

MONTANA BOARD OF REGENTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION
Policy and Procedures Manual

SUBJECT: ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Policy 301.16 – Writing Proficiency

Revised December 7, 2007; Issued December 10, 2007

I. Board Policy:

A. Any student seeking full admission to a four-year degree program at Montana State University- Bozeman, Montana State University-Billings, Montana State University-Northern, The University of Montana-Missoula, Montana Tech of The University of Montana, and The University of Montana-Western must satisfy a writing proficiency standard. That standard is as follows:

For Fall 2009 and the following years, students must earn a minimum score of:

- 7** on the Writing Subscore or 18 on the Combined English/Writing section of the Optional Writing Test of the ACT; or
- 7** on the Essay or 440 on the Writing Section of the SAT; or
- 3.5** on the Montana University System Writing Assessment; or
- 3** on the AP English Language or English Literature Examination; or
- 4** on the International Baccalaureate Language A1 Exam.

B. The writing proficiency standard will be phased in:

For Fall 2008, students must earn a minimum score of:

- 6** on the Writing Subscore or 17 on the Combined English/Writing section of the Optional Writing Test of the ACT; or
- 6** on the Essay or 420 on the Writing Section of the SAT; or
- 3** on the Montana University System Writing Assessment; or
- 3** on the AP English Language or English Literature Examination; or
- 4** on the International Baccalaureate Language A1 Exam.

C. In lieu of the indicators set out in paragraphs A and B above, students may offer CLEP Subject Examinations in Composition if their scores on the examination meet or exceed the ACE Recommended Score for Awarding Credit of 50.

D. A student who has not yet demonstrated the ability to meet these standards may be admitted (without condition) to a two-year degree program or admitted provisionally to a four-year degree program on any campus of the Montana University System. The Montana Board of Regents has approved additional guidelines to assist students who have been provisionally admitted to a four-degree program under this policy. The most important guideline requires students to change their admission status from provisional to full very early in their academic career; and if they don't they cannot continue to work on a four-year degree. Those guidelines are entitled [Operational Rules for the Provisional Admissions Status Created by Montana Board of Regents](#).

E. Before gaining full admission status to a four-year program, the student may prove that he/she has the appropriate proficiency in the following ways:

1. re-take one or more of the listed writing assessments to earn the required score;
2. earn a grade of C- or better in the composition course that is the prerequisite to the composition course that satisfies the general education program requirements described in Board [Policy 301.10](#);

3. submit a letter to the admissions office documenting a disability that prevented him/her from adequately demonstrating proficiency in a test setting if no accommodation was provided at the time of the test.

F. A student receiving a score of 5.5 or higher on the MUS Writing Assessment will be issued a certificate of merit from the Montana Board of Regents for use in applying for college admissions or scholarships.

High schools throughout Montana will receive:

- certificates of appreciation from the Montana Board of Regents for their partnership activities with the Montana University System on behalf of the Writing Assessment project;
- awards of merit from the Montana Board of Regents for the exemplary performance earned by their students on the Writing Assessment project.

G. The Montana University System will establish a uniform system to collect and report student data related to writing proficiency to provide evaluation and analysis of the writing proficiency requirement.

H. The following categories of students are exempt from the provisions of this policy:

1. non-traditional students (those who do not enter college for a period of at least three years from the date of high school graduation or from the date when they would have graduated from high school);
2. summer-only students; and
3. part-time students taking seven or fewer college-level semester credits.

History:

Approval of Proficiency Admission Requirements and Developmental Education in the Montana University System, approved by the Board of Regents on November 17, 1995 (Item 89-003-R1195); [Item 107-109-R0500](#), Report from Joint K-16 Composition Standards Committee on Writing Proficiency Standards for Admission and Graduation from MUS, approved July 6, 2000; [Item 122-115-R0104](#), Writing Proficiency Recommendation ([Background](#)), approved January 15, 2004; [Item 129-109-R1105](#), Writing Proficiency Policy, approved November 18, 2005; and [Item 135-105-R0507](#) approved May 31, 2007. Editorial changes made December 7, 2007.