

# Noncognitive Factors That Support Postsecondary Persistence in Deaf Students

**RS**  
Research  
Summarized

## What is postsecondary persistence?

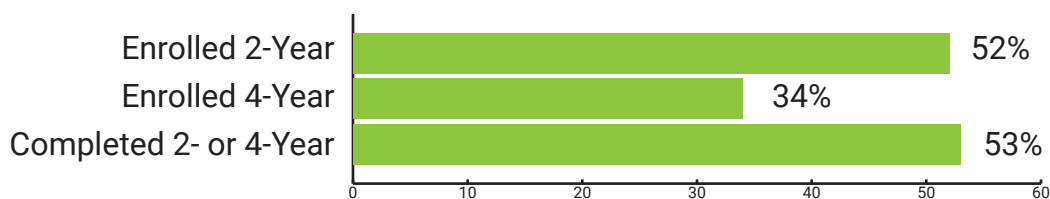
Persistence in postsecondary settings refers to the likelihood that a student will remain in school, particularly past the first year of enrollment. Although deaf student enrollment in postsecondary settings has seen a significant increase, students continue to face obstacles to completion of their postsecondary degree goals, with high rates of attrition. Facilitating successful persistence is thus a critical issue in increasing education and work options for deaf individuals.

“Giving increased attention to personal factors, as well as metacognitive skills, may provide the necessary boost for more deaf students to persist and succeed in college”<sup>1</sup>

## Evolving Model of Persistence

- Academic preparation is a predictor of postsecondary success, but “noncognitive” variables such as motivation, interest, and study habits also affect persistence and graduation rates.<sup>14,17</sup>
- Certain cognitive factors, such as English literacy skills, have been found to predict college enrollment in deaf individuals, but not completion or graduation.<sup>8</sup> There is a need to explore “noncognitive” factors in deaf students.<sup>10,9</sup>
- From 1990 to 1998, approximately 80% of deaf students with 9th- to 12th-grade literacy levels withdrew from The National Technical Institute for the Deaf/Rochester Institute of Technology. This finding indicates that some deaf students have adequate academic skills but, due to other factors, may still be likely to drop out of college.<sup>4</sup>

**Postsecondary Enrollment and Completion Rates for Deaf Young Adults  
2000-2010 (NLTS2)<sup>12</sup>**



## Factors Influencing Persistence in Postsecondary Settings

Students who persist have positive academic experiences.<sup>5,11</sup>

- They spend informal mentorship time with faculty.
- They participate in study groups, with both deaf and hearing peers.
- They collaborate with their academic advisor.

Students who persist have strong social skills to support academic achievement.<sup>3,20</sup>

- They have the ability and willingness to become involved in social activities.



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- They have the capacity to cope with frustration and to deal with conflict.
- They have the ability to follow directions and stay on task.

Students who persist have high levels of social integration, meaning they feel satisfied with their social experience and are able to adjust life away from home.<sup>11</sup>

- Participation in social events in the first year predicts later persistence.
- School clubs, sports, and fine art activities are important activities and structures.
- Interaction with other deaf peers may have a positive impact on persistence.<sup>18</sup>
- However, too many extracurricular activities may be overwhelming.<sup>16</sup>

Students who persist have clear goals and strategies.<sup>15</sup>

- They know who they are and are authentic to themselves.
- They have the desire to achieve educational goals at a particular school or program.
- They have “grit” and are “creative advocates,” especially in challenging conditions.

## Strategies to Support Persistence for Deaf Students

Focus on ways to support both academic and social integration.

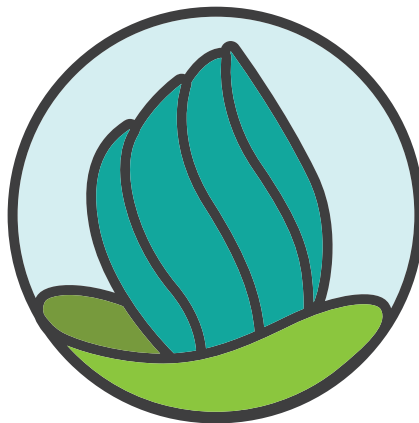
Administer personal factors assessments to first-year students to help predict academic progress and persistence.<sup>1,2</sup>

Emphasize the importance of determining a direction and purpose in pursuing higher education.<sup>11</sup>

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