

# MIRO Analysis Brief

## Undergraduate Time-to-Degree Brief



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## Key Takeaways

- UH Mānoa has been shortening the time needed to get a bachelor's degree in the past 10 years.
- Students who started their college experience at UH Mānoa spent less than 5 years on average to earn bachelors' degrees.
- Transfer students had been shortening the time needed to get a bachelor's degree in the past 10 years.

Time-to-degree (TTD), or time-to-completion, answers the question: How long does it take the students to finish a degree? A shorter Time-to-Degree is desirable because it implies that students graduate in a timely manner. At the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, undergraduate time-to-degree is reported separately for first-time, full-time students and transfer students. Before calculating time-to-degree, a cohort must be formed. A cohort consists of the students who completed a bachelor's degree in a given fiscal year. After the cohort is identified, we look backwards to measure the amount of time (including summers) between each student's first term as a degree-seeking student and graduation (commencement date). To achieve consistent and comparable statistics across years, specific rules are applied to select students for calculation (see note 1).

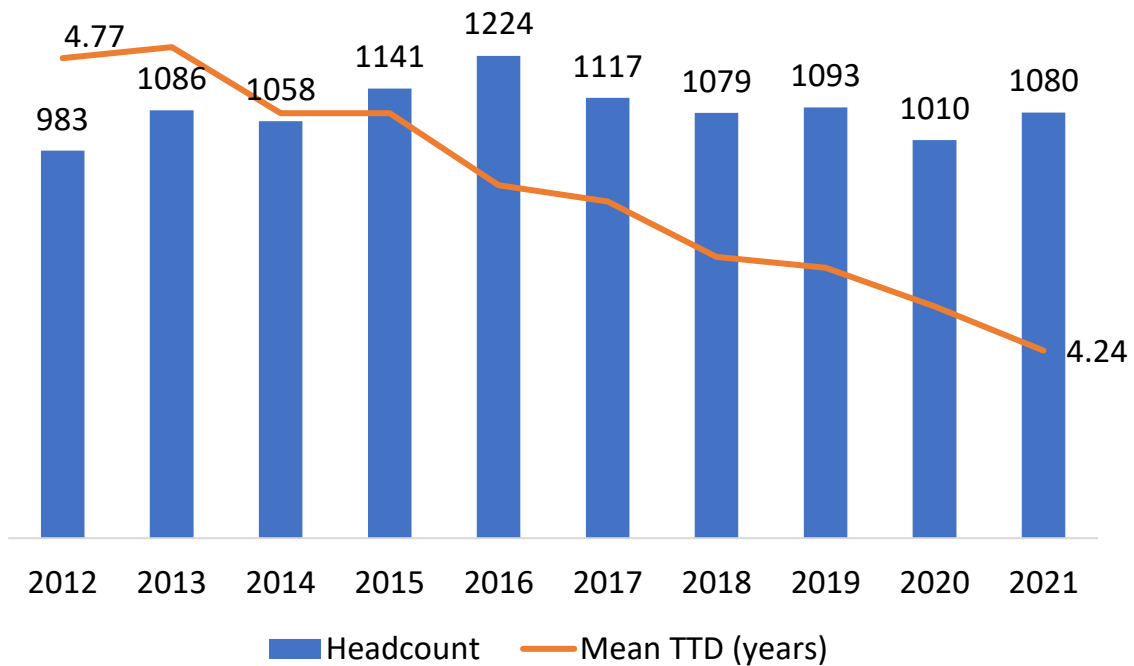
Figure 1 shows a continuously decreasing trend of time-to-degree over the past 10 years for the undergraduate students who started as first-time, full-time students at UH Mānoa (i.e., no prior college experience). On average, a student who starts as a first-time, full-time student will earn a bachelor's degree in less than 5 years. More details can be found in Table 1.

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<sup>1</sup> Students who pursue multiple degrees at the same time and students who pursue a second bachelor's degree are excluded from this calculation, due to the different requirements for course load and time to graduation. In addition, students who have two or more years of time gap between two enrolled semesters are excluded from the calculation, because those students may follow different requirements as re-admitted students. Among first-time full-time students, about 3.5% of students were excluded from this calculation because they had a single gap between semesters of more than two years.

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Figure 1. Headcount and Avg. TTD of Undergraduates who started as First-time Students

Table 1 Time-to-Degree of Undergraduates Who Started as **First-time Students**

| Cohort (fiscal year) | Headcount    | AVG. TTD (years) |
|----------------------|--------------|------------------|
| 2012                 | 983          | 4.77             |
| 2013                 | 1086         | 4.79             |
| 2014                 | 1058         | 4.67             |
| 2015                 | 1141         | 4.67             |
| 2016                 | 1224         | 4.54             |
| 2017                 | 1115         | 4.51             |
| 2018                 | 1079         | 4.41             |
| 2019                 | 1093         | 4.39             |
| 2020                 | 1015         | 4.33             |
| 2021                 | 1080         | 4.24             |
| <b>Overall</b>       | <b>10876</b> | <b>4.53</b>      |

The amount of time needed to graduate for students who transferred in at different educational levels can vary significantly. Table 2 shows the time-to-degree of undergraduate students who started as full-time, transfer students, broken down by educational level at the time of transfer. The most recent 2021 data shows that on average, a student who transfers in as a freshman takes 3.67 years to complete a

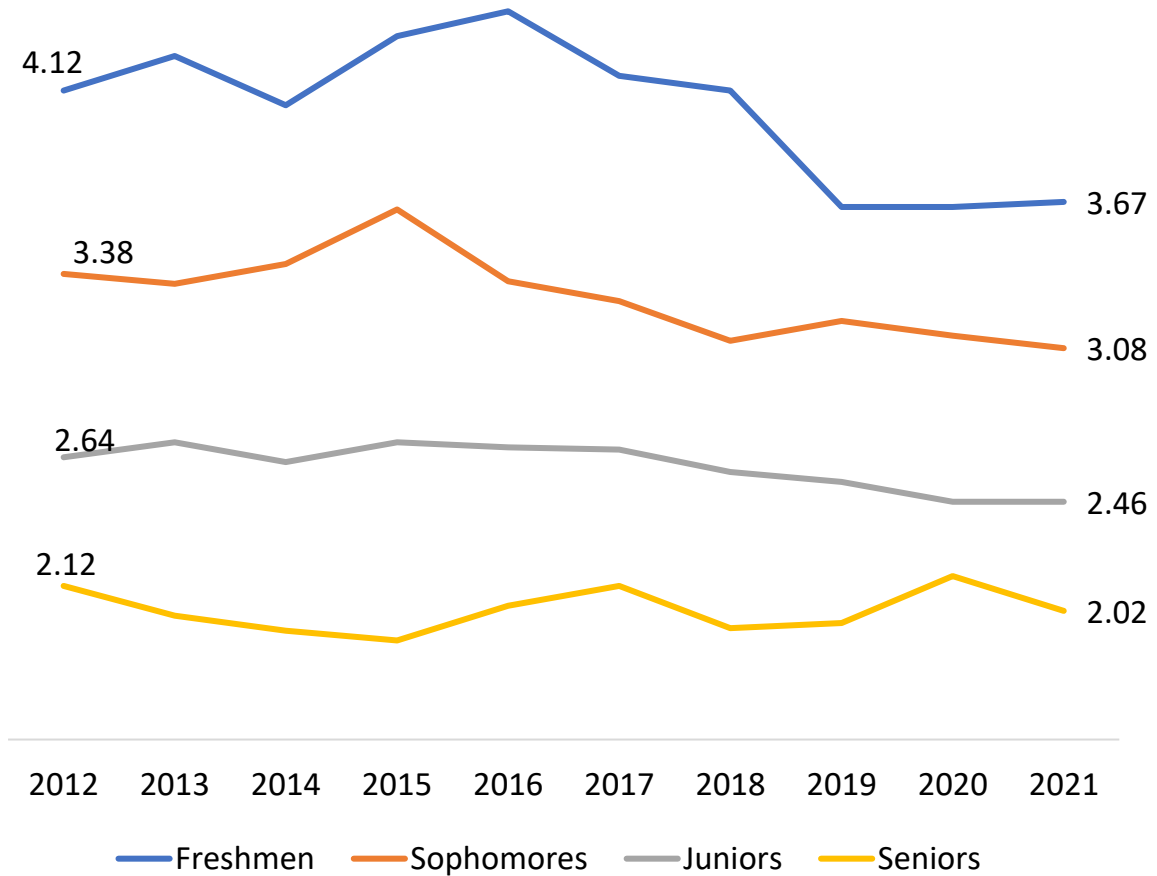
bachelor's degree, a sophomore transfer takes around 3.08 years, a junior transfer takes 2.46 years, and a senior transfer takes 2.02 years.

Table 2 Time-to-Degree of Undergraduates Who Started as **Full-time Transfers**

|                    | Full-time Transfer Freshmen |                  | Full-time Transfer Sophomores |                  |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Degree Cohort (FY) | Headcount                   | AVG. TTD (years) | Headcount                     | AVG. TTD (years) |
| 2012               | 68                          | 4.12             | 340                           | 3.38             |
| 2013               | 65                          | 4.26             | 373                           | 3.34             |
| 2014               | 69                          | 4.06             | 373                           | 3.42             |
| 2015               | 67                          | 4.34             | 399                           | 3.64             |
| 2016               | 75                          | 4.44             | 393                           | 3.35             |
| 2017               | 55                          | 4.18             | 366                           | 3.27             |
| 2018               | 51                          | 4.12             | 418                           | 3.11             |
| 2019               | 83                          | 3.65             | 385                           | 3.19             |
| 2020               | 92                          | 3.65             | 345                           | 3.13             |
| 2021               | 82                          | 3.67             | 371                           | 3.08             |
| Overall            | 707                         | 4.01             | 3763                          | 3.29             |
|                    | Full-time Transfer Juniors  |                  | Full-time Transfer Seniors    |                  |
| Degree Cohort (FY) | Headcount                   | AVG. TTD (years) | Headcount                     | AVG. TTD (years) |
| 2012               | 591                         | 2.12             | 110                           | 2.13             |
| 2013               | 610                         | 2                | 170                           | 2.01             |
| 2014               | 657                         | 1.94             | 177                           | 1.95             |
| 2015               | 657                         | 1.9              | 193                           | 1.91             |
| 2016               | 714                         | 2.04             | 159                           | 2.04             |
| 2017               | 669                         | 2.12             | 170                           | 2.13             |
| 2018               | 632                         | 1.95             | 150                           | 1.95             |
| 2019               | 542                         | 2.54             | 166                           | 1.98             |
| 2020               | 559                         | 2.46             | 151                           | 2.17             |
| 2021               | 509                         | 2.46             | 140                           | 2.02             |
| Overall            | 6144                        | 2.61             | 1586                          | 2.02             |

The following figure shows the ten-year trend of time-to-degree among students who transferred in at different educational levels at UH Mānoa. As you can see, the Mānoa transfer students had a shortened time-to-degree over the past ten years.

**Figure 2. Avg. TTD of Transfer Students by Educational Level**



For more information, visit MIRO Time to Degree webpage <https://manoa.hawaii.edu/miro/time-to-degree/>  
 If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact MIRO [miro@hawaii.edu](mailto:miro@hawaii.edu)