

# Statement of Educational Effectiveness

Updated Fall 2022

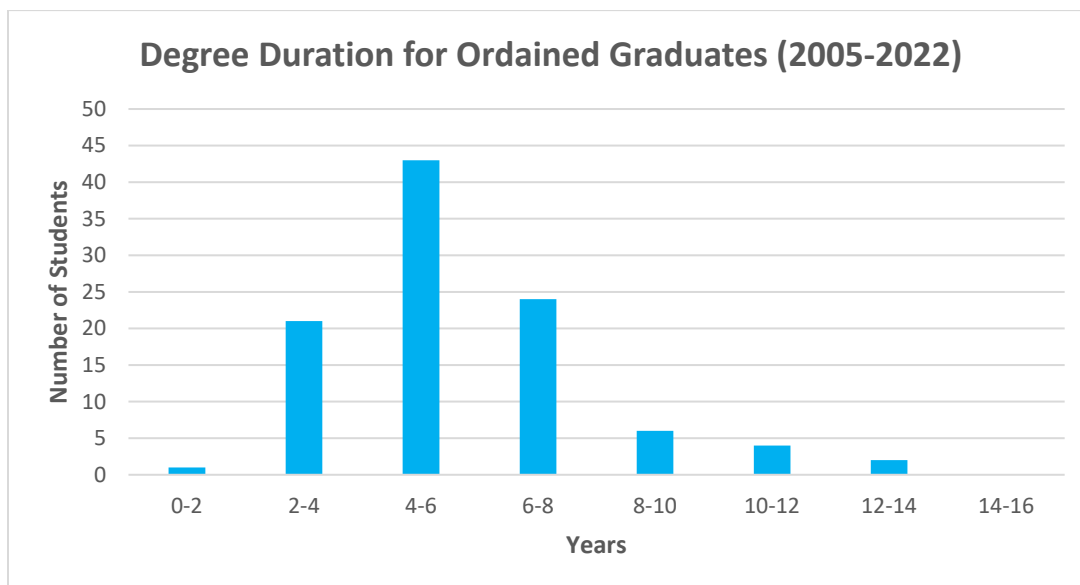
## Accreditation Status

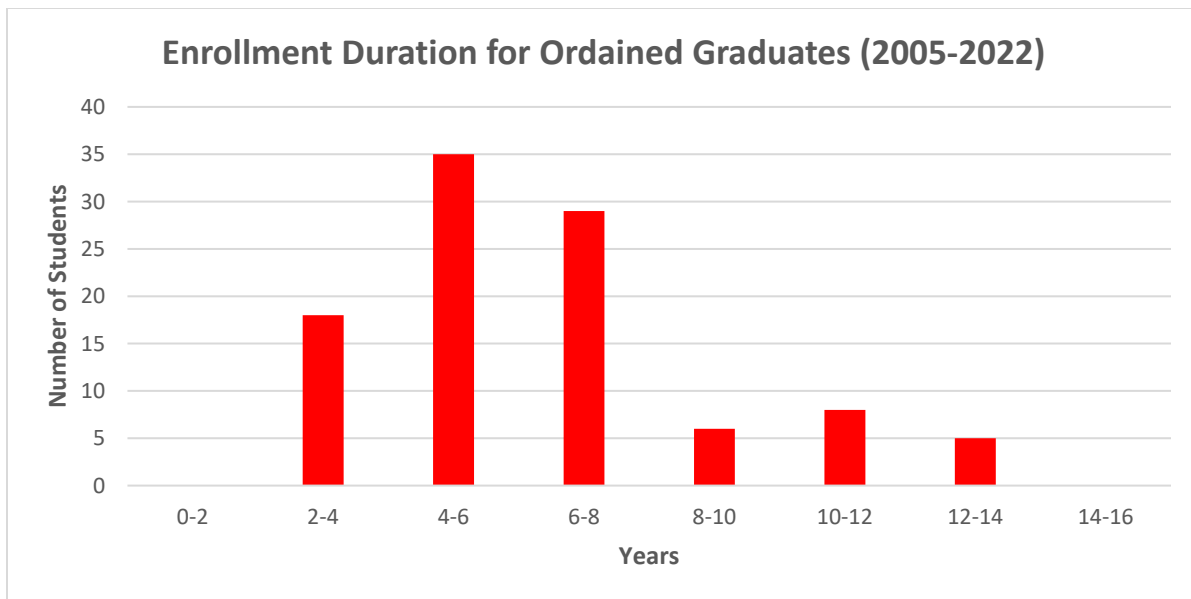
The Academy for Jewish Religion is accredited by [The Association of Theological Schools](#) and is approved to offer comprehensive Distance Education. Information about AJR's accreditation status can be found [here](#).

## Enrollment Duration and Graduation

Our records for graduates going back over the last two decades show that most AJR ordination students take an average of four to six years after the date of their matriculation to complete their ordination program. There is a wide range among completion times—some students who enter with substantial relevant experience or transfer credits may take only three years to complete their program, while other students who take only one or two classes each trimester may take ten or more years.

In general, the typical AJR ordinee completes their program in between four and eight years. 88% of ordinees complete their programs within eight years after the date of their matriculation, and 94% within ten years. In some extreme cases students may take longer. Because many of our students are enrolled part-time, getting an accurate picture of our programs' graduation rates requires considering students who began their programs many years ago. The graphs below reflect all students who matriculated in 2005 or later (even if they initially came to AJR prior to 2005) and have successfully completed an ordination program. The Degree Duration graph indicates time from matriculation while the Enrollment Duration graph indicates time from first enrollment.





## Completion and Transfer Rates

The Department of Education defines “completion rates” as:

The number of regular students who earned credentials for successfully completing a program within 150% of its length



Number of regular students enrolled in a program for the award year\*

\*AJR calculates the number of regular students by cohort based upon the academic year in which they matriculated. Given that each Ordination ceremony includes students from multiple cohorts, the total number of students in all represented cohorts are included for the calculation of completion rates.

AJR offers a flexible path towards ordination/graduation allowing students to complete programs at their own pace, which means that most candidates do not graduate with the rest of their entering cohort. The official completion rates below only capture the number of students from each entering cohort who have already completed their program. However, this does *not* mean that the rest of their cohort withdrew; many students in the cohorts represented below are still pursuing their degrees and will likely complete their programs within 150% of the program lengths. See the Historical Completion Rates data following the 2021-2022 Completion Rates for a more accurate picture of AJR’s completion rates.

AJR’s 2021-2022 Completion Rates for its programs are as follows:

Rabbinic Program: 37.5%

Cantorial Program: 0% (AJR did not ordain any cantors this year)

MA Program: 0% (AJR did not grant any MA Degrees this year)

Completion rates by program and gender:

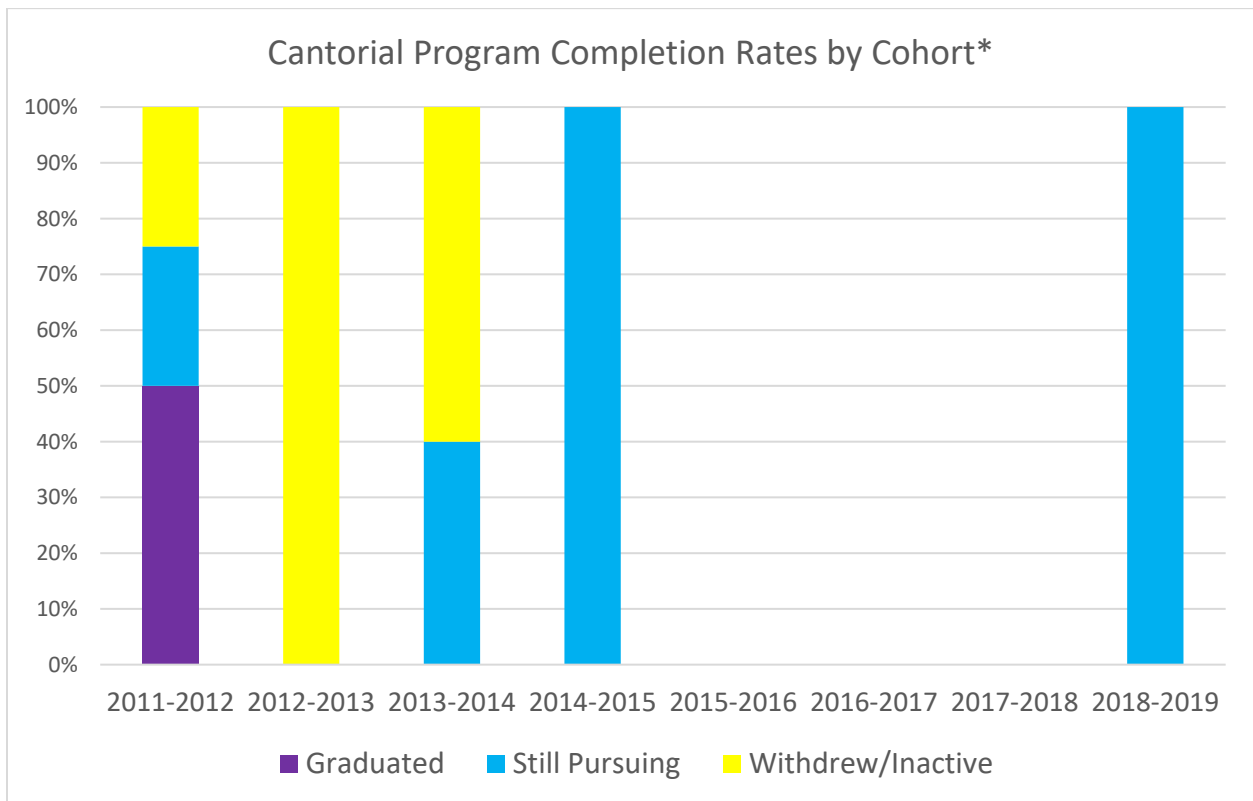
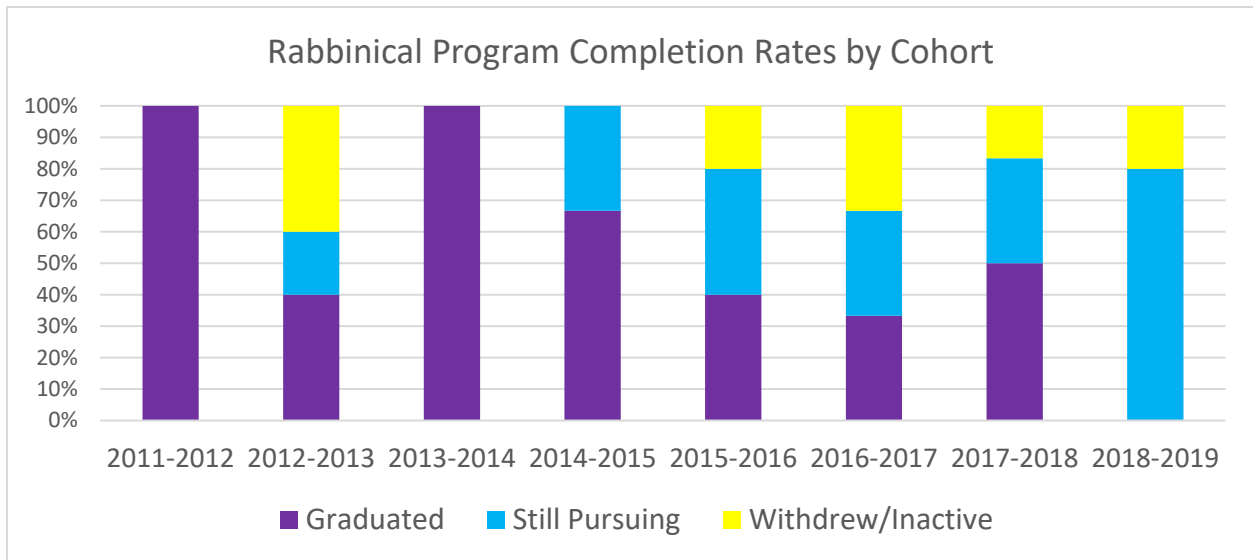
	Male	Female	Unknown

<b>Rabbinic Program</b>	40%	33.33%	0.00%
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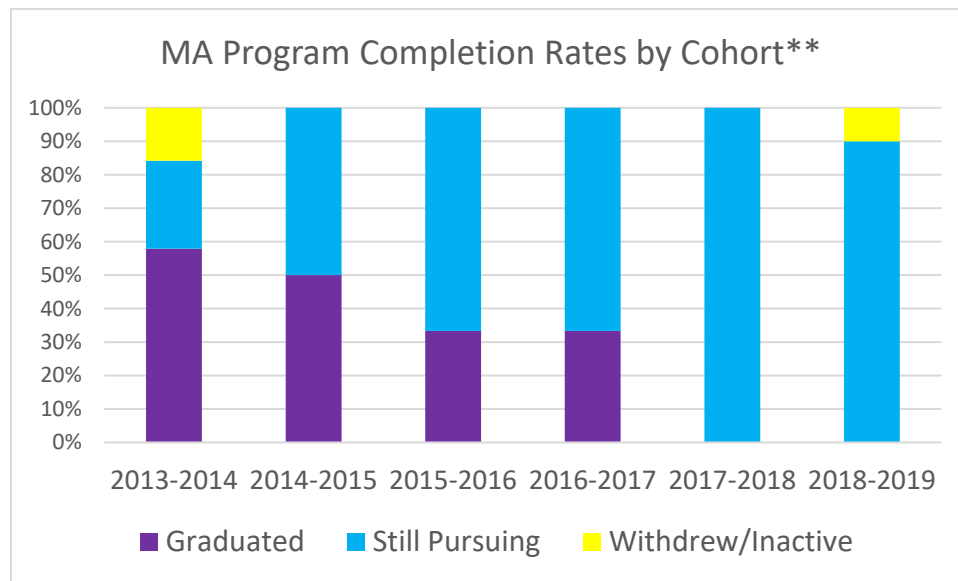
Completion rates by program and IPEDS race/ethnicity:

	<b>White</b>	<b>Two or more races</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>Indian/Alaskan</b>	<b>Unknown</b>
<b>Rabbinic Program</b>	37.5%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Historical Completion Rates



\*Note that AJR did not accept any cantorial applicants in 2015-2017. In 2017, AJR revitalized its Cantorial Program leading to its current size of 8 cantorial students and 6 *Kol-Bo* students. In general, the Cantorial Program at AJR (and at most Jewish seminaries) is significantly smaller than the Rabbinical Program.



\*\*AJR officially began its MA Degree Program in Spring 2014, which is reflected in the chart above as part of the 2013-2014 academic year. The vast majority of students in the MA Program are simultaneously pursuing ordination and typically complete their MA Project in their final year, meaning that most students in AJR’s MA Program take multiple years to complete the program (although the degree on its own can be completed in just two years).

### Withdrawals and Transfer Out Rate

To the best of AJR’s knowledge, none of the students who withdrew from AJR in the 2021-2022 academic year transferred to another comparable program. AJR’s transfer out rate for 2021-2022 is thus 0%.

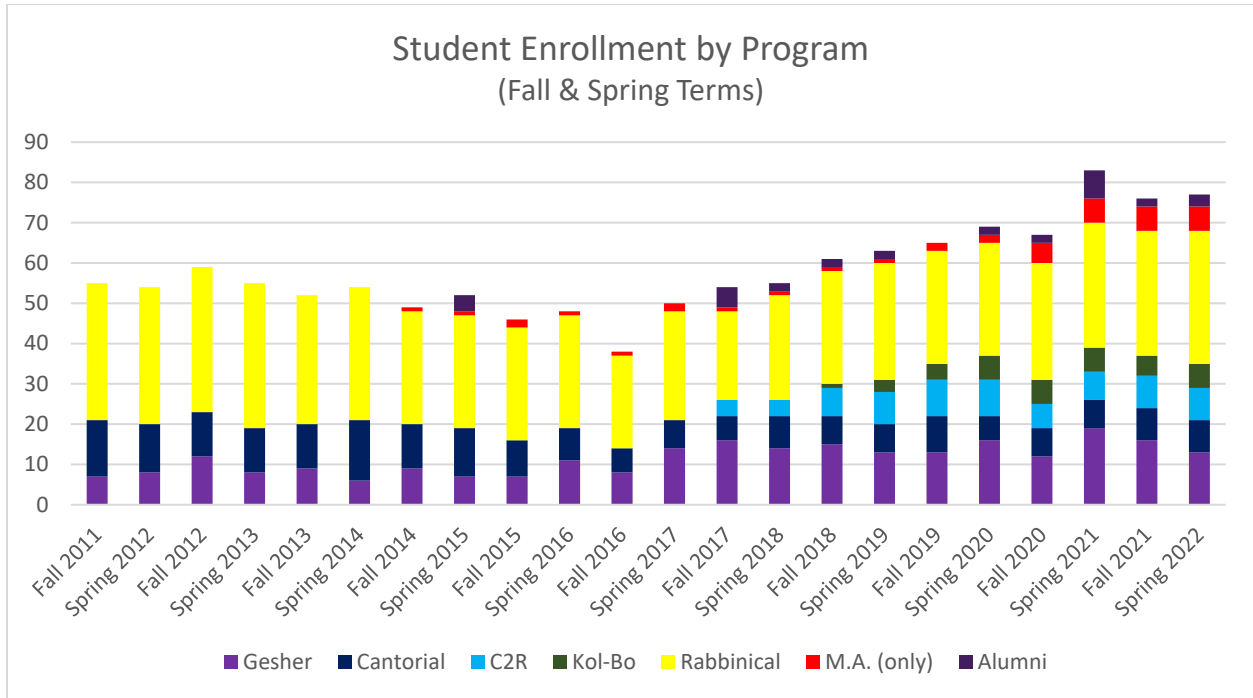
## Student Program Summary

AJR’s various programs are best understood in relation to our two ordination programs: Rabbinical and Cantorial. Separate to this, but integrated into the Rabbinical and Cantorial programs, is the M.A. in Jewish Studies, which is required of all Rabbinical and Cantorial students, unless they enter AJR already holding an equivalent degree.

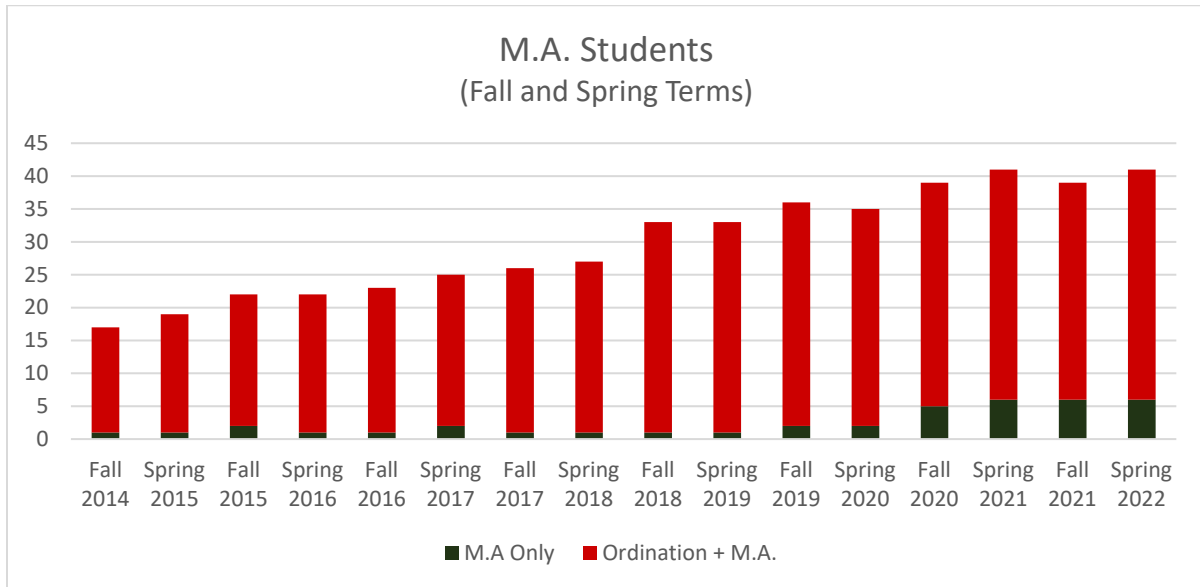
Our current programs include: Rabbinical, Cantorial, M.A., *Kol-Bo*, and the Cantors to Rabbis track (C2R), which is part of the Rabbinical Program. We designate students who are taking courses at AJR but have yet to formally matriculate as *Gesher*, meaning “bridge,” as a transition into the ordination and/or MA programs. We also allow alumni to audit courses at a discounted rate (non-credited).

Our student enrollment significantly increased in recent years and, in terms of program enrollment, is also the most diverse. Due to a lull in enrollment in Fall 2016, we addressed a number of issues in our systems. This resulted in the implementation of our now-thriving Distance Learning program, the introduction of a trimester system, and an overhaul of our admissions system, as well as a continued commitment to the development of our programs and courses (such as adding our Cantors to Rabbis track and *Kol-Bo* program).

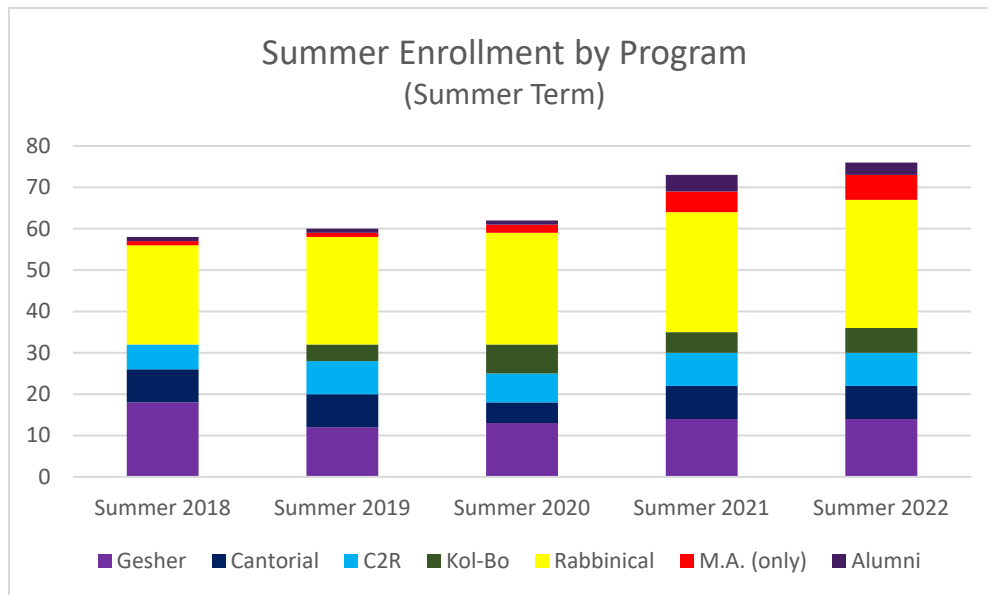
AJR's Enrollment by Program Summary for the last ten years is as follows:



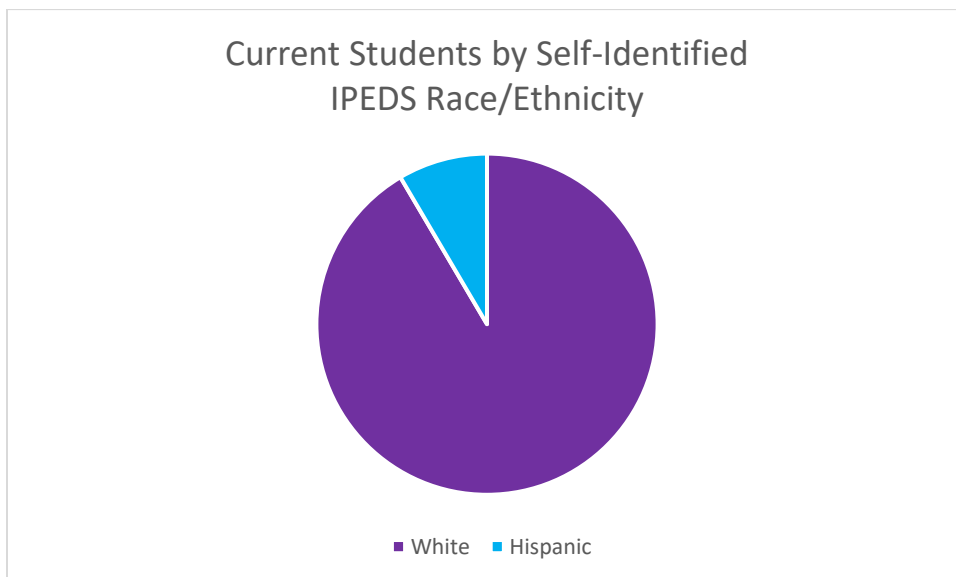
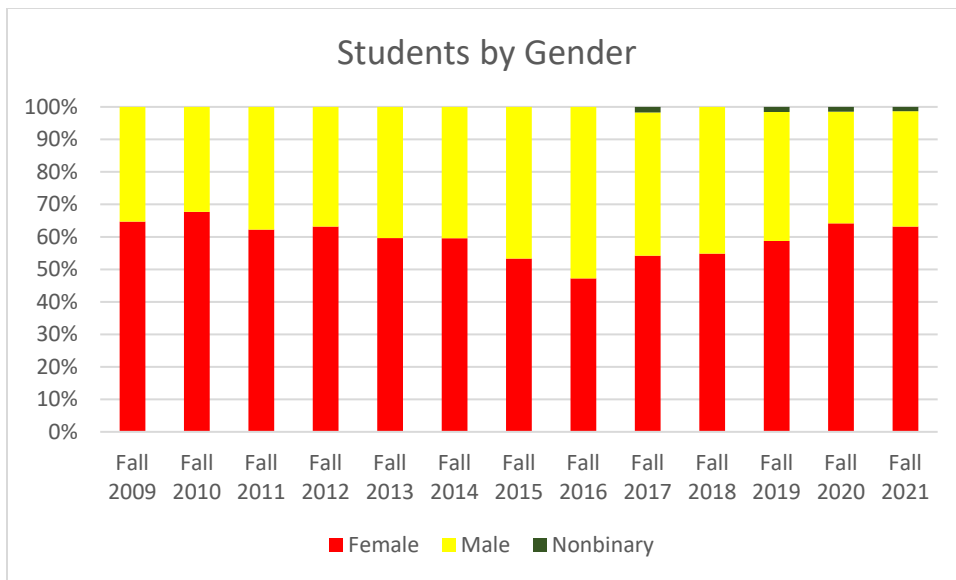
In 2014, AJR began offering an M.A. in Jewish Studies and it has since seen continued growth. All ordination students must complete their M.A. before ordination, unless entering into AJR with an equivalent degree.



After the introduction of a trimester system in 2018, our data tracking changed to include our total students during the summer trimesters.

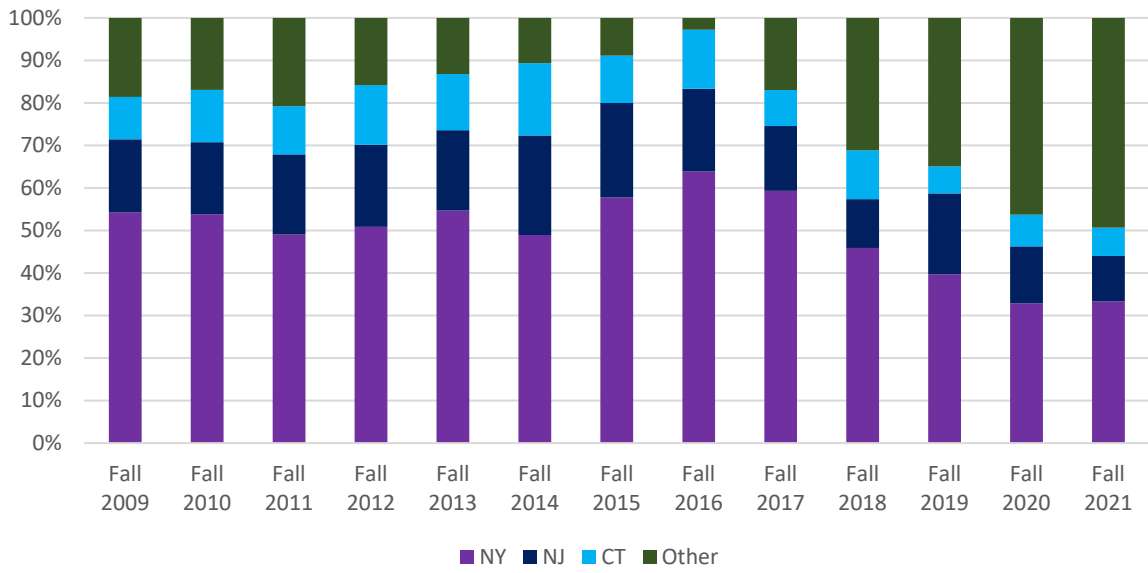


## Student Demographics



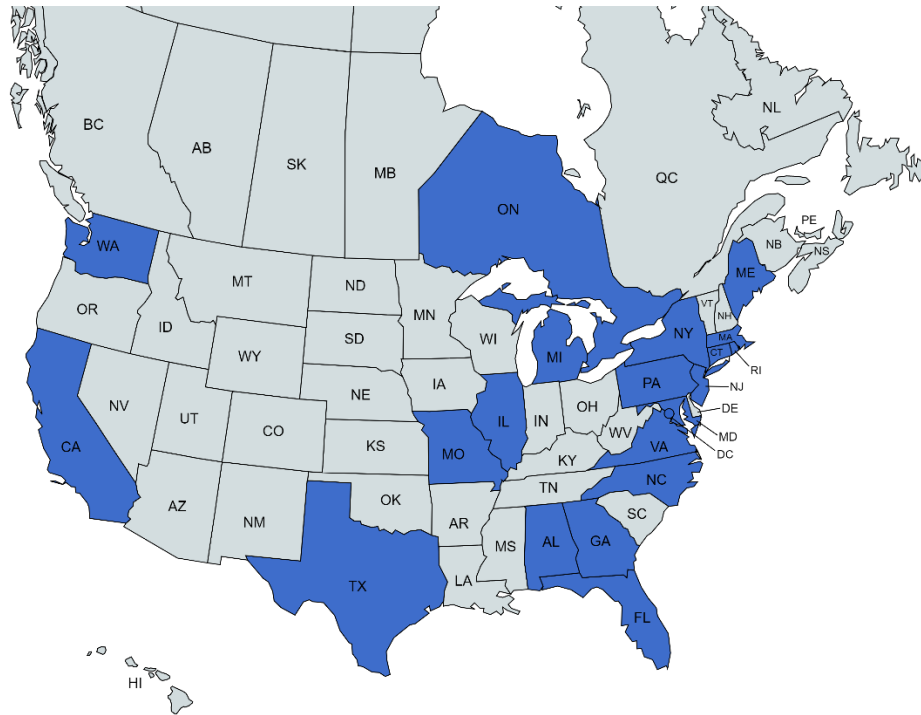
Historically, AJR has drawn the large majority of its students from New York’s tri-state area. However, since Fall 2017, enrollment of distance students from other parts of the country (and beyond) has increased dramatically. Our high percentage of non-local attendees earlier in the decade reflects a small number of super-commuters who were willing to travel an immense distance each week for classes. This level of commitment not only proved the importance of AJR’s work, but the necessity of a well thought out Distance Learning program.

## Geographic Distribution of Students

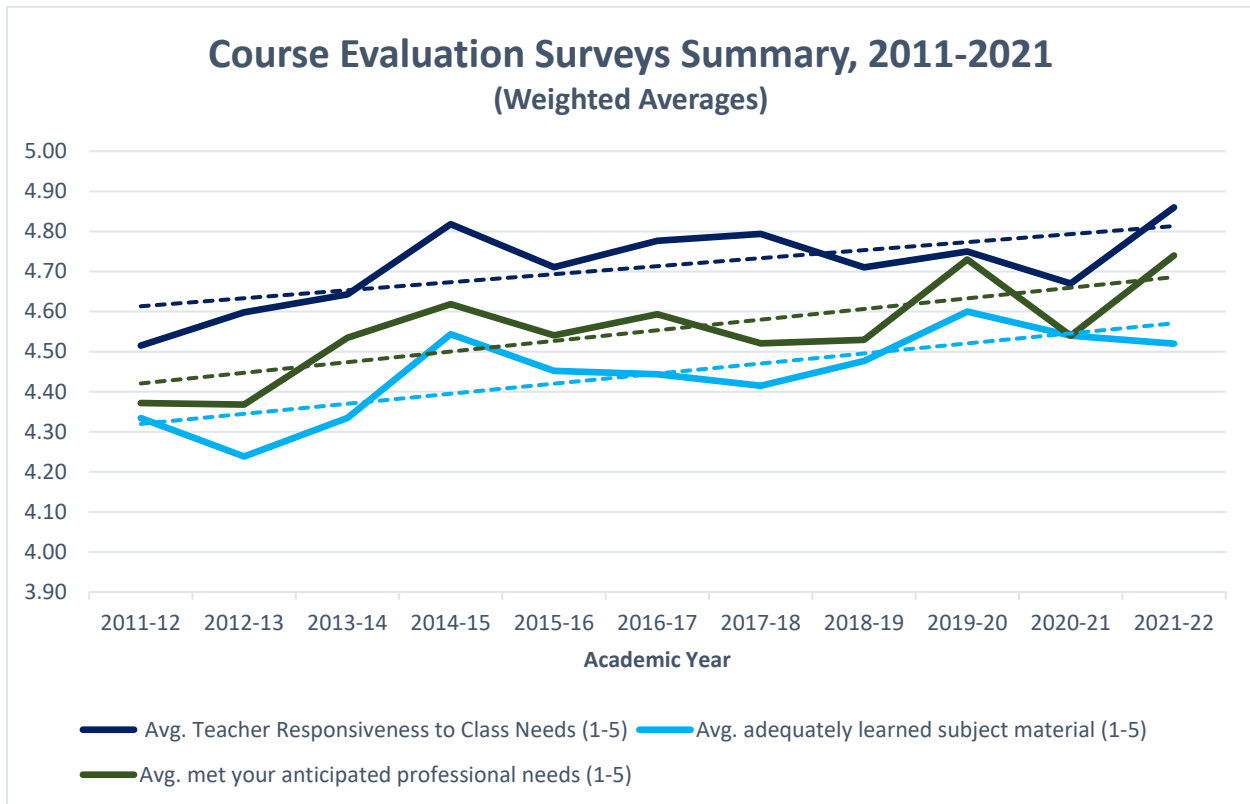




This map reflects all of the American states and Canadian provinces in which current AJR students live. AJR also has international students in Israel and abroad on active military duty.



## Course Quality and Satisfaction



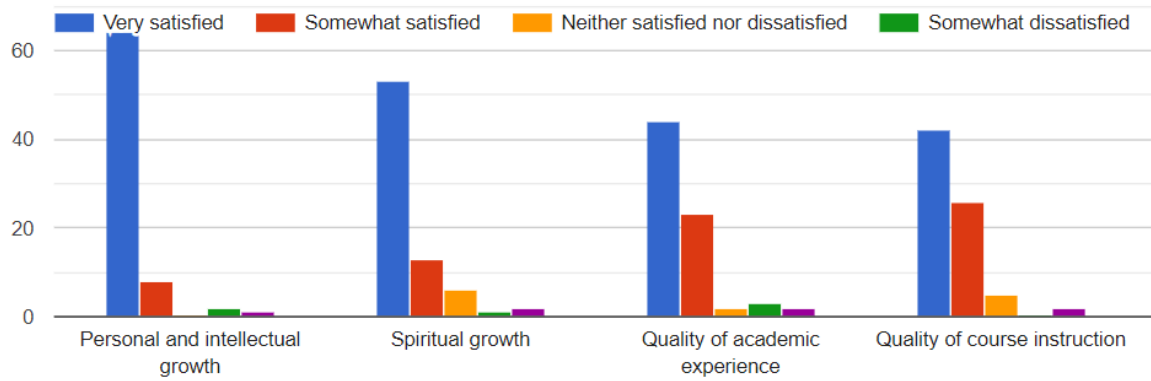
AJR has seen consistent and growing positive feedback from students with regard to the quality of our courses. The graph above summarizes the average rating given by students in three key areas of the academic experience for future clergy: teacher's responsiveness to the needs of their class, the degree to which courses addressed students' anticipated professional needs, and the degree to which students believe they gained an adequate mastery of the course's subject material.

We believe that the slight drop in rates in 2020-2021 is due to the pandemic. AJR has introduced specialized pedagogy sessions for faculty dedicated to online instruction and the administration has implemented new measures for working to ensure that faculty are able to address the needs of our diverse student body.

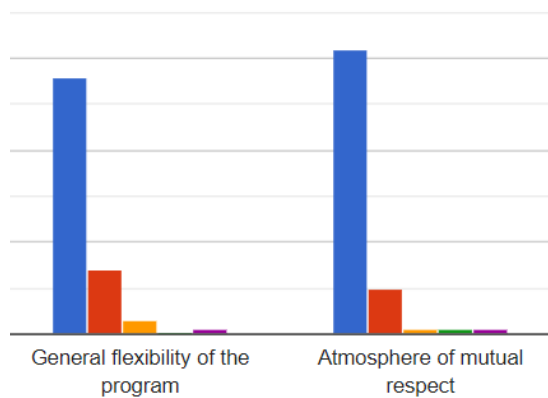
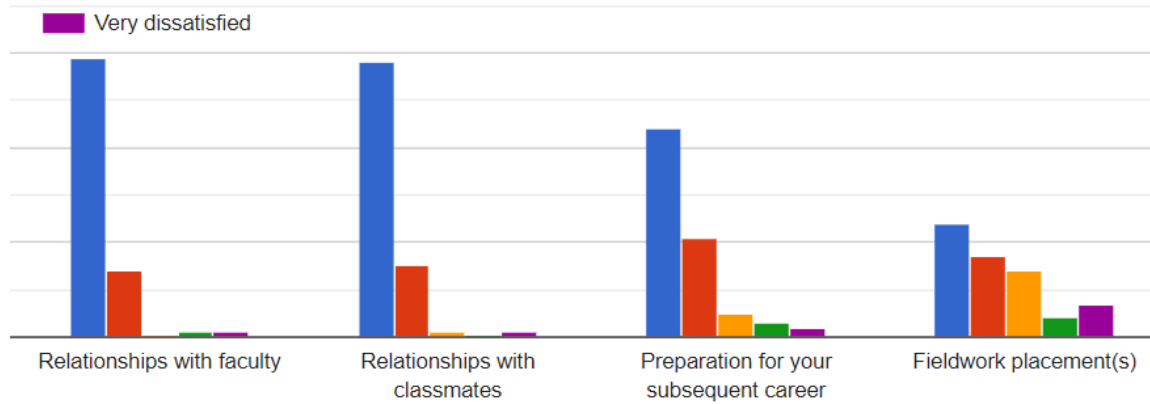
## Alumni Satisfaction

We survey our alumni every five years. Overall, our surveys show a high level of alumni satisfaction, as is evident in a few of the following sample graphs from our 2019 survey.

How satisfied are you with these specific aspects of your AJR experience?

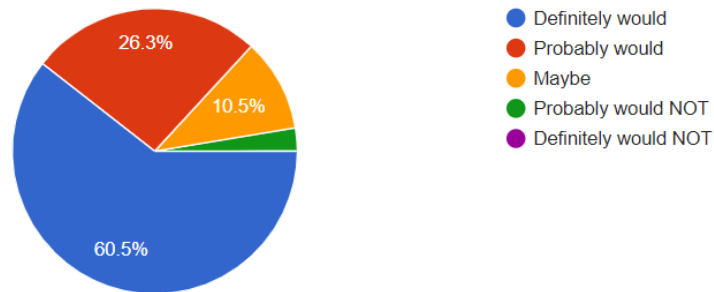


How satisfied are you with these specific aspects of your AJR experience?



Would you encourage a student with an educational background, work experience, and personal and professional goals similar to yours to pursue ordination at AJR?

76 responses



AJR has also observed increased satisfaction in a number of areas since previous surveys (note that “Very Satisfied” and “A Lot” reflect the most positive possible responses, respectively):

Satisfied with “personal and intellectual growth”:

2007 – 58%

2015 – 77%

2019 – 96%

Very Satisfied with “spiritual growth”:

2007 – 47%

2015 – 60%

2019 – 71%

Very Satisfied with “relationships with classmates”:

2007 – 64%

2015 – 85%

2019 – 77% (note that this reflects a growing number of distance students)

Modern Hebrew improved:

2007 – 27%

2015 – 65% (11% entered with already strong facility)

2019 – 75% (11% entered with already strong facility)

Textual knowledge improved “a lot”:

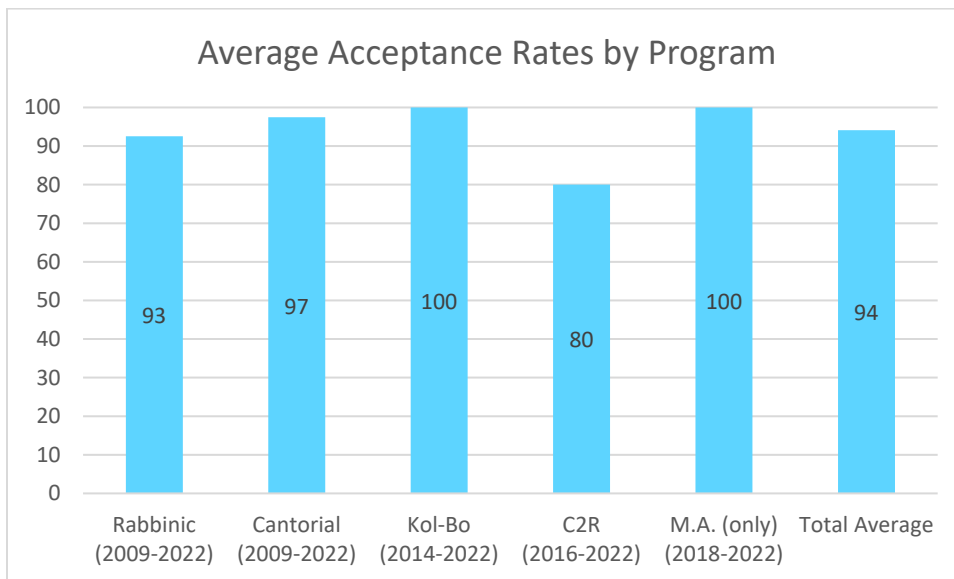
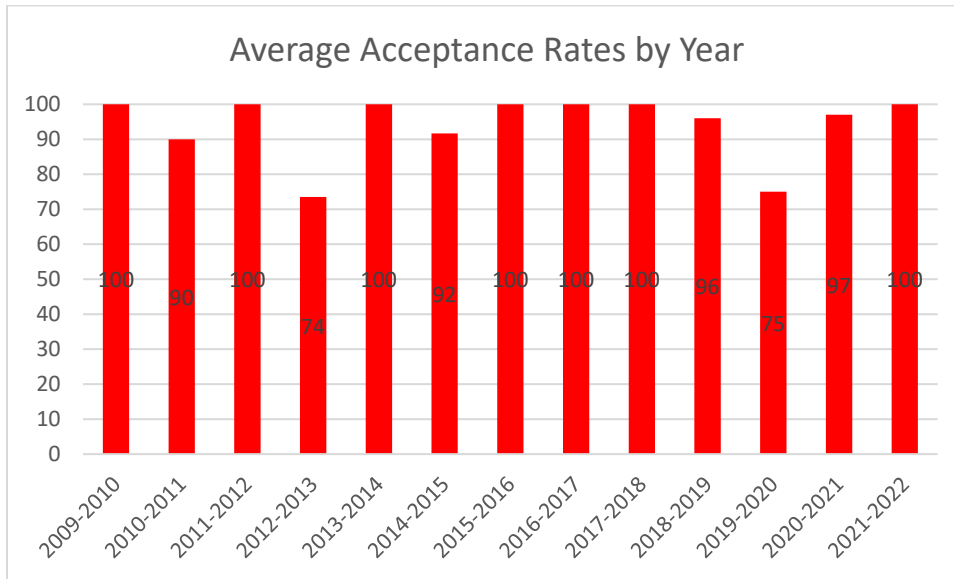
2007 – 49%

2015 – 77% (Biblical), 82% (Rabbinic), Liturgical (74%)

2019 – 80% (Biblical), 72% (Rabbinic), Liturgical (69%)

## Acceptance Rates

AJR's admissions process and Gesher ("Bridge") Program successfully help students determine whether matriculation is the right path for them. Our high acceptance rate reflects the effectiveness of our personalized approach, which provides students the opportunity to get to know AJR and AJR the chance to develop a relationship with students prior to the submission of official applications.



## Placement Rates

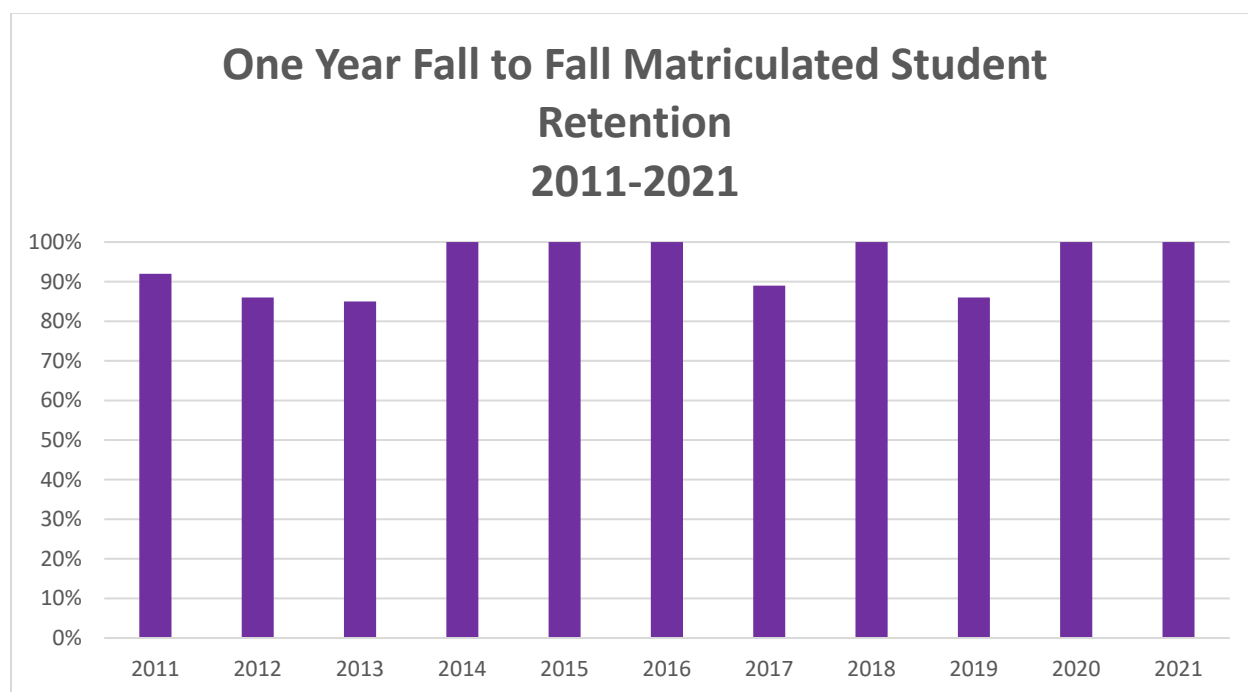
Ordination from AJR prepares candidates to serve as pulpit clergy, hospital and military chaplains, Hillel staff, religious school principals, Jewish educators and more. Based upon AJR's last survey of alumni

(2019), a majority of AJR graduates go on to work in pulpit positions, in addition to Jewish education as well as in non-profits, chaplaincy positions, and other roles within the Jewish community.

In order to accurately understand our placement rates, it should first be clarified that AJR considers placement to mean the following: finding employment (full-time or part-time) in a field to which the degree is relevant. This does not necessitate that the company or organization be overtly religious, as long as graduates are applying skills they learned in our program(s). Placement rates only track initial employment, within a few months of ordination.

Since 2015, in all years but two, AJR's placement rate has been 100%. The individual ordinees from 2018 and 2022 who did not accept a position within 6 months of ordination both have significant geographic restrictions to the jobs they are willing to pursue and one of them declined an offer for a local position that did not meet their religious needs.

## Retention Rates



The retention rate refers to matriculated students who remain at the school for one year or longer (counted as a single Fall to Fall period). Our high rate of retention—always above 80% over the past ten years and averaging 95% during that same period—is a testament to the success of our Gesher program, which allows student to ease into their chosen program and decide what mode of study suits them best.

## Financial Data

Average total tuition and fees for students who completed the program within a normal amount of time in 2022: \$124,281.50

Median loan amount of graduates who took out AJR loans for the past five years (2018-2022) at the time of graduation: \$9,188.

Average loan amount of graduates who took out AJR loans for the past five years (2018-2022) at the time of graduation: \$13,321.60

## Master's Project Data

The Master's Project is a major component of completing the M.A., and often takes several trimesters to complete. All students seeking ordination are required to complete an M.A. in Jewish Studies, unless entering into the program with an equivalent degree. If a student has a relevant M.A. but did not complete the equivalent of a Master's Project during that degree (e.g. a thesis) then they will be required to complete a Master's Project.

Here are some titles from Master's Projects over the past ten years:

**Synagogues in Crisis Mode: Models from the Covid-19 Pandemic (2021)**

**South American Conservative Rabbis in The United States of America: Exploring the Origins of a Particular Style (2020)**

**Developing Cultural Sensitivity When Working With Muslim and Orthodox Jewish Patients (2017)**

**Blood Libel Accusation: A Precursor to Anti-Semitism (2016)**

**Comedic Talmud: Humor in Talmudic and Rabbinic Sources (2015)**

**Comparing Jewish and Christian Mystical and Allegorical Commentaries to the Song of Songs During Late Antiquity (2013)**