

Time-to-Completion Analysis for NOCE CTE Pathways: *Preliminary Findings*

Prepared by Office of Institutional Research and Planning

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Introduction

With the intention to seek a better understanding of student engagement in CTE pathways, emphasizing initially allied health programs, NOCE's Office of Institutional Research and Planning (OIRP) analyzed enrollment patterns, success rates, and times to complete a pathway of students. Analysis began preliminarily viewing the Funeral Services Assistant, Personal Care Aide, and Medical Assistant pathways. This analysis intends to deepen our understanding on how our students' access, progress through, and complete their vocational training.

Methodology

For each program, all students who have completed the certificate program at NOCE were queried. The analysis includes the first term and the initial date of enrollment in one of the program's classes, along with other factors that may influence a student's journey, such as enrollment concurrency, gap years (time between enrollment within a program), and prior CTE program enrollments. Time to completion is calculated by subtracting either the first start date of the term or the first registration date in any course within the program from the graduation date (if the class registration date is before the start of the term, then the start of the term date was used, otherwise registration date was used).

Key Findings

Funeral Services Assistant (FSRV)

- Avg. completion time: **1 year 2 months**; 58% complete in <1 year.
- Gap years (≥ 1 year) add ~1 year 1 semester to completion time.

Personal Care Aide (PCA)

- 94% complete in **1 semester or less** (4 months).
- Program structure (6-week class increments) supports accelerated completion.

Medical Assistant (MA)

- Avg. completion: **1 year 6 months**; only 26% finish in <1 year.
- 83% complete within 2 years.

Preliminary Findings

Funeral Services Assistant Program

Table 1.1: Average Time to Completion for FSRV Completers

Time to Completion	Average	Std. Dev.	Median	Range
Total Completers (N = 77)	1.17 Years (1 year 2 months)	0.51 Years (6 months)	0.92 Years (11 months)	9 months – 3 years and 4 months
Concurrently Enrolled in Other NOCE Courses (n = 24)	1.24 Years (1 year 3 months)	0.56 Years (6.5 months)	0.89 Years (10.5 months)	9 months – 2 years and 10 months
Concurrent Enrolled in Credit (CC/FC) Courses (n = 17)	1.19 Years (1 year 2 months)	0.65 Years (7.5 months)	0.97 Years (11.5 months)	9 months – 3 years and 4 months

Table 1.2: Completion by Number of Students for FSRV Completers

FSRV Completers (N = 77)	Count of Students	Proportion
Less than 1 Year	45	58%
Between 1 Year and less than 2 Years	28	36%
2 Years or More	4	5%

There were 77 completers in the Funeral Services Assistant (FSRV) Program between June 2016 and May 2024. **The average time to complete the program is approximately 1 year and 2 months, where 58% complete within a year and 95% complete within two years.** Time to complete the program appears unaffected by whether a student is currently enrolled in other NOCE courses outside of the FSRV program or the student is enrolled in a credit course at Cypress or Fullerton College. Prior to Fall 2020, NOCE used a trimester schedule and saw this also affected time to completion. When on the trimester cycle, students' average time to complete was 1.08 years whereas now, on a semester basis, students' average is 1.27 years, a difference of about 10 weeks (the approximate length of a CTE course).

Table 1.3: Gap Years within FSRV Enrollment

Time To Completion	Average	Std. Dev	Median	Range
Has a Gap Year (n = 6)	2.35 Years (2 years 4 months)	0.63 Years (7.5 months)	2.22 Years (2 years 2.5 months)	1 year and 8 months – 3 years and 4 months
Without a Gap Year (n = 71)	1.07 Years (1 year 3.5 weeks)	0.36 Years (4 months)	0.86 Years (10 months)	9 months – 1 year and 11 months

Continuous or sporadic enrollment, including gap years, impacts time to completion. Among those who completed the program, only 8% had an enrollment gap of at least one year. These individuals typically experienced a delay of one year and one semester in obtaining certification.

Given the small number of re-enrolled students (6), attention was also directed toward non-completers. Non-completers are defined as individuals who did not finish the program but completed at least two FSRV courses, indicating a level of commitment, followed by no further enrollment. In total, 45 individuals met this criterion, 22 of which have completed 4 out of the 5 required courses (1 class away from certification). Further investigation into the factors influencing their decision to cease enrollment may provide valuable insights for improving retention and supporting students in completing the program.

Personal Care Aide Program

Table 2.1: Average Time to Completion for PCA Completers

Time to Completion	Average	Std. Dev.	Median	Range
Total Completers (N = 89)	0.33 years (1 semester)	.15 years (half a semester)	0.33 years (1 semester)	Half a semester – 1 year and half a semester
Concurrently Enrolled in Other NOCE Courses (n = 40)	0.33 years (1 semester)	.19 years (slightly above half a semester)	0.34 years (1 semester)	Half a semester – 1 year and half a semester
Concurrent Enrolled in Credit (CC/FC) Courses (n = 2)	0.33 years (1 semester)	N/A	0.33 years (1 semester)	Half a semester

Table 2.2: Completion by Number of Students for PCA Completers

PCA Completers (N = 89)	Count of Students	Proportion
1 Semester or Less	84	94%
More than 1 Semester	5	6%

There were 89 completers in the Personal Care Aide (PCA) Program between May 2021 and August 2024. Per the CTE PCA webpage, 3 courses are required to complete the program, and students can finish the program in 4 months (1 semester). When exploring the class schedule, classes are offered in 6-week increments within the same term which allows students to finish the certificate program in 1 semester, and **94% have completed in a semester or less**. Time to complete the program appears unaffected by whether a student is currently enrolled in other NOCE courses outside of the PCA program or the student is enrolled in a credit course at Cypress or Fullerton College. Of the students that took more than one semester, 3 students took an additional half a semester, 1 student took two semesters, and 1 student took more than a year and had a gap year.

Medical Assistant Program

Table 3.1: Average Time to Completion for MA Completers

Time to Completion	Average	Std. Dev.	Median	Range
Total Completers (N = 126)	1.46 years (1 year and 6 months)	.64 years (8 months)	1.33 years (1 year and 4 months)	7 months – 3 years and 7 months
No Concurrent Enrollment Within (n = 87)	1.36 years (1 year and 4 months)	.53 years (6 months)	1.19 years (1 year and 2 months)	7 months – 3 years and 4 months
Concurrently Enrolled in Other NOCE Courses (n = 30)	1.62 years (1 year and 8 months)	.74 years (9 months)	1.35 (1 year and 1 semester)	9 month – 3 years and 7 months
Concurrent Enrolled in Credit (CC/FC) Courses (n = 16)	1.89 years (1 year and 10 months)	.79 years (9 months)	1.85 years (1 year and 10 months)	9 months – 3 years and 2 months

Table 3.2: Completion by Number of Students for MA Completers

MA Completers (N = 126)	Count of Students	Proportion
Less than 1 Year	33	26%
Between 1 Year and less than 1.5 Years	51	40%
Between 1.5 Year and less than 2 Years	21	17%
Between 2 Year and less than 3 Years	16	13%
3 Years or More	5	4%

Only the new Medical Assistant (MA) Program, initiated in August 2021, is considered, and there were 126 completers between the start of the new program and August 2024. Per the CTE MA webpage, 7 courses are required to complete, and students can finish the program in “as little as 8-10 months.” When exploring the class schedule, classes are offered in 6-week, 8-week, and 9-week increments within the same term which allows students to take a course in either half of a semester.

While the program advertises itself as finishing in 8 to 10 months, only about a quarter of students complete within a year. **The majority complete the program between 1 to 2 years (57%); 83% of all completers finish within 2 years.** Taking concurrent classes whether within NOCE, Cypress College, and Fullerton College appears to affect students’ time to complete the program, increasing time to complete by about an extra semester.

Table 3.3: Gap Years within MA Enrollment

Time To Completion	Average	Std. Dev	Median	Range
Has a Gap Year (n = 8)	2.65 years (2 years and 8 months)	.77 years (9 months)	2.84 years (2 years and 10 months)	1 year and 2 months – 3 years and 7 months
Without a Gap Year (n = 118)	1.38 years (1 year and 4 months)	.54 years (6 months)	1.19 years (1 year and 2 months)	7 months – 3 years and 5 months

Among those who completed the program, only 6% had an enrollment gap of at least one year. These individuals typically experienced a delay of one year and one semester in obtaining certification. For the MA program, non-completers are defined as individuals who did not finish the program but completed at least two MA courses not including MEDA 100

and shared requisite courses for other CTE programs such as MEDA 101 or COMP 685. 318 non-completers were identified.

Conclusion

This preliminary study has established a defined methodology for analyzing time-to-completion in noncredit CTE pathways, accounting for variables such as concurrent enrollment, gap years, and prior program participation. While these initial findings provide valuable insights into student progression patterns for three CTE programs, they also highlight opportunities for targeted support to help near-completers finish their certificates.

The next phase will expand this methodology to additional CTE programs, enabling NOCE to build a comprehensive understanding of completion timelines across its vocational offerings. This expanded dataset will support data-informed program planning, resource allocation, and strategies to improve student completion rates.