INTERVENTION REPORT
Supporting Postsecondary Success

INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES

Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP)

Enrolling in college and completing a degree or certificate is one of the primary pathways to economic success. In 2017, median weekly earnings of full-time workers with an associate degree was 17 percent higher than full-time workers with a high school diploma only.[1] Despite the economic advantages of educational attainment, only 32 percent of students enrolled in two-year institutions complete their programs within three years. The first year of college is critical, as 38 percent of first-time, full-time students in 2-year institutions fail to return to the same institution for their second year.[2] As a result, several programs have been designed to support student retention and degree completion among college students. One example is the City University of New York's (CUNY's) *Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP)*.

ASAP is a three-year program that is designed to remove barriers to college success and completion for students seeking associate degrees. *ASAP* offers students financial supports (tuition waivers, free use of textbooks, free public transportation), academic supports (tutoring, early registration), and personal supports (advisors, seminars, blocked or linked courses). *ASAP* students are required to enroll full time and are encouraged to take any required developmental education courses in the first semester.

This What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) report, part of the WWC's Supporting Postsecondary Success topic area, explores the effects of *ASAP* on enrollment, credit accumulation, and graduation rates. The WWC identified eight studies of *ASAP*, two of which met WWC standards.[3] The evidence presented in this report includes studies of the impacts of *ASAP* on community college students, including students who were White, Black, Hispanic, and Asian or Pacific Islander.

What Happens When Students Participate in *ASAP*?[4]

The evidence indicates that implementing *ASAP*:

- **will likely increase student graduation rates**
- **will likely increase student enrollment rates**
- **will likely increase student credit accumulation and persistence rates**

Findings on *ASAP* from two studies that meet WWC standards are shown in Table 1. For each outcome reviewed by the WWC, an effectiveness rating, the improvement index, and the number of studies and students that contributed to the findings is presented. The improvement index is a measure of the intervention's effect on an outcome. It can be interpreted as the expected change in percentile rank for an average comparison group student if that student had received the intervention. All findings are based on two studies with 2,397 students. See Box 1 for a description of WWC effectiveness ratings.

Table 1. Summary of findings on *ASAP* from studies that meet WWC Standards[5]

	Study findings		Evidence meeting WWC standards (version 3.0)	
Outcome	Effectiveness rating	Improvement index *(percentile points)*	Number of studies	Number of students
Attainment	Positive effects	+17	2	2,397
Access and enrollment	Positive effects	+13	2	2,397
Credit accumulation and persistence	Positive effects	+10	2	2,397

Table Note: The improvement index is a measure of the effect of the intervention. The improvement index can be interpreted as the expected change in percentile rank for an average comparison group student if that student had received the intervention. For example, an improvement index of +17 means that the expected percentile rank of the average comparison group student would increase by 17 points if they received *ASAP*. The improvement index values are generated by averaging findings from the outcome analyses that meet WWC standards, as reported by Scrivener et al. (2015) and Sommo et al. (2018). Attainment outcomes include completion of a degree, certificate, or program. Access and enrollment outcomes include enrollment in college the first semester after graduating high school and enrollment in a four-year college. Credit accumulation and persistence outcomes include the number of college-level credits earned, number of sessions enrolled, enrollment in the fourth semester, and enrollment at any college in the sixth semester. The effects of *ASAP* are not known for other outcomes within the Supporting Postsecondary Success topic area, including college attendance, academic achievement, and labor market outcomes.

BOX 1. HOW THE WWC REVIEWS AND DESCRIBES EVIDENCE

The WWC evaluates evidence based on the quality and results of reviewed studies. The criteria that the WWC uses for evaluating evidence are defined in the **Procedures and Standards Handbooks** and the **Review Protocols**. The studies summarized in this report were reviewed under WWC Standards (version 3.0) and the Supporting Postsecondary Success topic area protocol (version 3.0).

To determine the effectiveness rating, the WWC considers what methods each study used, the direction of the effects, and how many studies tested the intervention. The higher the effectiveness rating, the more certain the WWC is about the reported results and about what will happen if the same intervention is implemented again. The following key provides a link between effectiveness ratings and the statements used in this report:

Effectiveness Rating	Rating Interpretation	Description of the Evidence
Positive (or Negative) Effects	The intervention is ***likely to change*** an outcome	Strong evidence of a positive effect, with no overriding contrary evidence
Potentially Positive (or Negative) Effects	The intervention ***may change*** an outcome	Evidence of a positive effect with no overriding contrary evidence
No Discernible Effects	The intervention ***may result in little to no change*** in an outcome	No affirmative evidence of effects
Mixed Effects	The intervention ***has inconsistent effects*** on an outcome	Evidence includes studies in at least two of these categories: studies with positive effects, studies with negative effects, or more studies with indeterminate effects than with positive or negative effects

How is *ASAP* Implemented?

The following section provides details of how *ASAP* was implemented. This information can help educators identify the requirements for implementing *ASAP*, and determine whether those implementation requirements would be feasible at their institutions. Information on *ASAP* presented in this section comes from the two studies that meet WWC evidence standards (Scrivener et al., 2015; Sommo et al., 2018), from CUNY's *ASAP* website, and from correspondence with the developer.

- **Goal:** *ASAP* aims to help students earn associate degrees within three years by providing a range of financial, academic, and personal supports to remove barriers to college success and completion.
- **Target Population:** *ASAP* is broadly targeted to low-income, full-time students in need of developmental coursework. Students admitted to CUNY colleges that offer *ASAP* can participate in the program provided they: (1) complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the New York State Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), and all admissions requirements; (2) need to take no more than two developmental courses; (3) enroll full-time; (4) complete a mandatory summer institute before enrolling; and (5) sign a contract agreeing to the *ASAP* terms of participation upon completion of the institute. Continuing or transfer students are eligible if they have GPAs of at least 2.0 and have accumulated no more than 15 college credits. To remain eligible, students must renew their FAFSA and TAP annually, maintain full-time status and be in good academic standing, enroll in all developmental courses within the first year, and meet regularly with their advisor, career specialist, and tutors as well as attend required program enrichment activities.
- **Method of Delivery:** *ASAP* students receive mentoring and guidance from an experienced advisor. The advisor provides comprehensive academic, social, and interpersonal supports. In addition to an advisor, *ASAP* facilitates relationship building among students through advising groups, a one or two-day required summer institute, and blocked courses in which students take classes with other *ASAP* students in a cohort model. Students can also be connected to tutors, career development specialists, and other campus-based supports, as needed.
- **Frequency and Duration of Service:** Students meet with *ASAP* advisors at least twice per month in their first semester. After the first semester, students meet with their advisors on a regular basis depending on their need level, from once every two months for students in the low-need group to twice per month for students in the high-need group. Students participate in *ASAP* for three years.
- **Intervention Components:** The *ASAP* model includes three key components, which are noted in Table 2.

Comparison Group: In the two studies that contributed to the findings, comparison group students received the usual college advising services provided by their institutions.

Table 2. Components of *ASAP*

Key component	*ASAP*
Financial supports	Eligible students receive supports to address financial barriers to degree completion. These supports include tuition waivers to cover any gap in need between financial aid and the cost of tuition and fees; textbook assistance to offset the cost of books (on average students receive $500 annually); and support with summer and winter tuition to facilitate continuous enrollment. CUNY students receive a semester MetroCard to ensure they have transportation to campus.
Academic supports	*ASAP*'s academic supports are based on a structured pathways model. Students begin by enrolling full-time in a major that can be completed in no more than three years (most majors except nursing and allied health meet this criterion). They work with an academic advisor to develop a schedule that allows them to complete courses in a prescribed sequence with a cohort of other students in the program. *ASAP* advisors encourage students to take courses in winter and summer terms (continuous enrollment). *ASAP* staff coordinate with campus colleagues to provide *ASAP* students opportunities for early registration. Students must complete assigned developmental coursework in their first year. Students needing two developmental courses must take at least one of those courses in the summer prior to their first year. Advisors reserve spaces in developmental courses for *ASAP* students.
Personal supports	Students meet with an assigned advisor regularly at intervals determined based on student needs. Advisors maintain average caseloads of 150 students so they can provide personalized, consistent, and comprehensive support to each student. In addition to providing an advisor, *ASAP* facilitates relationship building among students through advising groups, a required one or two-day summer institute, and blocked courses in which students take classes with other *ASAP* students. Students are also connected to tutors, career development specialists, and other campus-based supports, as needed. *ASAP* provides additional services to support transfer, career readiness skill-building, and leadership development opportunities through participation in *ASAP* Student Leader and Peer Mentor programs.

What Does *ASAP* Cost?

The cost of *ASAP* is reported in one study reviewed. Scrivener et al. (2015) calculated the direct cost per *ASAP* student at $14,029 over a three-year period ($4,676 per year). The cost breakdown below is not designed to be exhaustive; rather, it is designed to provide educators an overview of the kinds of resources needed to implement *ASAP*.

- **Personnel Costs:** The three-year cost includes $6,238 per student on administration and staffing (e.g., management, research and evaluation), $1,558 on course enrollment (e.g., blocked or linked courses, *ASAP* seminar), and $2,927 on student services (e.g., advising, tutoring, career and employment services).
- **Facilities Costs:** Beyond the facilities costs normally associated with college attendance, *ASAP* hosts a one or two-day summer institute for students and hosts the *ASAP* Student Leader and Peer Mentor programs.
- **Equipment and Materials Costs:** *ASAP* does not incur any equipment and materials costs beyond those normally associated with college attendance.
- **Costs Paid by Students or Parents:** There are no direct program costs billed to students or parents; however, students must pay for costs normally associated with college attendance that are not covered by the *ASAP* program.
- **In-Kind Supports:** The three-year cost for in-kind financial supports including MetroCards, textbooks, and tuition waivers totals $3,305.
- **Sources of Funding:** In addition to city and state support, *ASAP* has received funding from a range of foundations: the Robin Hood Foundation, the Stella and Charles Guttman Foundation, the Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust, the Jewish Foundation for the Education of Women, and the Sidney and Laura Gilbert Scholarship Fund.

For More Information:

About *ASAP*

The City University of New York, Accelerated Study in Associate Programs
16 Court Street, 32nd Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11241-0102
Web: **http://www1.cuny.edu/sites/asap/**

For More Information (continued):

About the cost of the intervention

Levin, H.M. & García, E. (2018). Accelerating community college graduation rates: A benefit–cost analysis. *The Journal of Higher Education, 89*(1), 1-27, DOI: 10.1080/00221546.2017.1313087.

Scrivener, S., Weiss, M.J., Ratledge, A., Rudd, T., Sommo, C., & Fresques, H. (2015). *Doubling graduation rates: Three-year effects of CUNY's Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) for developmental education students.* New York: MDRC.

Research Summary

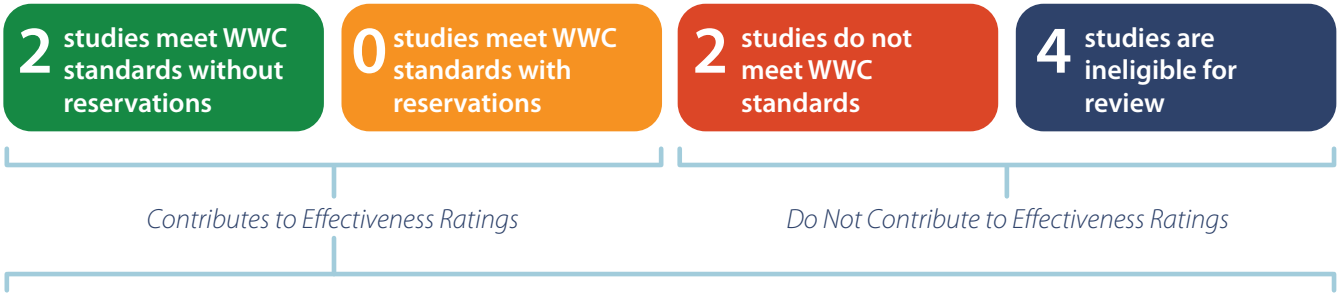
The WWC identified 8 studies that investigated the effectiveness of *ASAP* (Figure 1):

- 2 studies meet WWC group design standards without reservations
- 0 studies meet WWC group design standards with reservations
- 2 studies do not meet WWC group design standards
- 4 studies are ineligible for review

The WWC reviews findings on an intervention's effects on eligible outcome domains from studies that meet WWC group design standards, either with or without reservations. Based on this review, the WWC generates an effectiveness rating, which summarizes how the intervention impacts, or changes, a particular outcome domain. Findings from studies that either do not meet WWC standards or are ineligible for review do not contribute to the effectiveness ratings.

The two studies of *ASAP* that meet WWC group design standards reported findings on credit accumulation and persistence, access and enrollment, and attainment. The studies did not report findings on the following three domains in the Supporting Postsecondary Success topic area: college attendance, academic achievement, and labor market outcomes. Citations for all eight studies reviewed for this report are listed in the References section, which begins on page 10.

Figure 1. Effectiveness ratings for *ASAP*



ASAP has **positive effects** on attainment

The WWC determined that two studies that meet WWC group design standards without reservations showed evidence of a positive and statistically significant effect of *ASAP* on attainment (Scrivener et al., 2015; Sommo et al., 2018).

ASAP has **positive effects** on college access and enrollment

The WWC determined that two studies that meet WWC group design standards without reservations showed evidence of a positive and statistically significant effect of *ASAP* on college access and enrollment (Scrivener et al., 2015; Sommo et al., 2018).

ASAP has **positive effects** on credit accumulation and persistence

The WWC determined that two studies that meet WWC group design standards without reservations showed evidence of a positive and statistically significant effect of *ASAP* on credit accumulation and persistence (Scrivener et al., 2015; Sommo et al., 2018).

Main Findings

Table 3 shows the findings from two *ASAP* studies that meet WWC evidence standards. The table includes WWC calculations of the mean difference, effect size, and improvement index. Based on those studies, the effectiveness rating for the attainment, access and enrollment, and credit accumulation and persistence outcome domains is *positive effects*, indicating that there is evidence of *ASAP*'s positive effects on each domain with no overriding contrary evidence. These findings are based on two studies with 2,397 students.

Table 3. Findings from studies of *ASAP* by outcome domain

			Mean (standard deviation)		WWC calculations			
Measure (study)	Study sample	Sample size	Intervention group	Comparison group	Mean difference	Effect size	Improvement index	*p*-value
Earned any degree within six years (%) (Scrivener et al., 2015)[a]	Full sample	896 students	51.9	40.4	11.5	0.28	+11	<.01
E*arned a degree or certificate within 2 years (%)* (Sommo et al., 2018)[b]	Full sample	1,501 students	19.0	7.9	11.1	0.61	+23	<.01
Domain average for attainment across all studies						**0.45**	**+17**	
Enrollment in first semester (%) (Scrivener et al., 2015)[a]	Full sample	896 students	96.7	94.2	2.5	0.36	+14	.076
Enrollment in a four-year college, sixth semester (%) (Scrivener et al., 2015)[a]	Full sample	896 students	25.1	17.3	7.8	0.29	+11	.004
Enrollment in first semester (%) (Sommo et al., 2018)[b]	Full sample	1,501 students	95.1	91.4	3.6	0.36	+14	<.01
Domain average for access and enrollment across all studies						**0.34**	**+13**	
Number of credits earned over three years (Scrivener et al., 2015)[a]	Full sample	896 students	42.9 (27.7)	35.2 (27.8)	7.7	0.28	+11	<.0001
Number of sessions enrolled over three years (Scrivener et al., 2015)[a]	Full sample	896 students	6.6 (3.0)	5.4 (3.1)	1.2	0.39	+15	<.0001
Enrolled in any college, sixth semester (%) (Scrivener et al., 2015)[a]	Full sample	896 students	51.2	47.4	3.8	0.09	+4	.249
Enrollment in fourth semester (%) (Sommo et al., 2018)[b]	Full sample	1,501 students	60.2	50.5	9.7	0.24	+9	<.01
Domain average for credit accumulation and persistence across all studies						**0.25**	**+10**	

Table Notes: For mean difference, effect size, and improvement index values reported in the table, a positive number favors the intervention group and a negative number favors the comparison group. The effect size is a standardized measure of the effect of an intervention on outcomes, representing the average change expected for all individuals who are given the intervention (measured in standard deviations of the outcome measure). The WWC-computed average effect size is a simple average rounded to two decimal places; the average improvement index is calculated from the average effect size. The improvement index can be interpreted as the expected change in percentile rank for an average comparison group student if that student had received the intervention. The statistical significance of the domain average was determined by the WWC. Some statistics may not sum as expected due to rounding.

[a] For Scrivener et al. (2015), a correction for multiple comparisons was needed but did not affect whether any of the contrasts were found to be statistically significant. No corrections were needed for clustering or to adjust for baseline differences. The *p*-values presented here were reported in the original study. This study is characterized as having a statistically significant positive effect in all three domains because the effect for at least one measure within each domain is positive and statistically significant, and no effects are negative and statistically significant, accounting for multiple comparisons.

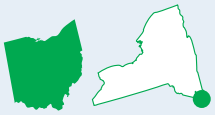
[b] For Sommo et al. (2018), no corrections were needed for multiple comparisons, clustering, or to adjust for baseline differences. The *p*-values presented here were reported in the original study. This study is characterized as having a statistically significant positive effect in all three domains because the effect for at least one measure within each domain is positive and statistically significant, and no effects are negative and statistically significant, accounting for multiple comparisons.

For more information, please refer to the WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook (version 3.0), page 26.

In What Context Was *ASAP* Studied?

The following section provides information on the setting and participants involved in the two studies of *ASAP* that meet WWC evidence standards. This information can help educators understand the context in which the studies of *ASAP* were conducted so that they can better determine whether the program might be suitable for their setting.

WHERE THE STUDY WAS CONDUCTED



2 studies, **2,397** students in **6** community colleges in **New York City** and **Ohio**

RACE

67%	33%
Minority	White

ETHNICITY

22%	78%
Hispanic	Non-Hispanic

GENDER

63%	37%
Female	Male

CHILDREN

23%	77%
Have Children	Do Not

GRADES: PK K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 PS

Postsecondary (PS)

Details of Each Study that Met WWC Standards

This section presents details for each study of *ASAP* that meets WWC standards. These details include the full study reference, findings description, findings summary, and description of study characteristics. A summary of findings for each outcome domain examined is presented in the first table for each study. The second table for each study provides a description of the study characteristics. These study-level details include contextual information on the study setting, methods, sample, intervention group, comparison group, outcomes, and implementation details. For additional information, the reader should refer to the original studies.

Research details for Scrivener et al. (2015)

Scrivener, S., Weiss, M.J., Ratledge, A., Rudd, T., Sommo, C., & Fresques, H. (2015). *Doubling graduation rates: Three-year effects of CUNY's Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) for developmental education students.* New York: MDRC. Retrieved from **https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED558511**

Findings from Scrivener et al. (2015) show evidence of a positive effect of *ASAP* on attainment, access and enrollment, and credit accumulation and persistence outcomes (Table 4). The improvement index is a measure of the effect of the intervention. For example, an improvement index of +11 means that the percentile rank of the average comparison group student would improve by 11 points on attainment outcomes if they received *ASAP*. These findings are based on one outcome in the attainment domain, two outcomes in the access and enrollment domain, and two outcomes in the credit accumulation and persistence domain. All findings are based on outcome analyses that include 896 students.

Table 4. Summary of findings from Scrivener et al. (2015) | **Meets WWC group design standards without reservations**

		Study findings		
Outcome domain	Sample size	Average effect size	Improvement index	Statistically significant
Attainment	896 community college students	0.28	+11	Yes
Access and enrollment	896 community college students	0.32	+13	Yes
Credit accumulation and persistence	896 community college students	0.25	+10	Yes

Table 5. Description of study characteristics for Scrivener et al. (2015)

WWC evidence rating	**Meets WWC Group Design Standards Without Reservations.** This is a randomized controlled trial (RCT) with low attrition.
Setting	The study was conducted at three CUNY community colleges: Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC), Kingsborough Community College (KCC), and LaGuardia Community College (LGCC).
Methods	The study uses a randomized controlled trial (RCT) design. Students in the three CUNY community colleges were eligible for the study if they met the following criteria: (1) they had a family income below 200 percent of the poverty level or were eligible for a Pell grant; (2) they needed one or two developmental courses in math, reading, or writing; (3) they had previously earned 12 or fewer college credits; (4) they were New York City residents; (5) they were willing and able to attend college full time; and (6) they were in an *ASAP*-eligible major. Prior to the spring 2010 semester and fall 2010 semester, eligible students were asked to attend an intake session on campus where they completed an informed consent form and a Baseline Information Form. Students were then randomly assigned to either receive an offer of participating in *ASAP* or to serve in a business-as-usual comparison group. Random assignment took place at BMCC and KCC for the spring 2010 semester and the fall 2010 semester; in LGCC, random assignment only took place for the fall 2010 semester. Altogether, 451 students were randomly assigned to the intervention group and 445 students were randomly assigned to the comparison group across the two semesters.
Study sample	Among the 896 students in the evaluation sample, 38 percent were male and 62 percent were female. At baseline, the average age of students was 21.5 years, 44 percent of students were Hispanic, 10 percent were White, 34 percent were Black, 8 percent were Asian or Pacific Islander, and 5 percent fell into the "Other" category. Moreover, 60 percent of students were incoming freshmen, 88 percent received a Pell Grant, and at least 86 percent of students had a developmental need in one or two classes (developmental need was unknown for 11 percent of students).
Intervention group	The *ASAP* intervention is a three-year multi-component program that provides wraparound supports to incoming community college students, including: tutoring; advising; career and employment services; blocked or linked courses; seminars; early enrollment; tuition waivers; free use of textbooks; and free public transportation. Students are required to attend college full time and are strongly encouraged to take developmental courses early. *ASAP* does not aim to alter classroom instruction. *ASAP* has three primary components: 1. *Academic Supports:* Students enroll in blocked or linked courses in their first year (i.e., multiple courses offered back-to-back or that have connected content and keep *ASAP* students together in the same courses). Students can also register for courses early and enroll in an *ASAP* seminar during the first three semesters which covers topics such as student skills and goal setting. 2. *Financial Supports:* Students receive a tuition waiver that covers the gap between financial aid and college tuition and fees (an average of $719 per semester among the small percentage of students who received the waiver). Students also receive free public transportation for subway and bus travel (Metro Cards, which cost an average of $112 per month by the end of the third year of the study) and free use of textbooks (worth approximately $270 per semester). 3. *Personal Supports:* In their first year, students received advisement from an *ASAP* advisor at least twice per month (average: 38 meetings per student during that time), support from an *ASAP* career and employment services staff member at least once per semester (average: nine meetings during that time), and one hour per week of tutoring from *ASAP* staff for each developmental course taken (tutoring was also required when students' GPA fell below 2.0) (average: 24 sessions during that time). In addition, *ASAP* provided voluntary services to students, including access to a social work intern, a $500 per semester *ASAP* Transfer Scholarship to complete degrees at CUNY four-year colleges, and participation in an *ASAP* Student Leadership Program to develop leadership and public speaking skills. Neither of these offerings was widely used by students.

Table 5. Description of study characteristics for Scrivener et al. (2015)

Comparison group	Unlike *ASAP*, students in the comparison condition were not required to enroll full time. Students in the comparison group had access to the usual college services: On average in their first year, students in the comparison group had six meetings with an advisor, two meetings with career services, and seven tutoring sessions. Blocked or linked courses were available at two of the three colleges during the first semester, but enrollment in these courses is unknown. Some students also took a student success course or a freshman seminar during their first year. Students in the comparison group had no access to additional financial supports (i.e., tuition waivers, free MetroCards, or free use of textbooks).
Outcomes and measurement	The study includes one eligible outcome in the attainment domain (earned a degree), two eligible outcomes in the access and enrollment domain (enrollment in the first semester, enrollment in a four-year college), and three eligible outcomes in the credit accumulation and persistence domain (total number of college-level credits earned, number of sessions enrolled, enrolled at any college in the sixth semester). All outcome measures are standard educational measures, pulled from student records, with assumed reliability. Data were drawn from CUNY's Institutional Research Database and the National Student Clearinghouse. The measure of college-level credits earned is a cumulative measure. This measure excludes courses that were passed more than once. Degree receipt is also a cumulative measure; any students who earned a degree in a given semester are counted as having earned a degree in all subsequent semesters. Subgroup analyses were presented by gender and high school diploma receipt. These supplemental findings are reported on the WWC website (**https://whatworks.ed.gov**) and do not factor into the intervention's rating of effectiveness. A number of outcomes were not eligible for review under the Supporting Postsecondary Success protocol: (1) completion of developmental education requirements; (2) developmental credits earned; (3) total credits earned (since this outcome includes developmental credits); (4) completed developmental education requirements; (5) enrolled at any CUNY college; (6) total credits attempted; and (7) cost effectiveness.
Additional implementation details	*ASAP* was initially funded in 2007 with a three-year, $20 million grant from the New York City Center for Economic Opportunity. *ASAP* is jointly administered by the CUNY Office of Academic Affairs and the participating community colleges

Research details for Sommo et al. (2018)

Sommo, C., Cullinan, D., & Manno, M. (2018). *Doubling graduation rates in a new state: Two-year findings from the ASAP Ohio demonstration*. MDRC Policy Brief, December. Retrieved from **https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED592008**

Findings from Sommo et al. (2018) show evidence of a positive effect of *ASAP* on attainment, access and enrollment, and credit accumulation and persistence (Table 6). The improvement index is a measure of the effect of the intervention. For example, an improvement index of +23 means that the percentile rank of the average comparison group student would improve by 23 points on attainment outcomes if they received *ASAP*. These findings are based on one outcome in the attainment domain, one outcome in the access and enrollment domain, and one outcome in the credit accumulation and persistence domain. All findings are based on outcomes analyses that include 1,501 students.

Table 6. Summary of findings from Sommo et al. (2018) — **Meets WWC group design standards without reservations**

		Study findings		
Outcome domain	Sample size	Average effect size	Improvement index	Statistically significant
Attainment	1,501 community college students	0.61	+23	Yes
Access and enrollment	1,501 community college students	0.36	+14	Yes
Credit accumulation and persistence	1,501 community college students	0.24	+9	Yes

Table 7. Description of study characteristics for Sommo et al. (2018)

WWC evidence rating	**Meets WWC Group Design Standards Without Reservations.** This is a randomized controlled trial (RCT) with low attrition.
Setting	The study was conducted at three Ohio community colleges: Cincinnati State Technical and Community College, Lorain County Community College, and Cuyahoga Community College.
Methods	Students at three Ohio community colleges were eligible to participate in the *ASAP* evaluation if the following criteria were met: (1) they planned to enroll in spring 2015, fall 2015, or spring 2016; (2) they were Pell Grant eligible (i.e., low income); (3) they were degree-ready or in need of developmental education; (4) they were planning to enroll full-time; and (5) they were in a major that can be completed in three years. Prior to start of the semester, eligible students were contacted by college advisers and staff who explained the program and determined their interest. If interested, students completed an informed consent form and a baseline questionnaire. Students were then were then randomly assigned to either receive an offer of participating in *ASAP* or to serve in a business-as-usual comparison group. Altogether, 806 students were randomly assigned to the intervention group and 695 students were randomly assigned to the comparison group across the two semesters.
Study sample	Among the 1,505 students in the study sample at baseline, 36 percent were male and 64 percent were female. At baseline, 46 percent of students were White, 35 percent were Black, 10 percent were Hispanic, and 10 percent fell into the "Other" category. Moreover, 60 percent of students were employed at baseline, 9 percent were married, 27 percent had children, 47 percent were nontraditional students, and 34 percent were the first person in their family to attend college.
Intervention group	The *ASAP* intervention is a three-year multi-component program that provides wraparound supports to incoming community college students, including: tutoring; advising; career and employment services; blocked or linked courses; seminars; early enrollment; tuition waivers; and free use of textbooks. This intervention model in Ohio differs from the CUNY *ASAP* model primarily in two ways: (1) there is no requirement or encouragement of enrollment in a winter session as none of the participating Ohio community colleges offer a winter session, and (2) program oversight management is decentralized in Ohio at each of the three campuses whereas CUNY *ASAP* management is central at the CUNY Office of Academic Affairs.
Comparison group	Unlike *ASAP*, students in the comparison condition were not required to enroll full time and could not participate in *ASAP* programs. Students in the comparison group had access to the usual college services.
Outcomes and measurement	The study includes one eligible outcome in the attainment domain (earned a degree or certificate in the fourth semester), one eligible outcome in the access and enrollment domain (enrollment in the first semester), and one eligible outcome in the credit accumulation and persistence domain (enrollment in the fourth semester). All outcome measures are standard educational measures, pulled from student records, with assumed reliability. Data were drawn from transcripts from the three participating community colleges. Supplemental analyses presented enrollment rates for the second and third semester, and by full-time vs. part-time status. Graduation outcomes in semesters 2-3 were also presented. These supplemental findings are reported on the WWC website (https://whatworks.ed.gov) and do not factor into the intervention's rating of effectiveness. The study also included measures of credit accumulation in each semester. Since these measures of credit accumulation included developmental credits in addition to college-level credits, they are out of the scope of the Supporting Postsecondary Success protocol, version 3.0.
Additional implementation details	*ASAP* in Ohio was funded through a consortium set up by MDRC. The primary funder was the Great Lakes Higher Education Guaranty Corporation with additional funding provided from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, Haile U.S. Bank Foundation, KnowledgeWorks, the Kresge Foundation, and the Lumina Foundation. Over time, the participating community colleges will take on an increasing share of the costs. CUNY and MDRC provided start-up technical assistance and the Ohio Department of Higher Education served as coordinator of the Ohio *ASAP* Network to facilitate communication and coordination across participating community colleges.

References

Studies that meet WWC group design standards without reservations

Scrivener, S., Weiss, M.J., Ratledge, A., Rudd, T., Sommo, C., & Fresques, H. (2015). *Doubling graduation rates: Three-year effects of CUNY's Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) for developmental education students.* New York: MDRC. Retrieved from **https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED558511**

Additional Sources:

Gupta, H. (2017). *The power of fully supporting community college students: The effects of The City University of New York's Accelerated Study in Associate Programs after six years.* New York: MDRC. Retrieved from **https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED579083**

MDRC (2015). *Accelerated Study in Associate Programs: A program that almost doubles three-year graduation rates*. New York: Author. Retrieved from **https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED560950**

Schmidt, B. (2013). Transforming community college education at The City University of New York. *International Journal of Educational Leadership and Management, 1*(1), 99-129. Retrieved from **https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1111700**

Scrivener, S., & Weiss, M.J. (2013). *More graduates: Two-year results from an evaluation of Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) for developmental education students*. New York: MDRC. Retrieved from **https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED546636**

Scrivener, S., Weiss, M.J., & Sommo, C. (2012). *What can a multifaceted program do for community college students? Early results from an evaluation of Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) for developmental education students*. New York: MDRC. Retrieved from **https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED532840**

Weiss, M. J., Ratledge, A., Sommo, C., & Gupta, H. (2019). Supporting community college students from start to degree completion: Long-term evidence from a randomized trial of CUNY's ASAP. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, 11*(3), 253-297. Retrieved from **https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED604399**

Weiss, M., Scrivener, S., Fresques, H., Ratledge, A., Rudd, T., & Sommo, C. (2014). The platinum bullet: An experimental evaluation of CUNY's Accelerated Study in Associate Program (ASAP)—New three-year impacts, cost analyses, and implementation findings. Paper presented at the Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness (SREE) spring conference, Washington, DC. Retrieved from **https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED562826**

Sommo, C., Cullinan, D., & Manno, M. (2018). *Doubling graduation rates in a new state: Two-year findings from the ASAP Ohio demonstration*. MDRC Policy Brief, December. Retrieved from **https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED592008**

Additional Sources:

Sommo, C., Manno, M., Cullinan, D., Blake, S., & Alonzo, E. (2019). Doubling graduation rates in a new state: Two-year findings from the ASAP Ohio demonstration, Supplementary Appendixes. Retrieved from **https://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/ASAP_OH_Tech_App_final.pdf**

Sommo, C. & Ratledge, A. (2016). *Bringing CUNY Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) to Ohio: Early findings from a demonstration in three community colleges.* MDRC Policy Brief, September. Retrieved from **https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED569162**

Studies that meet WWC group design standards with reservations

None.

Studies that do not meet WWC group design standards

Kolenovic, Z., Linderman, D., & Karp, M.M. (2013). Improving student outcomes via comprehensive supports: Three-year outcomes from CUNY's Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP). *Community College Review, 41*(4), 271-291. The study does not meet WWC group design standards because the measures of effectiveness cannot be attributed solely to the intervention.[6]

Additional Sources:

Linderman, D. & Kolenovic, Z. (2012). Results thus far and the road ahead: A follow-up report on CUNY Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP). Brooklyn, NY: CUNY.

Strumbos, D., & Kolenovic, Z. (2017). *Six-year outcomes of ASAP students: Transfer and degree attainment (ASAP Evaluation Brief)*. New York: City University of New York. Retrieved from **http://www1.cuny.edu/sites/asap/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2017/01/201701_ASAP_Eval_Brief_Six_Year_Outcomes_FINAL.pdf**

Strumbos, D., & Kolenovic, Z. (2016). *ASAP graduation rates by race/ethnicity, gender and Pell status (ASAP Evaluation Brief)*. New York: City University of New York. Retrieved from **http://www1.cuny.edu/sites/asap/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2016/09/201609_ASAP_Eval_Brief_Subgroups_FINAL.pdf**

Strumbos, D., Kolenovic, Z., & Tavares, A.L. (2016). CUNY Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP): Evidence from six cohorts and lessons for expansion. In S. Whalen (Ed.), Proceedings of the 12th national symposium on student retention, Norfolk, Virginia. Norman, OK: The University of Oklahoma.

Strumbos, D., Linderman, D., & Hicks, C.C. (2018). Postsecondary pathways out of poverty: City University of New York Accelerated Study in Associate Programs and the case for national policy. *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences, 4*(3), 100–117, doi: 10.7758/RSF.2018.4.3.06

Rini, A. L. (2011). *The contribution of student success programs on community college student persistence and graduation rates: A case study of the benefits and costs of the Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) at the City University of New York*. (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania). UMI No. 3455403. The study does not meet WWC group design standards because the measures of effectiveness cannot be attributed solely to the intervention.

Studies that are ineligible for review using the Supporting Postsecondary Success Evidence Review Protocol

Allen, D. (2015). *Understanding multiple developmental education pathways for underrepresented student populations: Findings from New York City*. (Doctoral Dissertation, New York University). Proquest No. 3729796. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use an eligible design.

Levin, H.M. & García, E. (2018). Accelerating community college graduation rates: A benefit–cost analysis. *The Journal of Higher Education, 89*(1), 1-27, doi: 10.1080/00221546.2017.1313087. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use an eligible design.

Levin, H.M. & Garcia, E. (2013). *Cost-effectiveness of Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) of the City University of New York (CUNY)*. New York: Center for Benefit-Cost Studies in Education, Teachers College, Columbia University. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use an eligible design.

Levin, H.M. & Garcia, E. (2012). *Cost-effectiveness of Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) of the City University of New York (CUNY)*. New York: Center for Benefit-Cost Studies in Education, Teachers College, Columbia University. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use an eligible design.

Endnotes

[1] Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2018). Measuring the value of education. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from **https://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2018/data-on-display/education-pays.htm**

[2] McFarland, J., Hussar, B., Zhang, J., Wang, X., Wang, K., Hein, S., Diliberti, M., Forrest Cataldi, E., Bullock Mann, F., and Barmer, A. (2019). *The Condition of Education 2019* (NCES 2019-144). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from **https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2019144**

[3] The descriptive information for this intervention comes from Scrivener et al. (2015) and Sommo et al. (2018), as well as from *ASAP*'s website. The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) requests developers review the intervention description sections for accuracy from their perspective. The WWC provided CUNY with the intervention description in April 2019 and incorporated feedback from CUNY's response. Further verification of the accuracy of the descriptive information for this intervention is beyond the scope of this review.

[4] The literature search reflects documents publicly available by March 2019. Reviews of the studies in this report used the standards from the **WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook (version 3.0)** and the **Supporting Postsecondary Success review protocol (version 3.0)**. The evidence presented in this report is based on available research. Findings and conclusions could change as new research becomes available.

[5] This report was revised following a routine WWC internal audit, which found that one eligible outcome was not included in the original report: Enrolled in any college, sixth semester (Scrivener et al., 2015). This reduced the improvement index in the credit accumulation and persistence domain from +11 to +10, but did not otherwise change the conclusions of the original report.

[6] This study used a comparison group from the previous school year, and thus has a time confound, for the 2007, 2009, and 2010 cohorts. Starting with the fall 2011 cohort, the authors matched *ASAP* students with comparison students from the same school year, so later cohorts in this study do not have a fundamental confound. The WWC cannot establish baseline equivalence on these later cohorts because the Supporting Postsecondary Success Protocol (version 3.0) requires baseline equivalence to be established on a measure of socioeconomic status and a continuous measure of academic achievement for outcomes without a natural pretest. Since the only academic achievement pretest data available were the CUNY placement tests in reading, writing, and mathematics, and since some students were exempt from taking this test, a continuously-scaled pretest for the analytic sample was not available. Data provided by the authors that imputed test scores for students who placed out of these subjects suggests that the treatment and comparison groups were well-balanced at baseline.

Recommended Citation

What Works Clearinghouse, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. (2019, November). *Supporting Postsecondary Success intervention report: Accelerated Study in Associate Programs*. Retrieved from **https://whatworks.ed.gov**