

# The Truth About: College Student Transfers

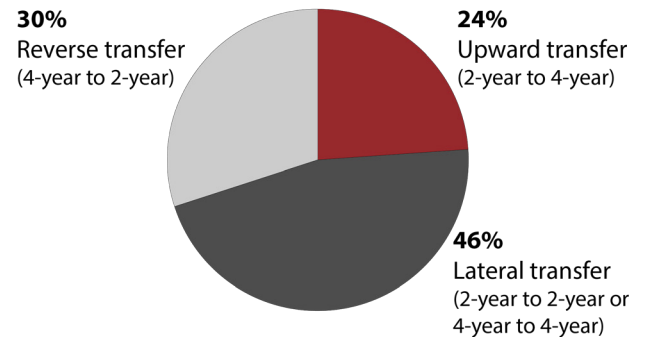


## College Student Transfers Defy Assumptions

Over [one-third of students](#) transfer credits to a different institution after entering college. Some students [plan to transfer](#) as part of their academic career, while others transfer for [reasons](#) such as financial concerns, social fit, and school location. Contrary to [common assumptions](#), the transfer landscape is complex and consists of multiple pathways (Figure 1). Some students transfer to take all classes at another institution, whereas other “[swirl](#)” and take a few classes at a different institution; for example, [one in three reverse transfer students](#) take only summer classes at a community college. It is clear that institutions are already effectively partnering to facilitate student transfers.

**Figure 1: First Transfer Pathways, 2011 to 2017**

Destination of first transfer in fall 2011 student cohort as percent of total



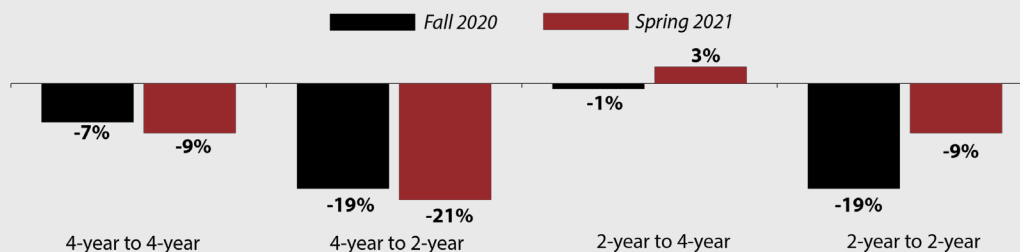
Note: The 2011 cohort represents the most recently available disaggregated data due to tracking students over six years.  
Source: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, “Transfer and Mobility - 2018”, Appendix C

## Students Find Value in Four-Year Degrees During Pandemic

Transfer mobility [dropped sharply by eight percent](#) due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the upward transfer pathway (2-year to 4-year) increased this spring (Figure 2). Furthermore, [65 percent of students](#) who transferred upwards earned credits but not a degree from a two-year institution, illustrating the importance of four-year degrees and flexible pathways for transfer students.

**Figure 2: Transfer Rate Changes**

Percent change in transfer pathway from previous year



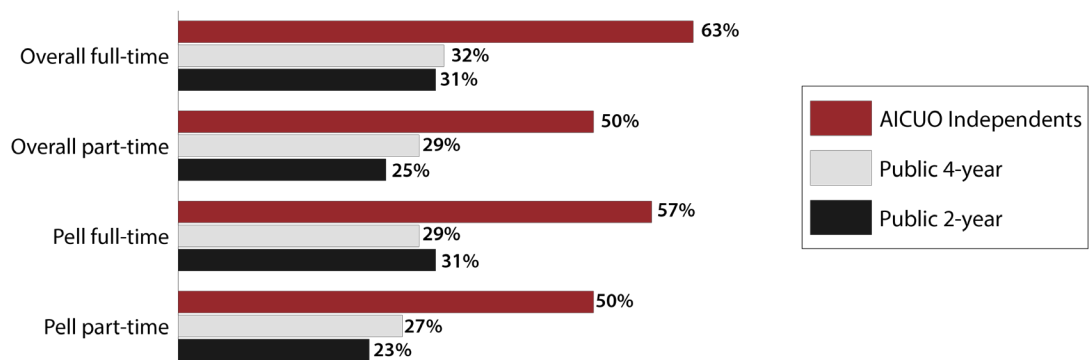
Source: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, “Transfer, Mobility, and Progress” Fall 2020 and Spring 2021

## Ohio Independents Lead in Graduating Transfer Students

Independent colleges already possess [essential services](#) necessary for supporting transfer students, including [easy access to advising](#) and [tailored financial aid](#). Among the most recently available IPEDS data, over 12,000 graduates from the 2011-12 cohort elected to transfer-in to an AICUO member college. Ohio independent colleges graduated transfer students from all income levels better than any other sector (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Ohio Transfer Graduation Rates**

Median percentage of students that received a degree from the institution they transferred to within 8 years of enrollment



Note: Analyses were conducted by AICUO using IPEDS 2019 Outcomes Measures data.  
Source: IPEDS