

Course Attrition Rates – Fall 2012 Through Spring 2015

Course attrition (defined as enrolled students who withdraw from courses either officially or by failing to attend) is an important measure of student success, impacting enrollment, financial aid, and completion. In conjunction with course success (see our recent report on COM’s [high-failure rate courses](#)), looking at course withdrawals can help determine where interventions might improve student retention and course success rates. This report was requested by COM’s Student Access and Success Committee to help inform its efforts.

Methodology

Course attrition was defined as the percent of students who withdrew from a course, earning a “W” or “FW” grade, from the total enrollment in the course as of first census. Withdrawals before first Census are not included. We looked at attrition rates for each Fall and Spring term from Fall 2012 through Spring 2015 (6 terms). Two metrics are presented in this report: the combined 3-year attrition rates from Fall 2012 through Spring 2015, and the term-by-term attrition rates over that same 3-year period. Term-by-term attrition rates for all courses combined are presented, followed by course-level analysis for selected courses.

For the course level analysis, courses with ≥ 70 enrollment in at least half of the terms offered between Fall 2012 and Spring 2015 were included. This threshold was used because courses with higher enrollment impact a greater number of students and so are of the most interest in terms of institutional planning, and because the same enrollment standard was recently used in our research identifying high-failure rate courses. Forty-one courses offered during the 3-year period met the enrollment threshold. Several of them were also identified as high-failure rate courses in our previous study. Table 3 at the end of this report shows term-by-term and 3-year attrition rates for each of the 41 courses.

Findings

Overall Attrition Rates

Overall attrition is slowly declining across the period, with the exception of Spring 2014. However, in the high-enrollment courses in this study, attrition rates vary from semester to semester with no clear pattern (Table 1).

Table 1. Attrition Rate by Term, All Courses Offered and High-Enrollment Courses (Fall 2012-Spring 2015)

Term	All Courses Offered		Courses with ≥ 70 Enrollment	
	# of Courses	Average % Attrition	# of Courses	Average % Attrition
Fall 2012	572	15.6	41	17.0
Spring 2013	551	15.0	41	15.4
Fall 2013	491	14.2	41	15.1
Spring 2014	553	16.2	41	19.5
Fall 2014	524	14.1	41	17.3
Spring 2015	524	13.8	41	16.4

Source: COM MIS Files, December 2014.

Course-Level Attrition Rates

3-year combined attrition rates for the 41 courses ranged from 2.3% (PE072) to 27.4% (CIS110). Thirteen courses had a 3-year rate of 20% or higher, including 3 Math courses and 4 English courses (Table 3, sorted by highest to lowest 3-year rate).

Trends in the term-by-term pattern of attrition rates were only notable for four courses: MATH095 and MATH101, PSY112 and CIS110 (Table 2). With the exception of one term, term-by-term attrition rates increased in MATH101 but decreased in MATH095 since Fall 2012. Since MATH095 precedes MATH101 in the developmental math sequence, these patterns may be related in some way, but discussion and investigation are needed to understand whether the two trends are related and, if so, in what way.

A Fall/Spring effect appears for PSY112; attrition rates are higher in the Fall than in the Spring semesters (Table 2).

With the exception of one semester, attrition rates in CIS110 have declined during this time period.

Table 2. Courses with Patterns in Term-by-Term Attrition Rates (Fall 2012-Spring 2015)

Course	Term	N	% Attrition (Term)	% Attrition (3-Year)
MATH101	Fall 2012	168	22.8	
MATH101	Spring 2013	153	21.1	
MATH101	Fall 2013	180	24.0	26.7
MATH101	Spring 2014	144	26.4	
MATH101	Fall 2014	188	29.3	
MATH101	Spring 2015	154	36.7	
MATH095	Fall 2012	92	28.4	
MATH095	Spring 2013	71	22.1	
MATH095	Fall 2013	106	20.6	20.5
MATH095	Spring 2014	74	24.3	
MATH095	Fall 2014	98	15.6	
MATH095	Spring 2015	91	13.5	
PSY112	Fall 2012	101	20.8	
PSY112	Spring 2013	83	13.6	
PSY112	Fall 2013	98	20.4	19.3
PSY112	Spring 2014	61	14.8	
PSY112	Fall 2014	56	30.4	
PSY112	Spring 2015	54	16.7	
CIS110	Fall 2012	101	34.3	
CIS110	Spring 2013	125	29.8	
CIS110	Fall 2013	125	30.9	27.4
CIS110	Spring 2014	69	26.1	
CIS110	Fall 2014	94	20.4	
CIS110	Spring 2015	89	19.8	

Table 3. Term-by-Term Attrition Rates, All Courses With >=70 Enrollment (Fall 2012-Spring 2015)

Course	Term	N	% Attrition (Term)	% Attrition (3-Year)
CIS110	Fall 2012	101	34.3	
CIS110	Spring 2013	125	29.8	
CIS110	Fall 2013	125	30.9	27.4
CIS110	Spring 2014	69	26.1	
CIS110	Fall 2014	94	20.4	
CIS110	Spring 2015	89	19.8	
MATH101	Fall 2012	168	22.8	
MATH101	Spring 2013	153	21.1	
MATH101	Fall 2013	180	24.0	26.7
MATH101	Spring 2014	144	26.4	
MATH101	Fall 2014	188	29.3	
MATH101	Spring 2015	154	36.7	
ENGL092	Fall 2012	122	21.0	
ENGL092	Spring 2013	86	24.7	
ENGL092	Fall 2013	132	22.0	25.3
ENGL092	Spring 2014	79	31.6	
ENGL092	Fall 2014	98	25.3	
ENGL092	Spring 2015	83	31.3	
MATH103	Fall 2012	370	18.9	
MATH103	Spring 2013	263	30.1	
MATH103	Fall 2013	257	17.7	24.9
MATH103	Spring 2014	300	28.3	
MATH103	Fall 2014	304	23.7	
MATH103	Spring 2015	279	32.1	
BUS101	Fall 2012	135	29.8	
BUS101	Spring 2013	104	27.3	
BUS101	Fall 2013	139	17.6	24.8
BUS101	Spring 2014	91	19.8	
BUS101	Fall 2014	127	23.8	
BUS101	Spring 2015	83	32.9	
ENGL150	Fall 2012	413	26.2	
ENGL150	Spring 2013	394	23.1	
ENGL150	Fall 2013	409	20.1	24.6
ENGL150	Spring 2014	367	27.0	
ENGL150	Fall 2014	343	31.1	
ENGL150	Spring 2015	358	20.9	

Course	Term	N	% Attrition (Term)	% Attrition (3-Year)
SPAN101	Fall 2012	177	25.7	
SPAN101	Spring 2013	146	26.6	
SPAN101	Fall 2013	175	18.6	24.4
SPAN101	Spring 2014	135	31.9	
SPAN101	Fall 2014	131	25.2	
SPAN101	Spring 2015	107	18.1	
ENGL120	Fall 2012	309	17.4	
ENGL120	Spring 2013	217	22.5	
ENGL120	Fall 2013	239	19.9	22.4
ENGL120	Spring 2014	210	21.9	
ENGL120	Fall 2014	212	26.7	
ENGL120	Spring 2015	202	29.1	
POLS101	Fall 2012	129	30.4	
POLS101	Spring 2013	85	17.1	
POLS101	Fall 2013	105	29.8	22.0
POLS101	Spring 2014	106	20.8	
POLS101	Fall 2014	92	15.2	
POLS101	Spring 2015	65	11.1	
ENGL098	Fall 2012	154	20.3	
ENGL098	Spring 2013	110	21.0	
ENGL098	Fall 2013	142	11.6	21.8
ENGL098	Spring 2014	130	30.0	
ENGL098	Fall 2014	125	21.0	
ENGL098	Spring 2015	96	29.8	
CHEM114	Fall 2012	98	13.4	
CHEM114	Spring 2013	98	23.2	
CHEM114	Fall 2013	87	24.7	21.3
CHEM114	Spring 2014	104	16.3	
CHEM114	Fall 2014	105	26.2	
CHEM114	Spring 2015	95	24.7	
MATH095	Fall 2012	92	28.4	
MATH095	Spring 2013	71	22.1	
MATH095	Fall 2013	106	20.6	20.5
MATH095	Spring 2014	74	24.3	
MATH095	Fall 2014	98	15.6	
MATH095	Spring 2015	91	13.5	
BIOL110	Fall 2012	355	23.3	
BIOL110	Spring 2013	268	9.2	
BIOL110	Fall 2013	351	18.7	20.1
BIOL110	Spring 2014	251	17.9	
BIOL110	Fall 2014	225	29.9	
BIOL110	Spring 2015	243	22.9	

Course	Term	N	% Attrition (Term)	% Attrition (3-Year)
SPCH128	Fall 2012	85	23.5	
SPCH128	Spring 2013	82	12.2	
SPCH128	Fall 2013	70	14.9	19.4
SPCH128	Spring 2014	76	31.6	
SPCH128	Fall 2014	48	12.5	
SPCH128	Spring 2015	33	18.8	
ECON101	Fall 2012	127	15.9	
ECON101	Spring 2013	76	26.0	
ECON101	Fall 2013	134	18.8	19.3
ECON101	Spring 2014	73	30.1	
ECON101	Fall 2014	82	17.5	
ECON101	Spring 2015	76	10.8	
PSY112	Fall 2012	101	20.8	
PSY112	Spring 2013	83	13.6	
PSY112	Fall 2013	98	20.4	19.3
PSY112	Spring 2014	61	14.8	
PSY112	Fall 2014	56	30.4	
PSY112	Spring 2015	54	16.7	
ENGL151	Fall 2012	237	16.9	
ENGL151	Spring 2013	218	21.4	
ENGL151	Fall 2013	230	18.3	19.2
ENGL151	Spring 2014	224	20.1	
ENGL151	Fall 2014	228	18.6	
ENGL151	Spring 2015	183	20.4	
PHIL110	Fall 2012	128	19.0	
PHIL110	Spring 2013	131	15.6	
PHIL110	Fall 2013	123	9.2	18.5
PHIL110	Spring 2014	91	26.4	
PHIL110	Fall 2014	117	15.9	
PHIL110	Spring 2015	111	27.5	
ART130	Fall 2012	113	18.2	
ART130	Spring 2013	105	7.9	
ART130	Fall 2013	97	19.1	17.8
ART130	Spring 2014	93	23.7	
ART130	Fall 2014	71	22.9	
ART130	Spring 2015	98	17.3	
ENGL092L	Fall 2012	122	19.0	
ENGL092L	Spring 2013	92	30.8	
ENGL092L	Fall 2013	131	11.0	17.6
ENGL092L	Spring 2014	82	22.0	
ENGL092L	Fall 2014	97	6.4	
ENGL092L	Spring 2015	85	19.3	

Course	Term	N	% Attrition (Term)	% Attrition (3-Year)
BIOL120	Fall 2012	121	13.7	
BIOL120	Spring 2013	118	14.5	
BIOL120	Fall 2013	100	8.2	16.6
BIOL120	Spring 2014	98	20.4	
BIOL120	Fall 2014	96	19.8	
BIOL120	Spring 2015	97	24.5	
MATH085	Fall 2012	55	13.0	
MATH085	Spring 2013	106	4.9	
MATH085	Fall 2013	106	25.0	16.3
MATH085	Spring 2014	88	17.0	
MATH085	Fall 2014	150	19.3	
MATH085	Spring 2015	97	15.8	
ECON102	Fall 2012	72	10.0	
ECON102	Spring 2013	84	17.1	
ECON102	Fall 2013	76	17.8	15.8
ECON102	Spring 2014	103	21.4	
ECON102	Fall 2014	54	11.3	
ECON102	Spring 2015	65	12.9	
PSY110	Fall 2012	356	14.5	
PSY110	Spring 2013	275	12.9	
PSY110	Fall 2013	315	13.8	15.5
PSY110	Spring 2014	278	13.7	
PSY110	Fall 2014	250	23.4	
PSY110	Spring 2015	228	16.4	
ASTR101	Fall 2012	159	14.7	
ASTR101	Spring 2013	140	8.7	
ASTR101	Fall 2013	142	15.8	15.5
ASTR101	Spring 2014	176	20.5	
ASTR101	Fall 2014	124	17.9	
ASTR101	Spring 2015	152	14.2	
MATH115	Fall 2012	201	15.8	
MATH115	Spring 2013	255	12.1	
MATH115	Fall 2013	193	16.9	15.3
MATH115	Spring 2014	196	18.4	
MATH115	Fall 2014	221	20.9	
MATH115	Spring 2015	206	8.3	
PSY114	Fall 2012	96	17.2	
PSY114	Spring 2013	88	20.7	
PSY114	Fall 2013	112	11.2	15.2
PSY114	Spring 2014	88	19.3	
PSY114	Fall 2014	102	13.5	
PSY114	Spring 2015	98	10.6	

Course	Term	N	% Attrition (Term)	% Attrition (3-Year)
BIOL110L	Fall 2012	234	18.3	
BIOL110L	Spring 2013	221	10.6	
BIOL110L	Fall 2013	239	12.2	14.7
BIOL110L	Spring 2014	207	16.4	
BIOL110L	Fall 2014	205	15.4	
BIOL110L	Spring 2015	182	15.6	
BIOL224	Fall 2012	80	17.9	
BIOL224	Spring 2013	74	11.1	
BIOL224	Fall 2013	75	11.3	14.3
BIOL224	Spring 2014	68	17.6	
BIOL224	Fall 2014	68	19.7	
BIOL224	Spring 2015	72	8.3	
SOC110	Fall 2012	198	13.0	
SOC110	Spring 2013	156	13.2	
SOC110	Fall 2013	191	9.6	13.5
SOC110	Spring 2014	150	23.3	
SOC110	Fall 2014	122	7.5	
SOC110	Spring 2015	144	14.3	
BUS112	Fall 2012	111	13.8	
BUS112	Spring 2013	121	14.2	
BUS112	Fall 2013	98	11.3	13.4
BUS112	Spring 2014	92	15.2	
BUS112	Fall 2014	102	14.0	
BUS112	Spring 2015	81	11.5	
HIST117	Fall 2012	122	13.6	
HIST117	Spring 2013	122	7.4	
HIST117	Fall 2013	109	15.9	13.3
HIST117	Spring 2014	76	17.1	
HIST117	Fall 2014	87	18.4	
HIST117	Spring 2015	88	9.4	
SPCH110	Fall 2012	110	15.5	
SPCH110	Spring 2013	106	18.3	
SPCH110	Fall 2013	100	14.4	12.3
SPCH110	Spring 2014	125	9.6	
SPCH110	Fall 2014	108	10.7	
SPCH110	Spring 2015	123	6.6	
SPCH120	Fall 2012	154	14.5	
SPCH120	Spring 2013	115	9.8	
SPCH120	Fall 2013	142	9.4	12.3
SPCH120	Spring 2014	115	18.3	
SPCH120	Fall 2014	109	10.7	
SPCH120	Spring 2015	113	10.7	

Course	Term	N	% Attrition (Term)	% Attrition (3-Year)
BIOL100	Fall 2012	120	13.8	
BIOL100	Spring 2013	75	5.7	
BIOL100	Fall 2013	96	15.8	12.0
BIOL100	Spring 2014	70	18.6	
BIOL100	Fall 2014	80	7.6	
BIOL100	Spring 2015	64	7.9	
BEHS103	Fall 2012	119	7.6	
BEHS103	Spring 2013	83	6.1	
BEHS103	Fall 2013	113	7.3	10.6
BEHS103	Spring 2014	83	19.3	
BEHS103	Fall 2014	84	16.7	
BEHS103	Spring 2015	32	6.3	
ANTH102	Fall 2012	65	4.8	
ANTH102	Spring 2013	100	7.1	
ANTH102	Fall 2013	64	4.8	6.8
ANTH102	Spring 2014	88	9.1	
ANTH102	Fall 2014	65	3.2	
ANTH102	Spring 2015	97	9.3	
ANTH101	Fall 2012	121	1.8	
ANTH101	Spring 2013	125	10.6	
ANTH101	Fall 2013	126	6.3	6.1
ANTH101	Spring 2014	151	6.6	
ANTH101	Fall 2014	148	7.5	
ANTH101	Spring 2015	139	3.6	
NE090	Fall 2012	145	9.9	
NE090	Spring 2013	84	1.6	
NE090	Fall 2013	141	3.7	5.5
NE090	Spring 2014	78	5.1	
NE090	Fall 2014	121	5.8	
NE090	Spring 2015	61	3.3	
PE074	Fall 2012	77	6.8	
PE074	Spring 2013	76	0.0	
PE074	Fall 2013	71	0.0	3.3
PE074	Spring 2014	64	0.0	
PE074	Fall 2014	70	7.1	
PE074	Spring 2015	70	5.7	
PE072	Fall 2012	88	3.4	
PE072	Spring 2013	91	0.0	
PE072	Fall 2013	111	0.9	2.3
PE072	Spring 2014	107	0.0	
PE072	Fall 2014	113	4.4	
PE072	Spring 2015	111	4.6	