Washington Student Achievement Council

Admission standards

Minimum admission standards guide student success

The Washington Student Achievement Council establishes minimum admission standards for freshmen at the state's public four-year college and universities. New standards, approved in May 2007, were revised in 2009 and again in 2010.

The standards include College Academic Distribution Requirements (CADR), used in the state's high schools as planning tools for college-bound students.

They require students to take specific courses in English, mathematics, sciences, arts, world languages, and social sciences.

Why minimum standards?

Our new standards are helping meet the state's goal of raising educational attainment by

- increasing the number of high school students prepared for college;
- shortening the average time it takes to earn a college degree or certificate;
- reducing the need for remediation in English and mathematics;
- saving students time and the state money; and
- enabling the state to educate more citizens to higher levels.

Consider these facts

- More than 37 percent of students who graduate from Washington high schools and continue to college require remediation in math or English.
- As many as three out of 10 freshmen at each of the state's four-year universities do not return for their sophomore year.
- Taking mathematics courses beyond advanced algebra in high school more than doubles a student's chances of earning a bachelor's degree.[1]

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[1]Adelman, C. "Answers in the Toolbox. Academic intensity, attendance patterns, and Bachelor's degree attainment." US Dept. of Education, 1999

Courses, credits required to meet minimum admissions standards

Since fall 2012, students have been required to complete the credits below to be eligible for admission to a public, four-year college or university.

Completing these requirements does not guarantee admission, as each institution has its own requirements beyond the minimum described below.

English – 4 credits including 3 credits of college preparatory composition or literature.

Mathematics – 3 credits including Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II, or Integrated Math I, II, and III. One math-based quantitative course must be taken in the senior year.

Science – 2 credits of laboratory science, including one algebra-based.

World Languages – 2 credits of the same world language, Native American language, or American Sign Language.

Social Science – 3 credits of history or other social science.

Arts – 1 credit of fine, visual or performing arts.

For more information see our website at: www.wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/MCASOverview-StudentsParents-Rev.12-11.pdf

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Facts about minimum college admission standards

Preparation pays dividends

Students who complete a rigorous course of study in high school are far less likely to need remedial courses in college than those who do not.

These students also tend to enroll in more challenging courses, achieve their degree goals faster and report they get more out of their academic experience.

Mathematics in senior year

Students must complete a math-based quantitative credit in their senior year. Studies show such courses improve student performance on college math assessment tests.[1]

Students can demonstrate competency to meet CADR language requirements

Students are allowed to meet the World Language requirement by demonstrating competency based on national standards. Also, high-school-level courses taken in middle school are allowed to count toward fulfilling the CADR.

Science

Students are required to complete two laboratory science credits, including at least one credit of algebra-based science.

Local oversight

The state's school districts determine which of their courses fulfill the new college admission standards.

Read more at
www.wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/MCASMarch2011Revised.pdf

[1] Brown, J.; B. Kleiner; R. Perkins; & S. Roey. "The High School Transcript Study: A Decade of Change in Curricula and Achievement, 1990-2000." The National Center for Educational Statistics, 2004.

High school graduation requirements

The State Board of Education (SBE) has approved more rigorous high school graduation requirements to align them more closely with the Minimum College Admission Standards. These included:

- Four credits of English
- Three credits of math through Algebra 2 or Integrated Math 3.
- Three credits of social studies (including civics)
- Automatic enrollment in a curriculum that would meet CADR requirements
- The use of competency-based assessments to meet requirements

Students who complete the new requirements will be better prepared to continue their education beyond high school.

Meeting the Minimum Admission Standards does not guarantee admission to a four-year state college or university. It simply represents a minimum standard a student needs to meet to be considered for admission.

College Bound students, their parents and counselors should carefully consider the Minimum Admission Standards when making course selections.

Read more about Washington State graduation requirements at www.sbe.wa.gov/graduation.php

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