more summits to bring together stakeholders to implement the Momentum Year initiative. These activities are described below.

## Student Advising

A key aspect of the project is to help transform student advising, creating a customizable intake system with pre-enrollment advising that helps students take the appropriate English and math gateway courses and enter a program of study. Each USG institution has committed to designing a new "onboarding" process in which every entering student is encouraged to choose a specific program or focus area.

Academic focus areas have been developed that group programs together to allow students to refine their postsecondary plans and minimize unnecessary credits. For example, students could choose an academic focus area when they first register, then receive a selection of block schedules prepopulated with course timetables relevant to first year of study. These focus areas are designed to translate smoothly into choices of major within their broad area, as the student becomes prepared for the choice.

**"We created a Focus Areas Infographic specific to Savannah State University to help our students navigate the available options for academic study and craft a clear pathway to their career goals with a defined purpose for learning. The Infographic provides faculty, advisors, and students a way to visualize the available majors at the university and how they relate to one another within the context of the various focus areas. This visual context can facilitate the advisement and matriculation process by engaging students in matching their goals, skills, and values to the major that is most meaningful for them."**

*-Dr. Shawn Rosenquist, Savannah State University  
Momentum Year Implementation Team*

**"Gordon State College completely rebuilt our New Student Orientations. By aligning existing initiatives with the Momentum Year work, GSC hopes to leverage its resources and build a structure that supports engagement and success from the time students first set foot on campus for orientation up through the time they walk ...to receive their diplomas. We fully expect to see almost immediate increases in retention, progression, and graduation rates."**

*-Dr. C. Jeffrey Knighton, Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs,  
Gordon State College*

To assist this process, annual statewide Advising Summits are being held on potential changes in advising practices on USG campuses and on how to create a structure that will best enable students to select an area of focus.

- The first summit was held October 2017, with teams of faculty and staff connected with advising leaders to explore how advising practices could connect with Momentum Year objectives. The summit brought together almost 200 people over two days, where institutional teams developed action plans that could lead to new advising interventions.
- A second summit occurred in October 2019 and again brought together faculty, staff, and community partners to focus on first-year experiences and the role of advisors in that early period.
- The Momentum III Summit was held in January 2020 as institutions reviewed their Momentum Year efforts and began applying plans for the years 2-4 Momentum Approach for the full undergraduate experience.

To facilitate the changes in intake and advising practices, the various academic focus areas needed to be identified and tracked, requiring several changes to elements in the systemwide, centralized BANNER Student Information Systems and policies. As of fall 2018, the BANNER data system includes Academic Focus Areas. In addition, each institution provided information on how the option for “undeclared” will be eliminated and how to engage students in selecting academic focus areas. As of fall 2019, undecided had been eliminated as an option at all institutions; all students are now enrolled in a major or in an academic focus area.

## Program Maps and Math Pathways

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Another crucial component of the Momentum Year initiative is the use of program maps that show courses or course sequences aligned with each program of study, which is expected to improve course selection and limit unnecessary credit accumulation. For example, students will be enrolled

in the first math course appropriate for their academic program or focus area, with these courses embedded in program maps.

USG-Strong Start to Finish activities underway now build upon existing math pathways work to determine the appropriate math gateway courses for various future programs of study. For example, in spring 2018, a qualitative survey data about math pathways implementation was collected and analyzed by USG in collaboration with the Charles A. Dana Center. The survey examined the effectiveness of the implementation of math pathways statewide. Focus group responses were gathered during the April 2019 math corequisite meeting, and data continues to be mined to add to the pathways planning process.

As noted, an Advisory Committee on Mathematical Studies was convened in fall 2018 to identify questions regarding the Statistics Pathway and evidence of its success. As a result, math department chairs at USG institutions convened for a workshop in spring 2019 to plan for a statewide gateway statistics course to replace or modify the multiple introductory courses that currently exist. The Advisory Committee met again in October 2019, and a two-day workshop occurred in fall 2019 to support a new Statistics Pathway with a gateway course and corequisite supports. The Advisory Committee continues to inform the ongoing Statistics Pathways implementation.

## Course Redesign

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Supporting the Momentum Year also involves redesign of key courses such as gateway English and math and critical Academic Focus Area courses. To this end, the project builds on previous collaboration with the John Gardner Institute and the Gateways to Completion (G2C) process. The goal of the G2C process is to create institutional plans for improving student learning by creating course redesigns for high enrollment courses with high failure rates. The institutional plans include specific pedagogies as well as embedded support in the courses through corequisite instruction or other methods. A number of USG campuses have been part of the G2C process since 2015, and a second cohort will include all 26 campuses.

**“The Strong Start to Finish grant is enabling important collaborative work across institutions, campus divisions, and disciplines to address Momentum student success. East Georgia State College has benefitted from professional development programs and expert consultations to refine its advisement processes and degree plans, and has been able to improve success rates for basic skills courses through course redesign and enhanced corequisite models.”**

*-Deborah Vess, Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, East Georgia State College*

As part of the USG-Strong Start to Finish project, institutions are required to redesign at least one of their gateway math and English courses, as well as two other critical courses that are on students' program pathways.

- Institutions began collecting baseline data/analytics for the gateway and critical courses in summer 2018, to help target courses for redesign.
- They then created implementation teams and initial action plans. Between fall 2018 and spring 2019, institutions prototyped the redesigned gateway courses.
- Teams are currently in the process of revising these courses based on feedback, as well as deciding on potential redesigns for future years. Prototypes for redesign of critical courses were reviewed in fall 2019, with implementation beginning in spring 2020.

The G2C course redesigns are being aligned with the math pathways work and Corequisite Learning Support models wherever possible to create synergy. For example, new gateway course redesigns would align to specific corequisite support options, while other redesigns would be paired with specific math pathways.

To support the course redesign work, beginning spring 2018, professional development has been provided to faculty and administrators who are involved in G2C through involvement with the annual G2C Community of Practice, Teaching and Learning Academy, Gateway Course Experience Conference, USG Chancellor's Learning Scholars program, as well as other conferences and training opportunities.

## Corequisite Instruction Models

The course redesign efforts are occurring within the context of identifying the most appropriate corequisite models for different student populations and providing faculty training for implementation of the corequisite model. Only a few years ago, corequisite instruction was available at all USG institutions but was reaching only about half of the remedial student population. With the help of research by the Dana Center on corequisite practices and structures, policy changes were made for placement in credit-bearing courses as well as guidelines for implementation of corequisite instruction systemwide. Corequisite Remediation Academies were created to bring together institutional teams from around the state to examine pedagogies, technology, advising, academic support, logistics, and other aspects of corequisite instruction, with dedicated days for English and math. Over two-plus years, there have been significant changes in the progress of corequisite instruction implementation:

- After prototypes were developed in spring 2018, full implementation of corequisite remediation for gateway courses occurred in fall 2018 for all 26 campuses, replacing the previous standalone Learning Support, or foundations, courses (except for two courses maintained by USG).
- In summer 2019 through spring 2020, institutions reported their continuing progress and development of corequisite instruction.
- Current steps include support and enhancement of full implementation on all campuses, including building a Network Improvement Community of corequisite faculty and working with faculty, staff, policy, and other stakeholders to create plans for the future.



**“SSTF support has enabled Georgia Southwestern University ...to engage in a number of initiatives to improve student success. One of the most exciting is the expansion of co-curricular support classes to traditionally difficult core courses. Improving success in these courses will put students on a much stronger track to graduation.”**

*-Dr. J. Kelly McCoy, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, Georgia Southwestern University*

The Charles A. Dana Center will host regular corequisite faculty teaching support meetings, math department chair trainings, and more corequisite academies throughout the project.

## Academic Mindset Research

Another key component of the project is continuing research on the benefits of an “academic mindset.” The goal of this research is to suggest strategies to improve engagement and success in gateway courses and help refine corequisite implementation. USG has committed to implementation of Academic Mindset strategies, in collaboration with the University of Virginia’s [Motivate Lab](#). As part of this process, Academic Mindset surveys are administered to USG freshmen each year. Surveys are followed by analysis of the data and grade outcomes, supplemented with interview data. At annual Academic Mindset Summits, faculty, administrators and staff come together to better understand the findings and develop academic mindset interventions and data metrics. For example, data from the fall 2018 Mindset Survey and focus groups was provided to stakeholders in spring 2019, with ongoing collaboration with Motivate Lab to dive deeper on data points.

Data collection has led to some changes in the process that increased response rates. For the 2017 survey, about 5,000 responses were received, for about 10% of freshmen with uneven participation. For the next survey, changes were made based on feedback from focus groups, students, and faculty, and the survey was administered by the institutions themselves. These changes led to increased participation—about 20,000 responses and approximately 33% of first-time freshmen.

The next steps are to use the initial findings to plan for pedagogy implementation, beginning in fall 2019 onward, using the most appropriate interventions. Early changes to pedagogy appear to be promising, as reported by Savannah State University.

**“We have redesigned our First Year Experience course around the principles of Academic Mindset—Growth, Purpose, and Social Belonging—and Momentum Year. Assignments, activities, and course policies are designed to engage students in successful learning strategies, build a growth mindset, and orient them with expectations for college learning. Early data indicate that this redesigned course is allowing our students to more successfully develop a productive mindset including mapping a clear pathway to their goals with strategies that will lead to success, defining a purpose for their learning, and establishing a sense of belonging in the academic community.”**

*-Dr. Shawn Rosenquist and Ms. Danita Townsend, coordinators of First Year Experience, Savannah State University*

**“USG and SSTF have given me the opportunity to have a voice in the positive change taking place at my university.”**

*-Konnor Sander, freshman, University of North Georgia*

Research will continue to be conducted, along with training, so that faculty, staff and administrators can learn more about the benefits of an academic mindset. Summits will be hosted in the future as new survey data become available, in addition to any results from prototypes of academic mindset interventions.

## Momentum Summits

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As part of the project, the system hosts annual Momentum Summits to plan and implement the existing Momentum Year strategies on each campus. Campus Leadership teams are convened to assist with designing and completing implementation plans to document key decisions, next steps, responsibilities for tasks, and timelines. The teams include presidents, provosts, vice presidents for student affairs, and finance officers. A baseline survey is used to assess the state of current efforts at each campus that are planned or in process of implementation, as well as help identify challenges and technical assistance needs, so that CCA can develop appropriate supports.

- As noted, the first summit in spring 2018 brought together campus leadership teams to develop initial 18-month implementation plans around the Momentum Year initiative.

- A second summit was held in February 2019 with more than 500 attendees, including campus leadership teams and faculty from each institution. In addition to the development of plans for completion of the Momentum Year, teams had the opportunity to begin to think about the full Momentum Approach.
- In June/July 2019, USG institutions updated their Momentum Year plans to cover the full range of student progression as outlined in the new Momentum Approach.
- Momentum Summit III was conducted in January 2020, as institutions reviewed their Momentum Year efforts and began applying plans for the years 2-4 Momentum Approach for the full undergraduate experience.

CCA continues to assist the teams through analysis of implementation plans and identification of institutional needs, and hosts quarterly calls with teams to track progress on plans and coordinate technical assistance.

# Successes, Challenges and Lessons

## Successes to Date

According to the USG Strong Start to Finish project team, the most important factor impacting the work to date is the USG Momentum Year initiative, and now the Momentum Approach, which frames all project activities. The initiative has received strong, ongoing support from the Chancellor's Office, Academic Affairs, Students Affairs, and other offices, making it easier to align implementation efforts. Support from the already-existing Complete College Georgia initiative has strengthened the Momentum initiative. Strategic convening of a series of meetings with a broad range of stakeholders over time laid a foundation that was critical to developing buy-in for the project.

The provision of key data to those initial stakeholders was also crucial in order to demonstrate the need for recognized, evidence-based strategies such as corequisite remediation, math pathways, and [Guided Pathways](#). The large number of teaching faculty and diffused geographic area made it difficult to reach all stakeholders. But getting information on successes to date to instructors of gateway math and English courses was an essential first step, as those instructors are critical to first-year success. Communication of data-driven results was critical to engender buy-in from these instructors. Continued data analysis is also needed to make pedagogical connections because not all faculty understand the need for pathways beyond the first year. Data will be essential to make the case to new stakeholders on an ongoing basis as the Momentum Approach moves past the first year of college.

The new Chancellor's Learning Scholars Program has provided an opportunity for each institution to have a faculty development structure so that more faculty can develop and apply pedagogies that can improve the Momentum process through course redesign, interactive lectures, and other curricular changes. An anticipated outcome will be faculty leadership

through a Faculty Learning Community process, which included 900 participants in the first round of learning communities. The program is in the process of expanding to 1,500 faculty in the coming year.

## Challenges

With success also comes challenges. Student Affairs personnel from USG and the institutions need to be more involved to reach students, especially with the upcoming transition to the Momentum Approach. To address this issue, the USG Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and the Associate Vice Chancellor for Faculty Development are now included in Momentum planning. In general, there has been such rapid change that it has been difficult to find personnel to manage improvements that are being made in a wide range of areas, from advising to teaching and enrollment management. An added challenge is funding from the state, with the USG absorbing budget cuts along with its institutions and other state entities.

Implementation of corequisite courses at scale has resulted in more students enrolling in gateway math and English courses; institutions are increasing the number of sections, but staffing and physical space can be a challenge. This has led to more online course sections to meet the needs of faculty and students. Infrastructure is particularly a problem for smaller institutions, but all institutions have faced some level of difficulty in scaling communications, technology, and other infrastructure. USG has provided some targeted personnel or other resources to assist, but the scale of the project means some lags exist, and financial resources have not matched the "expanded expectations" of institutions. USG is currently attempting to use convenings as a way to employ resources collaboratively and to identify problem areas.

Overall, efforts to change remedial instruction so far have resulted in inconsistent trends, with some institutions seeing positive trends and others negative. To address this, USG is refining pedagogy and practices in corequisite remedial courses to strengthen alignment and improve success in paired collegiate courses. It is also hosting regional meetings with faculty to discuss promising practices and improve alignment. Changes in math pathways have been particularly difficult, given significant numbers of students with dual enrollment. To help this process, USG is working with the Georgia Department of Education to “synchronize” secondary school pathways to the first year of postsecondary education.

Data collection for the student mindset research has also been inconsistent. The first Mindset survey in fall 2017 was conducted at some speed, and this resulted in an unevenly distributed response. To address this issue, Motivate Lab conducted a series of focus groups. The findings, as well as faculty feedback, were used to modify the administration of the 2018 later surveys, and response rates greatly improved.

## Emerging Lessons

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The work to date has suggested a new emphasis on Transition to College as critical to long-term success. The core elements of reform have been stressed from the beginning, but ongoing work with institutions led to a simpler approach—Purpose, Pathways, and Mindset—for the second and following Momentum Summits. USG is currently in the process of refining the core elements based on feedback at the summits as well the Regents Advisory Committees at all 26 institutions. In summary, the new elements consist of the following:

- **Scope of Transition**
- **Orchestrated Guidance**
- **Purposeful Choice**
- **Course Registration**
- **Differentiation**
- **Integrated Supports**

- **Building a Support Team**
- **Beginning with the End in Mind**

These elements will be heavily featured in upcoming USG Advising Academies. Review and editing of the elements will continue until they are fully integrated into policies and procedures.



# Early Outcomes

In spring of 2018, after a competitive selection process, USG was awarded \$2.1 million to implement developmental education reform efforts at scale. USG began implementing reform efforts by the fall semester with the goal to increase the number and proportion

of students completing both college-level (gateway) math and English courses in the student's first year of study. The data provided here serve as a baseline against which the progress of the grant may be made.

Figure 1:

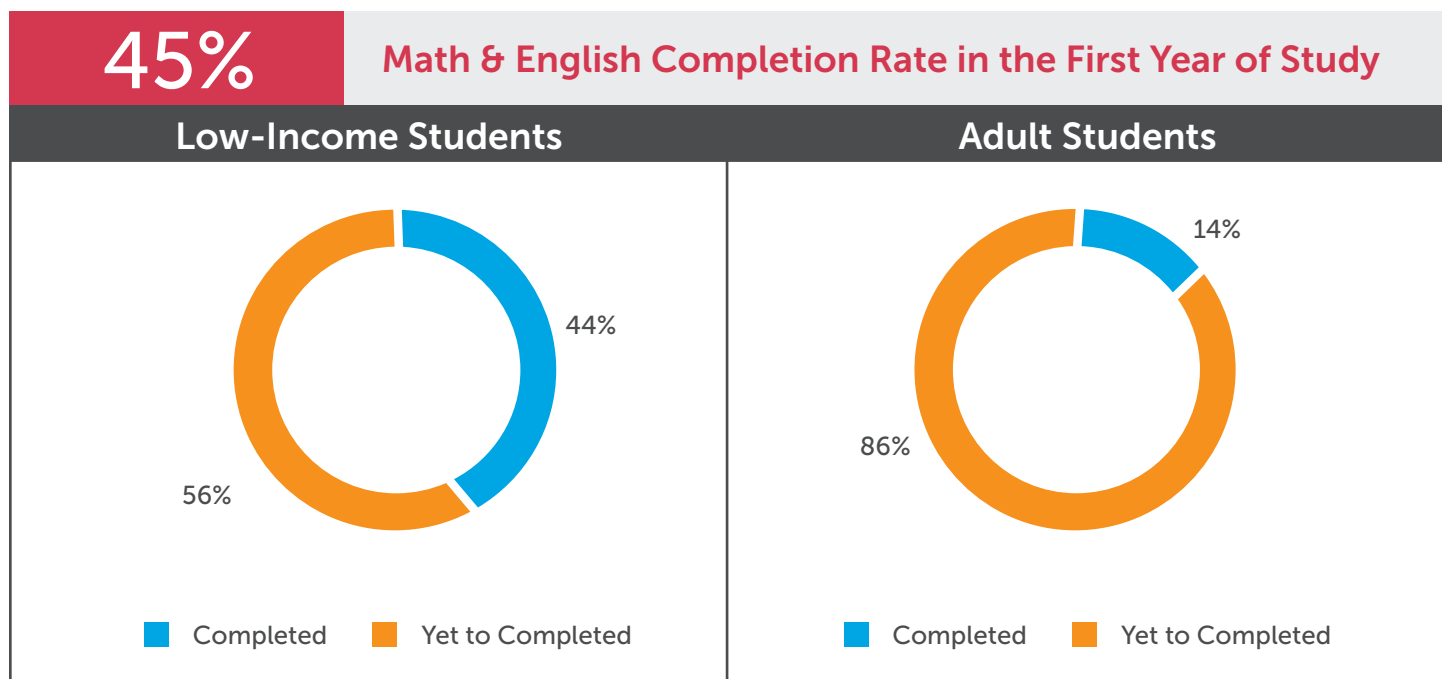


Figure 1. Gateway math & English completion in the first year of study rates overall and for low-income and adult students: Fall 2018 cohort.

For the cohort starting in the fall of 2018, 45% completed a gateway math & English course in their first year of study. Completion rates were 44% for low-income students and 14% for adult students.

Figure 2:



Figure 2. Gateway math & English completion in the first year of study rates by race/ethnicity: Fall 2018 cohort.

When examined by a student's race or ethnicity, completion rates varied for students who identified as American Indian or Alaskan Native (44%); Asian (53%); Black (42%); Hispanic (51%); Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (43%); Unknown, Two or more races or Non-resident Alien (49%); or White (44%).

## Next Steps

To date, the USG Strong Start to Finish project has accomplished a number of activities that build on the five success strategies—from changes to advising structures and corequisite models, to the use of data to guide course redesign and new mindset interventions. The next year of the project will focus on implementation of the expanded Momentum Approach. However, most of the strategies that are currently being used to change students' first-year experience will continue into future project work.

### Advising

With changes to intake systems accomplished—including the ability to track academic focus areas—and changes to advising structures underway, entering students will be able to choose an area of focus and receive guidance on their paths to a degree. The final Advising Summits are also planned for 2020.

### Course Redesign

The process of course redesign will continue to the end of the project. Prototypes for redesigned gateway courses began in spring 2019; the next steps are to collect baseline data/analytics on the course redesigns and conduct self-studies at each institution, and then scale the course redesigns. Institutions have taught redesigned math and English courses starting fall 2019, with ongoing revisions based on lessons learned, which will enable revised courses to be taught by late 2020. In addition, redesign on critical courses will continue in the coming year. As the process rolls out, efforts will continue to align the new courses with the work on math pathways and corequisite remediation models.

## Corequisite Instruction Models

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## Math Pathways

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A qualitative survey of math pathways implementation will be used to gain more information on what is working to date. In addition, committee recommendations and workshops continue to develop the statistics pathway.

## Academic Mindset Research

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Similarly, the mindset research will continue, with annual mindset surveys, data analysis, and stakeholder discussions. When interventions are developed, the results will be analyzed and interventions can be modified to be most effective. For the coming year, a survey will be implemented for 2020 and pedagogy implementation is expected throughout the extent of the project.

Over the past year, project activities have built a foundation for the future implementation of the Momentum Approach, which will contribute to the success of first-year students and beyond. The original SSTF plan called for three Momentum Summits, the keystone events for transformation at scale. But past success has prompted the need for a final Momentum Summit that will be held in early 2021 to bring together what has been learned through the project and advance the goals of the Momentum Year statewide.