

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

ADMISSIONS STUDY TEAM FINAL REPORT

Actions Requested:

1. Consider approval of the Admissions Study Team proposal to adopt the proposed alternative formula for the Regent Admission Index to be used for Iowa high school students without a high school rank.
2. Consider approval of the proposed changes in the Board Policy Manual §6.01.
3. Authorize the Executive Director to file the notice of intent to amend the Iowa Administrative Rules regarding the Regent Admission Index as stated below.

Executive Summary: In light of its mission and stewardship role to provide educational opportunities to the citizens of the state, the Board of Regents has an ongoing interest in ensuring that entering freshmen at the Regent universities are academically prepared to succeed in college. In 2006, the Board approved a revision of the freshman admissions requirements. A Regent Admission Index (RAI) was developed in by an inter-institutional Admissions Study Team after extensive study and analysis. The focus of the RAI is to allow the Regent universities to admit students who have a reasonable probability of academic success at any of the three Regent universities. The RAI includes four factors – high school class rank; high school grade point average; performance on standardized tests (ACT composite or SAT combined); and number of core subject area courses completed in high school. These factors have been shown to predict academic success at the Regent universities and are consistent with the Iowa Department of Education’s goal of encouraging students to take a rigorous core curriculum throughout their high school careers. An RAI of 245 or greater along with completion of the minimum required courses guarantee admission to any of the Regent universities. Since implementation of the RAI, the Regent universities have conducted individual reviews of applicants whose RAI is less than 245 to determine their potential for success.

The RAI was implemented with the entering freshman class of 2009. However, since then, the number of public and private high schools in the state of Iowa that stopped providing a high school class rank for their students increased from three to approximately 40¹. In order to respond to this change, each of the universities developed its own substitute for the missing factor, including using a regression analysis, sliding scale, or different weights for the remaining factors. Unfortunately, these approaches removed the consistency and transparency which the original RAI had provided to students, parents, and high school staff.

During its work with the Board of Regents on the Efficiency Study in 2014, Deloitte Consulting identified a business case related to the Regent Admission Index – SS-08: “Standardize manual calculation of the Regent Admission Index.” The Board of Regents assigned this business case to the Board Office for implementation.

¹ There are approximately 345 public school districts in the state of Iowa.

Between September 2014 and December 2014, Chief Academic Officer Diana Gonzalez met with the Admissions Study Team (Attachment C) to evaluate the business case and to provide a recommendation to the Board of Regents which would meet the intent of the business case.

Recommendations:

After extensive data analysis, the Admissions Study Team recommends the following alternative calculation of the RAI which will be used only by Iowa high school students whose high school does not provide a high school class rank:

RAI = ACT composite x 3 + High School Grade Point Average x 30 + High School Core Courses x 5

All Iowa students who are from high schools that do not provide high school class rank whose RAI is 245 or higher under the alternative formula and who have the required minimum core courses² will qualify for automatic admission to any of the Regent universities. Non-Iowa students may be held to a higher RAI minimum. Each Regent university will continue to conduct individual reviews of students who do not meet the guaranteed admission RAI of 245 but who otherwise demonstrate potential and commitment to succeeding at a Regent university. The alternative formula calculation of the RAI for Iowa students whose high school does not provide high school class rank will be implemented for the entering freshman class of Summer/Fall 2016.

Background:

Guiding principles. In its analyses and discussions, the Team used the following guiding principles:

- ⇒ The Regent universities will continue to admit students who have a reasonable probability of academic success.
- ⇒ The alternative formula will be consistent with the missions of the Board of Regents and the Regent universities.
- ⇒ The alternative formula will be transparent, objective, understandable, and easy to use by families and educators to determine likelihood of a student's admission.
- ⇒ Further changes in admissions requirements will result from relevant data analyses and will value students' academic high school experience.
- ⇒ The minimum RAI required for automatic admission to the three Regent universities will remain as close as possible to the primary formula (245) RAI for the alternative formula.
- ⇒ Each Regent university will retain the authority to review students who do not meet the automatic admission requirement.

² The core subject area courses, including English, mathematics, science, social sciences, and foreign languages, are defined by each Regent university and described in the publication Building Your Future which is available on the Board's website - http://www.regents.iowa.gov/Admissions/Building_Your_Future.pdf.

Team Findings:

The Team's findings were informed by the results of relevant data analyses.

- ⇒ The alternative formula will continue to use the remaining three factors which exist in the primary formula – high school grade point average, ACT composite score, and number of core courses completed.
- ⇒ The team identified 12 possible alternative formulas that included different weights for each of the three factors – ACT composite score, high school grade point average, and number of high school core courses.
- ⇒ The purpose of the analysis conducted was to determine if there were significant differences in the correlation of the alternative formula with several measures of academic success, including first-year grade point average, one-year and two-year retention rates, and four-year and five-year graduation rates.
- ⇒ In addition, analyses were conducted to determine which weights came the closest to defining those students who would have received automatic admission under the primary RAI formula calculation with particular attention to those students near the 245 automatic admission minimum.
- ⇒ The proposed alternative formula increases the weight of the ACT composite score from two to three; increases the weight of the high school grade point average from 20 to 30; the weight of the high school core courses remains the same as the primary formula (5); and retains a common automatic admission cut score of 245.

Next Steps:

- ⇒ The Board Office will inform those Iowa high schools that do not provide high school class rank of the change in the alternative calculation of the RAI, if approved by the Board.
- ⇒ Following Board approval, implement the alternative formula for Summer/Fall 2016 admission of entering freshmen at the Regent universities.
- ⇒ Re-affirm the current Board policy that non-resident applicants will be held to standards at least as high as those for resident freshman applicants.
- ⇒ Update the Board Policy Manual §6.01 to include the alternative formula for the Regent Admission Index for students from high schools that do not provide high school class rank.
- ⇒ Publicize the alternative formula. Also include an online RAI calculator for the alternative formula on the Board of Regents and university websites.
- ⇒ Update the *Building Your Future* brochure describing the alternative formula.
- ⇒ Provide notice to students and the general public about the alternative formula.
- ⇒ File the Notice of Intended Action to amend Section 681 of the Iowa Administrative Code to include the alternative RAI formula with the three factors.
- ⇒ Conduct a review of the alternative RAI formula one year after implantation.
- ⇒ Conduct a comprehensive review of the RAI in 2015-2016.

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

6.01 Admission Requirements Common to the Three State Universities

- A. The Board shall make rules for admission to and for the government of the institutions under its control, consistent with law. (Iowa Code §262.9(3))
- B. The Board of Regents, State of Iowa, has adopted the following requirements governing admission of students to the three state universities.

Each university shall describe in its catalog the requirements and other information necessary to make the admission process operate within the framework of these requirements.

Amendments and changes in these requirements are proposed by the universities to the Regent Committee on Educational Relations, which examines the proposals and makes specific recommendations through the Council of Provosts to the Board of Regents, State of Iowa, which is empowered by law to establish the admission requirements.

1. Admission of undergraduate students directly from high school. Students desiring admission must meet the requirements in this section and also any special requirements for the program, school, or college of their choice.

- a. Applicants must submit a formal application for admission, together with the appropriate application fee for U.S. citizens or permanent residents, to the State University of Iowa, Iowa State University, or the University of Northern Iowa. All three universities have a separate application fee for international students. Transcripts of students' academic records, including credits and grades, rank in class, high school grade point average, courses completed, and certification of graduation, shall be provided by the appropriate secondary schools.

Applicants must also submit SAT Reasoning Test or ACT scores or the equivalent as determined by each university. The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the equivalent as determined by each university is required of foreign students whose first language is not English. Applicants may be required to submit additional information or data to support their applications.

- b. Graduates of approved Iowa high schools who have the subject matter background as required by each university and who have a Regent Admission Index of 245 or higher will be automatically admitted. Applicants with a Regent Admission Index lower than 245 may, after a review of their academic and test records by the appropriate university, and at the discretion of the admissions officers: (1) be admitted unconditionally, (2) be admitted conditionally, (3) be required to enroll for a tryout period during a preceding summer session, or (4) be denied admission.

The primary Regent Admission Index is calculated using the following formula:

Regent Admission Index = (2 x ACT composite score) + (1 x high school rank) + (20 x high school grade point average) + (5 x number of high school courses completed in the subject areas)³

The alternative Regent Admission Index which will be used for Iowa students from high schools that do not provide high school class rank is calculated using the following formula:

Regent Admission Index = (3 x ACT composite score) + (30 x high school grade point average) + (5 x number of high school courses completed in the core subject areas).

³ For purposes of calculating the Regent Admission Index, ACT composite score has a top value of 36 (SAT scores will be converted to ACT composite equivalents); 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. The chosen multipliers were statistically derived.

IOWA ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

681—1.1(262) Admission of undergraduate students directly from high school. Students desiring admission to the University of Iowa, Iowa State University, or the University of Northern Iowa must meet the requirements in this rule and also any special requirements for the curriculum, school, or college of their choice.

Applicants must submit a formal application for admission, together with the appropriate application fee as approved by the state board of regents pursuant to Iowa Code subsection [262.9\(18\)](#) and detailed in rule [681—1.7\(262\)](#), and have their secondary school provide a transcript of their academic record, including credits and grades, rank in class, and certification of graduation. Applicants must also submit SAT Reasoning Test or ACT scores or the equivalent, as determined by each university. The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is required of foreign students whose first language is not English. Applicants may be required to submit additional information or data to support their applications.

1.1(1) Admission decisions to a university are based on the following four factors - performance on standardized tests (SAT Reasoning Test or ACT); high school grade point average; high school percentile rank in class; and number of core (or above) subject area courses completed in high school. These factors are used to calculate a Regent Admission Index, using an equation described in the Board Policy Manual. Graduates of approved Iowa high schools who have the subject matter background required by each university and who meet the Regent Admission Index required for automatic admission described in the Board Policy Manual will be admitted to any Regent university. Applicants who do not meet the Regent Admission Index for automatic admission or the subject matter requirements, may, after an individual review of their academic and test records, and at the discretion of the admissions officers:

- a. Be admitted unconditionally,
- b. Be admitted conditionally,
- c. Be required to enroll for a tryout period during a preceding summer session, or
- d. Be denied admission.

1.1(2) Graduates of approved high schools in other states may be held to higher academic standards, but must meet at least the same requirements as graduates of Iowa high schools. The options for conditional admission or summer tryout enrollment may not necessarily be offered to these students.

1.1(3) Applicants who are graduates of nonapproved high schools will be considered for admission in a manner similar to applicants from approved high schools, but additional emphasis will be given to scores obtained on standardized examinations.

1.1(4) Applicants who are not high school graduates, but whose classes have graduated, may be considered for admission. They will be required to submit all academic data to the extent that it exists and achieve scores on standardized examinations which will demonstrate that they are adequately prepared for academic study.

Students with superior academic records may be admitted, on an individual basis, for part-time university study while enrolled in high school or during the summers prior to high school graduation.

In rare situations, exceptional students may be admitted as full-time students to a regent university before completing high school. Early admission to a regent university is provided to serve persons whose academic achievement and personal and intellectual maturity clearly suggest readiness for collegiate level study. Each university will specify requirements and conditions for early admission.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section [262.9\(3\)](#).

FRESHMAN ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS TO IOWA REGENT UNIVERSITIES

The admission of freshman applicants to the Iowa Regent Universities is based on a Regent Admission Index which combines four factors: ACT composite score, high school rank, high school grade point average, and number of high school courses completed in the core subject areas.

A primary Regent Admission Index (RAI) will be calculated for each freshman applicant using the equation below where the high school has provided a class rank:

$$\text{RAI} = (2 \times \text{ACT composite score}) + (1 \times \text{high school rank}) + (20 \times \text{high school grade point average}) + (5 \times \text{number of high school courses completed in the core subject areas})$$

Note: For purposes of calculating the Regent Admission Index, 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 study⁴.

Freshman applicants from Iowa high schools who have an RAI of at least 245 and who meet the minimum number of high school courses required by the Regent universities will qualify for automatic admission to any of the three Regent universities. Freshman applicants who have an RAI below 245 may also be admitted to a specific Regent university; however, each Regent university will review these applications on an individual basis and the admission decision will be specific to each institution. Freshman applicants from approved high schools in other states may be held to higher academic standards, but must meet at least the same requirements as graduates of Iowa high schools.

The Regent universities recognize that the traditional measures of academic performance do not adequately describe some students' potential for success. Therefore, the Regent universities strongly encourage all interested students to apply for admission. Applicants who feel their academic record is not an accurate reflection of their potential for success are encouraged to provide supplemental information explaining their circumstances in addition to the application, academic transcripts, and test scores.

⁴ Applicants who do not possess all required factors will be evaluated on an individual basis by each Regent university.

An alternative Regent Admission Index (RAI) will be calculated for each freshman applicant using the equation below where the high school has not provided a class rank:

$$\text{RAI} = (3 \times \text{ACT composite score}) + (30 \times \text{high school grade point average}) + (5 \times \text{number of high school courses completed in the core subject areas})$$

Note: For purposes of calculating the Regent Admission Index, ACT composite score has a top value of 36 (SAT scores will be converted to ACT composite equivalent); 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 study⁵.

Freshman applicants from Iowa high schools who have an RAI of at least 245 and who meet the minimum number of high school courses required by the Regent universities will qualify for automatic admission to any of the three Regent universities. Freshman applicants who have an RAI below 245 may also be admitted to a specific Regent university; however, each Regent university will review these applications on an individual basis and the admission decision will be specific to each institution. Freshman applicants from approved high schools in other states may be held to higher academic standards, but must meet at least the same requirements as graduates of Iowa high schools.

The Regent universities recognize that the traditional measures of academic performance do not adequately describe some students' potential for success. Therefore, the Regent universities strongly encourage all interested students to apply for admission. Applicants who feel their academic record is not an accurate reflection of their potential for success are encouraged to provide supplemental information explaining their circumstances in addition to the application, academic transcripts, and test scores.

⁵ Applicants who do not possess all required factors will be evaluated on an individual basis by each Regent university.

High School Course Requirements for Admission

In addition to the requirements stated previously, freshman applicants must also meet the minimum high school course requirements for their institution of choice as indicated below.

Subject Area	Iowa State University	The University of Iowa	University of Northern Iowa
Foreign Language	Two years of a single foreign language for admission to the Colleges of Engineering and Liberal Arts and Sciences .	Two years of a single foreign language are required for admission. For many degrees, the fourth year of proficiency is required for graduation. Nursing – 4 years in a single language or two years each in two different languages.	Foreign language courses are not required for admission. However, two years of a foreign language in high school with a C- or above in the last course will meet the university graduation requirement.
English/ Language Arts	Four years emphasizing writing, speaking, reading, as well as an understanding and appreciation of literature.	Four years, with an emphasis on the analysis and interpretation of literature, composition, and speech.	Four years, including one year of composition; also may include one year of speech, communication, or journalism.
Math	Three years, including one year each of algebra, geometry, and advanced algebra.	Three years, including two years of algebra and one year of geometry, for admission to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences . Four years, including two years of algebra, one year of geometry, and one year of higher mathematics (trigonometry, analysis, or calculus), for admission to the College of Engineering .	Three years, including the equivalent of algebra, geometry, and advanced algebra.
Natural Science	Three years, including one year each from any two of the following: biology, chemistry, and physics.	Three years, including courses in physical science, biology, chemistry, environmental science and physics for admission to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences . Three years, with at least one year each in chemistry and physics for admission to the College of Engineering . Nursing – three years, including one year each of biology, chemistry and physics.	Three years, including courses in general science, biology, chemistry, earth science, or physics. Laboratory experience is highly recommended.
Social Sciences	Two years for admission to the Colleges of Agriculture and Life Science, Business, Design, Human Sciences, and Engineering . Three years for admission to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences .	Three years, with U.S. history and world history recommended, for admission to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences . Two years, with U.S. history and world history recommended, for admission to the College of Engineering .	Three years, including courses in anthropology, economics, geography, government, history, psychology, or sociology.
Other Courses	Specific elective courses are not required for admission.	Specific elective courses are not required for admission.	Two years of additional courses from the required subject areas, foreign languages, or fine arts.

Note: Non-resident freshman applicants may be held to higher standards for admission, but must meet at least the same requirements as resident freshman applicants.

ADMISSIONS STUDY TEAM

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