



Statement of Educational Effectiveness

Updated Fall 2023

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](#).

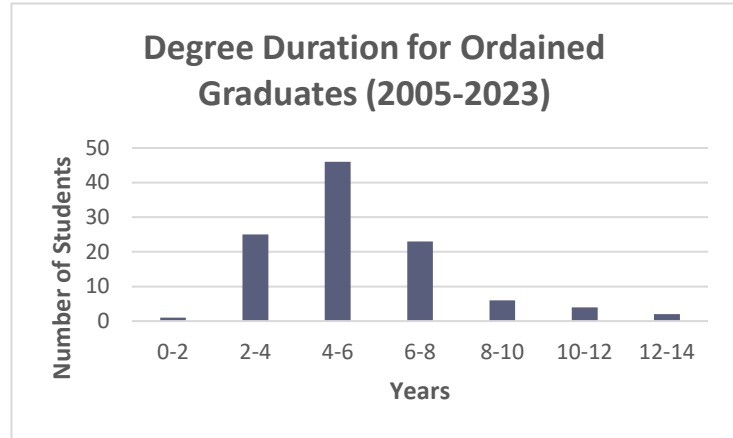
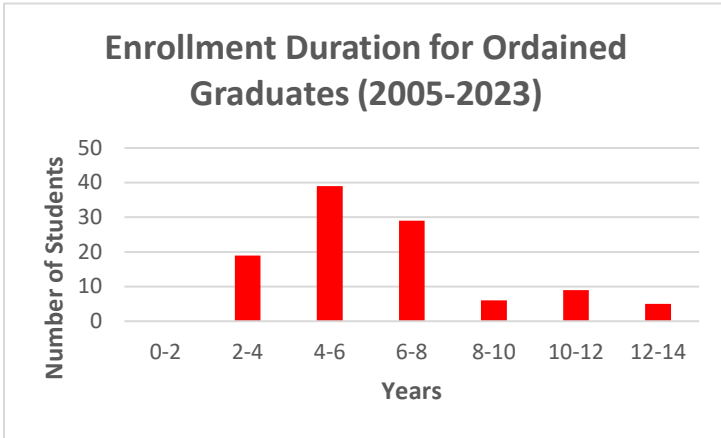
Enrollment Duration and Graduation

For many students, one of the attractive aspects of AJR is the possibility to take classes at a part-time pace. Even with a majority of students proceeding at a part-time pace, our records for graduates going back nearly 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 and many MA Degree students (including those also pursuing ordination) take 2-4 years after their date of matriculation to complete their Master's Degree. However, there is a wide range among completion times — some students who enter with substantial relevant experience or transfer credits, or who take classes at a full-time pace, may take only three years to complete their program, while other students, who take only one or two classes each trimester, may take ten years or more.

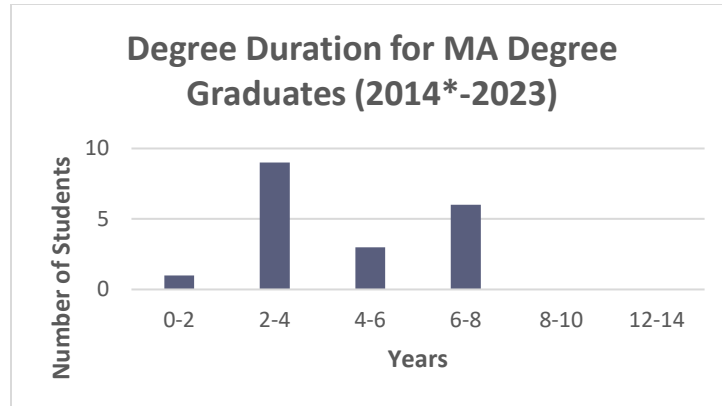
Many ordination students are also enrolled in AJR's MA Degree Program. They began the MA Program at the same time as their Ordination Program and they typically earn their MA Degree at the same time as ordination. This means that their matriculation in the MA Program can last for much longer than the two to three years in which one can typically earn the AJR MA Degree, as reflected in the charts below.

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 and/or MA program. The Enrollment Duration graph for ordination students indicates time from first enrollment at AJR while the Degree Duration graphs indicate time from matriculation.

Duration for Ordination Degrees



Duration for Master's Degrees



*Note that AJR was approved to offer a Master's Degree in Jewish Studies beginning in Spring 2014.

Completion, Withdrawal, 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*
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*AJR calculates the number of regular (i.e., matriculated) students by cohort based upon the academic year in which they matriculated. Given that each graduation/ordination ceremony includes students from multiple cohorts, the total number of students in all represented cohorts are included for the calculation of completion rates. Note that all percentages are rounded to the nearest tenths place.

For a variety of reasons the Department of Education calculation of "completion rates" does not accurately reflect the AJR experience. 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 2022-2023 Completion Rates for a more accurate picture of AJR’s completion rates.

AJR’s 2022-2023 Completion Rates for its programs as defined by the Department of Education are as follows:

Rabbinic Program: 19.3%

Cantorial Program: 33.3%

MA Program: 14.3%

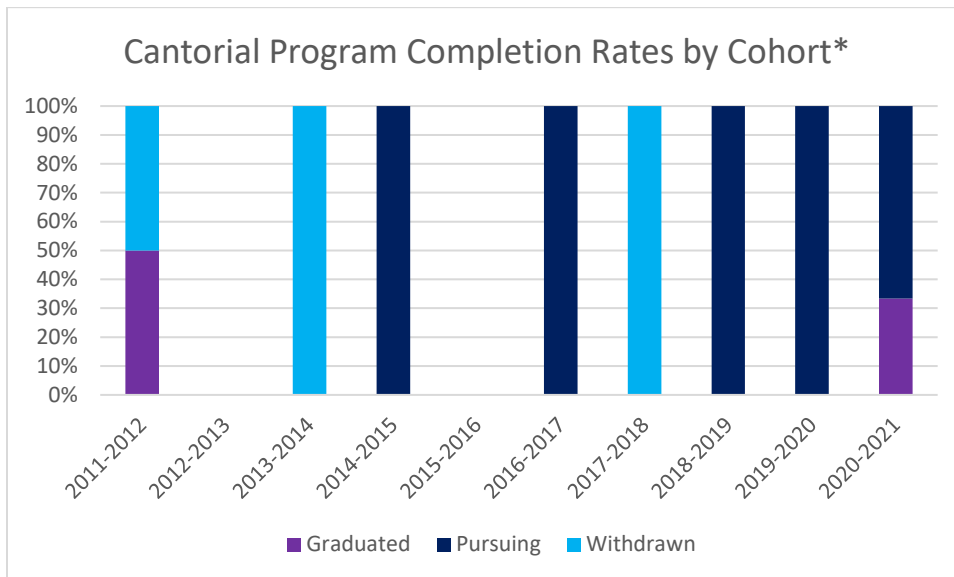
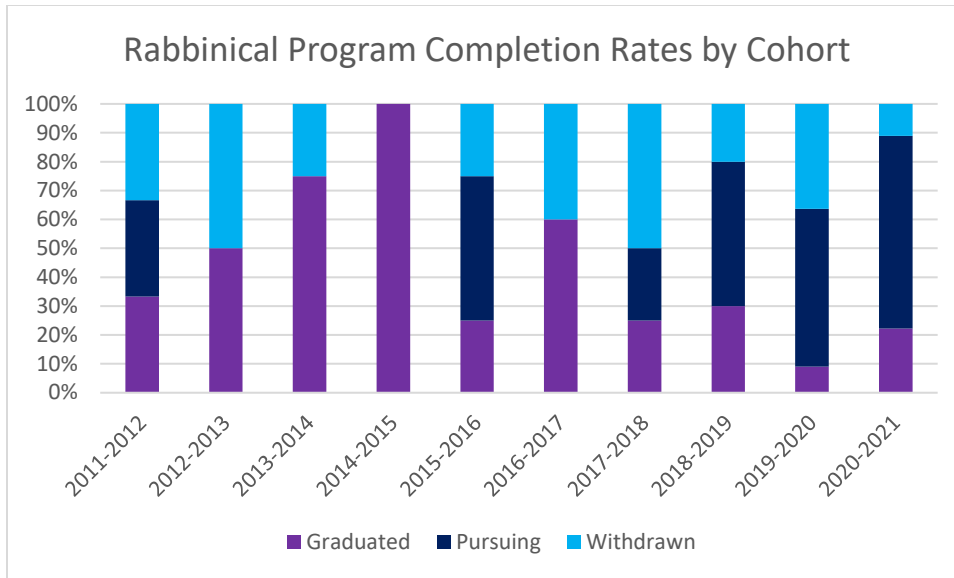
Completion rates by program and gender:

	Male	Female	Unknown
Rabbinic Program	26.6%	13.3%	N/A
Cantorial Program	100%	N/A	N/A
MA Program	16.7%	13.3%	N/A

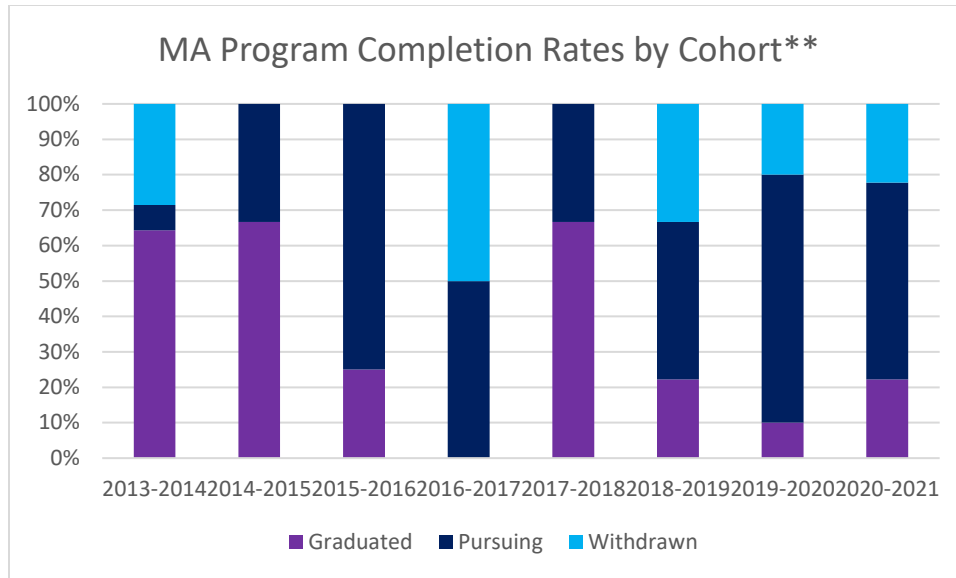
Completion rates by program and IPEDS race/ethnicity:

	White	Two or more races	Hispanic	Indian/Alaskan	Unknown
Rabbinic Program	26%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Cantorial Program	50%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
MA Program	19%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Historical Completion Rates



*Note that AJR did not accept any cantorial applicants in 2015-2016; there was only one cantorial student accepted in 2012-2013 who unfortunately passed away and their data is therefore not included in this chart (as per [34 CFR§ 668.45](#)). In 2017-2018 there was only one student accepted to the Cantorial Program, who subsequently withdrew to complete only AJR’s Master’s Degree. Since 2018, AJR has revitalized its Cantorial Program leading to its current size. 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 2022-2023

In calculating withdrawal and transfer-out rates, AJR includes all regular (i.e., matriculated), enrolled students based upon the Fall trimester of each academic year.

Withdrawals

Program	Male	Female	Unknown Gender	White	Other Races
Rabbinical	5%	14.3%	N/A	11.9%	N/A
Cantorial	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
MA	5.3%	14.3%	N/A	12.2%	N/A

Transfers-Out

Program	Male	Female	Unknown Gender	White	Other Races
Rabbinical	N/A	10.7%	N/A	7.1%	N/A
Cantorial	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
MA	N/A	7.1%	N/A	4.9%	N/A

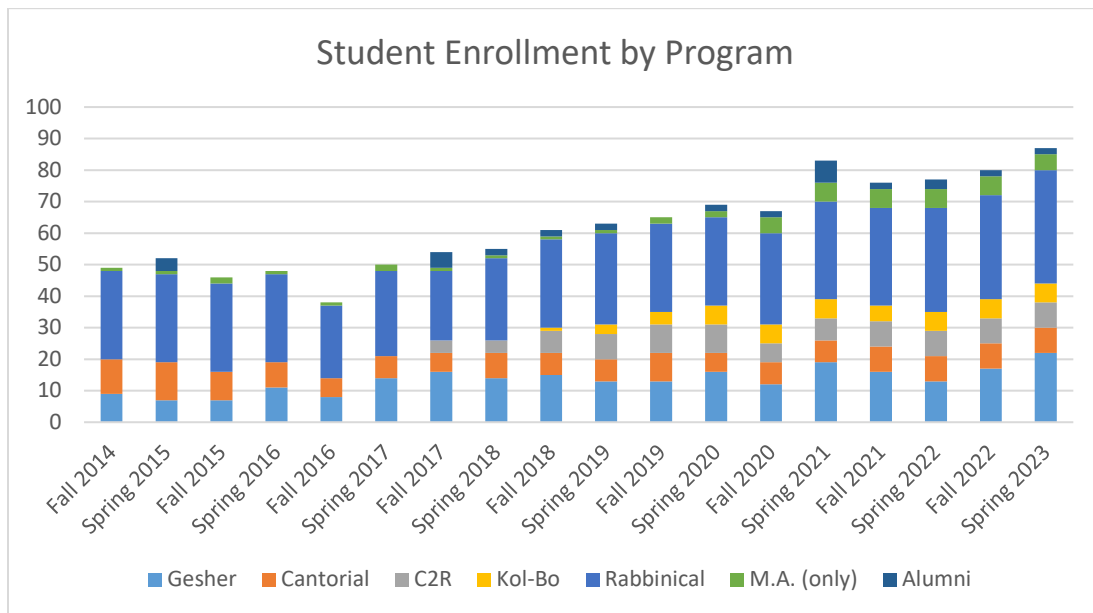
Student Program Summary

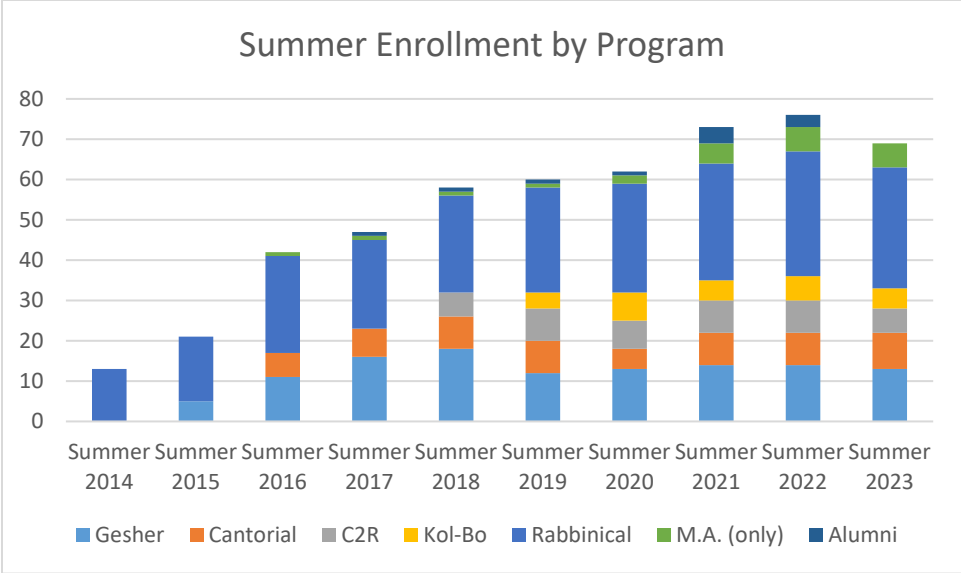
AJR's various programs are best understood in relation to our two ordination programs: Rabbinical and Cantorial. Separate to this, but integrated into the Rabbinical and Cantorial programs, is the M.A. in Jewish Studies, which is required of all Rabbinical and Cantorial students, unless they enter AJR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

Our current programs with matriculated students 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 Geshher, 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).

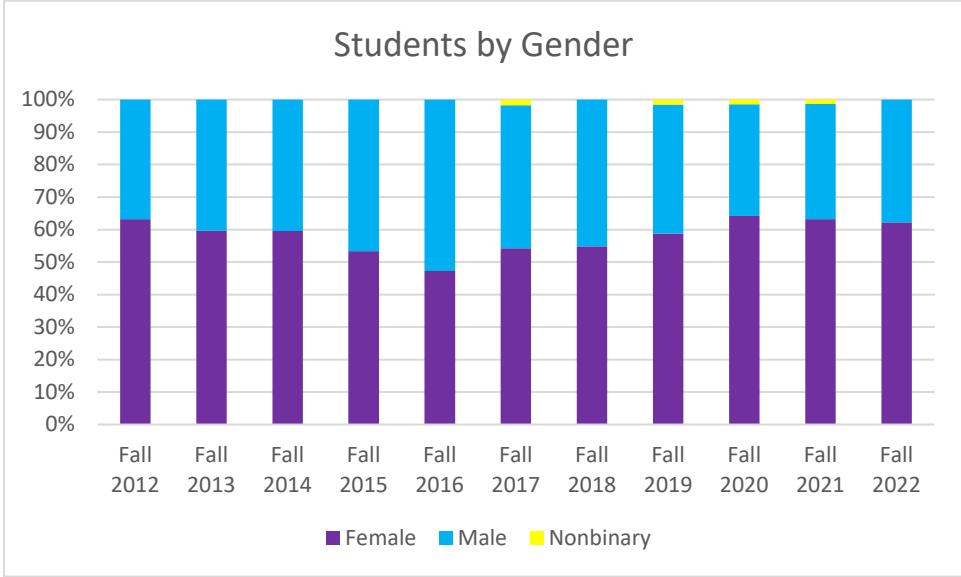
Due to a lull in enrollment in Fall 2016, we introduced a number of innovative changes starting in 2017 including the implementation of our now-thriving Distance Learning program, the introduction of a trimester system, and the development new programs (i.e., *Kol-Bo*) and tracks (i.e., the Cantors to Rabbis track). In response our student enrollment significantly increased in recent years.

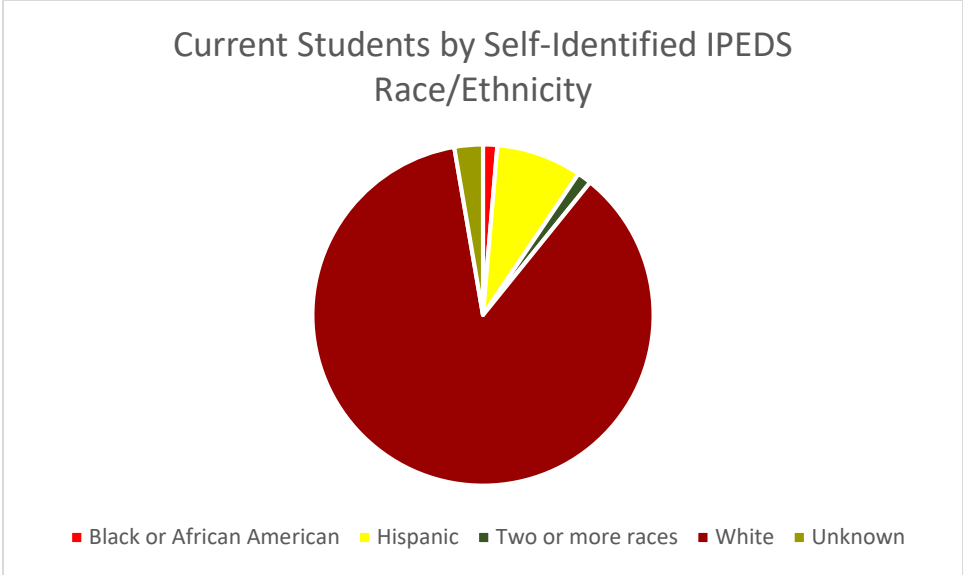
AJR's Enrollment by Program Summary for the last ten years is as follows, divided between the Fall/Spring trimesters and the Summer term (which typically has slightly lower enrollment):



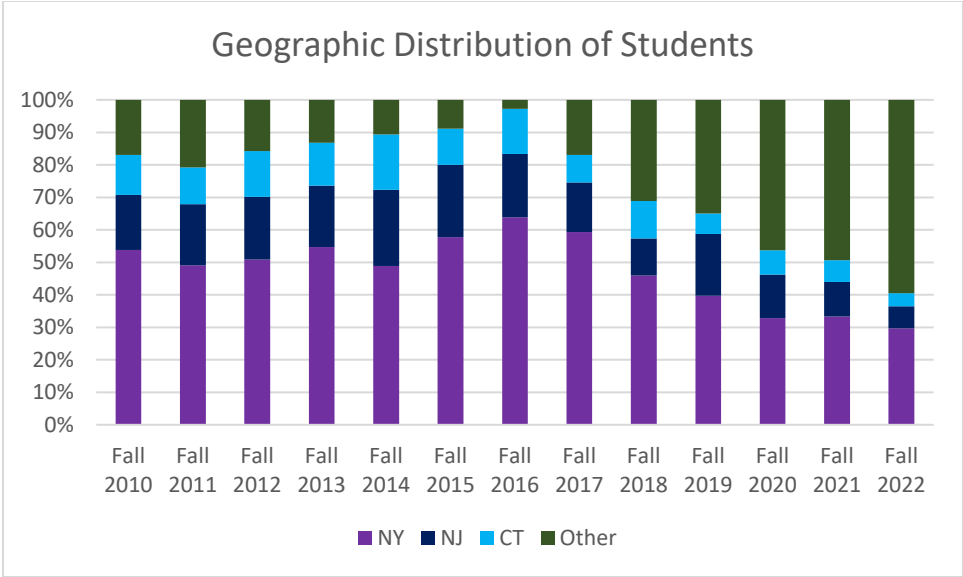


Student Demographics

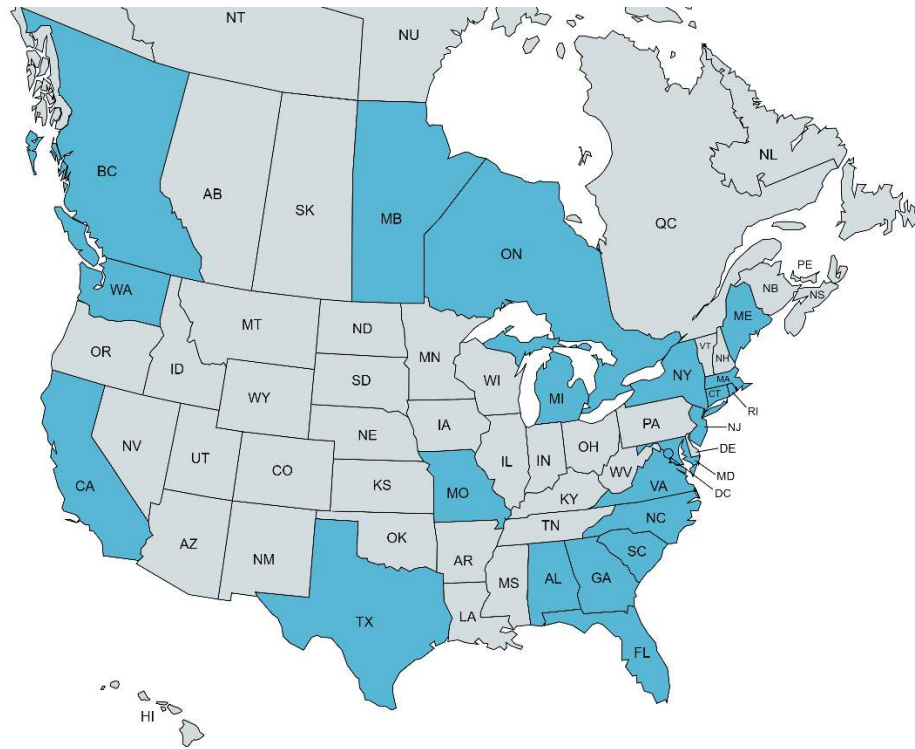




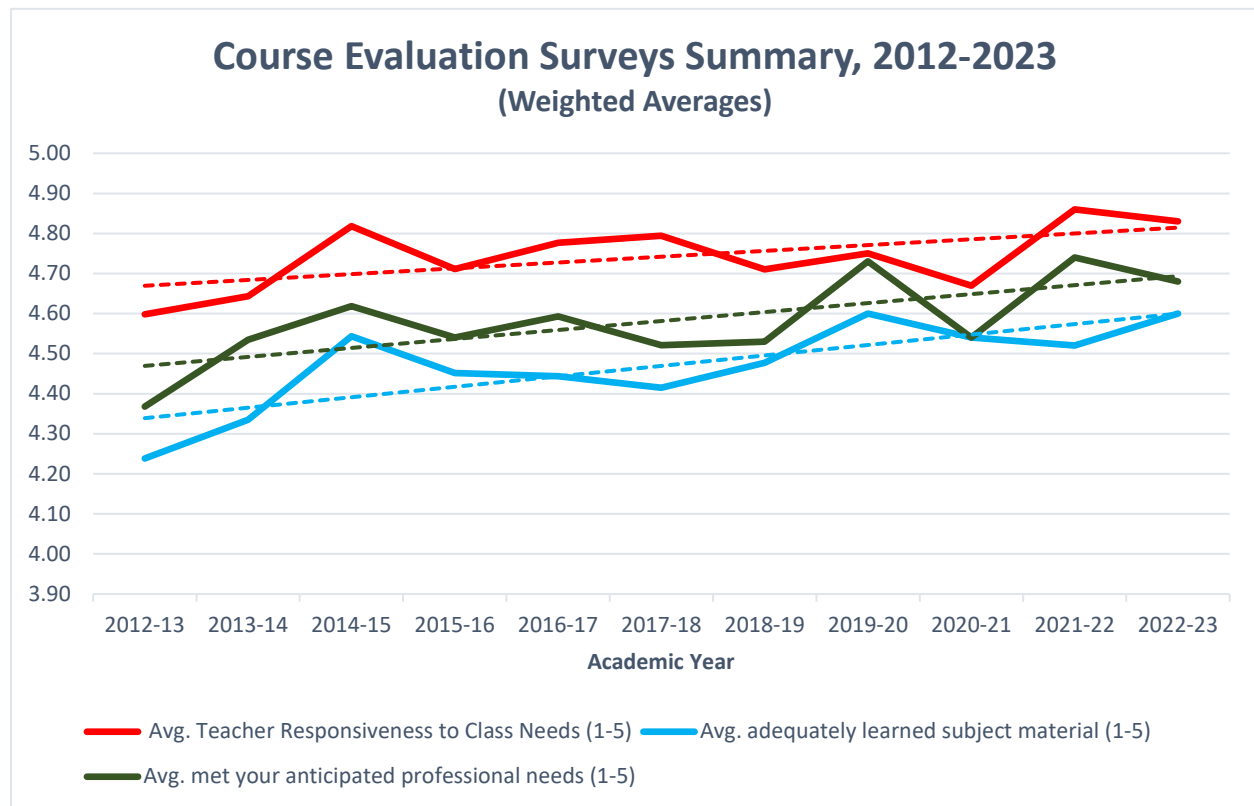
Historically, AJR has drawn the large majority of its students from New York’s tri-state area. However, since Fall 2017, enrollment of distance students from other parts of the country (and beyond) has increased dramatically. Our high percentage of non-local attendees earlier in the decade reflects a 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.



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



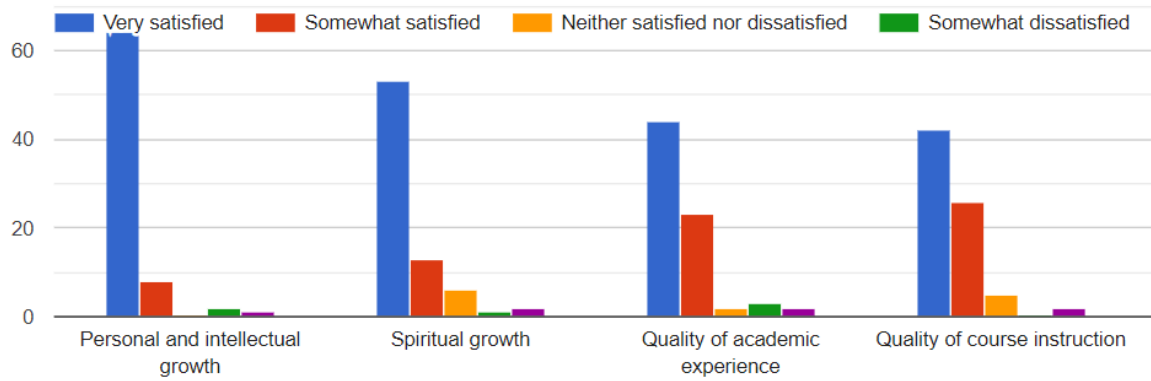
AJR has seen consistent and growing positive feedback from students with regard to the quality of our courses. The graph above summarizes the average rating given by students in three key areas of the academic experience for future clergy: teacher's responsiveness to the needs of their class, the degree 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 was 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.

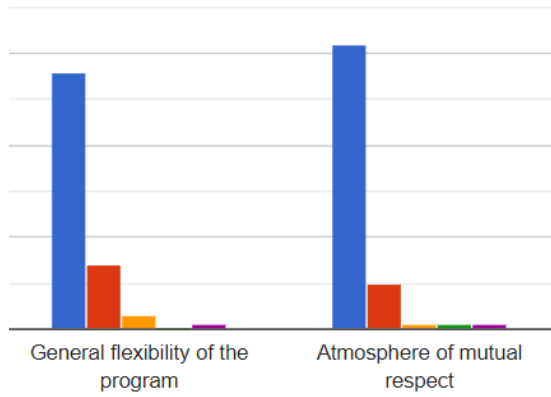
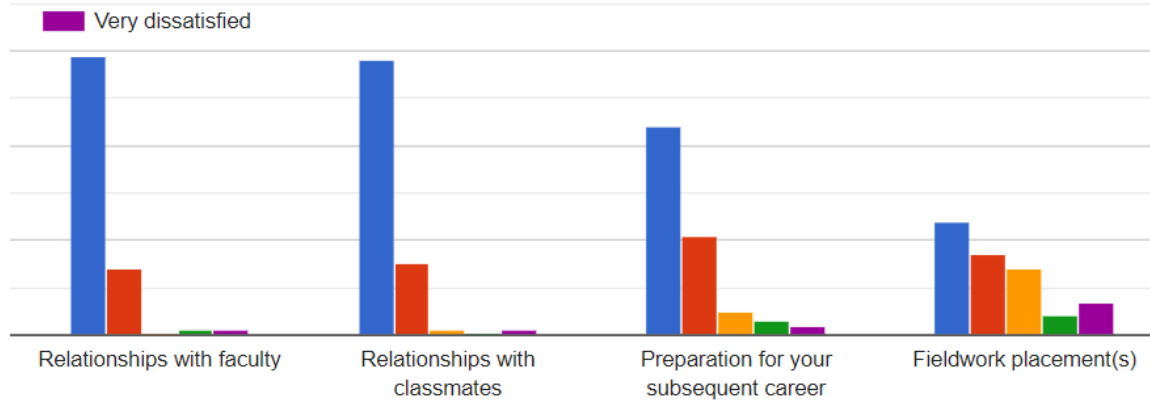
Alumni Satisfaction

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?

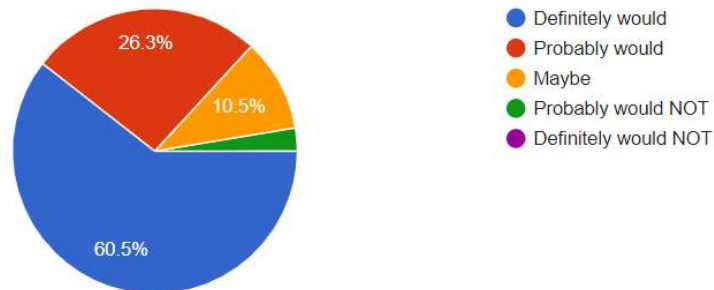


How satisfied are you with these specific aspects of your AJR experience?



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”:

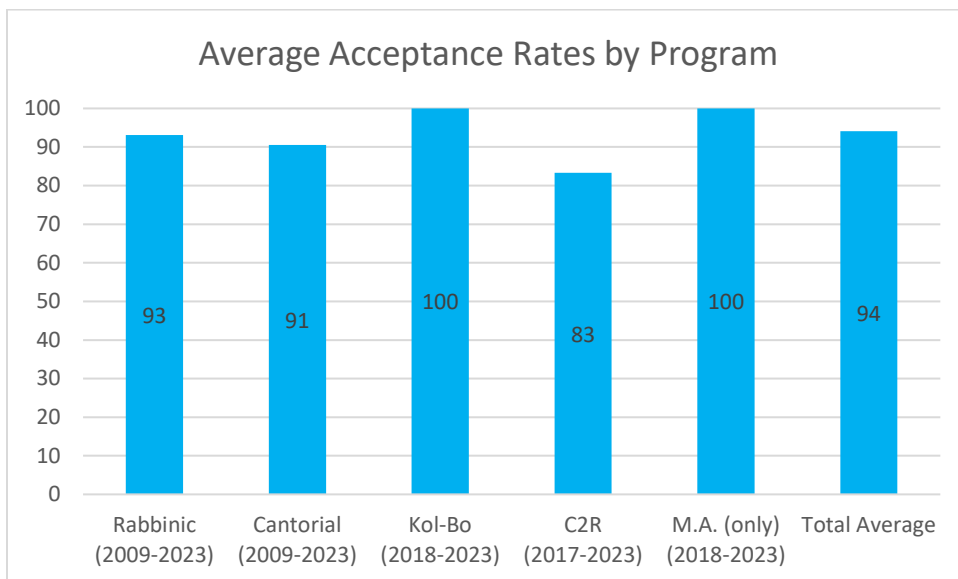
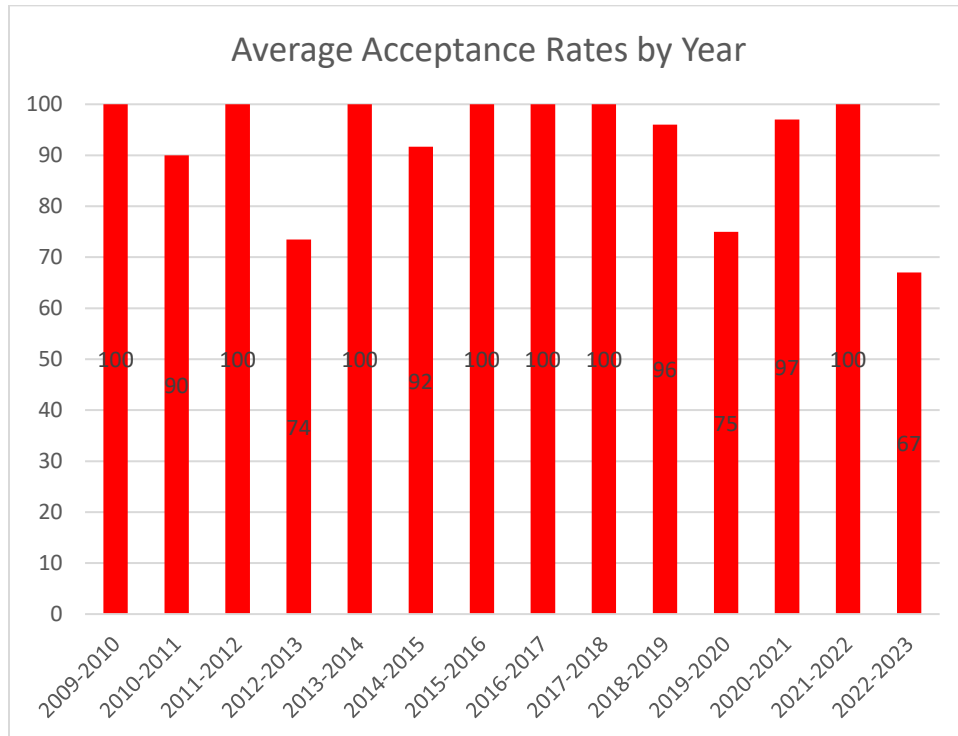
2007 – 49%

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.



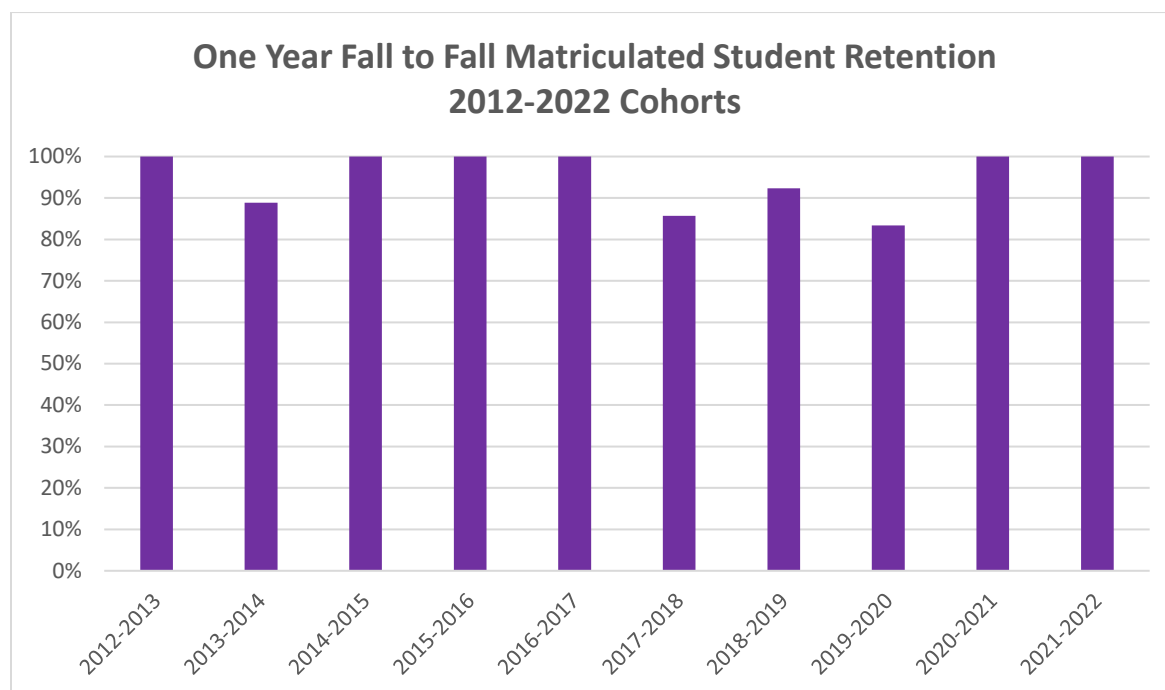
Placement Rates

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 ordinee from 2018 and from 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 frequently above 90% —is a testament to the success of our Geshet program, which allows student to ease into their chosen program and decide what mode of study suits them best.

Financial Data

AJR is now approved to offer Federal Student Aid. The loan information below reflects loans provided directly by AJR prior to this approval.

Average total tuition and fees *prior to any scholarships* for students who completed the program within a normal amount of time in 2023: \$129,176.79

Median loan amount of graduates who took out AJR loans for the past five years (2019-2023) at the time of graduation: \$8,937

Average loan amount of graduates who took out AJR loans for the past five years (2019-2023) at the time of graduation: \$12,199

Master's Project Data

The Master's Project is a major component of completing the Master's Degree, and often takes several trimesters to complete. All students seeking ordination are required to complete a Master's Degree in Jewish Studies, unless entering into the program with an equivalent degree. If a student has a relevant Master's Degree 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 (more MA Projects can be found on our website at <https://ajr.edu/library/ma-projects/>):

The Spiritual Lives of Medieval Jewish Women: A Preliminary Anthology (2023)

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)