

Regent Admission Index

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What was the reason for changing the freshman admission requirements to the Regent universities?

A: In Spring 2006, the Iowa legislature passed House File 2395, requiring the Board of Regents to conduct a study of the current upper one-half class rank requirement which has been in place since 1958. The Board of Regents appointed an Admissions Study Team, including representatives from the Board of Regents and each of the three Regent universities, to conduct this study. After reviewing a large volume of data, the Admissions Study Team created the Regent Admission Index (RAI) and recommended that the RAI replace the current upper-half class rank requirement. This recommendation was approved by the Board of Regents and by the Iowa legislature, and will go into effect for freshmen who will enter the Iowa Regent universities beginning Fall 2009.

Q: What exactly is the RAI?

A: The RAI is a score derived from a mathematical equation that includes four factors which have been shown to be predictors of academic success at the Regent universities: class rank, ACT/SAT scores, grade point average, and core courses completed. Below is the RAI equation:

$$\text{RAI} = (\text{percentile class rank} \times 1) + (\text{ACT composite} \times 2) + (\text{number of core courses completed} \times 5) + (\text{high school GPA} \times 20)$$

Note: For purposes of calculating the RAI, ACT composite score has a top value of 36 (SAT scores will be converted to ACT composite equivalent); high school rank is expressed as a percentile with 99% as the top value; high school GPA is expressed on a 4-point scale; and number of high school courses completed in the core subject areas is expressed in terms of years or fractions of years of study.

Q: May I calculate my own RAI score?

A: Students may easily calculate their own unofficial RAI score by using the RAI calculator on the Iowa Board of Regents website at www2.state.ia.us/regents/RAI/index.html.

Q: Does this mean each Regent university no longer has minimum high school course requirements for admission?

A: No. Each Regent university still has its own minimum high school course requirements for admission. These requirements really serve as the first screen in the admission decision process. In other words, if the students don't meet these minimum high school course requirements, they generally won't be offered admission, regardless of their RAI score.

Q: Why does the RAI represent an improvement over the current upper-half class rank requirement?

A: There are two primary reasons. First, the RAI takes into consideration four factors which have been shown to be predictors of academic success at the Regent universities. As a result, the RAI does a better job of predicting academic success. Second, the RAI provides a real incentive for high school students to take additional core courses, especially during the all-important senior year.

Q: What if my school doesn't provide a class rank?

A: Applicants whose schools do not provide class rank will be evaluated on an individual basis.

Q: Does an RAI score of at least 245 mean I will automatically qualify for admission to any of the three Regent universities?

A: Yes, provided you also meet each university's minimum high school course requirements for admission.

Q: Does an RAI score below 245 mean I won't be admitted to any of the Regent universities?

A: Not necessarily. Each university will evaluate applicants with less than a 245 RAI score on an individual basis and make their own admission decisions. Those admission decisions will be specific to each university. In other words, a student with less than a 245 RAI who is offered admission to one university is not guaranteed admission to the other two universities.

Q: How do I know which of my high school's courses will count in the calculation of my RAI score?

A: Basically, any college-prep course offered in the subject areas of English, math, science, social studies, or foreign language will count. However, students and parents should consult with their guidance office to be sure, especially as they plan their class schedules.

Q: Why are only English, math, science, social studies, and foreign language courses acceptable for the RAI? What about courses in areas like journalism, computer science, music, art, etc.?

A: When the RAI requirements were in the early stages of being developed, the decision was made to restrict the acceptable courses to the five core subject areas mentioned above. The reason behind this decision is that all students are expected to have completed a minimum level of preparation in each of these core subject areas (with the exception of foreign language for some majors) before they enter a Regent university. While courses in other subject areas are certainly beneficial for college-bound students, especially for those who wish to pursue majors in those respective fields, they are not courses that all Regent university bound students should be expected to have completed. And while courses in areas like journalism, computer science, art, music, etc. are generally not counted in the RAI calculation, they will be viewed favorably by the admissions officers when they consider applicants who fall below the RAI 245 automatic admit score.

Q: What about high school core courses that are completed before ninth grade?

A: In general, high school core courses completed before ninth grade may be counted in the RAI calculation. If the course is an obvious sequential course (e.g., Spanish 1, Algebra 1), it does not need to be listed on the high school transcript in order to be counted in the RAI calculation, provided a higher level course appears on the transcript (e.g., Spanish II, Algebra 2). However, if the course is not an obvious sequential course (e.g., Biology, American History), the course must appear on the high school transcript in order to be counted in the RAI calculation.

Q: What about college courses that are taken in high school?

A: College courses taken in high school may be counted in the RAI calculation only if they fall into one of the five core subject areas: English, math, science, social science, or foreign language. In order to be counted in the RAI calculation, these college courses must be listed on the high school transcript or a college transcript must be provided to the university. College courses taken in high school do not receive any additional weight when the RAI score is calculated. For example, one semester of college course work would generate an additional 2.5 RAI points since students receive 5 points for every year of core courses completed.