



University of Illinois  
College of Education

## OCCL RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

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# OCCL

## Project Profile

### MIDPOINT CREDENTIALS

#### Overview

This study examined the accumulated college credits of students who stop short of conferral of their intended postsecondary credentials. A search of higher education systems in the U.S. and internationally identified models that convert departing students' credits into college credentials or facilitate the awarding of formal degrees to students who drop out:

- For baccalaureate-seeking students with insufficient or the wrong credits, the **University-Awarded En-Route Degree** or the **Community College-Awarded En-Route Degree for University Students** models facilitate completion.
- For students who have earned nearly enough hours, but who have not completed specific requirements, the **Associate Completion Degree** or the **Baccalaureate Completion Degree** models provide general degree options.
- For students seeking career-focused education, the **Applied Degree** option (associate or baccalaureate) might be attractive.
- The **Transfer-Back Degree**, **Dual Admission Degree**, and **Traditional Transfer** models facilitate community college students' BA completion.

#### Findings

- College completion is a top priority for higher education today.
- The value of a credential compared to some or no college credit is increasing.
- Low college degree attainment remains an unresolved issue; enough students are beginning college, but some students leave with some credits, no degree.
- Many students who drop out depart after acquiring substantial numbers of credits. Selected state data reveal that students often depart with enough credits for some credential.
- Offering midpoint credentials to students who meet requirements for a lower or alternative degree than they initially sought may be considered a win-win-win.
- Associate degrees are an underutilized midpoint credential in baccalaureate programs, but models exist that may offer insights to other institutions.

#### Products

- "All or Nothing? Midpoint Credentials for College Students Who Stop Short of Credential Requirements"
- Major Findings and Discussion Guide for "All or Nothing? Midpoint Credentials for College Students Who Stop Short of Credential Requirements"
- Degree-Completion Decision Paths

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#### For more information

Visit <http://occl.illinois.edu/projects/midpoint> for more information and links to the released products.

