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September 18, 2020

The Honorable Cleo Fields
Chairman, Senate Education Committee
P.O. Box 94183
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Dear Chairman Fields,

I am writing to you pursuant to SCR 52, of the 2020 Regular Legislative Session, which tasked the Board of Regents and the postsecondary management boards to coordinate on a flexible and holistic admissions policy to be effective through Fall 2020 due to COVID-19.

In March 2020, at the onset of the pandemic, Board of Regents staff, in close consultation with the Louisiana Department of Education, system chief academic officers and the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA), developed guidance to help secondary and postsecondary stakeholders navigate the COVID-19 disruption. These administrative entities worked to ensure that no student would be academically disadvantaged by the cancellation of standardized testing or missing test scores, the closing of schools or other academic barriers that arose as a result of COVID-19. At its heart, the policy provides flexible and holistic alternatives for placement and admission, as well as a mechanism for students to drop their Spring and Summer classes with no penalty to their academic records.

The Emergency Policy on Dual Enrollment, Placement and Admissions Criteria was presented to the Board of Regents at its April 22, 2020 meeting. The Board unanimously approved the policy, now Academic Affairs Policies 2.18 [Placement] and 2.22 [Admissions], to go into effect immediately. Following its approval, Regents and LDOE staff collaborated on a series of webinars introducing the policy to secondary and postsecondary representatives.

This Emergency Policy meets the criteria set forth in SCR 52 and establishes the Placement and Minimum Admissions Standards for First-Time Freshmen into Four-Year Institutions through Fall of 2020. Based on feedback from parents, institutions and other stakeholders, the Board updated the policy at its August 13, 2020 meeting, approving its extension through August 2021. The updated policies are attached for your review.

The Board of Regents continues to monitor the educational landscape to ensure that any academic barriers related to the pandemic are addressed. Board staff is also providing ongoing support to both secondary and postsecondary entities via email and webinars conducted by Regents staff. All information is housed on the Regents' COVID-19 Response webpage (<https://regents.la.gov/covid19-response/>). Please let us know if you have any questions.

Thank you for your strong advocacy for higher education and your steadfast support for our students.

Sincerely,

Kim Hunter Reed, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Higher Education

Attachment

c: Yolanda Dixon, Secretary of the Senate
Michelle Fontenot, Clerk of the House
State Library (docs@state.lib.la.us)
Poynter Library (DRPLibrary@legis.la.gov)

Board of Regents Emergency Policy: Dual Enrollment, Placement and Admissions Criteria Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

Executive Summary

In response to the rapidly evolving impact on secondary and postsecondary education of the current COVID-19 pandemic, the Board of Regents offers the following guidance due to the cancellation or postponement of standardized tests whose scores are used in determining student eligibility for the following programs: dual enrollment, placement and admissions.

Board of Regents recognizes that as a result of these and other interruptions related to COVID- 19, students may not have been able to complete the standardized testing requirements necessary to demonstrate college readiness and meet minimum admissions eligibility criteria as currently defined in Academic Affairs Policies 2.18 (Placement), 2.22 (Dual Enrollment) and Minimum Admissions Criteria for First-Time Freshmen.

This emergency policy, developed in close consultation with the Louisiana Department of Education, system chief academic officers and LOSFA, provides guidance for students currently enrolled in dual enrollment as well as those seeking to enroll next academic year. It also addresses alternative criteria for placement into college courses and admission to postsecondary institutions. The emergency policy addresses the Board of Regents commitment to mitigate academic barriers caused by this pandemic, which has resulted in disruption of classes and postponement or cancellation of standardized testing and placement assessments. It is our goal to support students through these course disruptions and assist in their transition to or continuation in Louisiana's colleges or universities.

In light of this emergency policy to address disruption related to COVID-19 issues, students meeting these minimum admissions requirements through the Summer 2021 cohort may be admitted as regular admits, and, those who do not meet these requirements will be admitted by exception to Board of Regents policy.

Emergency Policy effective date are as follows:

- Options for current dual enrollment students, Spring 2020
- Prospective Dual Enrollment Policy, Academic Year 2020-21
- Placement and Minimum Admission Standards for First-Time Freshmen into Four-Year Institutions, Academic Year 2020-21 (including Summer 2021)



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DUAL ENROLLMENT

Effective immediately, this interim dual enrollment policy guidance on academic options (number one below) will apply for the Spring 2020 while the remainder of the policy will apply through the 2020-21 academic year.

- 1) All students currently enrolled in one or more dual enrollment courses may choose one of the following three options for Spring 2020 relative to the college credit portion of each course:
 - Complete the college coursework online during the Spring semester 2020 with a final grade; **OR**
 - Transition the course status to “in-progress”/”incomplete” and complete by August 31, 2020 (if “in- progress” or “incomplete” is selected, the course will end in a final grade; if the student does not complete the course, this may result in a failing grade and negatively impact TOPS scholarship eligibility and college GPA); **OR**
 - Withdraw from the college course via an “Administrative Withdrawal” (no grades are posted to the student’s college transcript/record). Note: The administrative withdrawal date is determined by the postsecondary institution. Also, if a high school student chooses to withdraw from the high school portion of the course and the course is needed to complete the TOPS Core curriculum, the student will need to retake the course.

PROSPECTIVE DUAL ENROLLMENT FOR 2020-21 ACADEMIC YEAR

2) Students wishing to initiate or continue their participation in dual enrollment for the 2020-21 academic year may be eligible to enroll in academic courses on the Master Articulation Matrix if they meet the following criteria:

- A minimum 2.5 cumulative high school GPA, as determined by the high school, including any GPA adjustments made due to Spring 2020 disruptions in learning;
AND
- Subject-specific demonstration of readiness in Mathematics (for mathematics and science courses) or English (for English, foreign language, history, social science, humanities, or arts survey courses) through either:

1.) Subject-specific minimum scores on any assessment listed in Academic Affairs Policy 2.22 (listed below):

	ENGLISH	MATHEMATICS*
ACCUPLACER	86 Sent Structure	65 (Elem Alg.) 40 (Col-Level Math)*
ACCUPLACER NG	250 Writing	250 QRAS
<i>*For College Algebra: ≥ 70 Accuplacer College-Level Math; ≥ 263 Accuplacer NG (QRAS) or ≥ 250 (AAF) are recommended.</i>		
ASPIRE	433	431
MAP	245	265
Pre-ACT	18	19
Pre-SAT	25WL	500
EOC	English II: 740	Algebra I: 760, or Geometry: 750
LEAP 2025	English II: Mastery or above	Geometry: Mastery or above (for enrollment in non-algebraic Gen. Ed Math) Geometry: Mastery or above <i>and</i> completion of Algebra II w/C or better for enrollment in College Algebra
ACT	18	19
SAT	500 ERW	510 Math

OR

2.) Counselor recommendation based on overall student performance and grade trends in the subject (see table below).

While the Board of Regents encourages all institutions to follow this policy, we recognize that minimum requirements may be increased for particular courses.

PLACEMENT AND MINIMUM ADMISSION STANDARDS FOR FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN INTO FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS THROUGH SUMMER 2021

This policy works in conjunction with existing Regents policies for Placement (Ac. Af. 2.18) and Minimum Admissions Standards. Should a student not have ACT or SAT test scores on file, or in the event students do not achieve minimum placement test scores, Regents Core and GPA must still be used to admit students.

- **Institutions note that eligibility for TOPS Scholarships by law requires specific standardized test scores. Admission via this interim policy of applicants who do not have or do not achieve the test scores required for TOPS will not be eligible for these scholarships.**

Institutions may consider the following Interim Policy Guidelines for admission through Summer 2021.

- 1) Students who have met the Regents Core and GPA (Flagship: 3.0; Statewide: 2.5 and Regional: 2.0) requirements for admission, but have no ACT or SAT score on file to demonstrate proficiency in English (ACT:18 or SAT: ERW 500) and Math (ACT:19 or SAT: MATH 510) may meet subscore admissions or placement criteria by:
 - a. Successfully completing postsecondary departmental exams and/or placement assessments at the institution where they plan to enroll, (see table below); **OR**
 - b. Successfully completing placement assessments offered by community colleges and submitting scores to the institution where they plan to enroll (see table below); **OR**
 - c. In keeping with Regents' Minimum Admissions Criteria policy, institutions can still evaluate for other factors in addition to minimum admissions requirements. Institutions with applicants who have not met the minimum test score requirements, or have no scores available as required by the Board of Regents Minimum Admissions Criteria for First-Time Freshmen, may rely on other factors, such as trends in academic performance, rigor of coursework, challenging high school curriculum, class rank, special talents or quality of extracurricular activities, to determine final admission (see table below); **OR**
 - d. Enrolling in co-requisite support in course(s) where the student is deficient
- 2) Incoming students from non-English speaking countries who do not have access to the TOEFL or IELTS English proficiency exams (per Academic Affairs 2.18) due to disruptions caused by COVID19, may meet English proficiency requirements through the Duolingo English exam if accepted by the institution. Scores on the Duolingo English exam must be concorded and comparable to the current TOEFL and IELTS minimum scores needed to indicate proficiency.

This interim policy for placement and minimum admission standards for first-time freshmen is in effect through Summer 2021 and may be amended by the Board of Regents as circumstances require.

SSPS Data Entry Guidance

Dual Enrollment Reporting: Courses transitioned to “In Progress” or “Incomplete” status will be reported as “IP” as the course grade for SSPS file submission. For Administrative Withdrawal, the course grade will be reported as “AW” and will not be included in GPA calculations nor appear on a college student transcript.

In addition to the placement test types listed below, a new code designated as “Z” for “Counselor Recommendation” has been added and should be reported in the English/Math placement test type field for preparatory students (dual enrollment) only.

Admissions Reporting: Students who have met the Regents Core and GPA requirements for admission but have no ACT or SAT score on file will have a “G” reported for the admission test type field.

<u>English Placement Test Type</u>	<u>Code</u>	<u>Math Placement Test Type</u>	<u>Code</u>
Accuplacer Sentence Skills	C	Accuplacer Arithmetic	B
Accuplacer Next Generation - Writing	H	Accuplacer College-Level Math	C
ACT	A	Accuplacer Elem Algebra	D
ASPIRE	Q	Accuplacer Next Generation – Arithmetic	J
ASSET Writing Skills	9	Accuplacer Next Generation – QAS	K
COMPASS-Writing	8	Accuplacer Next Generation – AAF	L
ELS 112 – Intensive English	U	ACT	A
EOC (End of Course)	4	ASSET Elem. Algebra	9
International English Language Testing System (IELTS)	E	ASPIRE	Q
LEAP 2025	5	COMPASS-Algebra	8
MAP	V	EOC (End of Course)	4
Postsecondary Departmental Exam	G	Postsecondary Departmental Exam	G
Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency (MTELP)	F	LEAP 2025	5
Pre-ACT	W	MAP	V
Pre-SAT	Y	Pre-ACT	W
SAT (2016) – Writing & Language Test	R	Pre-SAT	Y
SAT (Pre-March 2016)	S	SAT (2016) – Math Section	R
Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL – Paper)	T	SAT (Pre-March 2016)	S
Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL – Computer)	X	Recently passed a qualifying developmental or co-requisite Math course with grade \geq “C”	M
Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL – Internet)	I	Counselor Recommendation (for preparatory students only)	Z
Test of English as a Foreign Language (Duolingo)	L	No Score Available	N
Recently passed a qualifying developmental or co-requisite English course with grade \geq “C”	P		
Counselor Recommendation (for preparatory students only)	Z		
No Score Available	N		

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 52

BY SENATOR FIELDS

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Board of Regents and the postsecondary education management boards to adopt a flexible and holistic admissions policy for the summer and fall semesters of the 2020 academic year, due to the disruption caused throughout the state's postsecondary educational system by the COVID-19 pandemic.

WHEREAS, our colleges and universities responded quickly and decisively to the public health emergency caused by COVID-19 by closing campus buildings, enabling faculty and staff to work from home, and moving instruction online in record time; and

WHEREAS, the current admission process poses an additional challenge for new students and transfer students who seek to enroll in a postsecondary education institution; and

WHEREAS, it is clear that existing admission policies, standards, and criteria were not created to address current prevailing circumstances that are beyond the control of both students and postsecondary institutions; and

WHEREAS, a student might not be able to meet existing admission standards because his high school, college, or university had to shift to online instruction with varying degrees of success, reduce course offerings, or institute a pass/fail grading system, which can negatively impact a student's grade point average; and

WHEREAS, certain student test scores may not be available as testing companies, including ACT and SAT, postpone or cancel testing dates and qualifying exams for Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses are negatively impacted; and

WHEREAS, every student deserves an admissions process that is fair, realistic, and attainable given the educational landscape significantly disrupted by COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, flexible, holistic admission policies and criteria will ensure that prospective students have a full and fair shot, despite the fact that they are currently studying under dramatically different and, for many, highly stressful circumstances; and

WHEREAS, colleges and universities across the country, including the University of California, are significantly easing admission standards in response to the unprecedented upheaval in the educational system caused by COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the legislature has every confidence that Louisiana's postsecondary education management boards and institutions, with support from the Board of Regents, will fully embrace this call for flexibility in evaluating a student's application for admissions and adopt admission standards that remove every possible barrier to student admission.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Board of Regents and the postsecondary education management boards to adopt a flexible and holistic admissions policy for the summer and fall semesters of the 2020 academic year, due to the disruptions caused throughout the state's postsecondary educational system by the COVID-19 pandemic.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the commissioner of higher education, the chairman of the Board of Regents and each of the four postsecondary education management boards, and the president of each postsecondary education system.

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES