

Wisconsin

University of Wisconsin System
Sharon Wilhelm
Interim Associate Vice President
Office of Policy Analysis and Research
Email: swilhelm@uwsa.edu

Context: Public higher education in Wisconsin is provided by two Systems – the University of Wisconsin System and the Wisconsin Technical College System. The UW System includes 2 doctoral institutions (UW-Madison and UW-Milwaukee), 11 comprehensive UW's with master's and bachelor's level programs, thirteen freshman/sophomore liberal arts campuses that comprise the UW Colleges, and a statewide UW-Extension. The Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) includes 16 technical colleges – 4 of the WTC's offer a liberal arts/collegiate transfer program in addition to occupational/technical and vocational/technical programs. The UW System and WTCS work together to offer a variety of program options and provide students with a seamless transfer between the Systems.

- 1) Does the state have an identifiable “P-16” effort visible? Who is in charge of this effort?
The state of Wisconsin formed a voluntary, PK-16 Leadership Council in 2001. This is highly visible, permanent council that is co-chaired by: Kevin Reilly, President UW System Administration, Elizabeth Burmaster, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dan Clancy, President Wisconsin Technical College System, and Rolf Wegenke, President Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities. Please see web site at: <http://www.wisconsin.edu/pk16/>
 - 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 primary website for the UW System is called "HELP On-line" located at: <http://www.uwhelp.wisconsin.edu>. WTCS and WAICU have similar websites. Another major printed information resource for the UW System is "Introduction" which is distributed annually to high schools across the state.
 - 2) Is a mandated or recommended college preparatory curriculum in place in the state's public high schools?
There is no state mandated college preparatory curriculum, however there are UW System requirements, which are posted on our UW System website http://www.uwsa.edu/govrel/briefing/sec05a_admissionsPol.pdf
- Effective fall 1995 a minimum of 17 high school credits is required. Thirteen of the 17 credits will be distributed as follows:
- English 4 credits
 - Social Science 3 credits

Mathematics 3 credits

Natural Science 3 credits

The remaining 4 units will be: From the above areas, foreign language, fine arts, computer science and other academic areas 4 credits TOTAL 17 credits Each institution may specify additional unit requirements for the remaining 4 units and may specify required content for all 17 units.

Requirements for high school graduation include the following. A school board may not grant a high school diploma to any pupil unless the pupil has earned:

In the high school grades, at least 4 credits of English including writing composition, 3 credits of social studies including state and local government, 2 credits of mathematics, 2 credits of science and 1.5 credits of physical education.

In grades 7 to 12, at least 0.5 credit of health education.

57 percent of students who took the ACT during their high school years reported taking a core curriculum, compared to 54 percent nationally. Their scores were 2.2 to 1.5 points higher than students who didn't take the **ACT-recommended core course work of four years of English and three or more years each of mathematics, science, and social studies**. Most of Wisconsin's ACT-taking students already take ACT-recommended math and science credits, with 81 percent of 2006 Wisconsin graduates reporting they took three or more years of math and 77 percent taking three or more years of science.

<http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/index.html>

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

The state has not defined college ready, but rather focuses on what is required to graduate from high school. Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards specify what students should know and be able to do in English/Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies, what they might be asked to do to give evidence of standards, and how well they must perform. They include content, performance, and proficiency standards.

- Content standards refer to what students should know and be able to do.
- Performance standards tell how students will show that they are meeting a standard.
- Proficiency standards indicate how well students must perform.

<http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/index.html>

Faculty from K-12 and post-secondary education worked together for several months to examine a variety of admission and placement documents and to compare them to the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards. Areas of similarity were documented, as were areas of difference. These are used to guide curriculum planning in both high school and post-secondary institutions.

- 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. Wisconsin's Youth Options Program allows public high school juniors and seniors who meet certain requirements to take postsecondary courses at a UW institution, a Wisconsin Technical College, one of the state's participating private nonprofit institutions of higher education, or tribally-controlled colleges. Approved courses count toward high school graduation and college credit. <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/index.html>

Advanced Placement Courses: The UW System grants college credits to students attaining a score of 3, 4, or 5 on an AP exam.

- 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 UW System has a remediation policy in the areas of English and mathematics. Each UW institution determines the tests used for course placement and the cut-off scores used to place students into English and mathematics courses. The placement tests used include Mathematics and English placement tests developed by jointly by Wisconsin instructors and the Math and English ACT and SAT subscores.

- 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 system-wide transfer policy for undergraduates transferring into or within the UW System. This includes policy for transfers from the Wisconsin Technical Colleges. The policy can be found at http://www.uwsa.edu/acss/acis/ACIS_6.0rev.pdf.

- 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?

No, there is not a common statewide general education requirement. However, within the UW System there is a policy that enables a recipient of a UW associate degree or a liberal arts associate degree from a Wisconsin Technical College to automatically satisfy the university-wide and lower level college general education requirements at any UW institution. UW institutions also offer credit by examination opportunities that enable students to earn credit based upon success on appropriate examinations.

- 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, see #6a above. This accommodation is stated in the UW System Undergraduate Transfer Policy (http://www.uwsa.edu/acss/acis/ACIS_6.0rev.pdf) in section V.C.2.

- 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?

The UW System Undergraduate Transfer Policy is located at:

http://www.uwsa.edu/acss/acis/ACIS_6.0rev.pdf

This policy specifies that a course designated as fulfilling a general education breadth requirement at one UW institution should transfer as general education at the receiving UW institution whether or not the receiving institution has a direct course equivalent that satisfies general education. This information is included in the Transfer Information System (TIS). The TIS website can be found at: <http://www.uwsa.edu/tis>

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

The UW System permits students to earn college credits through alternative means through Advanced Placement (AP), College Level Examination Program (CLEP) and credit by examination as described in #8 above. Several of the UW institutions currently offer or plan to offer credit for some form of experiential learning.

- 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, but many of the UW System institutions offer collaborative degree programs where students can complete a bachelor's degree at a local site rather than the UW "four-year" campus. The UW Colleges also offers an on-line associate of arts and science degree. Please see web site at: <http://www.online.uwc.edu/>

- 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 UW System has developed a central bank of on-line courses at: <http://distancelearning.wisconsin.edu>. Distance education courses from all UW institutions are listed on the site. Students can link from the site to individual institutions to register for the courses. Courses are designated as 100% distance education versus partially distance education, where limited campus visits may be required. The site also includes information about degree programs that can be completed via distance education.

- 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 state of Wisconsin does not provide incentives for institutions to improve degree production, graduation rates, or credits to degree. However, each institution within the UW

System has established specific goals to increase retention and graduation rates and decrease average credits to degree. The System's "Accountability Report" annually assesses progress toward these goals; this information is provided to the UW Board of Regents and other stakeholders. You can find the report at: <http://www.uwsa.edu/opar/accountability.htm>.

- 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)?

The state of Wisconsin does not provide incentives for students who successfully complete their degrees or complete them without amassing an excessive amount of credits. However, the UW System's Board of Regents has an Excess Credits Surcharge policy. Students who earn more than 165 credits in their bachelor's level degree program (or 30 credits more than required by their degree programs, whichever is greater) are required to pay the full cost of the additional coursework rather than the discounted tuition costs available to Wisconsin residents. As a part of this policy, UW institutions are required to review degree programs that require more than 130 credits for the degree as well as provide advising interventions to help students make appropriate course selection and avoid accumulation of excess credits.