What is disproportionate impact?

Disproportionate impact is when a population of students significantly underperforms the highest performing group of students. The current threshold for a group to be disproportionately impacted is 80%. This means that when a group of students performs at a level that is only 80% of the highest performing group, they are disproportionately impacted.

## For example:

In Fall 2015, when we disaggregated by race, Asian students were the most successful group in terms of course completion at 79.7% successful completion. If we were to compare Pacific Islander (55.17% success rate) achievement rates to the Asian subgroup, you can see that there is a significant gap between the two groups of students.

Figure - Comparison of Student Success Rate- Asian vs. Pacific Islander

To assess disproportionate impact, we take the highest achieving group (Asians) and use them as the reference group. Then take the success rate for the group you are considering (Pacific Islanders) and divide that percentage by the percentage of the reference group.

$$\frac{55.17 (Pacific Islanders)}{79.70 (Asian Reference Group)}=.692$$

.692 is below .8 (80%) and so we can say that with regard to course completion, Pacific Islander students are disproportionately impacted. There is a significant gap between successful course completion for Asian students and Pacific Islanders.

## Important Considerations

* The number of students in the reference group matters. It is generally good to select a group that has more than 30 members in the population. If you choose a group that has too few students, your data could be significantly skewed and will not adequately represent disproportionate impact.
* To assess disproportionate impact for course completion you can use the [SEAT tool](https://public.tableau.com/profile/sacresearch#!/vizhome/shared/3WNQ22RSX) and to examine disproportionate impact for Degrees and Certificates, you can use the [Degree and Certificate Tool](https://public.tableau.com/profile/sacresearch#!/vizhome/DegreesCertificatesAwarded/DegreesAwarded).