

Oklahoma

Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education
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- 1) Does the state have an identifiable “P-16” effort visible? Who is in charge of this effort?
In 2005, the Oklahoma legislature passed the Governor’s initiative called Achieving Classroom Excellence (ACE). In 2006, the ACE Steering Committee was created to implement the aligned curriculum, testing and interventions/remediation. Membership on the Committee represents teachers, faculty, legislators, business leaders, high school counselors, principals, school boards, parents, department of education, state system for higher education and career technology education. The Committee is chaired by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and makes recommendations to the State Board 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?
The State Regents for Higher Education launched in March 2007 a student information portal. OKcollegestart.org is a comprehensive, Web-based information system for prospective and current college students. The Web site provides students with a “one-stop shop” for college planning and preparation and is located at <http://www.okcollegestart.org>
- 2) Is a mandated or recommended college preparatory curriculum in place in the state’s public high schools?
The ACE initiative includes new high school graduation requirements. Beginning with students entering the 9th grade in 2006-07 school year, students must complete the same courses required for college admission. Parents may opt their students out of this requirement, in which case a student takes the previous curriculum.
- 3) Has the state articulated a set of explicit competencies or skills that define what it means to be “college ready?”
College ready is the same as work ready. The competencies are imbedded in the Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS), the state approved PreK-12 curriculum. These have been aligned to ACT recommended curriculum and Achieve, Inc. American Diploma Project. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education approved ACT’s Standards for Transition (now College Readiness Standards) as the Core Competencies for Collegiate Success in December 1999.

- 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?

Admissible high school seniors receive tuition waivers for six credit hours per semester if enrolled in college courses. Admissible high school juniors and seniors taking approved technology center courses can earn college credit. AP courses are supported by funding from the State Department of Education.

- 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 State Regents have a mandatory assessment policy for course placement. Students must earn a score of 19 on the respective ACT subject test or earn a satisfactory score on a secondary institution-specific assessment or enroll in a remedial course. Institutions select the secondary assessment and cut score as part of an approved plan.

- 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?

There is a State System policy on transfer and articulation. Public institutions are required to comply with this policy and some private/independent institutions follow the same policy to enhance transferability. The policy details the requirements for admission of transfer students including transfer from a State System institution, a non-State System institution, students for whom English is a second language, and transfer probation

Additionally, the Course Equivalency Project (CEP) began in 1995 and brings together faculty to discuss discipline-specific issues and review courses that are transferable among Oklahoma public colleges and institutions. The information is available to all students at <http://www.okhighered.org/student-center/transfer-stdnts/>

- 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?

State Regents' policy on degree requirements calls for 40 hours of general education. The general education requirements are specified and embedded in the Associate in Arts (AA) and Science (AS) and baccalaureate degrees. Institutions have latitude in determining specific courses and titles. AA and AS degrees are transferable toward a baccalaureate degree's general education requirements. An explanation of general education framework (not specific competencies) is provided in policy. There is not particular test required for use 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?

Yes, all lower division general education requirements transfer. At least one upper division general education course is required at the four-year institution. All programs are reviewed on a five-year cycle and when new program requests are submitted, the general education component must be integrated as specified in policy.

- 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?

As indicated above, there is a transfer matrix that addresses disciplines at the course level.

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

The State Regents have a policy for accepting extra-institutional learning that specifies the provisions for students to earn college credit.

- 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?

There is no alternative institution as indicated, but there is an Online College of Oklahoma (OCO) course database that students can search to supplement courses not available to them at their home campuses. Also, institutions have the ability to offer programs in a variety of formats that may provide an accelerated or intensive program in some areas.

- 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?

The OCO is available and students are directed to the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) Electronic Campus for additional choices.

- 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)?

The Brain Gain initiative, which began in 1999, promotes the improvement of graduation rates at all state system institutions. Performance funding rewards institutions that improve or reach peer targets for first-year retention, graduation and degrees conferred. Incentives are provided to institutions most in need of improvement to implement new projects.

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)?

In 1996, the Student Advisory Board to the State Regents requested a review of time-to-degree issues within the State System. They were interested in discovering if new policies, guidelines, and/or strategies could be designed to improve course sequencing and timely availability of course offerings to shorten time-to-degree. A committee was appointed to review the issues and recommendations including a model by the University of Iowa to develop graduation plans with resources and interpretation of program requirements, outlining the responsibilities of the institution and the student regarding time-to-degree issues (advising, class scheduling, etc.), and using technology to enhance the advisement process. In May 1997, the State Regents accepted the Degree Completion Report and requested institutions to submit graduation plans. Institutions submitted plans and there has been no subsequent follow-up to the report.