

Queensborough Community College Demonstrates That ACUE-Certified Faculty Drive Sustained Student Success

Students taught by ACUE-certified faculty at QCC show sustained positive outcomes, with the greatest gains among Black/African American students.



Part of the City University of New York (CUNY) system, Queensborough Community College (QCC) is a designated Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANAPISI), which serves 12,405 students in Queens, NY. To advance student success, QCC prioritized investments in teaching effectiveness.

Key Findings

Students taught by ACUE-certified faculty experienced:

- **17%** fewer Ds, Fs, and withdrawals (DFWs)
- **22%** lower DFW rates among Black/African American students
- **8%** higher grades overall
- **6%** improved course pass rates

The study found that there was a larger impact for Black/African American students.

Executive Summary

This evaluation examines the impact of ACUE-certified faculty on student outcomes at Queensborough Community College (QCC), focusing on faculty who participated in ACUE's Effective Teaching Practices or Effective Online Teaching Practices courses between fall 2022 and spring 2023.

The sample included 51,527 enrollments and 318 faculty across 2,254 course sections, with analyses comparing outcomes between students taught by ACUE-certified faculty and non-participating faculty across three time periods:

- Before (fall 2021–spring 2022)
- During (fall 2022–spring 2023)
- After certification (fall 2023–spring 2024)

Results indicate that ACUE certification drives sustained benefits to students across multiple outcomes including course completion, passing rates, grades, and reductions in DFWs demonstrating that investing in evidence-based faculty development measurably strengthens instructional quality, improves student success, and helps close achievement gaps across a diverse community college population.

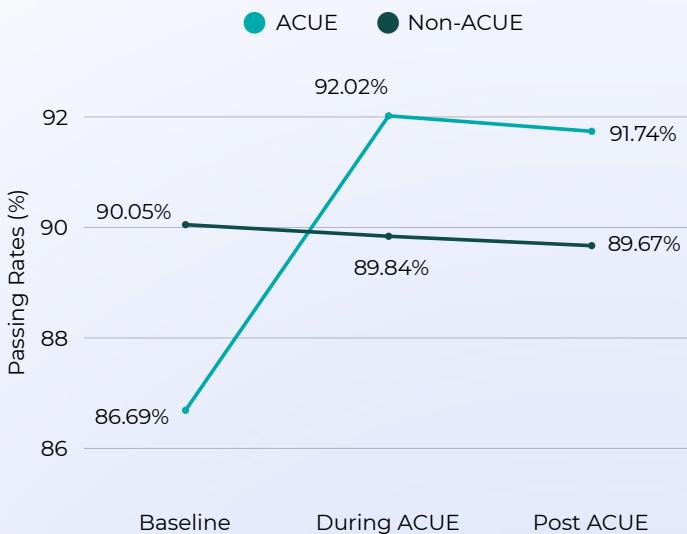
Higher Course Completion

There was a statistically significant, positive impact of ACUE certification on course completion:

- During certification: ($b = 0.17, p = .028$)
- After certification: ($b = 0.30, p < .001$)

Completion rates saw a predicted increase of 1.6% post-certification from baseline among ACUE-taught sections, while non-ACUE sections saw a predicted 3.8% decline during the same period.

ACUE Impact on Passing Rates



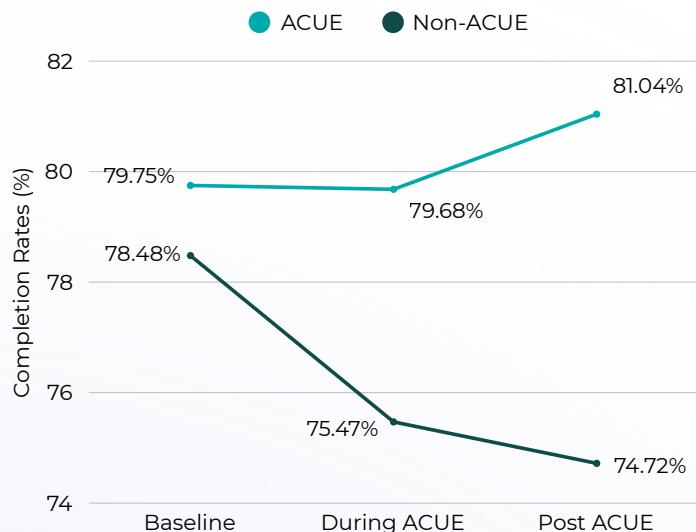
Reduced DFW Rates

There was a statistically significant effect of ACUE certification on the likelihood of students receiving DFWs:

- During certification: ($b = -0.35, p < .001$)
- After certification: ($b = -0.45, p < .001$)

Students in ACUE-taught sections experienced a predicted 13.2% decrease in DFW grades during certification and a predicted 17.3% decrease after certification, relative to baseline.

ACUE Impact on Completion Rates



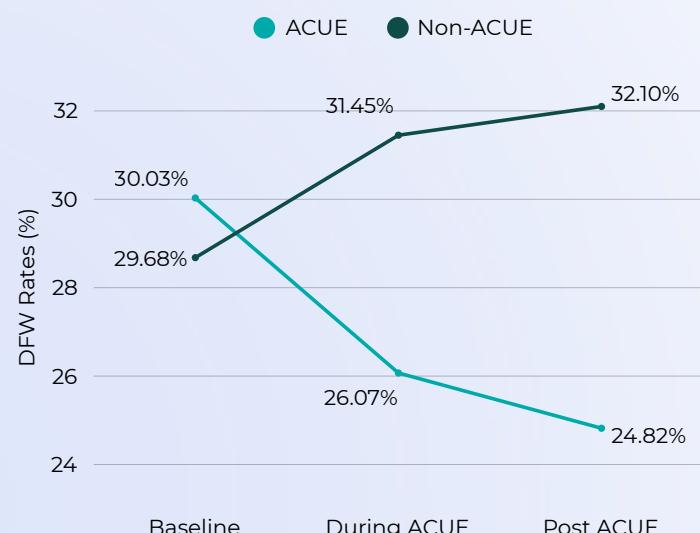
Increased Passing Rates

There was a statistically significant, positive impact of ACUE certification on likelihood of passing courses:

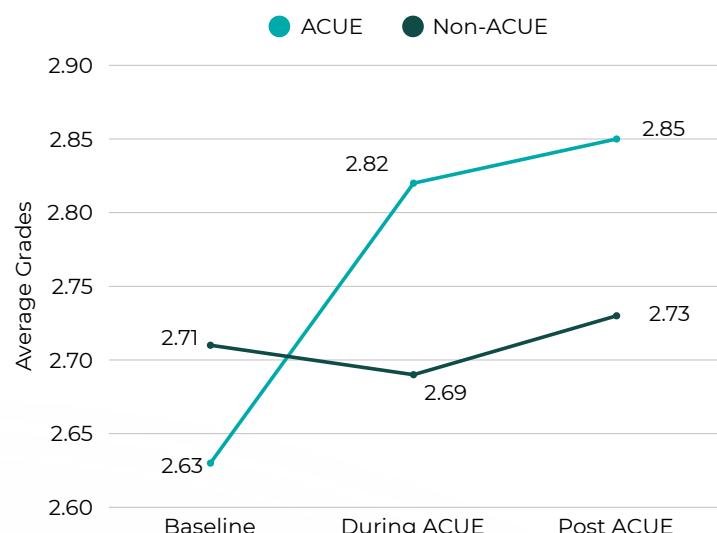
- During certification: ($b = 0.62, p < .001$)
- After certification: ($b = 0.60, p < .001$)

Students in ACUE sections showed a predicted increase of 6.1% on passing rates during and of 5.8% after certification, compared to baseline.

ACUE Impact on DFW Rates



ACUE Impact on Average Grades



Higher Average Grades

Students taught by ACUE-certified faculty experienced a statistically significant, positive impact on average grades:

- During certification: ($b = 0.21, p < .001$)
- After certification: ($b = 0.20, p < .001$)

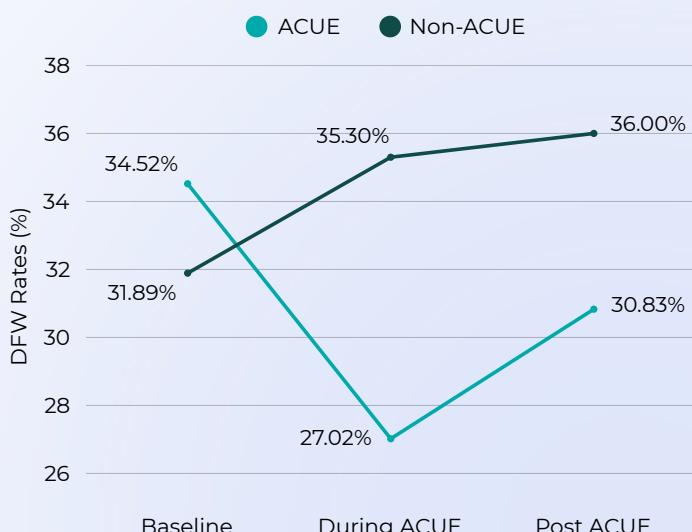
Specifically, they saw predicted increases of 0.19 grade points during and 0.22 grade points after certification (4.0 scale).

Greater Impact Among Black/African American and Female Students

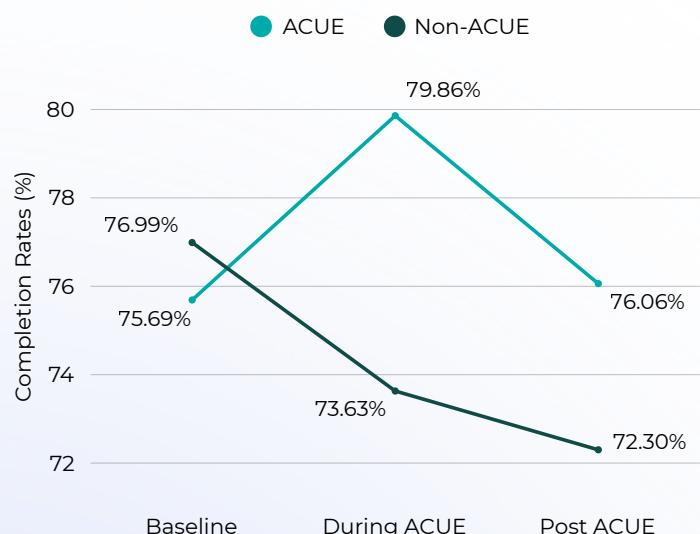
Impacts were larger for specific student groups:

- Black/African American students
 - Higher completion (during certification): $b = 0.74, p = .007$
 - Reduced DFWs (during certification): $b = -0.56, p = .025$
- Female students:
 - Increased completion rates (after certification): ($b = 0.33, p = .044$)

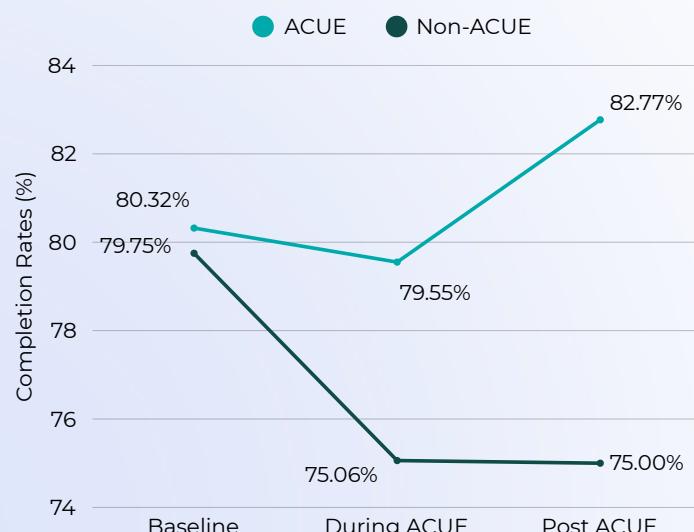
DFW—Black/African American Students



Completion—Black/African American Students



Completion—Female Students



Methods

To ensure fair and accurate comparisons between the ACUE and non-ACUE groups, Coarsened Exact Matching (CEM) was used to pair ACUE and comparison course sections based on course semester, course department, course level, and faculty tenure. This matching process facilitated the isolation of the ACUE certification's impact from other instructional or contextual differences.

A Difference-in-Differences (DID) approach was used to compare changes in student outcomes before, during, and after ACUE certification between courses taught by ACUE-certified faculty and those taught by non-certified faculty. The models controlled for faculty years of experience and teaching load, student demographics (gender, race/ethnicity, age, Pell eligibility, college generational status, ESL status, international status, student status, and class standing), and course characteristics (section size, course format, and CEM weights).

Conclusions

The findings from the evaluation demonstrate that ACUE certification was associated with sustained improvements in student success at Queensborough Community College. Across multiple outcomes, students taught by ACUE-certified faculty showed positive impacts on course completion, passing rates, DFW rates, and average grades during and after the certification periods. These benefits, observed across a broad and diverse student population, suggest that evidence-based instructional practices not only enhance overall academic performance but also promote equitable outcomes across student groups. By equipping faculty with evidence-based teaching strategies, ACUE supports QCC's mission to strengthen instructional quality and close achievement gaps. In summary, these results emphasize the continuing value of investing in faculty development, such as the ACUE courses, to improve student learning, persistence, academic success, and equity within the community college setting.

About ACUE

The Association of College and University Educators (ACUE) is dedicated to student success through high-quality instruction. In partnership with higher education institutions, we offer the only nationally recognized Effective Teaching certification, endorsed by the American Council on Education (ACE), supported by a vibrant online community of practice focused on advancing teaching excellence. ACUE-certified faculty deliver exceptional teaching in every class, resulting in higher student engagement, improved achievement, and stronger retention—outcomes that enhance institutional impact and support long-term student success. Learn more at acue.org.

Read the full report:: Queensborough Community College Demonstrates That ACUE-Certified Faculty Drive Sustained Student Success (2026)