

MEASURE 2: Demonstrate Student Achievement through Successfully Passing Professional Certification/Licensure Examinations

Metric: Certification/ Licensure exam pass rates

Identification: The University fulfills its core mission of teaching, research, and service by promoting professional competence. The rationale for using certification/licensure exam pass rates as the achievement measure criteria is to understand how well ASU is developing the professional competence of its students. Typically, students take these exams at or near the completion of their degree programs as they prepare for their next professional steps, whether entering the workforce or pursuing graduate or professional education. Therefore, the rationale for using pass rates for licensure and certification exams is to indicate pre-professional proficiency and employment readiness, which aligns with the objectives of **Focus 2030**. This measure helps ASU ensure that students are learning the essential information for their academic programs and developing the skills needed to meet professional standards. It is important to note that this analysis of achievement goals includes only the certification and licensure exam pass rates for programs that require these examinations.

These programs include the Clinical Doctorate in Physical Therapy, Master in Occupational Therapy, Master in Prosthetics and Orthotics, Master in Rehabilitation Counseling, Bachelor in Health Information Management, and Bachelor in Education.

For each of these programs, the certification and licensure exam pass rate is calculated by dividing the number of students from a particular entering and academic year cohort who passed the exam by the number of students who took the exam. Entering cohorts are the required student population cohorts for the accrediting bodies for the Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Prosthetics and Orthotics, and Health Information Management programs. Academic year cohorts are used for Rehabilitation Counseling and Education. For the Education program, annual pass rates reflect the total number of students taking each Praxis II exam during that academic year, regardless of entry cohort. Each student is counted for every Praxis II exam they take, making the pass rate a reflection of each exam taken and passed.

Each programmatic licensing board establishes a specific timeframe within which students must pass their certification exams. To compile aggregate pass rate data across programs at ASU, there must be a delay in reporting to allow for exam timeframes to end for programs utilizing the entry cohort model of reporting. Once the program-specific timeframe concludes, each program must submit the number of students who took and passed the exam to the Office of Institutional Research. Subsequently, the staff at the Office of Institutional Research calculates and publishes the overall ASU certification exam pass rate annually by August 30th on the **ASU Achievement Goals webpage**. Due to the program-specific rules regarding the timeframe for taking and passing the certification exams, the most recent years of complete data for all programs are 2017-2018 through 2021-2022 (see Table 2).

ASU's rationale for setting the minimum thresholds of acceptability is to align with the expectations of the various accrediting bodies, when applicable. The accrediting body for Physical Therapy has established a benchmark of an 85% licensure rate, which includes passing the certification/licensure exam as a component. The Occupational Therapy accreditor has set a benchmark of 80%, reflecting the percentage of students who must pass the certification exam over the most recent three years. The Prosthetics and Orthotics program accreditor has set a minimum threshold of 85%, reflecting the number of graduates who have achieved certification, regardless of whether they chose the Prosthetics,

Orthotics, or a combined pathway with associated certification exams. The Rehabilitation Counseling and Health Information Management program accreditors do not set a minimum threshold; therefore, the programs have set the minimum threshold as 25%. For the Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Prosthetics and Orthotics programs, the target pass rate is 100%. The Rehabilitation Counseling and Health Information Management, and Education programs have a target pass rate of 50%

Table 2: Certification/ Licensure Pass Rates by Program

Program	Cohort Type	Minimum Threshold	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Goal
Occupational Therapy	Entry Cohort	80%	95%	95%	95%	100%	100%
Physical Therapy	Entry Cohort	85%	77%	92%	95%	68%	100%
Prosthetics & Orthotics	Entry Cohort	85%	75%	78%	100%	100%	100%
Rehabilitation Counseling	Academic Year	25%	0%	17%	25%	25%	50%
Health Information Management	Entry Cohort	25%	100%	*	*	100%	50%
Education	Academic Year	25%	26%	8%	27%	30%	50%

* No students took the certification exams

Evaluation: Between 2019-20 and 2022-23, the overall pass rate at the University increased from 41% to 47%. The analysis of pass rates and results is integrated into the institutional assessment process by the departments responsible for these programs. These data are used internally to develop strategies for improvement where necessary. Additionally, programmatic pass rates are reported to accrediting agencies to ensure compliance with specific requirements and standards. The Office of Institutional Research conducts an annual analysis of both programmatic and aggregate pass rates, enabling the University administration to continuously monitor licensure and certification exam outcomes and support ongoing improvement in this area. The aggregate pass rates for ASU are also posted on the **ASU Achievement Goal webpage**, which is updated annually.

As part of ASU's annual continuous improvement process, each program assesses certification test pass rates, and determines if an improvement plan is needed. For the academic years most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic (2019-20 and 2021-21), several programs struggled to meet the minimum threshold. Each of these programs developed an improvement plan to better support students, particularly with the shift to online learning. Prosthetics and Orthotics established new program goals which resulted in curriculum changes, specifically meant to influence improvement on certification exams. Additionally, all faculty were new in 2018 and 2019, so the improvement in scores reflect the work on of the new faculty implementing the new curriculum. Rehabilitation Counseling developed a robust improvement plan that involved (1) reviewing and revising coursework to ensure all required job task domains were addressed at least three times in each course, (2) incorporating certification exam formatted multiple choice questions into course assignments, quizzes, and exams for all core courses, (3) adding case-based questions and applied scenarios into the instructional material, (4) providing students with the certification exam preparation manual after their first semester and create a certification exam resource center in Canvas, (5) ensuring students take the certification diagnostic exam to establish a baseline to develop individualized study plans, and (6) establishing peer study groups and alumni mentoring program. The improvement plan for the Education programs expanded

academic supports for students, including additional exam-preparation sessions and targeted coaching. The improvement plan for physical therapy entailed (1) assessing where students struggled on the practice exam and licensure exam, (2) assessing admission criteria, (3) assessing and improving the curriculum, resources, policies, and procedures, and (4) reviewing graduation surveys, exit interview, and other surveys for feedback on how to strength preparation for and performative on the certification exam.