

Arkansas

Arkansas Department of Higher Education
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- 1) Does the state have an identifiable “P-16” effort visible? Who is in charge of this effort?
Act 109 of the 2nd extra-ordinary session of 2003 established the Coordination Commission for Educational Efforts (CCEE) and its membership includes public education, higher education, and workforce education representatives. The CCEE is charged with making recommendations on policies of P16 efforts. Additionally, it is serving as the P-16 Council for the National Governors Association Honors State Grant that is led by the Arkansas Department of Education.
 - a) Does the agency include a utility or function on its website designed explicitly to help potential students locate an appropriate college or university to attend?
Yes, the link to Arkansas State Colleges & Universities is prominently displayed on the Arkansas Department of Higher Education’s (ADHE) website homepage. By clicking on Arkansas State Colleges & Universities, the user is sent to a page that lists all of the four-year public, two-year public, and independent colleges and universities in the state with a hyper-link to the college’s/university’s home page.
<http://www.adhe.edu/colleges.html>
- 2) Is a mandated or recommended college preparatory curriculum in place in the state’s public high schools?
The state’s core curriculum requirements for unconditional admission to a state public institution of higher education includes: four units of English, three units of natural science with laboratories, four units of math (including Algebra I and II, geometry, and an advanced math course), and three units of social studies.
- 3) Has the state articulated a set of explicit competencies or skills that define what it means to be “college ready?”
The state has articulated an explicit set of competencies for both English/Language Arts and mathematics for high school graduates as part of the P-16 effort in Arkansas. Both of these documents are available on the ADHE website under Academic Affairs.
<http://www.adhe.edu/pdfs/Eng-LA%20Expectations%20for%20coll%20grad%202-051.pdf>
<http://www.adhe.edu/pdfs/Mathematics%20Expectations%20for%20High%20School%20Students.pdf>

- 4) Are systematic programs in place in the state that encourage students to accelerate progress by taking college-level courses while still enrolled in high school?

Yes, several initiatives have been adopted to encourage students taking college-level courses while still enrolled in high school. Act 936 of 2007 delineates the policies of the state concerning concurrent enrollment and advanced placement (AP) courses. Beginning with the 2008-2009 school year, all school districts shall offer one College Board advanced placement course in each of the four core areas of math, English, science, and social studies for a total of four courses. Further, the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) adopted on April 27th a revised policy concerning concurrent enrollment and merged AP and concurrent enrollment courses. The AHECB Concurrent Enrollment Policy states that students must score an equivalent of 19 on the ACT Reading sub-test to be enrolled in a general education concurrent course and concurrent enrollment courses in English and mathematics require a 19 or better on the respective ACT sub-test. Beginning with the 2008-2009 school year, students in the eleventh grade will be able to take the ACT Assessment without any charge as created by Act 881 of 2007; thus, encouraging college and workforce readiness for all students and participation in concurrent enrollment courses.

- 5) Is there a statewide policy present that governs placement into college-level courses or remedial courses? Is a standard set of placement tests recommended or required? If yes, are common cut scores for placement decisions in place or do institutions get to set their own?

Students must achieve a score of 19 or above on the math, English, and reading sections of the ACT to enroll in college-level courses. Common cut scores are required for students to enroll in college-level courses at Arkansas's public institutions. For students to enroll in a college-level mathematics course at a public institution in Arkansas, the student must achieve a score of 19 or above on the mathematics section of the Enhanced ACT, 460 or above on the quantitative portion of recentered SAT, 39 or above on the ASSET, Intermediate Algebra, or 41 percent or above on the COMPASS. Students scoring 19 or above on the English section of the Enhanced ACT, 470 or above on verbal SAT, 45 or above on the ASSET Writing Skills test, or 75 percent or above on the COMPASS Writing test may enroll in college-level English courses. Students scoring 19 or above on the Reading Section of the Enhanced ACT, 470 or above on the verbal section of the recentered SAT, 43 or above on the ASSET Reading skills test or 82 percent or above on COMPASS Reading Skills will be considered to have met minimal reading skill requirements for college-level courses. Students not meeting the standard shall enroll in developmental courses for skill attainment.

- 6) Is there a visible statewide transfer and articulation policy? Does this cover all institutions or only public institutions? What are the specifics of this policy?

Yes. Act 672 of 2005 articulates the state policy concerning course transfer. The policy mandates that all public institutions must participate, however all Arkansas institutions are welcome to participate. Act 672 of 2005 stated that freshman and sophomore level general education courses offered at Arkansas's public colleges and universities would be included in

the transfer system and that these courses would be accepted for full credit in that subject-matter area of emphasis at all public colleges and universities.

- a) Is the transfer/articulation policy accompanied by a statewide transferable general education requirement? Does this name actual courses and/or credits? Are specific competencies identified that the student should meet through this coursework? Is testing used to guarantee student competency for progress or transfer?

Act 672 of 2005 stated that the existing state minimum core would be incorporated and replaced by the transfer system. The Arkansas Course Transfer System (ACTS) includes 88 general education courses that are guaranteed for transfer between state institutions. ACTS does not specify specific general education courses that must be taken to satisfy a general education requirement but indicates a range of credits in five core areas that must be satisfied for a general education requirement. ACTS names 88 actual courses that are guaranteed for transfer and lists the general education core area that the ACTS course covers. Specific competencies are not identified and testing is not used to guarantee student competency for progress or transfer.

- b) More specifically, does an AA or AS degree from a community college in the state meet general education requirements at public four-year institutions? What mechanisms are in place to make sure this actually happens?

No; however, there are individual articulation agreements between institutions that allow an AA or AS degree to meet the general education requirements of a baccalaureate degree. Additionally, individual courses will transfer for credit by guaranteed transfer or meeting the general education core curriculum area as listed in ACTS.

- c) Does credit from transfer courses meet specific course requirements at the transfer institution (e.g. American History counts for American History) or do just the credits transfer to count against the total needed for graduation?

Courses listed in ACTS as “guaranteed transfer” meet specific course requirements for transfer at the receiving institution. Courses not designated as “guaranteed transfer” in ACTS transfer for credits in a designated general education core curriculum area.

- 7) Are there statewide test-out or competency-based provisions that will allow a student to accelerate progress toward a degree?

No, there are no statewide test-out or competency-based provisions for acceleration toward a degree; this is done on an individual basis between the institution and the student.

- 8) Does the state have an easily-accessible state-supported alternative institution that allows students to complete their degrees more quickly or conveniently than through attendance at a traditional public institution?

No, however, there are multiple institution consortia and the UA system community college consortia that offer degrees electronically.

- a) Does the state have an accessible central bank or catalog of on-line courses contributed by many institutions that enable students to do “one-stop shopping” for electronic courses?

No, the state does not offer a central bank of on-line courses other than SREB’s electronic campus, which is accessible by ADHE’s website. www.adhe.edu : click on “Adult Learners: Click here for distance learning opportunities”.

- 9) Does the state provide incentives to institutions for improvements in degree production or graduation rates? For minimizing the number of students graduating with excessive numbers of credits (e.g. more than 120 SCH)?

Act 1592 of 2007 provides for incentive funding if the retention rate or the graduation rate exceeds three percent more than the institutional baseline. Incentive funding will be distributed beginning July 1, 2009 to public colleges and universities. There is no incentive for minimizing the number of students graduating with excessive number of credits.

- 10) Does the state provide incentives for students who successfully complete their degrees (e.g. tuition rebates or cash bonuses)? For students who complete their programs without amassing additional credits (e.g. within 120 SCH)? Are there financial disincentives for students to take more than the number of credits needed to graduate (e.g. full or out-of-state tuition)?

No, the state does not provide incentives for students who successfully complete their degrees, or for completing degree without taking additional credits, nor are there financial disincentives for students taking more than the number of credits needed to graduate.