

## Louisiana

Louisiana Board of Regents

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1) Does the state have an identifiable “P-16” effort visible? Who is in charge of this effort?

Louisiana has no specific “centralized” P-16 unit. Instead, the State has chosen to apportion P-16 concerns by issues-oriented work groups, i.e. Blue Ribbon Commission on Educational Excellence (teacher education reform), High School Redesign Commission (alignment between high school and other post-secondary educational institutions), etc. These groups work on a cooperative basis ( indeed, many of the same individuals serve on more than one such entity) and share their findings and recommendations for state policy/procedure change with the appropriate state agencies (Governor’s Office, Board of Regents and Board of Elementary and Secondary 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?

The Board of Regents website provides access to the four management boards of higher education (the Louisiana State University System, the Southern University System, the University of Louisiana System, and the Louisiana Community and Technical College System) that actually manage and operate state colleges and universities. Each of these sites include utilities to help students research their educational interests and availability of requisite programs of study. In addition, the Regents also provide the public at large access to a comprehensive education site (E-Portal) which helps the prospective student (from school age to adult) research the “hows and whys” of personal development, educational opportunity, and professional growth. The E-Portal is being evaluated and tested and is scheduled to be launched within the next 60-90 days.

2) Is a mandated or recommended college preparatory curriculum in place in the state’s public high schools?

Yes. This curriculum is currently under revision and the proposed new curriculum will require greater breadth and depth of math, science, and social science as compared with the current version.

3) Has the state articulated a set of explicit competencies or skills that define what it means to be “college ready?”

As a result of its participation in the ACHIEVE Alignment process, the State of Louisiana has adopted coordinated English and mathematics content standards from high school to postsecondary education and careers.

- 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, the State has recently afforded \$2 million in tuition funding for qualified students interested in earning college credits while still enrolled in high school. This program is expected to expand by another \$1 million next year. Further, new graduation requirements will encourage dual enrollment as a viable means for students to complete both high school graduation requirements and college degree requirements simultaneously.

- 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?

Yes, Academic Affairs Policy 2.18 requires the attainment of minimum scores on the ACT, SAT, ASSET, and/or COMPASS achievement tests for placement into entry-level, freshman-level English and mathematics college courses. All post-secondary institutions operate from the same set of standards and no deviation is allowed.

- 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?

The Board of Regents operates an electronic Statewide Articulation Matrix, including all public colleges and universities. This matrix covers all typical general education courses, along with more advanced courses in some of the more common areas of academic pursuit (Business/Teacher Education/Natural Sciences). The Regents also foster articulation agreements between individual colleges and universities which share similar/closely related degree programs. Such agreements are often facilitated by the fact that Regents policy requires external programmatic accreditation for all academic programs wherein such accreditation is available.

- 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?

Yes (see above). Actual courses are not required; instead, a specific number of hours by subject area are mandated (i.e. English Composition – 6 hours, Humanities – 6 hours, etc.). The Regents' policy sets forth common educational content expectations for all undergraduates, but this is defined broadly rather than by specific knowledge sets.

Assessment of these general education requirements is not required by the Regents as the appropriate regional accrediting agency, the Southern Association of College and Schools Commission on Colleges, already mandates such assessments and the use of these assessments to better achieve general education goals.

- 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?

Yes, all such courses are included on the Statewide General Education Matrix.

- 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?

Transfer credit is usually equally apportioned to specific course requirements at the receiving institution unless these credits exceed the number required. In which case, "excess" course credits are accepted as electives.

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

If this means that a student can earn credits through alternate methods, that depends upon the institution and curriculum. On a broader statewide basis, such opportunities generally exist for some teacher education certification programs only.

- 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?

Not yet, but the Board of Regents and the Louisiana Community and Technical College System are now working together to create an electronic community/ technical college in the near future. In addition, many institutions offer a variety of courses electronically and some offer entire degree programs 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?

Yes, the Board of Regents maintains a registry of both on-line courses and programs. The State of Louisiana also is an active participant in the Southern Region Educational Board Electronic Campus.

- 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)?

Not yet, but Louisiana is currently revising its funding formula. Performance funding is being strongly considered in this discussion. Also, an electronic community college is currently under consideration.

- 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)?

Not directly, however, the Louisiana TOPS scholarship for qualified high school graduates allows for 8 full semesters of tuition support only. This fact encourages many students to maximize their collegiate experience.