

Minimum Baccalaureate Admission Standards

Background

In July 2013, the UA Board of Regents submitted a developmental education report to the legislature in accordance with a recommendation made by the Alaska Advisory Task Force on Higher Education and Career Readiness in 2011. That report contained the following table of graduation rates for full-time students:

**Table 3. Average 4-Year Bachelor Degree Graduation Rate within 6 Years
Fall 2002 – Fall 2006 Starting Cohorts**

	English AND Math	English OR Math
Any Developmental	10.1%	22.1%
Significant Remediation	0.0%	11.0%
Some Remediation	4.4%	18.7%
Nearly College-Ready	13.3%	24.7%
College Ready	35.6%	

UAA and UAS currently admit students to baccalaureate programs that require significant remediation in both math and English; UAF established minimum admission standards in 2007 and does not admit such students. While underprepared students are expected to require additional time to complete baccalaureate programs, UA data indicates that no student requiring significant remediation in math and English in six annual cohorts had completed a baccalaureate within six years and only 4.4% of those requiring some remediation in both subjects did so.

About 4% of recent high school graduates and 1% of post traditional students entering UA baccalaureate programs annually need significant remediation; the figures for some remediation are 11% and 3% respectively. Minimum baccalaureate admission standards, if implemented, would direct one or both of these student groups to certificate, associate, or baccalaureate preparation programs. This approach is consistent with states that have separate community college and university systems.

The Statewide Academic Council agreed to move the following recommendation to the Faculty Alliance in July 2013.

The Statewide Academic Council (SAC) recommends that the three faculty senates set a minimum baccalaureate admission standard for the UA system and students that do not meet the admission standard, where historical data indicates substantial success in remediating them, should be admitted to a specific program to help them prepare for successful admission. The faculty senates would be jointly responsible for determining what the minimum admission criteria are; a starting point straw proposal is given below modeled after UAF's admission criteria.

MOTION: The _____ Faculty Senate moves to adopt a common minimum baccalaureate admission standard across the UA system. Individual programs and individual institutions may set baccalaureate admission standards higher than the minimum but all institutions shall implement at least the minimum standard.

STRAW STARTING POINT FOR DISCUSSION (the current UAF baccalaureate admission standard): For admission to baccalaureate level programs, applicants must fulfill either:

Option 1: have a high school diploma, and pass the 16-credit high school core curriculum with a GPA of at least 2.5, and have a cumulative GPA of 3.0. No minimum ACT or SAT score is required, OR

Option 2: have a high school diploma, and pass the 16-credit high school core curriculum with a GPA of at least 2.5, and have a cumulative GPA of 2.5, and submit results of the ACT Plus Writing (preferred) with a score of 18 or SAT with a score of 1290.

Rationale: UA institutions currently admit students that our historical data indicate do not complete baccalaureate degrees; this is an unethical practice. UA is and will remain an open admission institution. The UA mission includes the community college mission so students who apply for admission into a baccalaureate program but are not admitted should be accepted into an alternative program, such as a pre-baccalaureate certificate program (like the pre-nursing program), or an AA or AS program. UA should only admit students into baccalaureate programs that are prepared to complete those programs.

This change is intended to have several impacts. First, this change is intended to clearly communicate to future students, their parents, their teachers and school districts, UA standards for baccalaureate admission standards. Second, the U.S. Department of Education currently treats UA institutions as only four-year institutions and the required data reporting does not represent UA or Alaska well. The change is intended to more appropriately represent UA and Alaska on the national scene. Third, at present UA has relatively few clear pathways from associate programs to baccalaureate programs the way other community college and universities do in other states. This change is intended to encourage the development of such pathways and for UA to track students following those paths.

UAF implemented the above admission standard in fall 2007. Baccalaureate admissions fell 15 to 20% when they first implemented this standard but have since recovered.

UAA and UAS are still assessing the likely impact of implementing the proposed standard.

Complete College America recommends placing underprepared students in collegiate level coursework with additional support. UA institutions would have to assess whether to follow this recommendation, if the proposed admission standards are implemented.

The ACT score of 18 in option 2 above is a relatively low standard nationally for college readiness. College readiness benchmarks set by ACT are given in the table below. These benchmark scores on the

ACT subject-area tests represent the level of achievement required for students to have a 50% chance of obtaining a B or higher or about a 75% chance of obtaining a C or higher in corresponding credit-bearing first-year college courses. Based on a sample of 214 institutions and more than 230,000 students from across the United States, the benchmarks are median course placement values for these institutions and as such represent a *typical* set of expectations. The ACT College Readiness Benchmarks are (content of paragraph and table copied from <http://www.act.org/solutions/college-career-readiness/college-readiness-benchmarks/>) :

College Course	ACT Subject-Area Test	The ACT Benchmark
English Composition	English	18
College Algebra	Mathematics	22
Social Sciences	Reading	22
Biology	Science	23