



# Montana University System College Readiness

## COLLEGE READINESS

### What does it mean?

“College-ready” is defined as the level of academic preparation necessary to successfully complete entry-level college courses that are required for a degree.

### What are entry-level college courses?

In the Montana University System, courses that are numbered “100” and above are considered college-level. Typical entry-level courses are WRIT 101 - College Writing and M 121 - College Algebra. Courses numbered below 100 are considered developmental (designed to develop skills needed to be successful in entry-level college courses.)

### Where are Montana’s college readiness standards described?

For college admissions standards, with links to documents describing what students need to know and be able to do, go to: [mus.edu/collegeprep.asp](http://mus.edu/collegeprep.asp).

### Is academic readiness enough to guarantee success?

College-readiness includes critical thinking; adaptive reasoning, tolerance for diversity and ambiguity; independence; study, research, and technology skills; and responsibility. These habits of mind, as well as fiscal and social support and the motivation to complete a degree, are also critical.

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Colleges and universities evaluate college readiness of high school students by analyzing courses completed in high school (college preparatory program or rigorous core), grade point averages (GPA), scores on college entrance exams, including the ACT, SAT, and Montana University System Writing Assessment (MUSWA), and may also consider other factors (extra-curricular activities).

### College Preparatory Program

In general, college readiness is achieved by taking high school courses that are rigorous and generally comparable among high schools. ACT and College Board studies, as well as Montana’s standards, indicate that successfully completing at least three years of rigorous math, two years of science, three years of social studies, and four years of English will help students achieve college readiness. A “rigorous core”, recommended by the Montana Board of Regents, includes four years of mathematics.

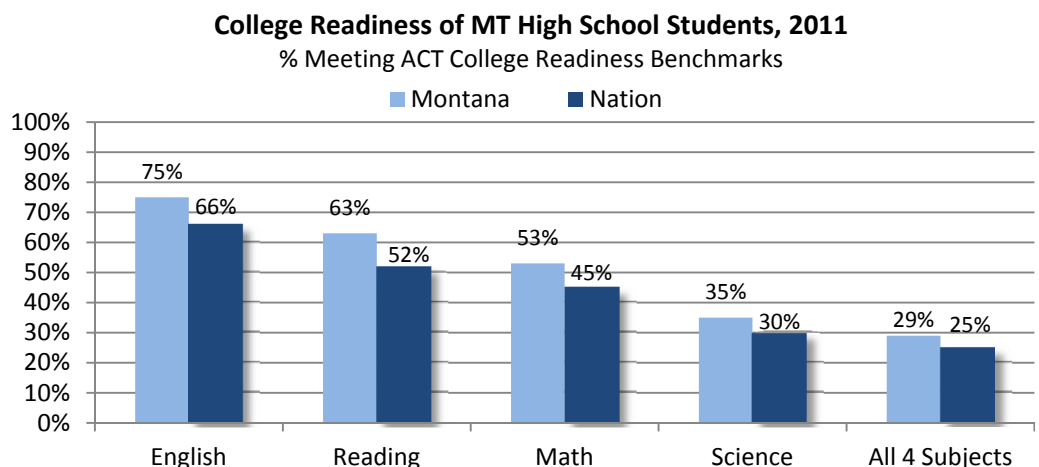
### College Entrance Exams

Scores on college entrance exams provide the most objective measures of college readiness, with proficiency levels set in specific subjects and described by the academic standards required for college level work. For example:

- To gain entrance into college-level writing courses in the MUS, students must earn a minimum ACT or SAT essay score of 7 or MUSWA score of 3.5. These scores mean that students can “make arguments supported by evidence; create a logical progression of ideas; choose words and phrases to express ideas precisely; and demonstrate command of the conventions of standard written English.”
- To enter college-level math courses in the MUS, students must earn a minimum math ACT score of 22 or SAT score of 520. These scores mean that students can, for example “evaluate algebraic expressions by substituting integers for unknown quantities, evaluate quadratic functions, find the measure of an angle using properties of parallel lines, and determine the probability of a simple event,”

### College Readiness of Montana High School Graduates

In 2011, approximately 6,000 out of 10,000 high school graduates in Montana took the ACT. The chart below displays the percentage of 2011 Montana high school graduates meeting college readiness benchmarks in comparison to national averages.



source: ACT