



COLORADO
Department of
Higher Education

FAQ: Changes to Colorado's admissions policy

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education approved key changes to the state's admissions policy in December. Learn more about the changes.

Why did Colorado need to take another look at these policies?

State law requires the Department of Higher Education to review the two policies to consider the effects they're having on indicators of student success in college, including retention and graduation rates.

When will the changes to the admissions policy go into effect?

2019

What are the major changes?

- Elimination of the so-called index score.
- Emphasis on demonstrations of competency.
- Guaranteed admission for community college graduates.
- Incorporation of new statewide assessments (Colorado Measures of Academic Success) in 2014-2015.

Why do away with the index score?

The index, a combination of a student's high school performance and college entrance exam scores, is used to determine whether a student qualifies for a particular college or university. The index currently uses cumulative grade point averages and combined test scores. Test scores and grade point averages receive equal weight under the current policy. The index, created in 1987, will be replaced by a more flexible review of a student's academic background and performance, including the rigor of his or her coursework. The index score does not distinguish between achievement in general high school courses and performance in more advanced work such as higher levels of math or Advanced Placement classes. The new policy will more accurately evaluate student achievement and preparation.

Will there be a calculator similar to the index to determine where a student ranks?

Yes. A tool is now under development that will allow high school counselors and students to plug in information and quickly see which campuses might be the best fit - academically - for that student.

How will students demonstrate competency under this policy?

Colorado has relied upon completion of Higher Education Admissions Requirements, also known as HEAR, to determine whether students are eligible for admission to the state's four-year colleges and universities. Examples of these "seat-time" requirements include four years of language arts, four years of math and three years of science. The revised policy encourages colleges and universities to be more flexible in considering other means of demonstrating readiness beyond the completion of a particular set of courses by title or time. HEAR requirements will still be able to be used but institutions will also be encouraged to consider other demonstrations of competency, such as completing college classes while in high school, subject-specific test scores or performance in particular courses such as Advanced Placement.

What is this guaranteed admission for community college graduates?

Students who successfully complete a two-year associate's degree at an accredited in-state institution will be guaranteed admission to a four-year Colorado college or university. Students would have to meet the receiving institution's minimum grade point average and have completed all community college courses with a grade of C- or better. Admission will not guarantee placement in a specific degree program.

This is one of several changes dealing with transfer students. An analysis of data has shown students who transfer after receiving an associate's degree are more likely to graduate from four-year institutions than those who transfer with fewer credits earned.

Why will new assessments be used?

New tests - called Colorado Measures of Student Success - are now being developed to replace Colorado's annual CSAP/TCAP exams. These results will be used as one measure of college readiness when available. Colorado will begin administering the tests in 2014-15.

When did the review of this policy begin?

A task force began meeting in May 2012. Task force members heard from a number of presenters and reviewed various reports and data before completing their initial recommendations for change in April 2013.

Where can I get more information and read the current and new policy?

<http://highered.colorado.gov/Academics/Admissions/>

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