

**TOPIC: 2010 HIGHER EDUCATION ADMISSION
REQUIREMENTS (HEAR): REVIEW AND PROPOSED
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

PREPARED BY: JULIE CARNAHAN, MATTHEW MCKEEVER

I. SUMMARY

In November 2007, Commission policy was approved which requires all applicants to Colorado's four year postsecondary institutions who graduate from high school in 2010 and later to meet Phase II of the Higher Education Admission Requirements (HEAR). This agenda item updates the Commission on implementation of HEAR 2010 and requests approval for revisions to existing admission policy.

At the July 2007 meeting the Commission directed staff to work with the Colorado Department of Education to address the problem that an unknown number of students who graduate in 2010 or later may not meet the Higher Education Admission Requirements. A survey was sent out to Superintendents asking whether the exemptions put in place for HEAR 2008 would provide flexibility for students in meeting HEAR 2010 and whether the Superintendents wanted the additional option of a school district waiver. The response from the Superintendents as described in correspondence from Commissioner Jones (see Appendix A) indicates the index exemption, continued flexibility on the admissions window and the option to request a school district waiver are desired.

Incorporating the response from the Superintendents with ongoing discussions with Admission's Directors and other higher education institutional staff leads staff to make three recommendations for adjustments to the admission policy for 2010 implementation. The first recommendation would allow for an exemption for students with an index number more than 10 points higher than the minimum index number to a particular institution; the second would apply the 20% admissions window on a statewide rather than on an institution basis; and the third would give school districts the option of requesting a school district waiver.

II. BACKGROUND

Since 1986, the Colorado Commission on Higher Education has held the authority to establish statewide admission standards for public colleges and universities. C.R.S. 23-1-113 directs the Commission to establish admission standards for public baccalaureate and graduate institutions of higher education. The statute states that "The criteria established and the specified performance levels shall be consistent with the role and mission

established for each state-supported institution of higher education.” In addition, the statute requires that admission policies use a combination of “high school academic performance indicators” which include, but are not limited to, grade point average (GPA), class rank, and content standard performance level assessments.

The standards established by the Commission in 1987 for an entering freshman were based on the calculation of an admission index. The index has two components: a student’s high school performance (i.e., high school GPA or class rank) and performance on a standardized test. Each public four-year college or university in Colorado is assigned a minimum admissible index number based on the role and mission of the institution.

In 2003, the Admission Standards Policy was modified to include minimum academic coursework requirements, otherwise known as the Higher Education Admission Requirements (HEAR). Effective with applicants who graduate from high school in spring 2010 or later, in-state and out-of-state freshmen must meet the institution’s index standard and have completed the required pre-collegiate curriculum (if applicable) to meet CCHE’s freshmen admission standards. Included in the policy are provisions that exempt students from meeting admissions standards and HEAR 2010 requirements. Exemptions are typically allowed for students who are not in the category of first time college going students or who are able to demonstrate comparable knowledge and competencies.

The 17 academic units required for applicants who graduate high school in the spring of 2010 or later are listed below.

Table A: 2010 Higher Education Admission Requirements

Academic Area*	2010+ Graduates
English**	4 years
Mathematics (Must include Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II or equivalents)***	4 years
Natural/Physical Sciences (two units must be lab-based)***	3 years
Social Sciences (at least one unit of U.S. or world history)	3 years
Foreign Language	1 year
Academic Electives****	2years

* CCHE, CDE, and School Districts are developing standards for alternative demonstration of proficiency to be accepted in lieu of course completion.

**Two units of ESL English may count for HEAR requirements when combined with two units of successfully completed college preparatory English.

***College-preparatory ESL mathematics/science courses that include content and academic rigor/level comparable to other acceptable courses may satisfy HEAR requirements.

****Acceptable Academic Electives include additional courses in English, mathematics, natural/physical sciences and social sciences, foreign languages, art, music, journalism, drama, computer science, honors, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate courses, and appropriate CTE courses.

III. STAFF ANALYSIS

A. Students Exempt from Higher Education Admission Requirements

To provide some context for evaluating the recommended adjustments, it is useful to consider the various existing policies that exempt a student from meeting HEAR 2010.

- High school graduates prior to spring 2010
- Students who have a baccalaureate degree
- Students who have a foreign transcript
- Applicants to the two-year role and mission of a four-year institution
- Concurrently enrolled high school students
- Internal transfer students age 22 and older
- Non-degree seeking students
- Applicants to Metropolitan State College of Denver (over 20)
- Students participating in a formal exchange program
- Transfer students with 30 or more college credits who meet GPA requirements
- Students who have successfully demonstrated assessments of comparable knowledge and competencies

Staff Recommendation

The Commission direct staff to revise the Admission policy on the 2010 HEAR requirements to include an exemption for students whose index number exceeds the minimum institutional admissions index number by more than 10 points¹. The exemption would be effective for students graduating from high school from spring of 2010 and later. The primary purpose of HEAR requirements was to reduce the remediation rates of entering students and as a consequence increase retention and graduation rates. An analysis of the relationship between index numbers and remediation rates of entering students suggests that remediation rates decrease significantly with higher index numbers.

¹ More than 15 points for MSCD.

Table B : Fall 2006 Comparison of the Number of Students Needing Remediation - by Index Score

Institution	Index	Fall 2006 1st Time Enrollment	Remedial #	Remedial %	Remedial # 10+ points above index	Remedial % 10+ points above index
Adams State College	80	449	291	65%	117	26%
Colorado School of Mines	110	755	16	2%	0	0%
Colorado State University	101	4,052	316	8%	29	1%
Colorado State University - Pueblo	86	592	314	53%	108	18%
Fort Lewis College	80	876	265	30%	122	14%
Mesa State College	80	1,067	564	53%	244	23%
Metropolitan State College of Denver	76	1,386	468	34%	211*	15%*
University of Colorado - Boulder	103	5,606	86	2%	5	0%
University of Colorado - Colorado Springs	92	970	4	0%	3	0%
University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center	93	902	252	28%	69	8%
University of Northern Colorado	94	2,453	787	32%	139	6%
Western State College	80	499	194	39%	69	14%
		19,607	3,557	18%	1,116	6%

Source: SURDS data, Fall 2006

* MSCD Remedial count and percentage reference students with an Index score 15 or more than the assigned Index Score

Exempting students with higher index numbers regardless of whether or not they met HEAR 2010 would accomplish the intent of reducing remediation, and thereby increasing retention and graduation rates.

B. Specifications for Freshman Admission Window Sizes

Statute directs the Commission to establish admission standards for first-time freshman and transfer students and specifies the criteria to be used for each. Statute also states: “In lieu of such criteria, additional criteria may be used for up to twenty percent of the admitted freshman students.” C.R.S. 23-1-113 (1) (b) (c). This way of gaining admittance for “...up to twenty percent of the admitted freshman students” is referred to as *being admitted through the window*.

Staff Recommendation

Currently, each institution is allowed to admit (i.e., exempt) a percentage of students who do not meet either the index or HEAR. The percentage allowed for each institution is based on the institution role and mission. The range for this exemption window is from 10% to 20%. Staff recommends that the commission direct changes to the admission policy to include 1) that each institution’s window size remains at the 2007 level, and 2) that the 20% window be calculated and applied on a statewide rather than an institutional basis. This policy would allow for the reallocation of unused window slots as needed by institutions whose entering students do not meet HEAR 2010. Applying the 20% window statewide is a continuation of policy approved by the Commission for students graduating from high school from spring 2008 to fall 2009. It should be noted that flexibility in applying admissions window sizes occurred when admissions standards were first put in place by the Commission as documented in the CCHE policy dated October 3, 1986.

During the implementation period for 1986 policy, institutions were given two, four and six years to reach the 20% admissions window size.

The following Table C indicates the extent to which each institution used its exemption window in its most recent admissions decision. The table also shows the number of potential window slots that could be reallocated based on institution window sizes of less than 20%.

Table C : 2006/2007 Admits by Index and Window

Institution	# Admitted in Window	# Admitted above Index	Total Admitted	2007 Window %	Window Difference	Projected # Reallocation
Adams State College	66	1,160	1,226	20%	0%	0
Colorado School of Mines	110	2,444	2,554	10%	10%	255
Colorado State University	985	8,660	9,645	14%	6%	579
Colorado State University - Pueblo	202	1,468	1,670	17%	3%	50
Fort Lewis College	155	2,138	2,293	20%	0%	0
Mesa State College	48	1,597	1,645	20%	0%	0
Metropolitan State College of Denver	64	3,684	3,748	20%	0%	0
University of Colorado - Boulder	1,671	14,420	16,091	14%	6%	965
University of Colorado - Colorado Springs	173	2,410	2,583	17%	3%	77
University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center	200	2,106	2,306	17%	3%	69
University of Northern Colorado	1,022	5,362	6,384	17%	3%	192
Western State College	152	1,298	1,450	20%	0%	0
	4,848	46,747	51,595	-	-	2,188

Source: SURDS data, Fall & Summer 2005
 * Numbers came from 2007 Spring UAF using full year tables.

Included in this recommendation would be a Commission directive for DHE staff to work with the institutions to develop a model for reallocating unused window slots from one institution to another, not to exceed the 20% window for admitted students on a statewide basis.

C. School District Waivers for meeting Higher Education Admission Requirements

Staff has consulted with admissions directors and institutional research staff on implementation of school district waivers starting with the graduating class of 2010. Key to successful implementation is having a consistent process across all 168 school districts and sufficient lead time for the admissions staff at the institutes of higher education to be informed of which school districts have been granted waivers.

Staff Recommendation

School districts seeking a waiver for students in their district shall by a vote of the school board “attest that their school district does not have available resources to meet HEAR

2010 requirements as established in current policy and requests a district waiver from CCHE starting with the graduating class of 2010’.

The resolution and request for a waiver must be submitted to the Department of Higher Education by January 15, 2009. The request will specify that the school district cannot meet the requirements of the fourth year of mathematics, the one year of foreign language, or both and provide an explanation as to why the requirements can not be met. School district waivers will be effective for three years, until the graduating class of 2013.

Staff will forward requests for school district waivers to the Commission for approval at the February 2009 Commission meeting. The Institutions of Higher Education will be given a list of school districts approved for a waiver for HEAR 2010 by March 13, 2009.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Commission approve the recommended revisions to the 2003 Admission Policy, as presented in this agenda item.