

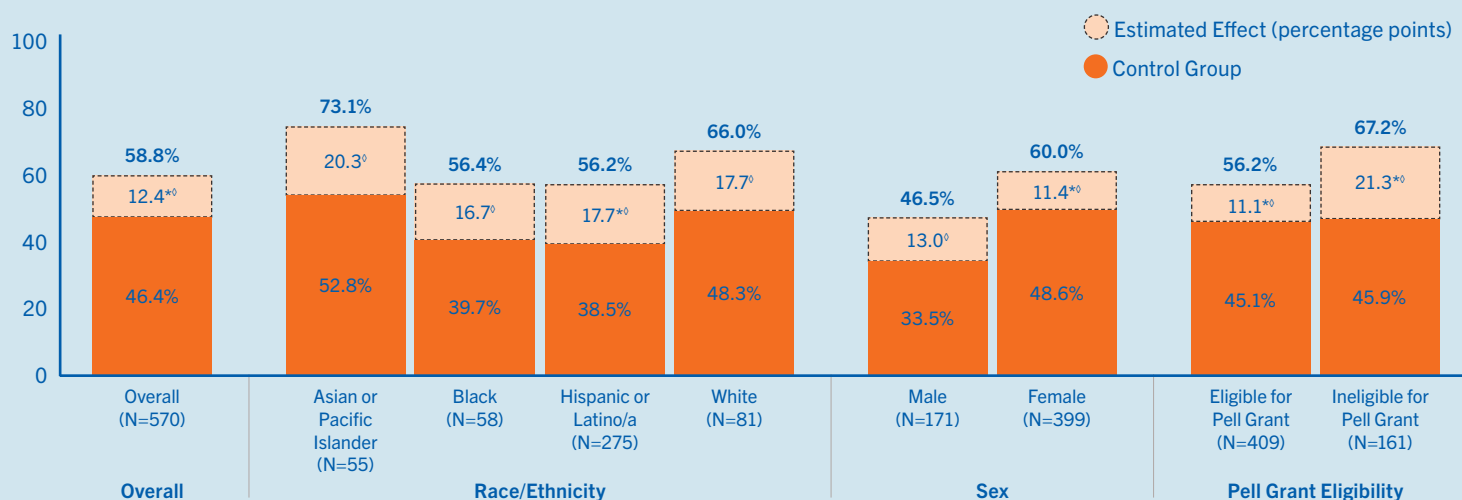
ACCELERATE, COMPLETE, ENGAGE (ACE): SUCCESSFULLY ADAPTING THE ASAP MODEL FOR BACHELOR'S STUDENTS

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Accelerate, Complete, Engage (ACE) is the baccalaureate version of the highly successful **Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP)**, a comprehensive program that provides support to students so they can reach their graduation goals. ASAP has demonstrated remarkable success in helping associate degree-seeking students graduate in a timely manner, doubling the rate at which students earn degrees.¹ Based on the impressive outcomes of ASAP, the City University of New York (CUNY) has implemented the model at six of its senior colleges, aiming to achieve similar outcomes for bachelor's degree-seeking students. Early results from a propensity-score analysis found promising effects on retention, credit accumulation, summer and winter enrollment and graduation.² In order to more rigorously evaluate whether ACE is effective at improving four-year and five-year graduation rates for students who join the program as freshmen, a team of researchers at Metis Associates and CUNY is conducting a randomized-controlled trial (RCT) study of the program at John Jay College of Criminal Justice.³ This summary shares highlights from the **April 2023 report**.

- Overall, the study found a sizeable impact on four-year graduation rates – **ACE students graduated at a rate 12.4 percentage points higher than the control group (58.8% vs. 46.4%)**. Graduation rates for both groups were higher than the four-year graduation rates for first-time full-time freshmen at John Jay for recent cohorts.⁴
- Exploratory analyses found positive effects for nearly all subgroups of students defined by race/ethnicity, sex and socioeconomic status, although only those for the largest subgroups were statistically significant likely due to small sample sizes for the other subgroups.⁵ These exploratory results should be interpreted with caution due to the small sample sizes; additional research is needed to confirm the robustness of these subgroup findings.
- Effects for Hispanic or Latino/a, Black, White, and Asian or Pacific Islander students were close in size (ranging from 16.7 to 20.3 percentage points)**, suggesting the program had similar impacts on students in different race/ethnicity groups.
- While female students graduated at a higher rate in both groups, there did not appear to be differential impacts of the program by sex. **Effects were similar in size for male and female students (13.0 percentage points and 11.4 percentage points)**.

ACCELERATE, COMPLETE, ENGAGE (ACE) FOUR YEAR GRADUATION RATES AND ESTIMATED EFFECTS BY SUBGROUP



Note: The subgroup analysis excludes students in the following groups: students who selected multiple race/ethnicity options (63 students, including students who identify as Hispanic or Latino/a and any other race), Middle Eastern students (5 students), students who identified as an "Other" race/ethnicity (24 students), and students who declined to provide race/ethnicity information (9 students).

* Statistically significant, p-value < .05

[†] Substantively important (standardized effect size ≥ .25 SDs).

- The program appeared to have a larger effect on students who were not eligible for Pell grants (21.3 percentage point difference) than those who were eligible (11.1 percentage points), which may indicate a need for more research on how the program supports and services may benefit students differently based on socioeconomic status.
- Persistence rates going into the fifth year were very high relative to overall rates at the college (78.7% for the program group and 76.3% for the control group), with no significant difference between study groups. This suggests that more students in both groups will likely graduate within five or six years from entering college.
- Implementation data were not collected for the study, but a review of existing data that were available demonstrated that the program was implemented largely as designed, most notably that **over 85% of students who remained in the program each semester met one-on-one with their ACE advisor at least four times per semester they were enrolled.**

Study design and data sources:

In spring 2018, 570 students meeting eligibility criteria for the program were recruited to participate in the study and randomly assigned to the program or control group with a 50:50 ratio. Baseline equivalence analysis confirmed that the two groups were equivalent across all key variables at the start of the study. To investigate the impact on the target student outcomes, intention-to-treat (ITT) analyses were conducted using logistic regressions with an analytic dataset created from two data sources: (1) the CUNY Institutional Research Database (IRDB); and (2) the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC). The full regression models included a comprehensive list of study participant pre-program characteristics for further statistical control.⁶

This study has shown that the ACE program overall has demonstrated a statistically significant and substantively important positive impact on four-year graduation, underscoring the value of the program and its comprehensive supports and confirming that the ASAP|ACE model works for bachelor's degree-seeking students as well. Moreover, the high graduation rates and persistence rates are especially impressive given the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic during the students' second year in college. Four-year graduation is a key outcome for ACE as it represents the "on-time" graduation rate, however the final report from the study will include five-year graduation rates as well to more fully understand the program effect on degree attainment. The results from this study contribute to and expand the robust evidence base that the ASAP|ACE model is an effective student success strategy and a valuable approach beyond the community college sector.

For more information about ASAP|ACE, visit www.cuny.edu/asap.

¹ For example, see [Doubling graduation rates: Three-year effects of CUNY's Accelerated Study in Associate Programs \(ASAP\) for developmental education students, 2015](#) and [CUNY Accelerated Study in Associate Programs \(ASAP\): Evidence from Six Cohorts and Lessons for Expansion, 2016](#)

² [Accelerate, Complete, Engage \(ACE\): Outcomes for Three First-Time Freshmen Cohorts, 2022](#)

³ The study is funded by Arnold Ventures. The analysis plan and earlier reports can be found here: <https://osf.io/k8y54/>.

⁴ [City University of New York, Office of Applied Research, Evaluation and Data Analytics: Student Data Book, 2023](#)

⁵ The subgroup analysis excludes students in the following groups: students who selected multiple race/ethnicity options (63 students, including students who identify as Hispanic or Latino/a and any other race), Middle Eastern students (5 students), students who identified as an "Other" race/ethnicity (24 students), and students who declined to provide race/ethnicity information (9 students). In the full report, these groups were analyzed as part of a single "more than one or other race/ethnicity" category which has shown non statistically significant but substantively important negative effects. For this summary, the effects for this "more than one or other race/ethnicity" group are not shown as the group is so heterogonous that the results become difficult to interpret in a meaningful way and each of the groups that comprise the "more than one or other race/ethnicity" category reported on previously are too small to analyze individually.

⁶ Variables included age, sex, race/ethnicity, borough of residence, SAT total score, credits at the beginning of fall 2018, Pell grant eligibility, dependency status for financial aid purposes, highest level of parental education, parents' adjusted income (AGI), degree goal, career goal, current job/internship status, having siblings attending colleges, country of birth, language(s) spoken at home, and parental involvement in education. In all impact analyses, the dummy variable adjustment method was employed for any missing covariate data. Appropriate effect sizes (i.e., Cox index) were also calculated to measure the practical importance of findings generated by statistical significance tests.