



Council of Graduate Schools

Advocacy, Research, and Innovation

Ph. D. Completion and Attrition: Baseline Program Data

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CGS Annual Meeting

December 7, 2007

Ph.D. Completion Project

■ Goals:

- To study doctoral student completion and attrition patterns at a specifically selected set of Research and Project Partners institutions.
- To give deans context to lead conversations about what attrition and completion patterns actually are at their universities, and what practices could be implemented to improve these patterns.
- To empower graduate deans to develop interventions that are tailored to disciplines, departments, and programs at their universities.



Ph.D. Completion Project

- Funding provided by Pfizer Inc and the Ford Foundation
- 29 Research Partner institutions received grants
- 25 Project Partner institutions are currently participating in various project aspects (unfunded)
- Institutions participate in one or both project phases:
 - Phase I (2004-2007)
 - Phase II (2007-2010)



Data Requirements

- Completion and attrition data by program
- Aggregate demographic completion data by broad field
- Factor assessments for each institution and program
- Student Exit Surveys



Categories of Potential Interventions

- Selection/Matching
- Mentoring and Advising
- Financial Support and Structure
- Program Environments
- Research Experiences
- Curricular and Administrative Processes and Procedures



New CGS Publication

**“Ph.D. Completion and Attrition:
*Analysis of Baseline Program Data
from the Ph.D. Completion Project*”**



Number of Programs and Entering Students in Baseline Data

	<u># of Programs</u>	<u># of Entering Students</u>
Engineering	54	9,496
Life Sciences	66	6,925
Math & Physical Sciences	78	15,262
Social Sciences	65	9,671
Humanities	67	7,759
<i>All Fields Total</i>	330	49,113

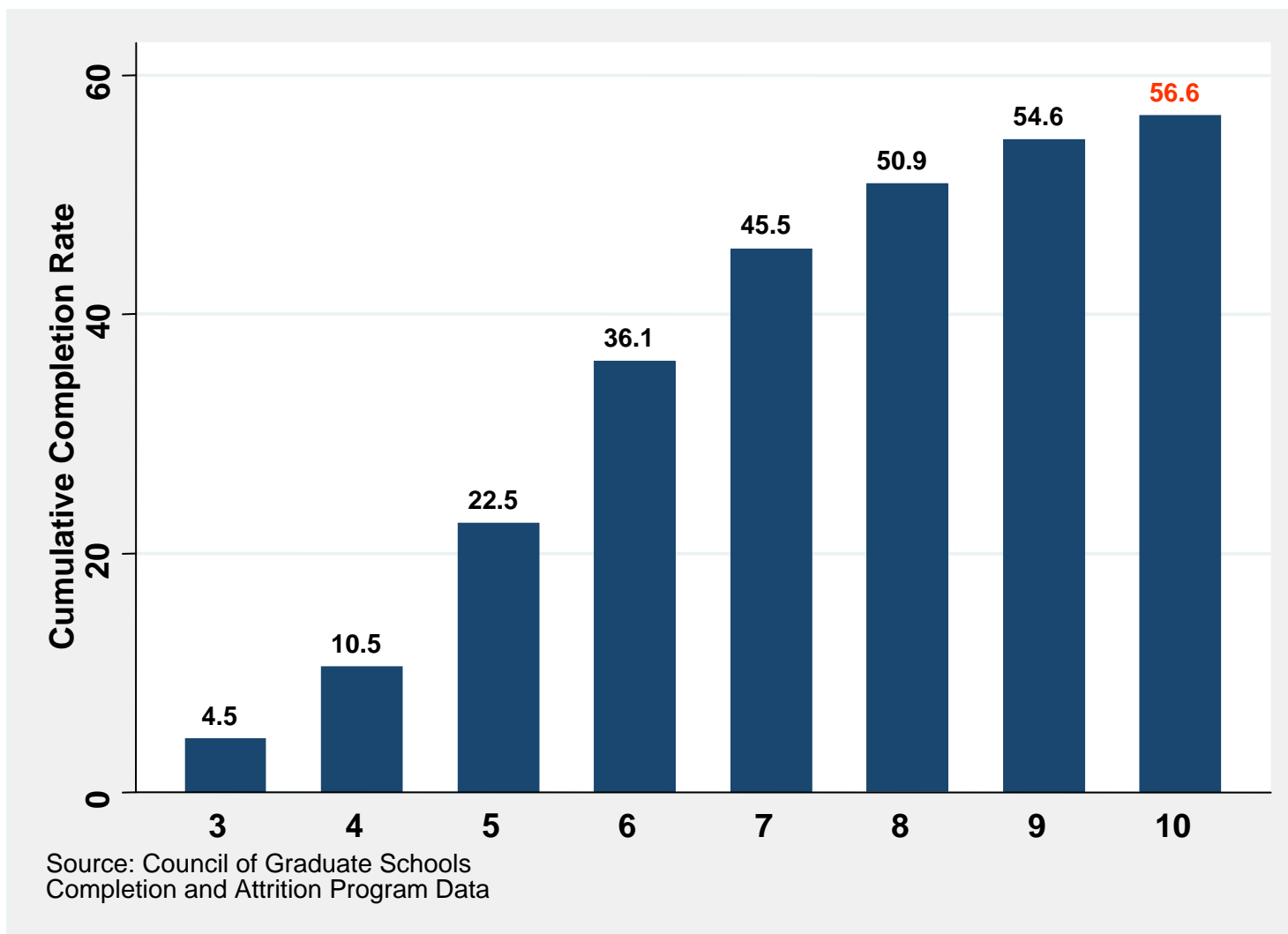


Cohort Definitions for Baseline Data Analysis

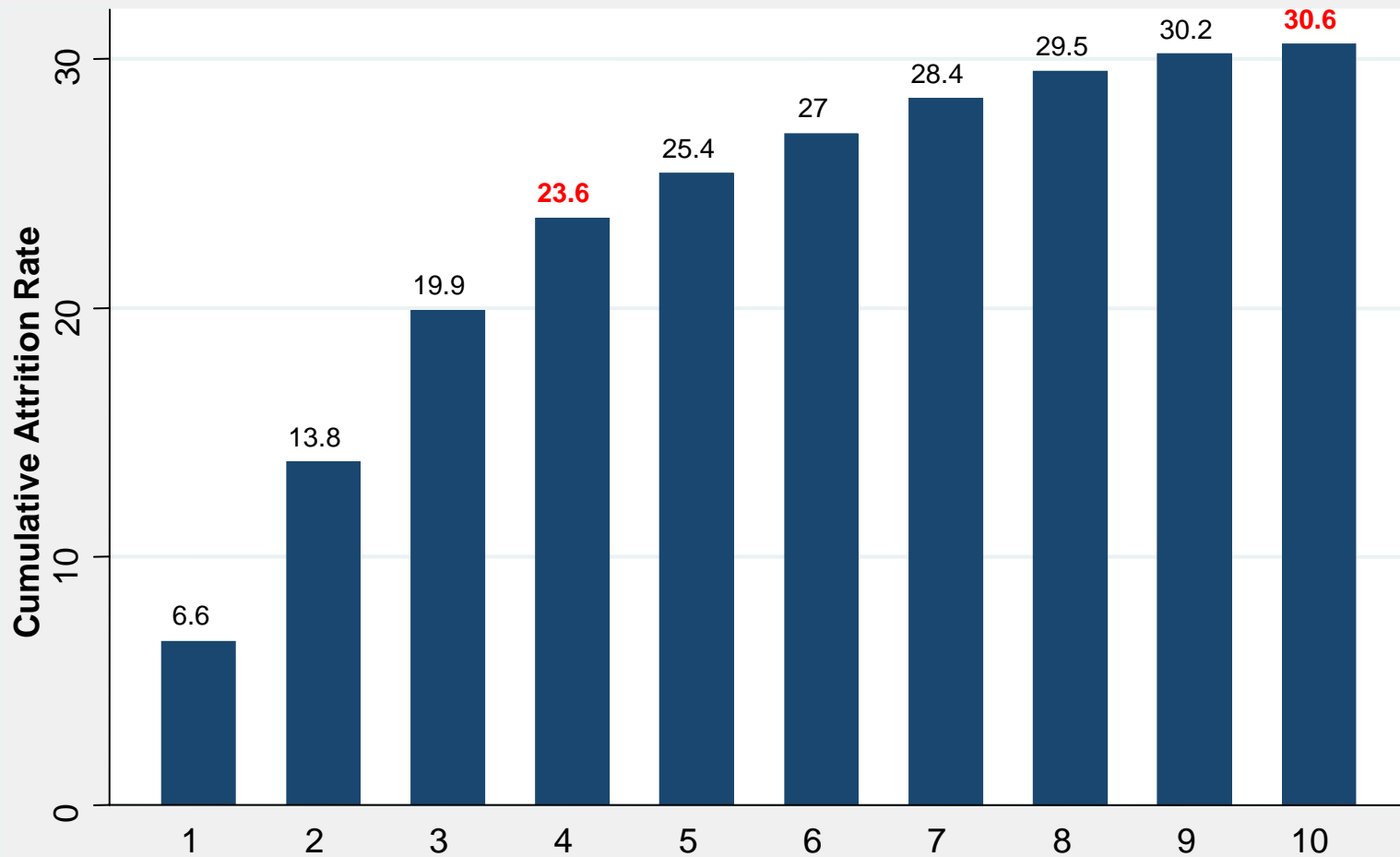
- **A-Cohorts (10-year cohorts)**
 - Students enrolling in 1992-93; 1993-94; 1994-95
 - 12,135 students (313 programs)
- **B-Cohorts (7-year cohorts)**
 - Students enrolling in 1995-96; 1996-97; 1997-98
 - 11,697 students (320 programs)
- **C-Cohorts (4-year cohorts)**
 - Students enrolling in 1998-99; 1999-2000; 2000-01
 - 12,125 students (323 programs)



Overall Ten-Year Completion Rates



Overall Ten-Year Attrition Rates

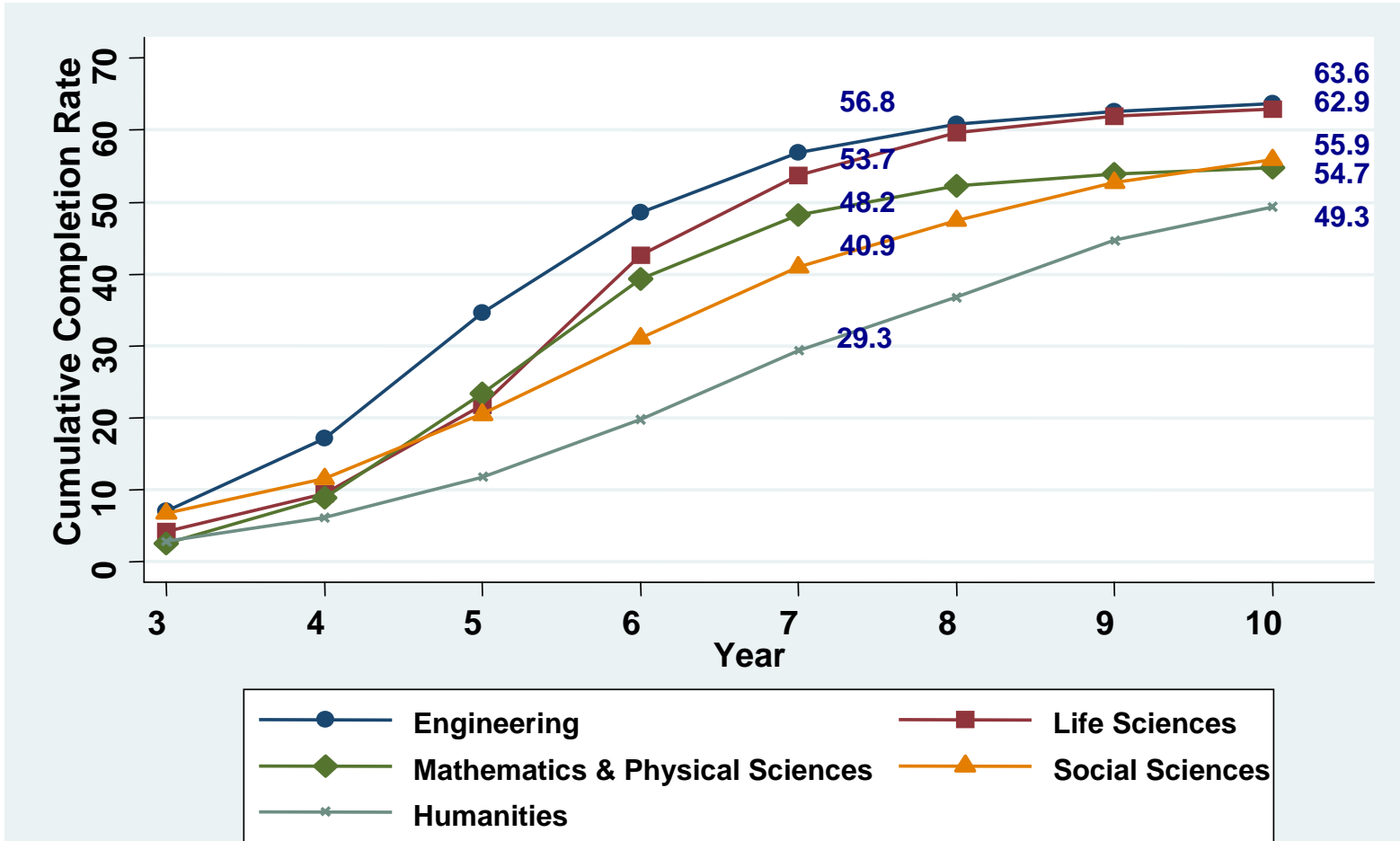


Source: Council of Graduate Schools
Completion and Attrition Program Data



Council of Graduate Schools

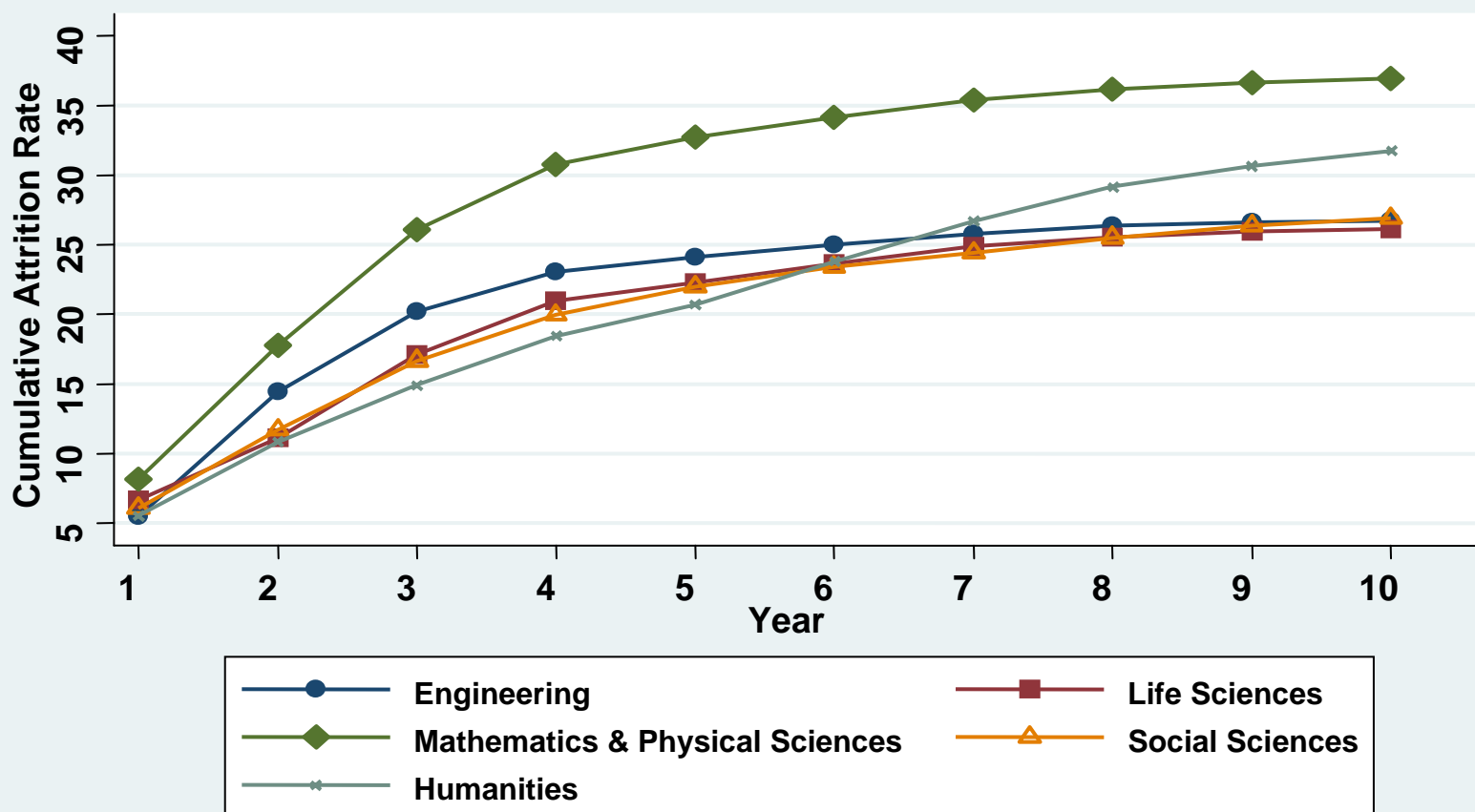
Ten-Year Completion Rates by Broad Field



Source: Council of Graduate Schools
Completion and Attrition Program Data



Ten-year Attrition Rates by Broad Field

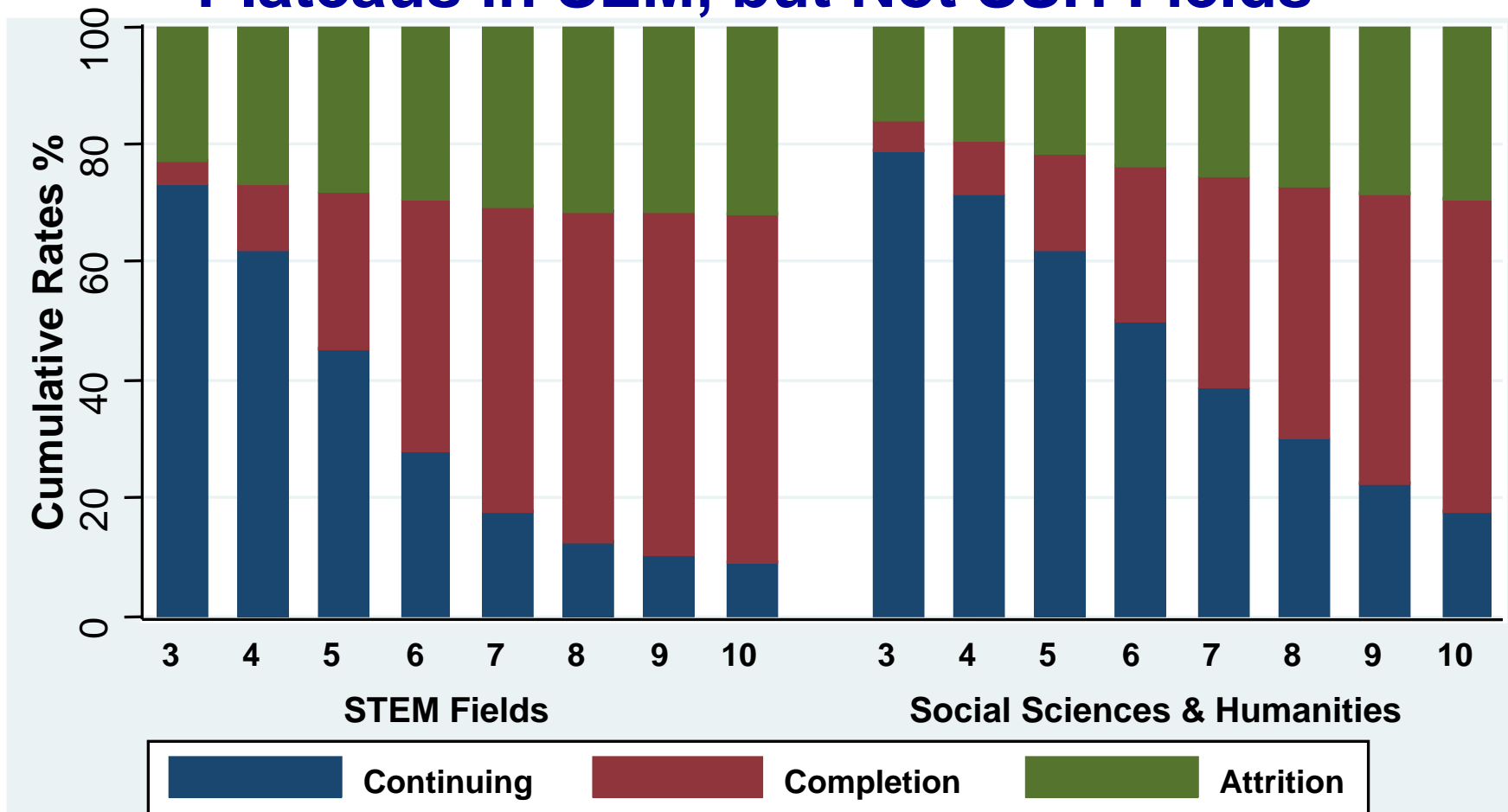


NOTE: 10-Year Attrition Rates include all cohorts entering 1992-93 through 1994-95

Source: Council of Graduate Schools
Completion and Attrition Program Data



By Year 10, Percentage of Continuing Students Plateaus in SEM, but Not SSH Fields

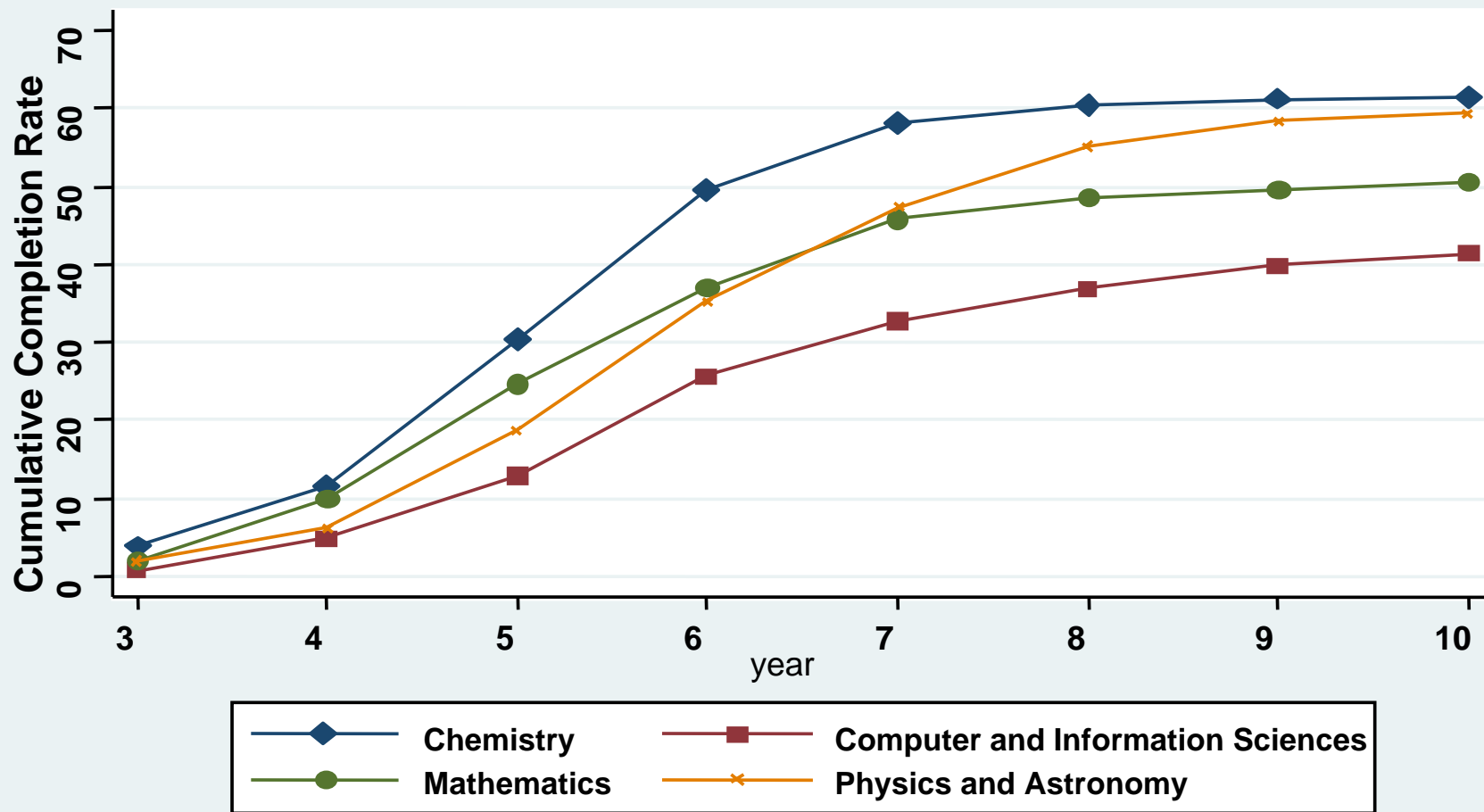


Note: 10-Year Cohorts include all cohorts entering 1992-93 through 1994-95

Source: Council of Graduate Schools
Completion and Attrition Program Data



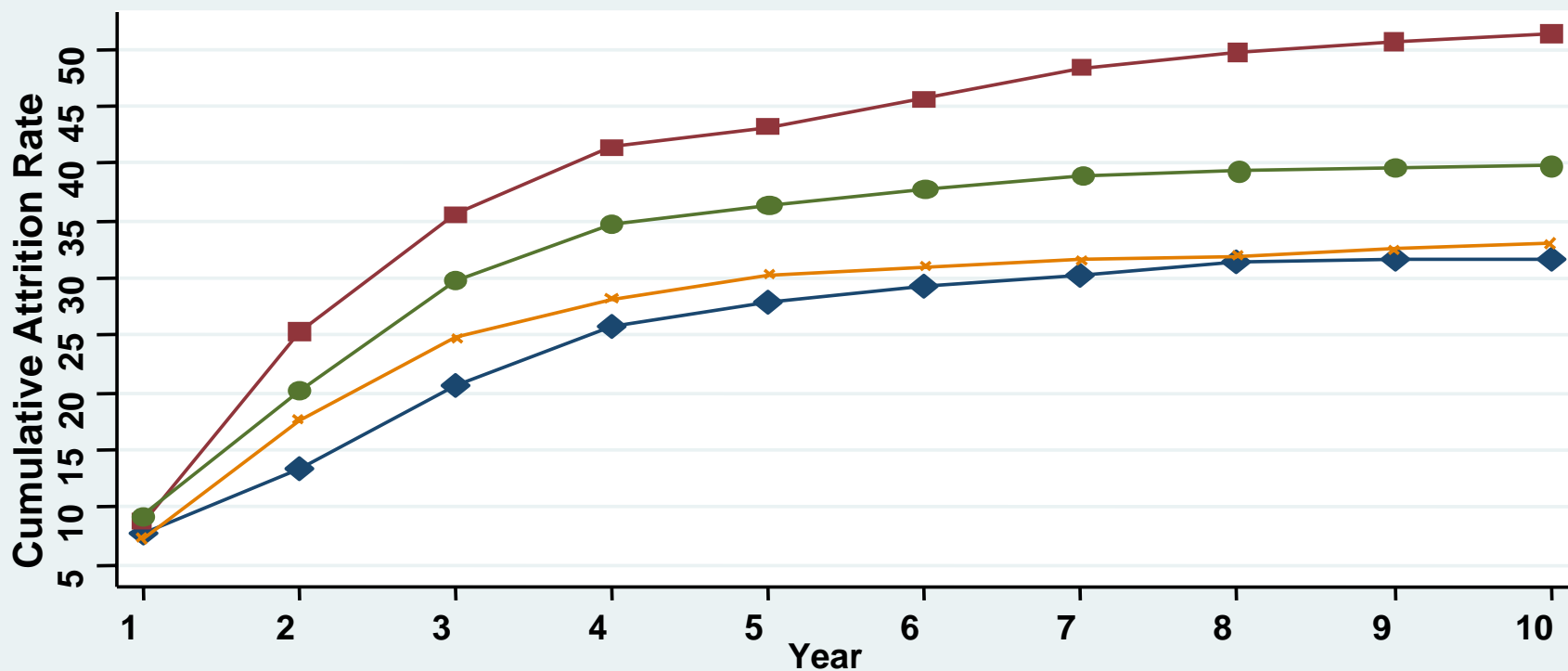
Ten-Year Completion Rates for Mathematics & Physical Science Disciplines



Source: Council of Graduate Schools
Completion and Attrition Program Data



Ten-Year Attrition Rates for Mathematics & Physical Science Disciplines



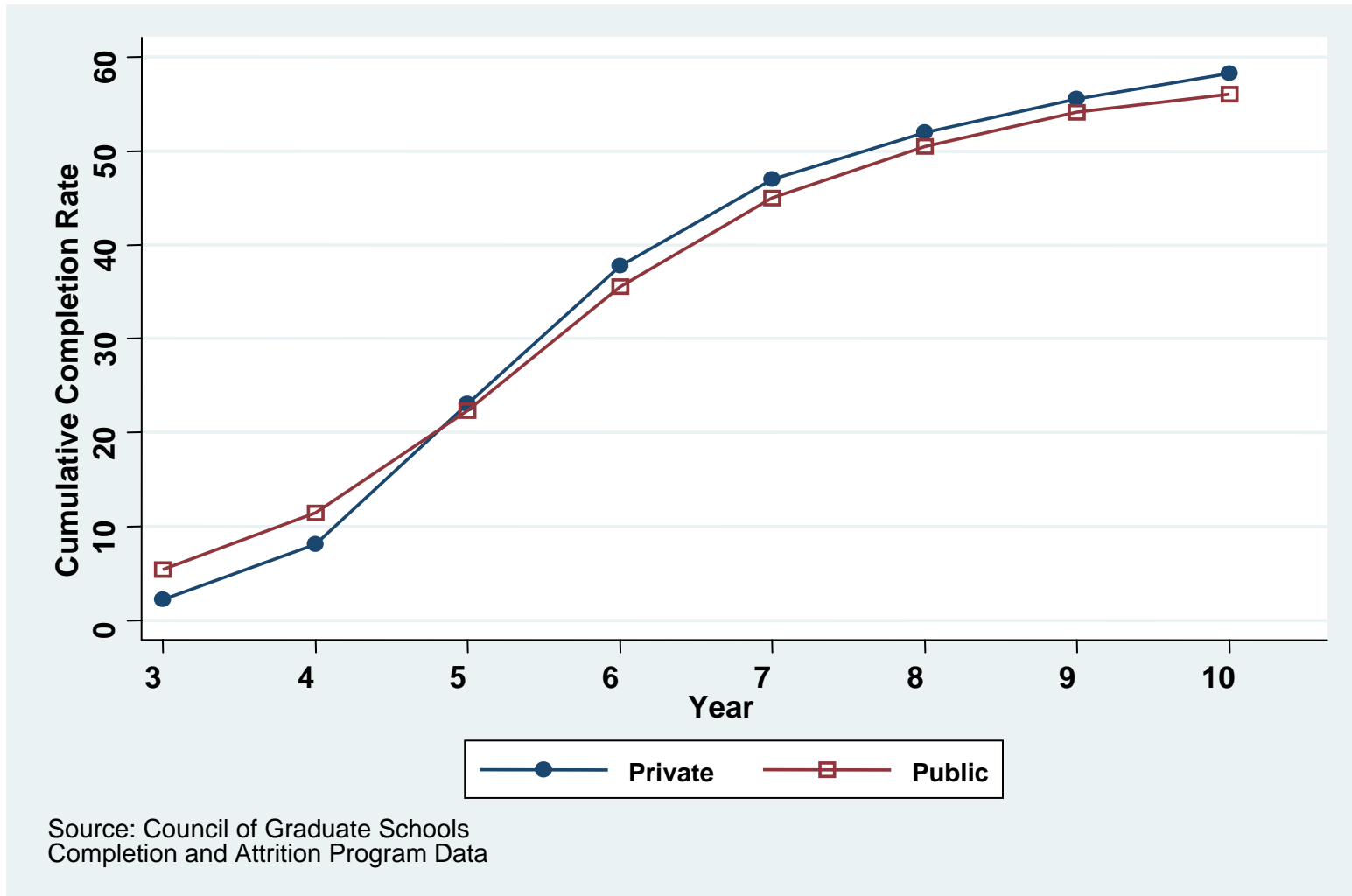
NOTE: 10-Year Attrition Rates include all cohorts entering 1992-93 through 1994-95

Source: Council of Graduate Schools
Completion and Attrition Program Data

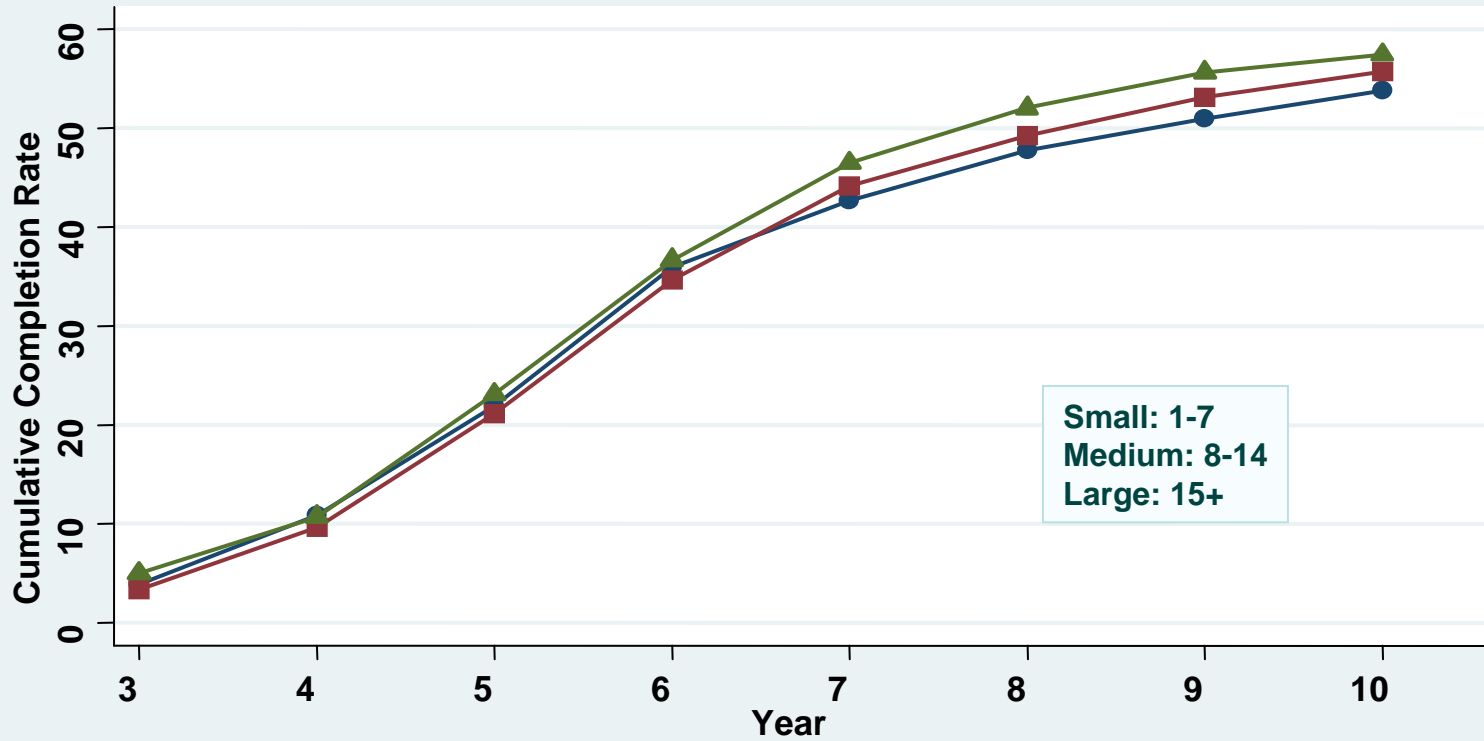


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Ten-Year Completion Rates by Institution Type



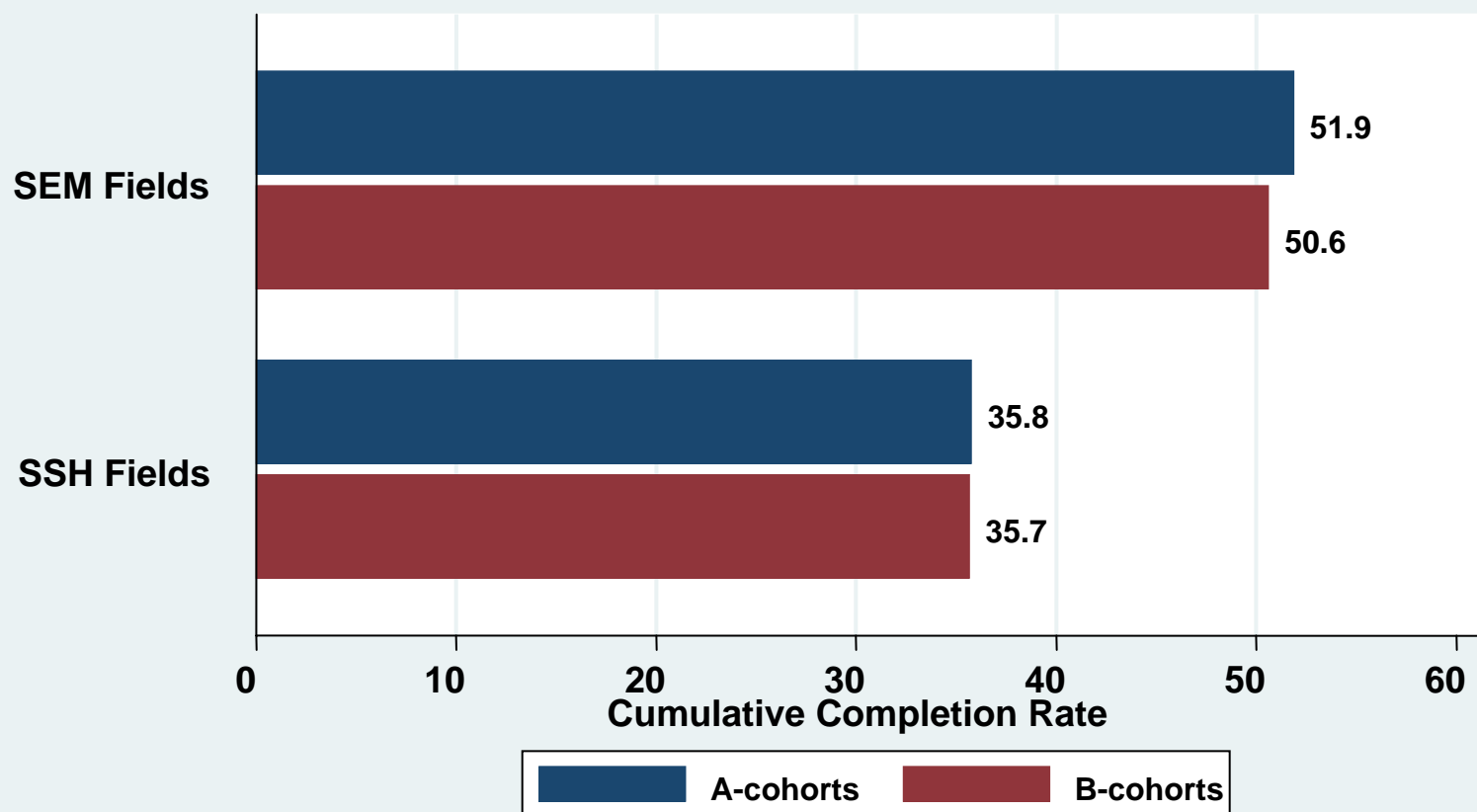
Ten-Year Completion Rates by Cohort Size



Source: Council of Graduate Schools
Completion and Attrition Program Data



Seven-Year Completion Rates Over Time: A- and B- Cohorts, SEM vs. SSH Fields

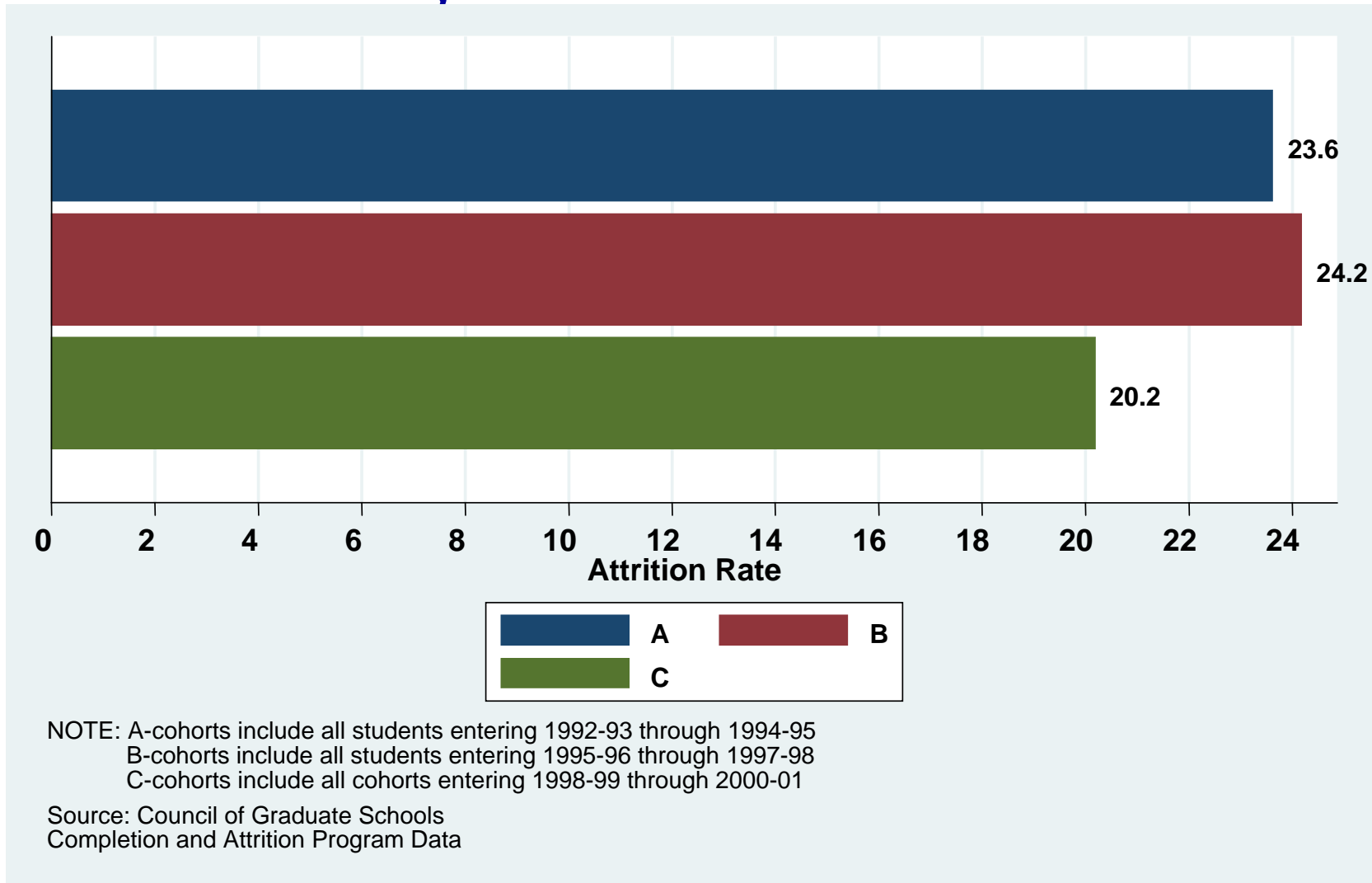


NOTE: A-cohorts include all students entering 1992-93 through 1994-95
B-cohorts include all students entering 1995-96 through 1997-98

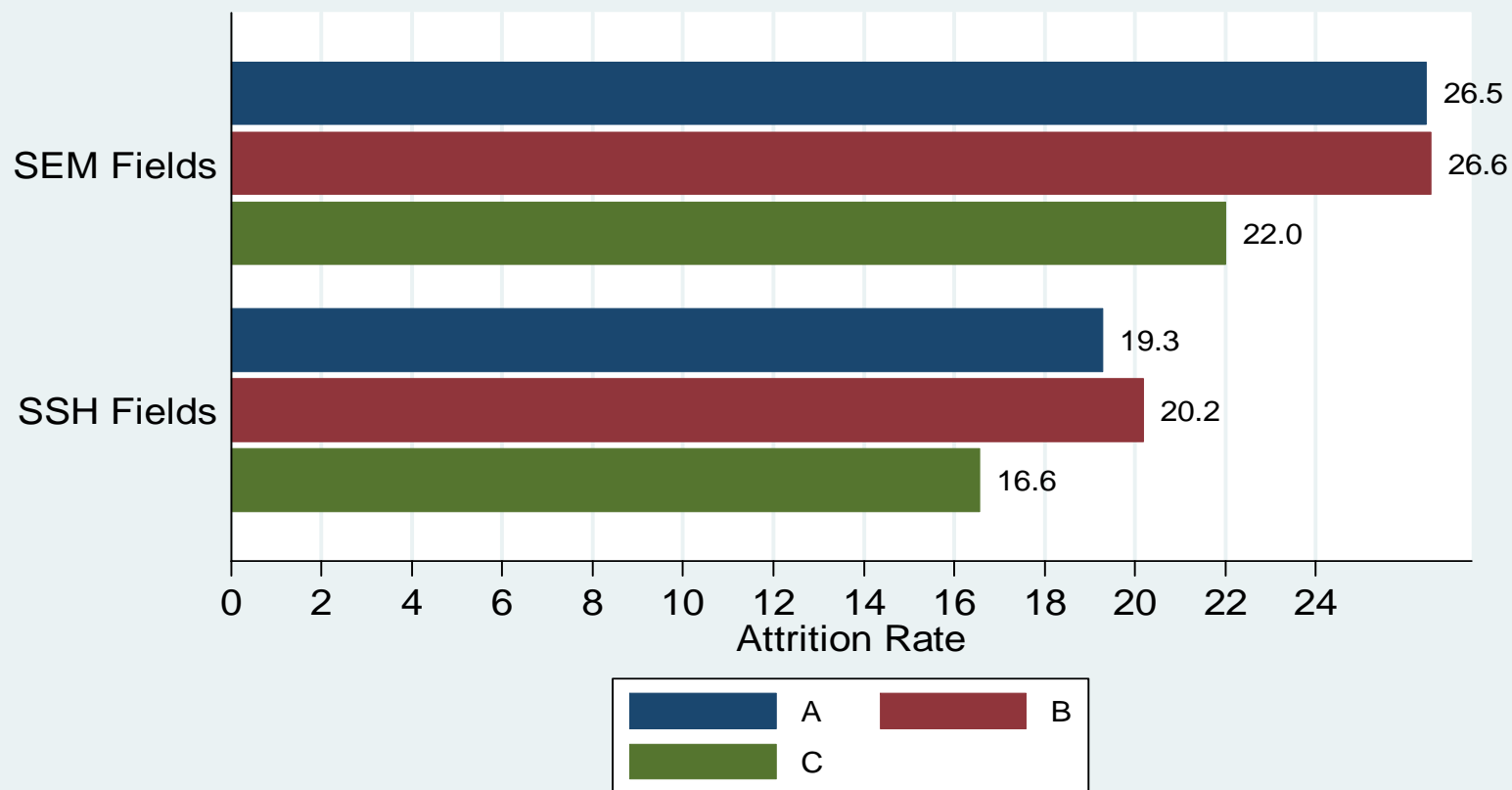
Source: Council of Graduate Schools
Completion and Attrition Program Data



Four-Year (Early) Attrition Rates Over Time: A-, B- and C-Cohorts



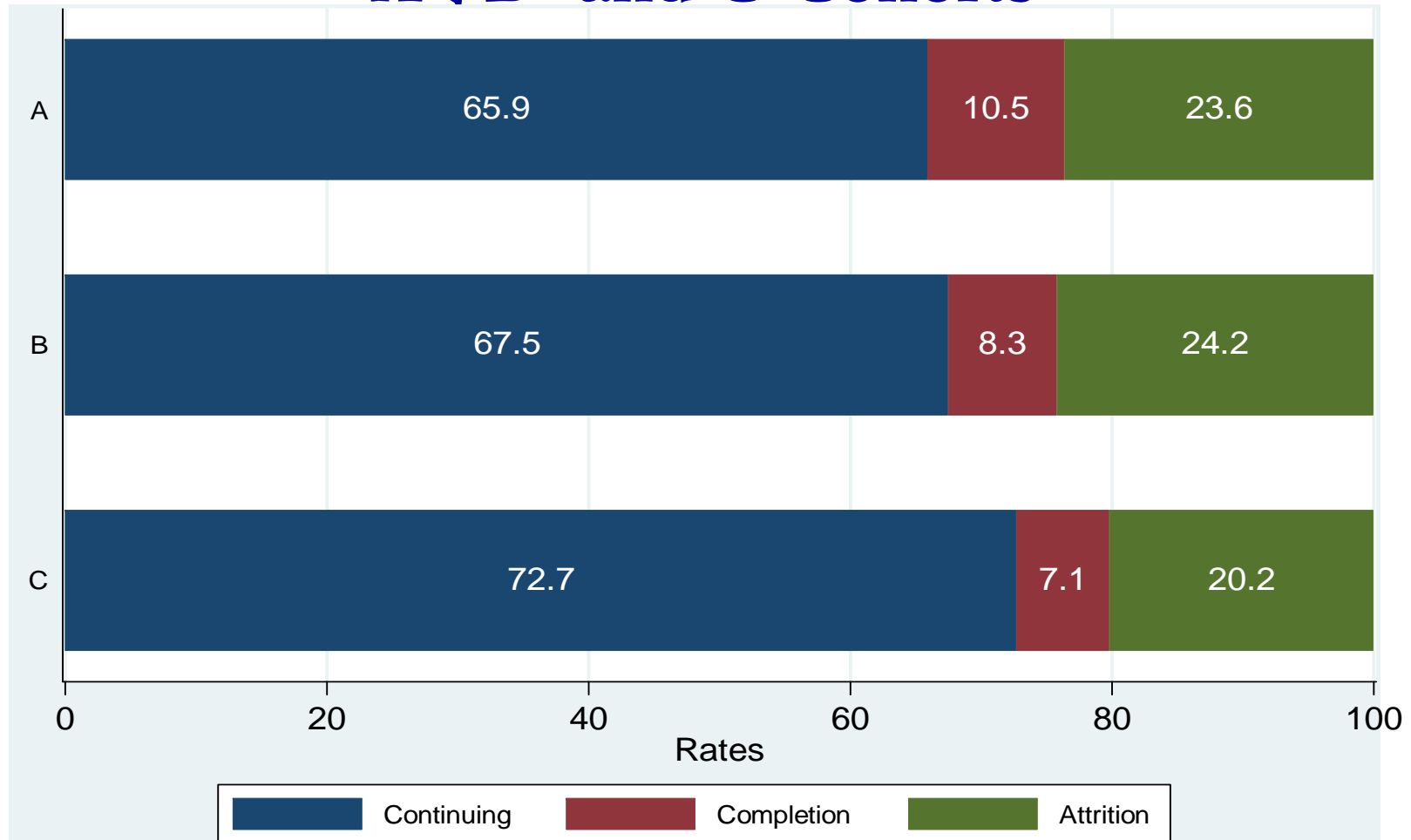
Four-Year Attrition Rates Over Time: A-, B- and C-Cohorts, SEM vs. SSH



NOTE: A-cohorts include all students entering 1992-93 through 1994-95
B-cohorts include all students entering 1995-96 through 1997-98
C-cohorts include all cohorts entering 1998-99 through 2000-01

Source: Council of Graduate Schools
Completion and Attrition Program Data

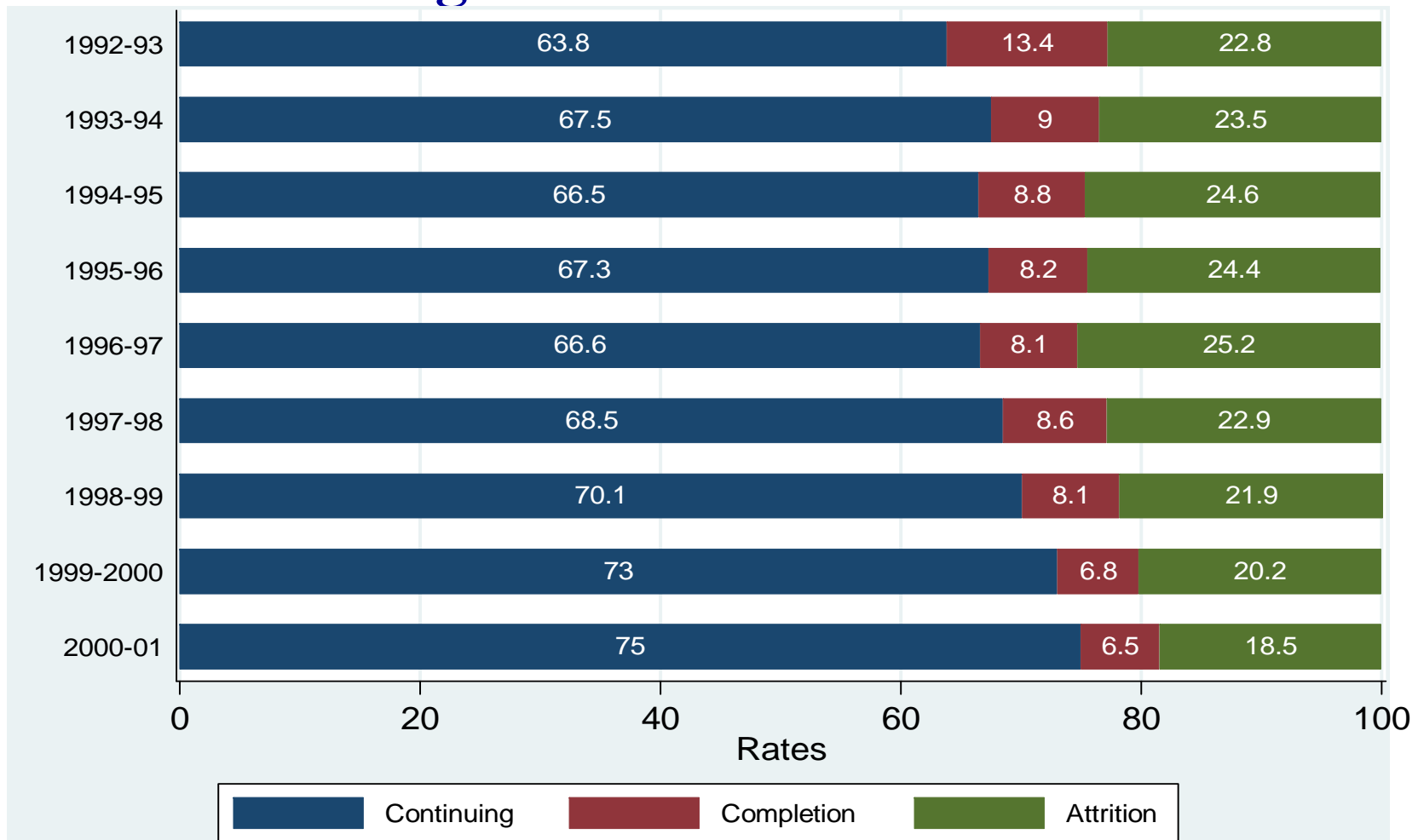
Four-Year Continuing Rates Over Time: A-, B- and C-Cohorts



Source: Council of Graduate Schools
Completion and Attrition Program Data



Trend of Decreasing Attrition and Increasing Continuing Student Rates at Four Years



Source: Council of Graduate Schools
Completion and Attrition Program Data



Future Questions to be Addressed in the Ph.D. Completion Project

- How do completion patterns vary by ethnicity, gender and citizenship?
- Why do students say they complete (or not)? What are the perceptions about graduate school of completers and non-completers?
- What is the impact of the six categories of interventions? How does efficacy vary across broad field and for which populations?
- Can we project ultimate completion and time to degree from our completion and attrition data?



Future Ph.D. Completion Project Publications

- Baseline demographic data (publication expected March 2008)
- Student exit surveys (publication expected June 2008)
- Promising practices, policies and activities
- Publications based on 2007 and 2009 data submissions (2008-2010)
- Final “Best Practices” report (2010)

