

2024-2025 Student Achievement Results with Discussion

The mission of NOBTS is to “prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.” The programs offered at NOBTS prepare students for ministry, and students who matriculate at NOBTS must indicate their call to ministry as part of the application process. NOBTS is convinced that well-trained, well-equipped ministers are more effective at fulfilling their callings than those who lack this training. Students who complete degree requirements are better equipped to fulfill their callings than those who lack this training. Those with completed degrees become eligible to take advanced degrees to become servants who are better prepared to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission. The student achievement metrics NOBTS has selected thus are appropriate to a theological institution preparing students to minister in churches.

Selected Metrics for Student Achievement

Key Student Completion Indicator (KSCI)

NOBTS has chosen the IPEDS 8-Year Outcomes Measure (OM) as the institution’s Key Student Completion Indicator (KSCI) as required by SACSCOC. The following reasons explain the choice of the OM as our KSCI:

1. First, NOBTS does not have stringent academic admissions requirements. The main requirements are a statement of call to ministry and a church endorsement, along with the prerequisite academic degrees. NOBTS does not require the SAT or ACT scores for undergraduate admission. Particularly in the undergraduate program, we have a number of post-traditional students who felt a call to ministry later in life and thus have not been in an institutional academic setting for many years. Other students are from culture traditions in which they are the first in their families to attend college. This lack of preparation impacts their degree completion.
2. Second, the OM captures more students as it is not limited to first-time, full-time cohorts. Many of our students are part-time students because they already are working at least one job. Unlike many church traditions, Southern Baptist churches do not require an academic degree for ordination. Therefore, the majority of our students already are serving in a ministry position and/or a secular work position. Time is their greatest challenge. This is particularly a challenge for bi-vocational ministers who comprise more than 40% of evangelical pastors, among whom are Southern Baptist pastors. These students serve in both a secular and a ministry position. NOBTS’s Caskey Center for Church Excellence specifically targets these students for scholarships. Even with a full scholarship, these students do not have time to take a full-time load.
3. Third, more than half of our students are distance students. Distance students tend to take fewer credit hours due to the higher cost. Some students are delayed by life situations or financial limitations, requiring them to sit out a semester or two occasionally. In the 2024-2025 academic year, undergraduate students averaged 12.4 credit hours per year. The 120-hour BA degree, then, would take nearly 9.5 years to complete at this rate, long after full-time students completed the degree.

Given these reasons, the IPEDS 8-Year Outcomes Measure best fits our institution. By looking at the trends of the 4-year, 6-year, and 8-year completions, we have a more comprehensive view of student success of all our degree-seeking undergraduates, not just first-time, full-time undergraduates. Additionally, OM captures undergraduates' highest credential earned at 4, 6, and 8 years after entry and provides information on the enrollment status for students who did not earn a credential after 8 years.

Data for the OM derive directly from the IPEDS information submitted annually. Additionally, this measure aligns with strategic initiatives 1.1 (1.1.1), 2.1 (2.1), and 2.2 (2.2.1, 2.2.2) of the NOBTS 2024-2025 Strategic Plan. Of note: the strategic plan measures graduation rates of first-time/full-time students, but for student achievement, all students are included in the calculations. Therefore, a comparison of data for the strategic plan and student achievement may not provide a valid comparison, though the data for student achievement measures do provide a comprehensive look at completion rates and thus informs the strategic plan initiatives. The alignment to strategic initiatives 2.1 and 2.2 relates to the desire to increase the number of credit hours taken by undergraduate students. If students increase the number of credit hours taken, they have a higher chance of completing their degrees more quickly.

Graduation Rate

NOBTS defines graduation rate as the percentage of students completing their degree programs within 200% of the expected time frame (see Table 1 below). Data are gathered from the IPEDS report, the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) report, and internal reports generated by the Office of the Registrar and Student Success. As with the 8-Year Outcomes Measure, the 200% graduation rate (GR200%) aligns with strategic initiatives 1.1 (1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3), 2.1 (2.1.1, 2.1.2), and 2.2 (2.2.1, 2.2.2) of the NOBTS Strategic Plan. Of note: the strategic plan measures graduation rates of first-time/full-time students, but for student achievement, all students are included in the calculations. Therefore, a comparison of data for the strategic plan and student achievement may not provide a valid comparison, though the data for student achievement measures do provide a comprehensive look at completion rates and thus informs the strategic plan initiatives. The alignment to strategic initiatives 2.1 and 2.2 relates to the desire to increase the number of credit hours taken by students. If students increase the number of credit hours taken, they have a higher chance of completing their degree within the 200%-time frame.

Table 1 below shows the expected completion time and 200% completion time for the levels of each program at NOBTS.

Table 1: Graduation Rates by Expected Completion Time and 200% Time

Program	Expected Completion Time	200% Completion Time
Associate of Arts (AA)	2 years	4 years
Bachelor of Arts (AA)	4 years	8 years
Master of Arts (MA)	2 years	4 years
Master of Arts in Counseling (MAC)*	3 years	6 years
Master of Divinity (MDiv)	3 years	6 years
Master of Theology (ThM)	2 years	4 years
ProDoc (DMin, DEdMin)	2 years	4 years
Doctor of Education (EdD)	3 years	6 years
Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA)	3 years	6 years
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)	4 years	8 years

*This MA program is longer than the other MA programs because of CACREP and licensing requirements and thus has a longer expected completion time. For this reason, it is listed independently of the other MA programs.

Retention Rate

NOBTS defines retention rate as the percentage of matriculated students from the previous fall cohort who re-enrolled in the reporting year fall semester (fall-to-fall comparison). This metric allows NOBTS to capture potential barriers to graduation during a specific semester within a program. Data is gathered via IPEDS reports and internal reports generated by the Office of the Registrar and Student Success. This measure aligns with strategic initiatives 1.1 (all three sub-goals), 2.1 (all three sub-goals), and 2.2 (both sub-goals) in the NOBTS 2024-2025 Strategic Plan.

Course Completion Rate

NOBTS defines course complete rate as the percentage of courses completed with a passing grade. Since not all students will graduate, the course completion rate allows NOBTS to capture achievement at the classroom level as a means to gauge student success. For the undergraduate and graduate programs, passing grades are A, B, C, D, I, or P. For advanced programs (ThM and all doctoral degrees), passing grades are A, B, I, and P. Data is gathered via internal reports generated by the Office of the Registrar and Student Success. This measure aligns with strategic initiatives 1.1 (all three sub-goals), 2.1 (all three sub-goals), and 2.2 (both sub-goals) in the NOBTS 2024-2025 Strategic Plan.

Placement Rate

NOBTS defines placement rate as the percentage of graduates who enter vocational ministry, whether paid or unpaid, at or upon graduation. Data are gathered via an internal graduation ministry survey given to all graduates during the semester of their graduation and thus relies on self-reported data. This measure aligns with strategic initiatives 1.1 (all three sub-goals), 2.1 (all three sub-goals), and 2.2 (both sub-goals) in the NOBTS 2024-2025 Strategic Plan.

Metric Standards

For each of the metrics, NOBTS has identified thresholds and targets (also called goals) for student achievement at the various program levels. The Student Achievement Task Force, composed of the Director of Institutional Effectiveness, the Associate Vice-President for Institutional Administration, and the Associate Vice-President for Accreditation and Assessment, reviewed five years of data and set recommended thresholds and targets. The thresholds and targets set by the Student Achievement Task Force were approved by the Assessment Oversight Committee and allow better comparison to the thresholds and targets used in previous years in analyzing data. NOBTS adopted these thresholds and targets for student achievement to be consistent with its mission statement, to reflect on historical patterns, and, when possible, to compare its results with national benchmarks.

Thresholds of Acceptability

The threshold of acceptability is the score below which the unit should not drop. These thresholds are based on an analysis of the data trends for the individual programs.

Targets

Student achievement targets (also called *goals* in our nomenclature) are the desired performance outcomes for the selected metrics. They are based on an analysis of the data trends for the individual programs.

Discussion of Results

Annual student achievement reports capture program-level outcomes in relation to institutional thresholds and targets. The Student Achievement Task Force (SATF) evaluates the data for each of the metrics; results are compared to previous years' results to note any trends. The SATF consults with the Provost and appropriate Academic Deans regarding any concerns, and the appropriate administrators create action plans to address any programs falling below the set thresholds.

IPEDS 8-Year Outcomes Measure (OM)

The 8-Year Outcomes Measure data submitted to IPEDS present the numbers by headcount rather than percent, showing the low number of students in some of our programs. Those low numbers greatly impact the percentages posted in Table 2, since the status of one or two students can swing the percentages greatly. For example, for the cohort represented by the 2024-2025 numbers, we had only 6 students pursuing the Leavell College Certificate (LCC). One student completing or not completing the program swings the percentages by nearly 17%.

The OM for the 2016-2017 entering cohort is presented in Table 2 below, disaggregated by undergraduate program level: Church Leadership Certificates (CLC), which are 8-hour certificates; Leavell College Certificate (LCC), an 18-hour certificate; Associate of Arts (AA); and Bachelor of Arts (BA). As noted earlier, NOBTS has designated the OM as its KSCI.

Table 2: 2024-2025 8-Year Outcomes Measure (cohort based—undergraduate only)

Program	OM results 2024-2025			OM Thresholds			+/- Threshold			OM Targets		
	4-yr	4-yr	4-yr	4-yr	6-yr	8-yr	4-yr	6-yr	8-yr	4-yr	6-yr	8-yr
CLC	29%	31%	31%	25%	27%	30%	+04%	+04%	+01%	40%	40%	40%
LCC	50%	50%	50%	25%	27%	30%	+25%	+23%	+20%	40%	40%	40%
AA	12%	12%	20%	15%	17%	20%	-03%	-05%	Even	40%	40%	40%
BA	20%	35%	38%	20%	25%	30%	Even	+10%	+08%	40%	40%	40%

Church Leadership Certificates (CLC). The 4-year, 6-year, and 8-year OM rates for the CLCs slightly exceeded the thresholds at +4%, +4%, and +1% respectively. These certificates function on a 2-year cycle, and students are not degree-seeking students. They take the courses in person in the evenings or online either synchronously or asynchronously. If students miss a course, they have to wait two years to take it again. Also, the target demographic for the CLCs is lay-people who desire basic training to be effective in lay leadership in their churches. One group of students working towards their CLC is made up of men and women in a drug and alcohol rehab program. Another group of students is wives of current NOBTS students. Both of these groups are transient, and while they could complete their certificates online from a distance, they may delay completion during their period of transition.

Leavell College Certificate (LCC). The thresholds for all three time periods were met. In fact, they were exceeded by more than 20% for this cohort of students. However, the numbers for the CLC need to be interpreted in light of the fact that very few students enroll in this program. Since the coursework consists of required courses for the AA and BA degrees, advisors and faculty encourage students to become degree-seeking students. Because of the small number of students in the program, one or two students not completing their credential can swing the percentage greatly. In fact, for three of the past five cohorts, completion rates for the 4-, 6-, and 8-year time frames were 0%. Thus, the fact that the thresholds were exceeded by 20% or more is not a reason to adjust thresholds.

Associate of Arts (AA). For this cohort of students, the 4- and 6-year thresholds were not met, by 3% and 5% respectively. In this cohort, 25 students were pursuing the AA, so one student represents 4% of the cohort. Thus, the percentages below the threshold represent no more than 2 students. Additionally, advisors and faculty often encourage AA students to move to the BA since all of the courses in the AA transfer directly into the BA. An action plan to address graduate and retention rates was created: adding a short reflection assignment in the required *Introduction to College and Vocation* course and having a note-writing campaign for faculty to write notes to AA students encouraging them to persevere. Both have been implemented.

Bachelor of Arts (BA). Although the 6-year and 8-year thresholds were slightly exceeded, the 4-year threshold for this group was unchanged. While we desire for all of our BA students to complete their program in four years, the reality is that our demographic struggles in this area. The President addresses this concern every semester during orientation by showing students a PowerPoint of how long it would take them to graduate if they take fewer than 15 hours per

semester. Recent efforts to encourage at least 15 hours per semester include a “plus three” initiative, where students are encouraged to take 3 more hours each semester, and encouraging students to take advantage of the tuition cap. Undergraduate students taking 12 hours can take up to an additional six hours—up to 18 hours total—for no extra tuition costs. Thus, the school is aware that our BA students struggle to complete their program in four years and have been addressing it.

In addition to disaggregating by program level, NOBTS disaggregates the 8-Year Outcomes Measure by specific major, by gender, and by race/ethnicity as defined by IPEDS. A detailed disaggregated report for the 2024-2025 8-Year Outcomes Measure is available from the student achievement webpage by clicking a link. (The specific programs included on that document reflect the active programs at the time that cohort matriculated; any programs on the document that are no longer offered are being taught out so that students can complete the degree program under which they entered.) Additionally, academic administrators and program coordinators interested in real-time data can access the Power BI dashboard and choose the characteristics by which to disaggregate the data. This information can help them target specific means to address any concerns or draw inferences based on areas of growth.

An evaluation of selected majors indicates that they follow the pattern of the overall program level rates noted in Table 2. For example, the AA in Christian Ministry did not meet the thresholds for 4-year, 6-year, or 8-year outcomes, basically mirroring the AA outcomes in Table 2. The BA in Christian Ministry matched the threshold at the 4-year mark, just as was true of all BAs in Table 2. Finally, the Leavell College Certificate in Christian Ministry exceeded the 4-year, 6-year, and 8-year thresholds by 37% just as the overall LCC programs exceeded the thresholds by 20% to 25%. Thus, while being able to disaggregate by major provides another piece of meaningful data for program coordinators, the aggregate rates by level offer a meaningful snapshot for the administration to evaluate overall student achievement progression. For this reason, the information is posted by level rather than major on the website, but clicking a link from that website will take anyone interested to the disaggregated data for a more specific examination of the data. See “8-Year Outcomes Measures by Major, Ethnicity/Race, and Gender.”

Of the 590 students in this cohort, 34% were female, 55% were male, and 11% did not specify gender. The higher number of male students makes sense given NOBTS’s connection to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). The SBC reserves the role of pastors for males, and as NOBTS prepares students for ministry, it makes sense that more undergraduate students would be male. In terms of gender completion rates at the 4-year, 6-year, and 8-year marks, of those who completed a credential, male completers outnumber female completers by double-digit numbers, as shown in Table 3 below. Again, the gap between male and female completers correlates to the gender composition of the student body of this cohort, and that gender composition aligns with the mission of the institution and the broader SBC.

Table 3: 8-Year Outcomes Measure Completions by Gender

Gender	4 Years	6 Years	8 Years
Female	38%	35%	34%
Male	57%	61%	63%
Non-specified	05%	04%	04%

A more detailed breakdown of gender completers by program level is posted on the Student Achievement webpage. See “8-Year Outcomes Measures by Major, Ethnicity/Race, and Gender.” Of note is that female completers outnumber male completers at the 4-year mark for the LCC, the AA, and the BA. This statistic correlates to a 2023 BestCollege study that indicates that women are more likely than men to complete a four-year college degree in four years.

Finally, NOBTS also disaggregates this student achievement metric by race/ethnicity. For the cohort represented in the 2024-20205 IPEDS data, 219 of the 5990 undergraduates did not specify an ethnicity, representing 37%. In order to discuss numbers more specifically, we have removed the non-specified reporters from the total, making the adjusted total of students in the cohort 371. Using that number, 76% of the students identify as White, 22% identify as Black or African American, and <1% each identify as Asian, African, American Indian/Native Alaskan, or 2+ races. This racial gap is not surprising since the Southern Baptist Convention is largely a White convention, according to the Pew Research Center.

A more detailed breakdown of race and ethnicity by program levels is posted on the Student Achievement webpage. See “8-Year Outcomes Measures by Major, Ethnicity/Race, and Gender.” None of the completion rates related to gender and ethnicity are surprising. One encouraging trend is the closing gap between Whites and African-Americans at the 8-year mark for the BA. For this cohort, 31% of the BA 8-year completers were African-American, as opposed to 28% of White BA completers.

Because the 8-Year Outcomes Measure by gender and ethnicity mirrors the genders and ethnicities of the composition of the students in the graduation cohort, NOBTS sees no concerns specific to the OM. None of the categories are considered at risk. However, NOBTS continues to monitor trends, particularly by comparing previous years’ OM rates and looking at five-year averages.

Finally, though NOBTS reports OM data by Pell and non-Pell status, as required by IPEDS, we only recently began awarding the Pell Grant. Thus, many of our recent cohorts for the OM began at a time when we did not offer the Pell Grant, so disaggregating by Pell/non-Pell status does not provide us useful information at this time. In the coming years, particularly if we receive PEP status, disaggregation by Pell/non-Pell status may prove more useful.

Graduation Rate

A three-year trend of the institutional graduation rate is presented in Table 4 below. The three-year rate is an appropriate snapshot as NOBTS revised the means by which it measures student

achievement following the 2021-2022 academic year. Thus, results starting with the 2022-2023 academic year track one-for-one with results for 2023-2024 and 2024-2025. The graduation rates have consistently hovered around 50% for the past three years. While this rate may seem low, it makes sense given the niche of our school as an institution preparing students for ministry.

Table 4: Institutional Three-Year Graduation Rate (at 200% of Expected Time) (cohort based)

2022-2023 Grad Rate	2023-2024 Grad Rate	2024-2025 Grad Rate
53%	50%	52%

Graduation rates by program level, along with the thresholds and targets for those programs, are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5: 2024-2025 200% Graduation Rates (cohort based)

Program	Grad Rate 2024-2025	Grad Rate Threshold	+/- Threshold	Grad Rate Target
AA	18%	30%	-12%	35%
BA	53%	30%	+23%	35%
MA	60%	50%	+10%	70%
MDiv	52%	50%	+02%	60%
DMin	50%	40%	+10%	50%
DEdMin	50%	40%	+10%	50%
EdD	n/a	55%	n/a	60%
DMA	100%	55%	+45%	60%
PhD	42%	55%	-13%	60%

Two programs did not meet the graduation thresholds for the 2024-2025 academic year, and one program (the DMA) was well over the threshold. However, that program is a small program such that 2 or 3 students graduating or not graduating within 200% of the expected time can swing the graduation rate greatly. Thus, that 45% rate above the threshold, while certainly something to monitor, should not be seen as a reason to adjust the threshold.

The fact that the AA was 12% below the graduation rate, while not ideal, is not unexpected. As noted above in the discussion of the 8-year Outcomes Measure, advisors and faculty often encourage AA students to move to the BA since all of the courses in the AA transfer directly into the BA.

The PhD program was 13% below the threshold. Previous graduation rates were 50% and 46%, so the 42% bears scrutiny as it shows a slight downward trend. Per the PhD director, possible reasons include recent large graduating classes. He created an action plan to address issues with both graduation rate and retention rate, a plan focused on support for PhD candidates, improved tracking for student progress, and targeted supervisor training.

While SACSCOC requires only its KSCI to be disaggregated, NOBTS chooses to disaggregate graduation rates and retention rates by gender and race/ethnicity. A detailed disaggregated report for the 2024-2025 graduation rate is available from the Student Achievement webpage by clicking a link. See “Graduation Rate 200% by Ethnicity/Race and Gender.” Additionally, academic administrators and program coordinators interested in real-time data can access the Power BI dashboard and choose the characteristics by which to disaggregate the data. This information can help them target specific mean to address any concerns or draw inferences based on areas of growth.

Based on the disaggregated data, it is no surprise that male graduates outnumber female graduates at all program levels. Of all graduates, 20.7% were female and 72.8% were males, with 7% not specified. Since NOBTS prepares students for ministry, and since the majority of Southern Baptist ministers are male, this proportionately higher number of male graduates is not surprising. Excluding the programs that had no females in the cohort, the widest gap in male/female graduation rate was in the DMin program. This gap makes sense: DMin students must be actively involved in ministry in order to be accepted into the program, and the majority of ministers in the SBC are male. The closest gap in the male/female graduation rate was at the MA level. The female graduation rate for the MA was 40.7%, and the male graduation rate for the MA was 59.3%. The MA level includes degrees in areas such as Christian Education, Cross-Cultural Studies, Counseling, Discipleship and Ministry to Women among others, and more women enroll in such programs than in programs more specific to vocational ministry.

In terms of race and ethnicity, white graduates outnumber the other races and ethnicities, as expected based the Pew Research Center article noted earlier. Of all graduates, 67% were White, 12.35% were other races, and the remainder of graduates did not specify race. Of the non-White graduates, 5.25% were Black/African-American, 4.6% were Asian, 1.9% identified as more than one race, 1.2% were Haitian, and 0.6% were American Indian/Alaska Native. Additionally, the overall racial composition of the 2024-2025 graduation cohort was 65.87% White. Of the remaining students in the cohort, 7.17% were Black/African-American, 6.28% were Asian, 1.13% identify as more than one race, 0.64% were Haitian, 0.32% were American Indian/Alaska Native, and 0.16% were African. The remaining students in the cohort did not specify a race. The graduation rates aligned with the racial composition of the students in the cohort.

Because the graduation rates by gender and ethnicity mirror the genders and ethnicities of the composition of the students in the graduation cohort, NOBTS sees no concerns specific to the graduation rates. None of the categories is considered at risk. However, NOBTS continues to monitor the trends, particularly by comparing current graduation rates to previous years' graduation rates.

Retention Rate

A three-year trend of institutional retention rate is presented in Table 6 below. The three-year rate is an appropriate snapshot as NOBTS revised the means by which is measures student success following the 2021-2022 academic year. Thus, results starting with the 2022-2023 academic year track one-for-one with results for 2023-2024 and 2024-2025. Retention rates are showing a downward trend.

Table 6: Institutional Retention Rate (cohort based)

2022-2023 Ret Rate	2023-2024 Ret Rate	2024-2025 Ret Rate
82.8%	75.7%	71.9%

Table 7 below presents retention rates by program level. In that chart, the “N/A” designation means that no students were the cohort.

Table 7: 2024-2025 Retention Rates (cohort based)

Program	Ret Rate 2024-2025	Ret Rate Threshold	+/- Threshold	Ret Rate Target
AA	24%	70%	-46%	85%
BA	82%	70%	+07	85%
MA	75%	70%	+05	85%
MDiv	75%	70%	+05	85%
DMin	100%	70%	+25	85%
DEdMin	50%	70%	-20	85%
EdD	n/a	70%	n/a	85%
DMA	100%	70%	+30	85%
PhD	69%	70%	-01	85%

Three programs did not meet their thresholds for retention rate. The results were shared with the appropriate administrators, who determined action plans to address the lack. For the AA program, its small size could be a contributing factor. If only a few students choose not to return from one fall to the next, it causes a large swing in the percentage rates. For the AA program, previous retention rates were 100% and 0%, so wild fluctuations happen in that small program. The Dean and Associate Dean of Leavell College believe that the action plans for the graduation rate appropriately address the retention rate issue as well.

The DEdMin program likewise is a small program, such that one or two students not returning create large swings in the retention rate percentages. The Director of Professional Doctoral Programs indicated several reasons for the retention rate issue, namely that students who in the past may have enrolled in the DEdMin program are choosing to enroll in either the DMin and the EdD, both of which have grown in number. The action plan includes adding more recruitment meetings; helping students understand differences among the DEdMin, the DMin, and the EdD through better advising; and assessing of the viability of the DEdMin program given the growth in the EdD program.

Finally, the PhD program shows a retention rate of 01% below the threshold. Previous years’ retention rates were 90% and 92% respectively, so the lower rate of 69% bears scrutiny. Per the PhD director, recent large graduating classes could be contributing to the lower retention rate. He believes this slightly lower retention rate could be an anomaly but he created an action plan focused on support for PhD candidates, improved tracking for student progress, and targeted supervisor training.

Annually, NOBTS disaggregates retention rate by gender and race/ethnicity. A detailed disaggregated report for the 2024-2025 retention rate is available from the Student Achievement webpage by clicking a link. See “Retention Rate by Ethnicity/Race and Gender.” Additionally, academic administrators and program coordinators interested in real-time data can access the Power BI dashboard and choose the characteristics by which to disaggregate the data. This information can help them target specific means to address any concerns or draw inferences based on areas of growth.

Course Completion Rates

NOBTS uses course completion rates to measure student success at the classroom level. The course completion rates for 2024-2025 are presented below in Table 8.

Table 8: 2024-2025 Course Completion Rates (non-cohort based)

Program	CC Rate 2024-2025	CC Threshold	+/- Threshold	CC Target
AA	86%	85%	+01%	90%
BA	89%	85%	+04%	90%
MA	94%	85%	+09%	90%
MDiv	91%	85%	+06%	90%
DMin	88%	85%	+03%	90%
DEdMin	95%	85%	+10%	90%
EdD	97%	85%	+12%	90%
DMA	94%	85%	+09%	90%
PhD	98%	85%	+14%	90%

Course completion rates at NOBTS are high. All programs met the threshold. All of the course completion rates for 2024-2025 fall within 14 percentage points of the threshold, indicating that course completion rates are consistent and stable. Given the means by which NOBTS collects course completion data, disaggregating it by gender and race/ethnicity is not viable. However, NOBTS monitors course completion rates to encourage students toward degree completion. Some of the action plans described elsewhere in this narrative certainly could help programs like the AA, at just 01% above the threshold, to increase its course completion rate.

Placement Rates

The mission of NOBTS is to “prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.” One logical end result of this mission is for NOBTS students to serve in the churches and para-church ministries of the SBC. SBC churches are autonomous and hire their own ministers; the convention does not place pastors and ministers in churches. Thus, the best means to track placement rates is for students to self-report if they are serving a church, whether paid or unpaid. The placement rates for 2024-2025 are presented below in Table 9.

Table 9: 2024-2025 Placement Rates* (non-cohort based)

Program	PR 2024-2025	PR Threshold	+/- Threshold	PR Target
AA	100%	75%	+25%	85%
BA	74%	75%	-01%	85%
MA	76%	75%	+01%	85%
MDiv	80%	75%	+05%	85%
DMin	100%	75%	+25%	85%
DEdMin	100%	75%	+25%	85%
EdD	50%	75%	-25%	85%
DMA	100%	75%	+25%	85%
PhD	90%	75%	+15%	85%

The data for this table came from a survey given to graduating students during the semester of their graduation. Previously, placement rate data were gathered 12-18 months post-graduation and yielded low returns. Having graduates complete the survey as part of their requirements to graduate results in much higher returns, thus making the information more representative of the placement of our students. These results are self-reported. Since churches in the Southern Baptist Convention hire their own ministers, such self-reported data are the most viable option for gathering information on ministerial placement, whether vocational or non-vocational, since no official mechanism exists in the SBC for such data to be gathered.

Two programs did not meet the thresholds for placement. Regarding the BA, the one percentage point was determined to be unremarkable given that at NOBTS, undergraduate students are encouraged to continue their education at the graduate level. They therefore may forego ministerial placement while they continue their education.

The EdD is a program that has been rebirthed at NOBTS over the last few years with increasing enrollment. The graduation rate has been limited since the restart of this academic degree program; initial enrollment was small. Another consideration is marketplace: some students are seeking the EdD not for primary ministry vocation employment but for teaching placements, corporate management from a Christian perspective, or leadership in various non-profit settings. The EdD director indicated that he would work with faculty teaching *Introduction to Educational Research and Writing* and *Educational Career and Context* courses to communicate to students the vocational opportunities related to ministry.

Concluding Thoughts

NOBTS takes seriously its call to prepare God-called servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission. The churches of the Southern Baptist Convention have entrusted us with this sacred task. Carefully monitoring the student achievement results of our students—using the measures we have selected and adjusting instruction and curriculum where needed—provides accountability to all of our constituents.