

Minnesota

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Context: Both SHEEO agencies, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities and the Minnesota Office of Higher Education, collaborated on this response.

- 1) Does the state have an identifiable “P-16” effort visible? Who is in charge of this effort?
Yes, Minnesota has had a P-16 Council in place for several years. Leadership rotates among the Commissioner of Education, the President of the University of Minnesota and the Chancellor of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System.
<http://education.state.mn.us/mde/index.html>

- 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?
See www.mnscu.edu, click on students for information about the institutions within the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. GO PLACES! is a publication distributed to all high schools in MN as well as many border community schools.
<http://www.mnscu.edu/media/publications/pdf/goplaces06-07.pdf>

The Minnesota Office of Higher Education offers a website associated with its Get Ready program, <http://www.getreadyforcollege.org/>. This program is funded in part by a grant from the federal government. The agency is also part of a group that sponsors <http://www.iseek.org>, which provides similar functionality. The agency website also has

a “useful links” page that provides links to various systems within the state:
http://www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?pageID=912&1534-D83A_1933715A=1c671516e645a7f0

Finally, the agency produces a number of publications oriented toward choosing a college that are available on the Get Ready website at
<http://www.getreadyforcollege.org/sPagesGR/pubsGR.cfm>

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

The seven state universities have a college prep curriculum that students are to complete; the 32 open admissions two-year colleges do not.

According to a communication with an individual at the Minnesota Department of Education, “the state does not mandate, recommend, or create curriculum.”

http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Academic_Excellence/Academic_Standards/Graduation_Requirements/index.html - this site provides general information on graduation requirements and provides linkages to requirements for MnSCU, the University of Minnesota, and others can be found in this document:

<http://education.state.mn.us/mdeprod/groups/Standards/documents/Instruction/001068.pdf>

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

No. There are graduation requirements at the same site referenced in #3

- 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?

Within the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities in FY06 over 19,800 high school juniors and seniors enrolled in college courses and received both high school and college credit via the Postsecondary Enrollment Options or college in the schools options. See Board Policy 3.5 and procedure 3.5.1 <http://www.mnscu.edu/board/policy/index.html>

Postsecondary Enrollment Option (PSEO) – allows students to take college courses for both college and high school credit free of charge for juniors and seniors in the top 50% of their class.

Concurrent Enrollment – more than 100 MN high schools offer students college-level courses through this program.

Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses are available through Minnesota secondary schools as well.

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? The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Policy 3.3 and Procedure 3.3.1 requires all institutions to use the same placement tests (with exceptions stated) The system is nearing the end of a process to determine a common cut score. Previously that was left to campuses and departments with great variation resulting. Please see: <http://www.mnscu.edu/board/policy/index.html>

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, by agreement the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC) is recognized by U of Minnesota, MnSCU and most private colleges. Statute also requires the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities to accept all credits within the MnTC. Please see: www.MnTransfer.org

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? See the MnTransfer.org website for answers to the above. In general, yes – there is a statewide, transferable general education requirement; no, there are no specified courses, just 10 content areas; yes, there are specific competencies identified; there does not appear to be any testing to guarantee student competency.

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? The Associate of Arts degree contains the entire MnTC (40 credits) and therefore meets the general education requirements; Associate of Science degrees only require x credits in y of the ten goal areas of the MnTC and therefore do not meet the full general education requirement . See MnSCU Policy 3.21 at <http://www.mnscu.edu/board/policy/index.html>

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? Board of Trustees Policy 3.21 Undergraduate Credit Transfer <http://www.mnscu.edu/board/policy/321.html> addresses requirements for transfer of credit for MN State Colleges and Universities.

Transfer credit may be awarded in one or more of four ways:

- as a direct course equivalency to meet specific course requirements at the receiving transfer institution (e.g. American History counts for American History) www.mncas.org

- to meet the MN Transfer Curriculum general education requirements
<http://www.mntransfer.org/MnTC/MnTC.html>
- according to program articulation agreements approved by colleges and universities to meet specific academic program requirements
<http://www.mntransfer.org/Agreements/articagree.html>
- as elective credits toward meeting total credit requirements for a degree, diploma or certificate

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

Minnesota has stateside approaches that enable high school students to get credit for college and advance more quickly toward college while they are in high school. Additionally, there is a credit by exam policy and endorsed CAEL standards for credit for experiential learning but no coordinated statewide approaches.

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?

Yes. See Minnesota Online website and note that we not only have hundreds of courses and programs on line we have an award-winning student services suite as well.

<http://www.minnesotaonline.org/>

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. See Minnesota Online website <http://www.minnesotaonline.org/>

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)?

No specific incentives currently exist. The Office of Higher Education has recently completed an accountability study, and data related to degree production (especially in critical fields) and graduation rates were prominently featured. The governor’s proposed budget for MnSCU does include some performance based funding that targets increased enrollment and participation in STEM programs, medical records technology programs, and programs in the 4 centers of excellence.

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)?

There are no particular incentives for completing successfully or for completing without amassing more than 120 credits.

The Minnesota State Grant program has a number of limits that act as disincentives to taking too long to complete, including:

- a. a limit of 4-years of full-time attendance (or the equivalent if part-time)
- b. definition of full-time as 15 credits per semester
- c. a limit of 6 years to finish a 4-year degree before having to deal with issues related to sufficient academic progress