

The College Solution by Lynn O'Shaughnessy is the best book I have found on financial aid, merit money, and how it all works. She is a nationally recognized college expert, higher-ed journalist, speaker and educator. Her blog by the same name is a wonderful resource:

<http://www.thecollegesolution.com/>

Here is excerpt from her excellent post on graduation rates. Check red hyperlink to see graduation rate map of US colleges and universities.

<http://www.thecollegesolution.com/dont-overlook-college-graduation-rates/>

Don't Overlook College Graduation Rates

When building a college list, it's critical to check college graduation rates.

Paying for college is hard enough without adding a fifth or six year to the tab! And yet most students do not graduate from college in four years.

Many parents whom I've talked to over the years seem shocked by this reality. It is understandable since schools with mediocre or worse grad rates don't like to share them.

Below are the nationwide graduation rates, which the federal government compiles. These rates only apply to students who started as full-time freshmen:

Four-Year Graduation Rates

- Public colleges and universities: 33%
- Nonprofit private colleges and universities: 53%

Six-Year Graduation Rates

- Public colleges and universities: 57%
- Nonprofit private colleges and universities: 65%

Grim, huh?

Check Gender Graduation Rates

You'll also want to examine the grad rates based on gender at individual schools.

Women graduate at a much faster rate than men at both public and private four-year institutions. At private colleges and universities, women's four-year grad rate is a whopping 13.7 percentage points higher.

Four-Year Graduation Rate for Men

- Public colleges and universities: 29.8%
- Nonprofit private colleges and universities: 43.6%

Four-Year Graduation Rate for Women

- Public colleges and universities: 39.5%
- Nonprofit private colleges and universities: 57.3%

You can find the gender grad rates for individual schools at the website of [College Completion](#), which is a microsite of The Chronicle of Higher Education.