

MONTANA BOARD OF REGENTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Policy and Procedures Manual

SUBJECT: ACADEMIC AFFAIRS
Policy 301 – Admission Requirements
(new) (existing) (removed)

Adopted: October 28, 1977; Revised: January 1, 2014; Revised: April 16, 2020; Revised: May 27, 2021; Revised: July 14, 2022; Revised: July 10, 2025; Revised: July 9, 2026;

Draft for discussion – not yet adopted by the Board.

I. General Admissions Standards

A. Students must have graduated from a high school accredited by a state accrediting agency or have a high school equivalency completion assessment designated by the Montana Board of Public Education to be admitted to any campus of the Montana University System (MUS). At the discretion of the institution, for students who complete their secondary education through home schooling or at unaccredited secondary schools, this requirement may be met by “satisfactory performance” on the ACT, SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test), GED, or HiSET.

B. The two-year campuses and some two-year programs of the four-year campuses of the MUS are open admission, in which the only academic requirement is (A) above. However, individual programs of study within those institutions may have more selective admission requirements.

C. Students in credit-bearing continuing education courses must meet the same admission requirements and academic standards as students in regular academic courses.

D. The requirements in this section apply to admission to colleges and universities in the MUS. Specific academic programs (such as nursing or engineering) may have additional admission requirements, which can be found in the program catalogues and websites.

II. Full Admission to Four-Year University Programs

To be fully admitted as first-time, full-time undergraduates into a four-year university program (without conditions or provisions), students must meet the following requirements:

A. Completion of the Regents’ College Preparatory Program:

1. Four years of English: in each year the content of the courses should have an emphasis upon the development of written and oral communication skills and study of literature.
2. Three years of mathematics including Algebra I, geometry and Algebra II (or the sequential content equivalent of these courses). Students are encouraged to take a math course in their senior year.
3. Three years of social studies which shall include global studies (such as world history or world geography); American history; and government, economics, Indian history or other third year courses.
4. Two years of laboratory science: one year must be earth science, biology, chemistry, or physics; the other year can be one of those sciences or another approved college preparatory laboratory science.
5. Two years chosen from the following:

- (a) foreign language (preferably two years);
- (b) computer science;
- (c) visual and performing arts; or
- (d) career/technical education units which meet the office of public instruction guidelines.

6. Dual Enrollment Credit: A course taken through dual enrollment or concurrent enrollment that satisfies a high school graduation requirement in a subject area listed in Section II(A)(1)–(5), and that is recorded as high school credit for that subject area on the student's official high school transcript, shall count toward satisfaction of the corresponding requirement of the Regents' College Preparatory Program.

B. Demonstration of Mathematics Proficiency:

- 1. A score of 22 or above on ACT mathematics; or
- 2. A score of 27.5 or above on SAT mathematics test; or
- 3. A score of 3 or above on the AP calculus AB or BC subject examination or a score of 4 on the IB calculus test; or
- 4. A score of 50 or above on the CLEP subject examinations in selected topics [college algebra, college algebra-trigonometry, pre-calculus, calculus, or trigonometry]; or
- 5. Completion of a rigorous high school core including four years of mathematics in high school (Algebra I, Algebra II, geometry & a course beyond Algebra II) and three years of laboratory science; or three years of mathematics including a course beyond Algebra II and four years of laboratory science, in addition to English, social studies, and electives as described in the regents' college preparatory program, with grades of C or better in all courses (See Appendix I.) Mathematics or laboratory science courses completed through dual enrollment or concurrent enrollment, and recorded as high school credit on the student's official high school transcript, count toward these course totals.; or
- 6. A cumulative high school grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher; or
- 7. A cumulative high school GPA of 2.5 or higher AND an Algebra II (or the sequential content equivalent) course grade of C or better.

C. Demonstration of Writing Proficiency:

- 1. A score of 7 or above on the writing test or 18 or above on the ELA (weighted composite based on the English, reading, and writing scores) of the optional writing test of the ACT; or
- 2. A score of 25 or above on the writing and language test of the SAT; or
- 3. A score of 3 or above on the AP English language or English literature examination; or
- 4. A score of 4 or above on the IB language A1 exam; or
- 5. A score of 50 or above on the CLEP subject examinations in composition; or
- 6. A cumulative high school GPA of 3.0 or higher; or

7. A cumulative high school GPA of 2.5 or higher AND a course grade of C or better in an 11th grade English Course.

D. General preparation as demonstrated through at least one of the following:

1. A composite score of at least 20 on the ACT or a score of at least 1050 on the total of mathematics, evidence-based reading, and writing scores on the SAT for admission to Montana State University-Northern; or
2. A composite score of at least 22 on the ACT or a score of at least 1120 on the total of mathematics, evidence-based reading, and writing scores on the SAT for admission to Montana State University-Billings, Montana Technological University, Montana State University-Bozeman, The University of Montana-Missoula, and The University of Montana Western; or
3. A high school GPA of at least 2.5; or
4. A ranking in the upper half of the school's graduating class.

E. Institutions are authorized to exempt the following classes of students from the requirements to demonstrate their math proficiency, writing proficiency and general preparation, as set out in Section II parts (B), (C), and (D).

1. Institutions may exempt up to 15% of first-time, full-time undergraduates to admit students with special talents or needs; and
2. 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); and
3. Summer only students; and
4. Part-time students taking seven or fewer college-level semester credits.
5. Students who do not meet the Mathematics and Writing Proficiency requirements in Section II parts (B) and (C), provided the campus establishes procedures to: (i) provide these students access to additional math and writing support; (ii) advise them to enroll immediately in math and writing coursework; and (iii) encourage them to complete math and writing coursework in their first 30 credits.

Institutions must establish procedures for the admission of applicants who do not meet the minimum requirements set forth in Section II parts (B), (C), and (D). Such procedures shall include submission of evidence of the ability to do college-level work and shall be subject to approval of the deputy commissioner for academic, research, and student affairs.

III. Transfer Admission

A. Transfer applicants must present at least a 2.0 cumulative grade point average (i.e., equivalent to a "C" on a 4.0 scale) based on transferable credits carried from all colleges or universities previously attended to be eligible for full admission to a four-year campus.

B. For purposes of admissions, a transfer student is a student who has earned 12 or more credits in college-level courses at another college or university after graduating high school or attaining a high school equivalency as described in Section I part (A), who is entering a new institution for the first time, and whose credits at the previous institution have been accepted by the receiving institution.

IV. Dual Enrollment

A. In order to grant college credit, campuses may establish procedures for the admission of students enrolled simultaneously in high school and a campus of the MUS and for admission of non-high school graduates before their high school class has graduated. Such admission shall:

1. Be selective and shall be confined to students who present evidence of the ability and maturity to successfully complete the college course(s); and
2. Be based on providing educational opportunities that are not available in the high school setting; and
3. Require that the high school principal or counselor approve participation of a student in the college program; and
4. Be consistent with Operational Guidelines on Dual Enrollment, including test scores and prerequisites for courses with placement requirements.
5. Dual enrollment coursework that is recorded as high school credit in a subject area on a student's official high school transcript shall be treated as high school coursework in that subject area for purposes of Sections II and VII of this policy, in addition to any college credit awarded for the same coursework.

V. Student Responsibilities

A. Falsification or willful suppression by a student of any information called for on an application for admission may be grounds for cancellation or denial of admission.

B. Before enrolling for an initial term, all post-secondary students must comply with immunization requirements of ARM 37.114.701-721:

1. Students born in 1957 or later must provide evidence that they have received two measles and two rubella immunizations, with dose one administered at 12 months of age or later and dose two administered at least 28 days after dose one. No measles vaccination before 1967 is valid. No rubella vaccination before 1969 is valid. As an alternative, a student may supply a laboratory report from a CLIA approved laboratory indicating that the student is immune to measles and/or rubella.
2. Under ARM 37.114.711, a student may be conditionally enrolled for an initial term if the student has not received the second dose of measles and/or rubella vaccine provided they receive the second dose at least 28 days after the first dose and before the beginning of the succeeding school term.
3. A student may be exempt from the above requirements for medical reasons (ARM 37.114.715) provided the student supplies a statement from a physician (MD or DO) holding a license to practice in the United States or Canada stating: (a) the specific immunization that is contraindicated; (b) the time period the immunization is contraindicated; and (c) the reasons for the contraindication
4. A student may be exempt from the above requirements for religious reasons provided the student supplies a notarized statement that immunizations are contrary to the student's religious beliefs. This notarized statement must be submitted annually by any student claiming a religious exemption (ARM 37.114.716).
5. Individual campuses or programs may have additional immunization/testing requirements.

VI. General Campus Procedures

A. Campuses may apply admission review processes that: (1) improve the likelihood of student success; (2) encourage rigorous college preparation among applicants; and (3) ensure balanced treatment of all student applications.

B. For applicants who exceed every criterion of undergraduate admissions standards, campuses may establish facilitated admissions procedures and may identify such students with special privileges, titles, or honors.

C. For applicants whose transcripts and exam scores leave some question about the prospective student's success, additional documentation (such as essays, letters of recommendation, and/or portfolios) may be required before granting admission.

D. Campuses will adhere to the non-discrimination policy contained in section 703 of the policy and procedures manual.

E. Campuses may establish a cut-off date for the submission of complete credentials for admission, and any applicant who does not submit a complete application by that date may be required to delay entrance until a subsequent semester.

F. Campuses may establish a category of special or non-degree student. This category will allow admission for the purpose of taking a limited number of credits without the complete documentation required in a regular application for admission.

G. Any campus may deny or condition admission, readmission, or continuing enrollment of any individual who, in the judgment of the campus, presents an unreasonable risk to the safety and welfare of the campus and persons thereon. In making such judgment, the campus may, among other things, take into account the individual's history and experience relative to: (1) violence and destructive tendencies; (2) behavior at other educational institutions; and (3) any rehabilitative therapy the individual may have undergone. A decision to utilize the authority conferred by this paragraph shall be communicated to the individual in writing. Each campus shall have a procedure by which such decisions may be appealed.

H. Campuses are authorized to control the number of out-of-state first-time and transfer students. In addition, campuses shall require applicants from non-English speaking countries to present evidence of proficiency in the use of the English language. Campuses may impose additional requirements on applicants from foreign countries.

I. The MUS will establish a uniform system for monitoring performance of all students based on admission criteria, including Proficiency Standards, ACT or SAT scores, high school GPA, age, high school rank and course of study to facilitate evaluation and analysis of the admissions requirements.

VII. Scholarships

A. To encourage a high level of academic preparation for students who wish to pursue higher education, the board of regents of higher education hereby adopts the following procedures:

1. Only students who have completed the rigorous high school core shall be eligible for regents' high school honor scholarships. [For purposes of this eligibility determination, dual enrollment or concurrent enrollment coursework that satisfies a rigorous-core course requirement under Appendix I, and that is recorded as high school credit on the student's official high school transcript, shall count toward completion of the rigorous high school core.](#)

2. Other state-supported scholarships, fee waivers, or grants-in-aid are awarded on the basis of academic achievement. In unusual circumstances this provision may be waived for students who have been graduated from high school for more than three years.

B. In awarding scholarships based on academic achievement, special consideration should be given to students who have completed available academic core courses beyond those specified in the college preparatory program. Honors and advanced placement courses should be given extra weighting.

C. Dual enrollment and concurrent enrollment coursework shall be given the same extra weighting described in Section VII(B) as honors and advanced placement courses when calculating academic achievement for scholarship purposes, provided the coursework is recorded as high school credit on the student's official high school transcript.

VIII. Definitions of Terms

A. For purposes of admissions, a transfer student is a student who has earned 12 or more credits in college-level courses at another college or university after graduating high school or attaining a high school equivalency as described in Section I part (A), who is entering a new institution for the first time, and whose credits at the previous institution have been accepted by the receiving institution.

B. College-level work means those courses that are applicable toward an associate of arts, associate of science or baccalaureate degree at their respective institution. Developmental (remedial) courses numbered below 100 are not considered college-level.

C. Traditional students are those who enter college within three years of high school graduation or within three years from the date when they would have graduated from high school.

D. Full admission status describes students who have met all the admissions standards and are not admitted under exemptions, exceptions, conditions, or provisions.

E. Provisional admission status is reserved for students who do not meet one or both of the proficiency standards (mathematics or writing). During this temporary provisional status, students must satisfactorily complete developmental coursework or additional tests to demonstrate the proficiency required for college-level work.

F. Open admission refers to a non-competitive college admission process in which the only academic criterion for entrance is a high school diploma or high school equivalency completion assessment designated by the Montana Board of Public Education.

G. Early admission refers to the admission of a high-school aged student prior to his or her high school graduation. The student may earn college credit while enrolled high school.

H. Non-degree admission is for students who do not intend to pursue a degree program.

I. Program can be found in two contexts in higher education: (1) a degree/credential program, such as a certificate, associate, or baccalaureate degree program; or (2) an academic program, such as a nursing or engineering program. Admissions requirements apply to both types of programs.

J. Ability to Benefit exams are designated in the federal register as means for students who do not have US high school diplomas or recognized equivalents such as GEDs to demonstrate their ability to benefit from the training offered and be eligible to receive financial aid under any Title IV Higher Education Act program.

K. Dual enrollment is the broad term for various types of opportunities for high school students to take college coursework while they are enrolled in high school, either for dual credit or college-credit only. (Operational Guidelines for Dual Enrollment)

L. Dual enrollment credit, for purposes of Sections II, IV, and VII of this policy, means coursework completed through dual enrollment or concurrent enrollment that has been awarded high school credit in a corresponding subject area on the student's official high school transcript.

Appendix I

Regents' College Preparatory Program (301 II (A)) and Rigorous Core (301 II (B) 5)

Course	College Prep Program	Years	Rigorous Core	Years
Mathematics	Algebra I, II, and Geometry (or the sequential content equivalent, i.e., 3 levels of Integrated Math).	3	Algebra I, II, and Geometry (or the sequential content equivalent) and a course beyond Algebra II or Integrated Math III (such as Trigonometry, Pre-Calculus, Calculus, Computer Math, or course equivalent). All with grades of C or better. Courses satisfying this requirement through dual enrollment or concurrent enrollment, and recorded as high school credit, qualify.	4
English	Written and oral communication skills and literature	4	Written and oral communication skills, literature; Recommendation: a designated college-prep composition or research-writing course.	4
Science	Lab sciences: one year must be earth science, biology, chemistry or physics	2	Lab sciences: General, physical or earth science, biology, chemistry or physics Courses satisfying this requirement through dual enrollment or concurrent enrollment, and recorded as high school credit, qualify.	3
Social Studies	Global studies (world history, world geography), American history, and government. Economics, American Indian history or other third-year course	3	Global studies (world history, world geography), American history, and government. Economics, American Indian history or other third-year course. Recommendation: ½ yr of other courses (such as psychology, humanities)	3
Electives	World language, computer science, visual and performing arts, or career/technical education	2	Recommendation: 2 years of one world language; and music, fine arts, speech/debate, or career/ technical education (such as computer science) Dual enrollment and concurrent enrollment courses in these subject areas, recorded as high school credit, qualify.	3

History:

Board action April 1, 1929 (rescinded); Item 18-002-R1077, Admission Requirements: General Policies; Montana University System, October 28, 1977 as revised April 13, 1984, May 3, 1985,

December 1986, December 16, 1988, September 14, 1989, March 22, 1990, April 26, 1990, November 20, 1997, and January 28, 1999; editorial changes made July 14, 2004; Item 148-104-R0910 clarification and consolidation, September 23, 2010. Item 162-101-R0114, revised to reflect the Montana Board of Public Education policy, January 1, 2014. Revised April 16, 2020 per Item 187-101-C0420. Revised May 21, 2021 via Item 194-110-R0521. Revised July 14, 2022 Item 201-101-R0722. Revised July 10, 2025 Item 219-101-R0725. Revised July 9, 2026 Item 225-101-R0726.