

SECTION I

PART F ADMISSIONS STANDARDS POLICY

1.00 Introduction

Colorado Revised Statute 23-1-113 authorizes the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (Commission) to establish academic admissions standards for first-time and transfer students at all state-supported baccalaureate and graduate institutions of higher education in the state. The Commission is also required to review and revise these standards.

In 2012, the Commission adopted Colorado Competes, a five-year master plan. The goals of this Admissions Standards Policy directly support the Colorado higher education master plan. Goal number one calls for Colorado to “increase the attainment of high quality postsecondary credentials across the academic disciplines and throughout Colorado by at least 1,000 new certificates and degrees each year to meet anticipated workforce demands by 2025.”

This policy represents a move to reflect what institutions are doing in practice and to better serve students. Each institution is required to publish a quantitative and qualitative demonstration using academic performance indicators of the middle 50 percent of the last class admitted to their institution. This information must be publically accessible and published in each institution’s communications materials. This policy reflects a change in the following areas: academic performance indicators, transfer standards and alignment with other statewide policies.

To ensure that the Admissions Standards Policy continues to meet state goals and priorities, the Commission will review the policy every three years to determine if changes are appropriate. Additionally, institutions shall report all undergraduate first-time and transfer applicants, including those for summer terms, to the Commission on the Student Unit Record Data System (SURDS) Undergraduate Applicant File. Meeting the Commission admissions standards does not guarantee admissions, as institutions consider a broad range of factors in making admissions decisions.

This policy is comprised of the following sections:

1.00 Introduction

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2.00 Statutory Authority

23-1-113. Commission directive - admission standards for baccalaureate and graduate institutions of higher education - policy - definitions
(1) (a) The commission shall establish and the governing boards shall implement academic admission standards for first-time freshmen and transfer students at all state-supported baccalaureate and graduate institutions of higher education in the state. The commission shall establish and may subsequently review and amend the standards after consultation with the governing boards of institutions. The academic admission standards for students who do not have in-state status, as determined pursuant to [section 23-7-103](#), shall equal or exceed those established for determining admission of in-state students.

3.00 Policy Goals

Through this policy, the Commission intends to provide an opportunity for all qualified individuals to attend a Colorado public institution by:

1. Informing prospective students regarding the recommended ways to academically prepare for postsecondary education in Colorado.
2. Establishing and clearly communicating to prospective students and affiliated constituents performance-based admissions standards that reflect differentiated institutional role and mission, which align to the:
 - a. Colorado high school graduation guidelines (Colorado Academic Standards) per C.R.S. 23-1-113(1.5);

- b. Colorado Guaranteed Transfer and statewide articulation agreements;
 - c. Colorado Remedial Education Policy; and
 - d. Appropriate alternative pathways.
3. Encouraging diversity by supporting the admissions of applicants from underrepresented groups, applicants with special talents and applicants with other unique circumstances while ensuring their ability to succeed.
4. Allowing institutional flexibility for making admissions decisions to support increased enrollment, persistence and completion rates as institutions move forward in helping the state meet the Colorado Completes master plan.

4.00 Admissions Standards

4.01 First-time Admissions Standards

The first-time admissions standard applies to all new first-time applicants and to transfer applicants with fewer than 24 college-level semester credit hours completed from a regionally accredited institution at the point of application, except first-year and transfer applicants who meet one of the admissions standards exemptions listed in section 4.01.03. Institutions may include evaluation of the completed college coursework in determining admissibility of transfer applicants with fewer than 24 college-level semester credit hours completed.

4.01.01 First-time Academic Performance Indicators

Best practices tells us employing a holistic or comprehensive review process, for at least a portion of the review process, ensures greater student success. Statue requires the Commission to establish academic performance indicators for first-time and transfer admissions standards.

Academic performance indicators are defined in C.R.S. 23-1-113. It states academic performance indicators may include, but are not limited to, grade point average, class rank, and content standard performance level assessments... the commission and the governing boards may take into account the rigor of a student's high school academic preparation and the academic content of the courses taken. For the purposes of the Colorado Admissions Standards, institutions must use a combination of all three of the following as **first-time**

admissions academic performance indicators:

Assessment scores,
Grade point average (GPA) and
Rigor

4.01.01.01 Assessment Scores

First-time students must meet college-ready standards determined in the Remedial Education Policy (Commission Policy section I Academic Affairs Statewide Remedial Education Policy part E). Students scoring below the cut score may be allowed to enter college-level courses with Supplement Academic Instruction based on the institutions secondary evaluation process (Commission Policy section I Academic Affairs Policy And Procedures For Authorization Of A State Institution Of Higher Education To Provide Supplemental Academic Instruction part W). Institutions must select one or more of the following nationally normed and validated assessments of college readiness in English and mathematics as one of the first-time admissions academic performance indicators:

Assessment Test	English Subscore	Math Subscore
ACT	18	19
SAT		
Accuplacer		
Compass		
PARCC*	TBD	TBD
SBAC*	TBD	TBD

** Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and Smarter Balanced instruments are currently being deployed and field-tested nationally, and by the Colorado Department of Education in an effort to implement and assess statewide college and career readiness standards for students. The research and validation studies will be available by 2016-17, at which point Colorado institutions of higher education will begin to utilize the approved college readiness scores.*

4.01.01.02 Grade Point Average (GPA)

Effective with applicants who graduate from high school in spring of 2018 or later,

in-state and out-of-state first-time applicants must demonstrate college readiness with a high school cumulative GPA. Institutions will accept the GPA reported on the high school transcript. All GPA's will be correlated to a 4.0 scale.

Students entering without a GPA will not be given a GPA proxy. Instead, institutions must report to the Commission the data given about the student (e.g., assessment score, etc.).

4.01.01.03 **Rigor**

Admission to many of the state's institutions is competitive. Research indicates the best preparation for success in college is for a student to take a rigorous high school curriculum. Rigor can be demonstrated in multiple ways, including the following:

- A. Completed high school core-content courses - Strong preparation in English and mathematics is highly recommended for all college-bound students. Students should also complete significant core-content coursework in, natural sciences, social sciences, world languages, and academic electives:
- B. Quantity and quality of high school core-content courses completed:
- C. Successful completion of Advanced Placement exams, International Baccalaureate exams, honors courses or gtPathways concurrent enrollment courses (grade of "C-" or better):
- D. High school senior year coursework. Students are strongly encouraged to take the most rigorous courses available to them and consistent with their academic abilities. Additionally, students may be evaluated on the rigor of the courses selected compared to the rigor of courses available.
- E. Students are recommended to take high school courses relevant to their career path.

4.01.02 **Students required to meet First-time Admissions Standards**

4.01.02.01 Students who drop out of high school, earn a high school equivalency degree and apply to a four-year institution are subject to High School Equivalency Exam requirements, assessment scores and rigor performance

indicators.

4.01.02.02 Home- schooled students.

4.01.02.03 Students admitted to degree and certificate of completion programs offered through the Colorado Statewide Extended Studies Program.

4.01.02.04 Applicants who wish to enroll in a degree or certificate of completion program offered either through the Statewide Extended Studies Program, the Off-Campus State-Funded Program or under the authority as a Regional Education Provider shall meet exactly the same institutional requirements for admissions that are applied to students enrolling on campus.

4.01.02.04.01 A student who has been formally admitted to the institution may enroll in courses through the Statewide Extended Studies Program and apply the credits toward a degree. These students are advised to regularly consult with the institution to ensure that the credits earned fulfill degree requirements.

4.01.02.05 Non-degree seeking students age 21 and younger who apply for formal admissions at the same institution at which they enrolled/completed non-degree coursework are required to meet the first-time admissions standards regardless of credit hours earned.

4.01.03 Applicants Exempt from all Admissions Standards

The following undergraduate applicants are exempt from the Commission's admissions first-time standards and transfer standards.

4.01.03.01 Degree-seeking applicants:

4.01.03.01.01 Who have a foreign (non-U.S.) transcript. The Commission directs the individual institutions to evaluate, to the best of their ability, the non-United States credentials presented by the student to ensure that they are of an equivalent level to those students admitted under the Commission's standards.

4.01.03.01.02 Who have already completed a baccalaureate degree.

4.01.03.01.03 To the two-year role and mission component of a four-year institution.

4.01.03.02 Applicants enrolled as non-degree seeking students are exempt from the first-time admissions standards. This includes but is not limited to summer-only enrollment; formal Colorado Consortium exchange programs with a planned enrollment for one year or less; and those who have not been formally admitted to an institution and who wish to enroll in any off-campus coursework not offered as part of a complete off-campus degree program.

4.01.03.03 Students who completed 24 or more college-level semester credit hours while enrolled in early or middle college in which the student successfully concurrently earned a high school diploma and associate of arts or associate of sciences degree. Qualified students will be subject to the transfer admissions standards, but counted as first-time students for reporting purposes.

4.01.03.04 Applicants who are age 23 or older and/or have been out of school for five or more years are not held to these admissions standards and can be evaluated according to institutional policies.

4.01.04 **Two-year and Four-year Role and Mission Institutions**

Students may be admitted at Adams State University or Colorado Mesa University in either a two-year or a four-year program. Those admitted to a four-year program as first-time students must meet the first-time admissions standards. Students whose only college work has been completed concurrent with high school, regardless of the number of credits, are subject to the first-time admissions standards, though all college coursework will be evaluated for transferability according to institutional and Colorado statewide transfer policies for admissions to the two-year or four-year program.

4.01.05 **High School Equivalency Exam**

Students without a high school diploma who receive a score of 550 or greater on the 2002 version of the GED (55 or greater on the 1988 version of the GED) are considered to have met the Commission standards for admissions to the high and selective institutions. Students receiving a score of 450 or greater on the 2002 version of the GED (45 or greater on the 1988 version of the GED) satisfy the Commission standards for moderately selective, modified open and open institutions. Once the GED 2014 version is validated, those scores

will be added to this policy. Other high school equivalency exams will be accepted as the Colorado Department of Education deems appropriate. This route to admissions is only available to students without a high school diploma.

4.02 Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Endorsed Diploma Admissions Guidelines

C.R.S. 23-1-113 authorizes the Commission to establish guidelines on admissions practices for students receiving a Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Endorsed Diploma. Students with this endorsement are guaranteed admissions to all open, modified open or moderately selective public institutions in Colorado. These students will receive priority consideration at selective and highly selective institutions in Colorado. The Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Endorsed Diploma criteria can be found at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/secondaryinitiatives/hsdiplomaendorsement>.

4.03 Transfer Admissions Standards

In accordance with the Commission Academic Affairs Policy section I part L Statewide Transfer Policy (gtPathways), a transfer student is defined as an applicant who has successfully completed college-level coursework at another regionally accredited institution after completion of high school or after earning a high school equivalency degree. College-level courses include credit-bearing courses at or above the 100/1000 level and therefore exclude remedial and college preparatory coursework.

The transfer student admissions standard applies to all degree-seeking undergraduate transfer applicants with 24 or more college-level semester credit hours completed at the point of application who do not meet one of the exemptions listed in this policy.

The standards established in C.R.S. 23-1-113 for transfer students require the Commission to use college academic performance indicators as the eligibility criteria for admitted transfer students. The academic performance indicators may include, but are not limited to, grade point average, credit hours completed and successful completion of basic skills courses, if required and as appropriate considering the role and mission of the receiving institution.

4.03.01 **Students Required to meet Transfer Admissions Standards**

The transfer admissions standards are based on the students college academic performance indicators. College Academic Performance indicators include: cumulative grade point average (GPA) from all previous college-level coursework completed at regionally accredited institutions (refer to Table 1), number of transfer hours completed and high school record (for transfer students with fewer than 24 college-level semester credit hours completed at the point of application). Transfer students should complete gtPathways or equivalent courses in a range of academic subjects, especially college-level English composition and mathematics, before applying to transfer to another institution. Institutions may still use first-time admissions standards to evaluate candidates. Beyond the statewide criteria for credit totals, minimum GPA (refer to Table 1) and recommended coursework, admissions standards can vary at each institution. Students who meet the minimum credit total and GPA standards are not guaranteed admissions but are eligible for consideration.

Minimum Transfer GPA	
TABLE 1: Minimum Grade Point Average Requirement for Students Transferring from another Institution with More Than 24 College-Level Semester Credit Hours	
Receiving Institution	Minimum GPA*
Adams State University	2.3
Colorado Mesa University	2.3
Colorado School of Mines	TBD
Colorado State University- Ft Collins	2.5
Colorado State University- Global Campus	2.3
Colorado State University- Pueblo	2.3
Fort Lewis College	2.4
Metropolitan State University of Denver	2.3
University of Colorado Boulder	2.7
University of Colorado Colorado Springs	2.4
University of Colorado Denver	2.4
University of Northern Colorado	2.4
Western State Colorado University	2.4
<p><i>*The specific institution grade point average (GPA) required to meet the Commission Transfer Admission Standards at each public institution is summarized in this table.</i></p> <p>Meeting the Commission's minimum transfer admission standards minimum grade point average (GPA) stated above does not guarantee admission, as institutions consider a broad range of factors in making admissions decisions.</p>	

4.03.02 **Guaranteed Transfer Admissions**

Applicants who have completed an Associate of Arts (AA) or Associate of Science (AS) degree from a regionally accredited Colorado two-year institution will be guaranteed admissions at most* Colorado public four-year institutions provided the student meets the minimum cumulative GPA standard (Table 1), has completed all courses with a grade of C- or better and a two-year institution is the last institution attended prior to transfer. Meeting

the Commission admissions standards does not guarantee admissions, as institutions consider a broad range of factors in making admissions decisions.

Admissions to an institution does not guarantee enrollment in a specific degree program. Institutions may have controlled entry due either to space limitations or academic requirements. Students who complete an AA or AS degree concurrent with high school may qualify for guaranteed admissions to an institution, and subsequently may be held to additional criteria for determining students eligibility for specific degree programs. These students will be reported as first-time applicants and may be held to additional institutional expectations of first-time applicants.

**Colorado School of Mines does not participate in the guaranteed transfer admissions because of the specialized nature of its academic programs and limited opportunities to begin in a liberal arts or other more general program of study.*

4.03.03 Two-year and Four-year Role and Mission Institutions

Students may be admitted at Adams State University or Colorado Mesa University in either a two-year or a four-year program. Students enrolled into the two-year programs who seek to transfer to the four-year program must meet the Commission's transfer admissions standards in order to be eligible for transfer.

4.03.04 Transfer Admissions Standards Minimum Grade Point Average (GPA)

The specific institution minimum grade point average students are required to meet at each public institution is summarized in Table 1. Meeting the minimum transfer grade point averages stated in this policy does not guarantee admissions, as institutions may specify additional academic performance indicators for transfer student admissions criteria and consider a broad range of factors in making admissions decisions.

4.03.05 Admissions Not Guaranteed

Applicants who meet the appropriate Commission admissions standard for an institution are not guaranteed admissions to that institution. Institutions may make admissions decisions

based on other criteria resulting in admissions standards more rigorous than the Commission's minimum admissions standards. Meeting the Commission admissions standards does not guarantee admissions, as institutions consider a broad range of factors in making admissions decisions.

5.00 Public Institutions' Roles and Missions

Institutions roles and missions are as follows:

23-20-101 (1) (a) The Boulder campus of the University of Colorado shall be a comprehensive graduate research university with selective admission standards

(b) The Denver campus of the University of Colorado shall be an urban comprehensive undergraduate and graduate research university with selective standards

(c) The Colorado Springs Campus of the University of Colorado shall be a comprehensive university with selective admission standards

23-30-124 . . . Colorado State University – global campus shall be a baccalaureate and graduate online university with the mission in offering upper division baccalaureate degree-completion programs for nontraditional students

23-31-101 . . . Colorado State University shall be a comprehensive graduate research university with selective admission standards

23-40-101. . . . The University of Northern Colorado shall be a comprehensive baccalaureate and specialized graduate research university with selective admission standards

23-41-105 . . . The School of Mines shall be a specialized baccalaureate and graduate research institution with high admission standards

23-55-101 . . . Colorado State University-Pueblo which shall be a regional, comprehensive institution with moderately selective admission standards.

23-51-101 . . . Adams State University, which shall be a general baccalaureate institution with moderately selective admission standards.

23-52-102 . . . Fort Lewis College, which shall be a public liberal arts institution, with selective admission standards.

23-53-101 . . . Colorado Mesa University, which shall be a general baccalaureate institution with selective admission standards.

23-54-101 . . . Metropolitan State University of Denver, which shall be a comprehensive baccalaureate institution with modified open admission standards; except that non-traditional students, as defined by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education after consultation with the Board of Trustees of the Consortium of State Colleges, who are at least twenty years of age shall only have an admission requirement of a high school diploma, a GED high school equivalency certificate, or the equivalent thereof.

23-56-101 . . . Western State Colorado University shall be a general baccalaureate institution with moderately selective admission standards.

23-60-201 . . . A state system of community and technical colleges . . . offers a broad range of general, personal, vocational, and technical education programs. No college shall impose admission requirements upon any student.

23-1-113.3 . . . Aims Community College and Colorado Mountain College shall be two-year local district colleges with open admission standards.

6.00 Data Reporting and Analysis

Institutions shall report annually all undergraduate first-time and transfer applicants, including those for summer terms, to the Commission on the SURDS Undergraduate Applicant File. Fall term data from the Student Unit-Record Data System (SURDS) Enrollment File will be used to monitor institution success. These data will be used to monitor the compliance of institutions

with the Commission's admissions standards and to evaluate the impact of the policy on institutions and students. An institution must keep up at least one, complete, prior year of files and records to document admissions decisions.

Each year, the Department will collect data on institutional performance, including the admissions, enrollment and retention of first-time and transfer students and will prepare an annual report. The Commission will monitor and report this data, along with admissions, enrollment and retention of different student populations, including resident/non-resident status, students receiving financial aid, by type and level, and background characteristics such as gender and ethnicity. Data will be reported by institution and will be reported by high school and school district level, per C.R.S. 23-1-108.

The Commission then will formally review the report and monitor how institutions are meeting their performance contract goals. The Commission will also reconsider the question of whether the ultimate standards designated under the policy should be retained or modified and whether the implementation schedule should continue.

7.00 Communicating with Prospective Students

Beginning December 2014 and every December thereafter, institutions are required to communicate their middle 50 percent range academic performance indicators established by the Commission and specific to their institution. This must be public and easily accessible. College in Colorado, a division of the Department of Higher Education, shall compile this information in a yearly summary for statewide distribution.

8.00 Window

Colorado Revised Statute 23-1-113 allows each institution to admit students, up to a number not exceeding 20 percent, who do not meet the Commission admission standards of the admitted pool of students.

9.00 In-State and Out-of State Enrollment Standards

Colorado Revised Statute 23-1-113.5 states, "It is the intent of the General Assembly that all

state-supported institutions of higher education operate primarily to serve and educate the people of Colorado.” Standards for out-of-state students must equal or exceed those for in-state students per C.R.S. 23-1-113 (1) (a). Not less than 55 percent of the incoming first-year class at each state-supported institution of higher education shall be in-state students per 23-1-113.5.

9.01 Calculation of the In-State Percentage for First-Time Students

The in-state percentage will be calculated from the selection of all students on the Fall Enrollment File who meet the following conditions: credit hours - resident instruction greater than zero (in other words, students with only extended studies or sponsored program credit hours will be excluded from this calculation); student level less than 19; and registration status equal 1. The percent will be calculated as the total number meeting the above condition divided into those from this group that are reported as having in-state tuition status. It should be noted that this calculation includes all enrolled students, with the exception of Native American students attending Fort Lewis College, who are excluded from this calculation. Beginning with fall 1995, the average of the most recent three fall term percentages will be used. This percentage will be calculated as the total in-state over the three years divided by the total enrollment.

9.02 Consequences for Not Complying With 55 Percent Restriction

If the data for an institution shows an in-state percent less than 55 percent for first-time students, then staff will formally request an explanation and corrective action from the institution's governing board, and a discussion item for Commission review will be prepared.

10.00 Policy Background

The original admissions standards policy was adopted by the Commission in 1986 and was implemented the following year. In 1987, the Commission established state-level admissions standards for first-time entering undergraduates and transfer students at each of Colorado's baccalaureate-granting public institutions. The standards established for an entering freshman were based on the calculation of an admissions index. The index had two components: a student's high school performance (i.e., high school grade point average or class

rank) and performance on a standardized test. For an undergraduate transferring from another institution, the standard's criterion was a specific GPA.

The changes made in 2008 reflected a significant addition for applicants who were high school graduates beginning in spring 2008. In addition to defining institutional admissions indices for first-time students and grade point averages for entering undergraduate transfers, the standards were expanded to require a stronger higher education admissions requirement so that students seeking admissions to four-year public institutions of higher education were ready to progress successfully in higher education. This policy articulated and required a particular curriculum to be met by first-time entering undergraduates who graduated from high school in spring 2008 or later.

Beginning with students graduating from high school in spring 2010, a student must complete a fourth unit of mathematics (including at least courses that are the equivalent of Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II), and one unit of foreign language. Electives may include world languages courses taken in addition to the requirement. Academic course units must total 17.

<u>Academic Area</u>	<u>2008/2009</u>	<u>2010</u>
English	4 Units	4
Mathematics	3 Units	4
Natural Science	3 Units	3
Social Science	3 Units	3
World Languages	Not	1 Unit
Academic Electives	2 Units	2
TOTAL	15 Units	17 Units

Note: An academic unit, often referred to as a Carnegie unit, is equivalent to one full school year of credit in a specific subject.

Prior to the adoption of this revised policy in 2013, at least 80 percent of an institution's fiscal year admitted students had to meet the appropriate Commission first-time or transfer admissions standard. Each institution was allowed to admit students who did not meet the Commission admissions standards up to a number not exceeding 20 percent of the admitted pool of students. This pool, often referred to as "the admissions window," provided institutional

flexibility in admitting promising students who met institutionally established criteria but not the Commission's numerical standards.

11.00 Guiding Policies

Statute directs the Commission to align this policy with other state-wide policies including CDE-determined graduation guidelines.

C.R.S. 23-1-113 1.5 instructs the Commission to align the Remedial Education Policy and the Admissions Standards Policy.

C.R.S. 23-1-113 (1.5) (a) (I) The commission shall establish and the governing boards shall implement a policy pursuant to [section 23-1-113.3](#) to identify matriculated students who need basic skills courses in English and mathematics and standards and procedures whereby state institutions of higher education may offer basic skills courses as provided in [section 23-1-113.3](#). The commission, in consultation with the governing boards, shall ensure that the policy aligns with the admission policy adopted pursuant to subsection (1) of this section. In identifying the standards for basic skills, the commission may differentiate requirements for mathematics based on the prerequisite skills needed for required courses within a student's declared program of study.

(II) As part of the policy established pursuant to this paragraph (a), the commission may authorize a state institution of higher education to provide supplemental academic instruction even though the institution is not authorized to provide basic skills courses pursuant to [section 23-1-113.3](#). The institution may receive stipend payments from the state pursuant to [section 23-18-202](#) on behalf of an eligible undergraduate student, as defined in [section 23-18-102 \(5\)](#), who is enrolled in a college-level course that includes supplemental academic instruction. (II) As part of the policy established pursuant to this paragraph (a), the commission may authorize a state institution of higher education to provide supplemental academic instruction even though the institution is not authorized to provide basic skills courses pursuant to [section 23-1-113.3](#). The institution may receive stipend payments from the state pursuant to [section 23-18-202](#) on behalf of an eligible undergraduate student, as defined in [section 23-18-102 \(5\)](#), who is enrolled in a college-level course that includes supplemental academic instruction.

...

(4) The commission shall work with the state board of education to align the academic admission standards established pursuant to this section with the guidelines for high school graduation requirements developed pursuant to [section 22-2-106 \(1\) \(a.5\)](#), C.R.S. Any revised academic admission standards shall be implemented no later than the selection of the freshman class of fall 2012.