

Topic in Brief

Time-to-degree for graduates with multiple majors, minors, capped and STEM majors: Freshman entrants

September, 2017

For single-degree recipients who entered as freshmen, STEM majors had a shorter time-to-degree. For multiple-degree recipients, those with a minor or a STEM major had a longer time-to-degree. Whether single or multiple majors, degree recipients with capped majors had a shorter time-to-degree.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the academic years 2011-12 through 2015-16, there were 20,096 bachelor’s degree recipients who had entered as freshmen in a Fall term. Eighty-five percent (n = 17,065) were enrolled for four years or fewer before graduating. An additional 10% were enrolled for 4.5 years, and the remaining 5% were enrolled for five years or more.

Having more than one major was associated with a longer time-to-degree.

Time-to-degree for **single** degree recipients was

Not associated with earning a minor.
Shorter for capped majors.
Shorter for STEM majors.

Time-to-degree for **multiple** degree recipients was

Longer for those who earned a minor.
Shorter if any major was capped.
Longer if any major was STEM.

Methodology

The analysis includes degree recipients from academic years 2011 through 2016 who entered as freshmen in a Fall term. Data were pulled from the Degrees subject area of Cal Answers. Degree recipients who graduated in a Single, Individual, or Joint major program were counted as having one major. Students who graduated in more than one major program were counted as multiple majors, regardless of whether those programs were offered within the same, or by different, Schools or Colleges. Time-to-degree was measured in enrolled academic years, counting Fall and Spring terms, but not Summer terms. Degree recipients in an academic year include a trailing Summer term. The Department of Homeland Security’s [STEM Designated Degree Program List](#) was used to classify majors as Science, Technology, Engineering, or Math degrees. “Capped” majors are declared after matriculation to UC Berkeley and have a grade point average (GPA) requirement or a limit to the number of students accepted to the major. For this analysis, the following were categorized as capped majors: Art, Business Administration, Cognitive Science, L&S Computer Science, Economics, Media Studies, Psychology, L&S Public Health, and Statistics. The analysis on capped majors was limited to degree recipients in the College of Letters & Science and Haas School of Business.

Additional analyses

Several Office of Planning & Analysis projects are related to this briefing note. The Cal Answers [Multiple Majors Dashboard](#) and [visualization](#) provide information on the co-occurrence of declared majors of enrolled students (not degree recipients). The briefing note, [“Undergraduate Double/Triple Majors at UC Berkeley”](#) has previous analysis and historical trends on multiple majors. The fact sheet, [“Majors and Minors of Degree Recipients, 2010-11 to 2014-15”](#) lists the most common majors and minors earned at Berkeley.



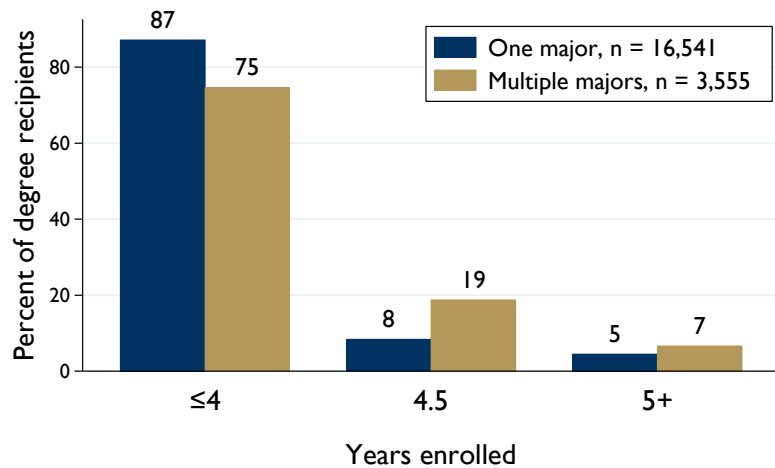
MULTIPLE MAJORS

In the academic years 2011-12 through 2015-16, there were 20,096 bachelor's degree recipients who had entered as freshmen in a Fall term.

- 82% (n = 16,541) earned one major
- 17% (n = 3,454) earned two majors
- 1% (n = 101) earned three majors

As shown in the graph to the right, 87% percent (n = 14,413) of degree recipients with one major were enrolled for four years or fewer (not shown: 6% for 3 years, 12% for 3.5 years, and 69% for 4 years). Comparatively, 75% (n = 2,652) of degree recipients with multiple majors were enrolled for four years or fewer (3% for 3 years, 6% for 3.5 years, and 65% for 4 years). A larger proportion of degree recipients with multiple majors (19%, n = 667) than those with one major (8%, n = 1,383) were enrolled for 4.5 years.

Years enrolled by number of majors



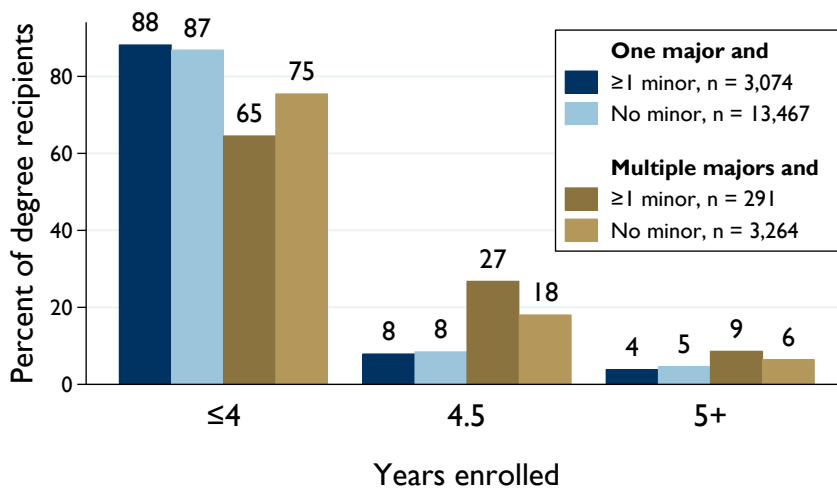
Source: Cal Answers - Degrees, degree recipients 2011-12 through 2015-16 (N = 20,096)

MINORS

Among all degree recipients, 17% (n = 3,365) earned one or more minors. A similar proportion of degree recipients who earned a minor (86%, n=2,900) and those who did not (85%, n = 14,165) were enrolled for four years or fewer.

When considering multiple majors, differences emerged (see graph below). Among single-degree recipients, earning a minor does not appear to be related to time-to-degree. Eighty-eight percent (n = 2,712) of single-degree recipients who earned one or more minors were enrolled for four years or fewer. This was 87% for single-degree recipients who did not earn a minor. In comparison, among multiple-degree recipients, 75% (n = 2,464) of those who did not earn a minor, compared with 65% (n = 188) of those who did, were enrolled for four years or fewer.

Years enrolled



Sources: Cal Answers - Degrees, degree recipients 2011-12 through 2015-16 (N = 20,096).
Minors data from transcripts

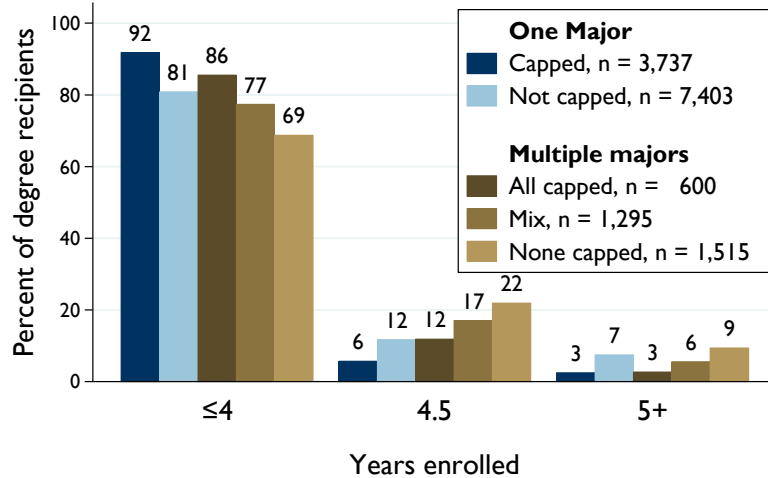
Degree recipients with multiple majors and a minor were a small proportion of each graduating cohort. Additionally, the proportion of multiple-degree recipients who earn one or more minors did not appear to increase over the five years analyzed.

CAPPED MAJORS

There are several “capped” majors, with minimum GPA requirements or a limited number of spaces, which undergraduate students may apply to after completing prerequisite classes. These majors include, but are not limited to, Art, Business Administration, Cognitive Science, L&S Computer Science, Economics, Media Studies, Psychology, L&S Public Health, and Statistics. Almost one-third (32%, n = 6,450) of degree recipients had a capped major.

Only degree recipients in College of Letters & Science and Haas School of Business are included in the analysis since the capped majors occur in L&S and Haas. In addition, students are admitted directly into a major in some colleges, making the comparison with capped majors irrelevant.

Years enrolled by number of capped majors (L&S and Haas only)



Whether single or multiple majors, degree recipients with capped majors had a shorter time-to-degree.

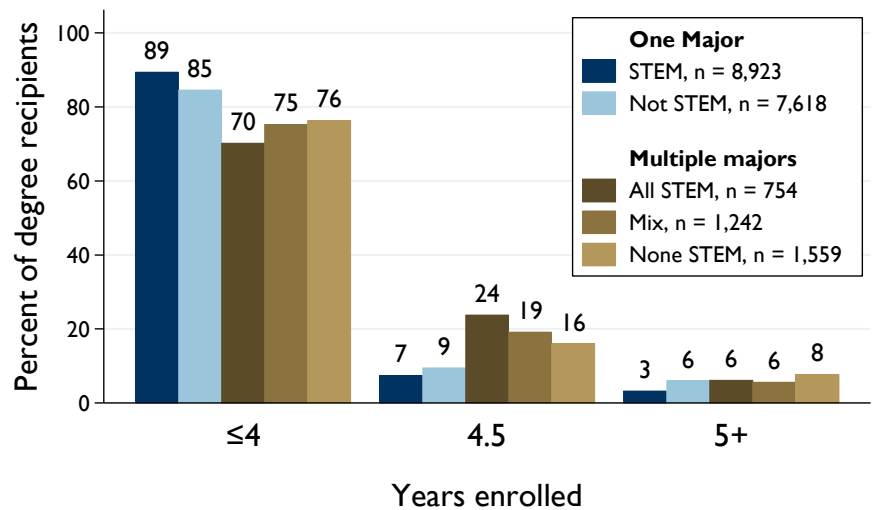
Sources: Cal Answers - Degrees, degree recipients 2011-12 through 2015-16 (N = 14,550).

A higher proportion of degree recipients who had one capped major was enrolled for four years or less (88%, n = 4,392) compared to those who did not have a capped major (79%, n = 7,026, were enrolled for four years or less). Additionally, 86% (n = 554) of those with multiple capped majors were enrolled for four years or less.

STEM MAJORS

Over half of all degree recipients (54%, n = 10,919) earned a degree in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) as defined by the Department of Homeland Security. Eighty-nine percent (n = 7,974) of STEM single-major degree recipients were enrolled for four years or less. Comparatively, 85% (n = 6,439) of non-STEM single-major degree recipients were enrolled for four years or less. Conversely, having a STEM major was associated with longer time-to-degree among multiple-degree recipients. The number of degree recipients with multiple STEM majors is small and the vast majority graduate within 4.5 years.

Years enrolled by number/type of majors



Source: Cal Answers - Degrees, degree recipients 2011-12 through 2015-16 (N = 20,096)

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