



Massachusetts Department of Higher Education

Admissions Standards for the Massachusetts State University System and the University of Massachusetts

Guidance Document

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Massachusetts Department of Higher Education
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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this guidance document is to provide detailed information about the minimum standards for admission to Massachusetts' state universities and undergraduate University of Massachusetts (UMass) campuses (UMass Amherst, UMass Boston, UMass Dartmouth, and UMass Lowell). Revised standards were most recently adopted by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education in 2012, and specific subject area requirements apply to students enrolling at state universities and UMass campuses starting in the fall of 2016 and the fall of 2017.

This document presents the following types of information:

- A summary of admissions requirements for freshman, transfer, and other types of applicants to the state universities and UMass undergraduate campuses (pages 2 - 6); and

An explanation of exceptions and allowances (pages 7 - 9);

In addition, the Appendix presents the following types of information:

- Definitions of the different types of academic courses that meet the minimum admissions standards (pages 11 - 12);
- The calculation of the weighted GPA, one component of the admissions requirements (pages 13 - 18);
- Contact information for the admissions offices at our state universities and undergraduate UMass campuses (pages 19 - 20); and
- Information about financial aid resources (page 21).

This guidance document is also available online at:

<http://www.mass.edu/forstufam/admissions/admissionsstandards.asp>. If you have any questions or need additional information, please submit your inquiries by e-mail using the General Email Form for the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, which is available at <http://www.mass.edu/aboutus/generalemail.asp>.

MINIMUM ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS FOR STATE UNIVERSITIES AND UNDERGRADUATE UMASS CAMPUSES

The minimum admissions standards for the state universities and undergraduate UMass campuses were established for several primary reasons: first, to emphasize the importance of successfully completing a rigorous academic course of study in high school (such as [MassCore](#), a recommended program of studies that includes specific numbers and types of courses across academic subjects); second, to ensure that students are well prepared to complete college courses and their degrees; and third, to increase consistency across the state universities and undergraduate UMass campuses.

Again, these standards are minimum requirements. Eligibility for admission is not an entitlement of admission for any applicant; as such, meeting the minimum standards does not guarantee admission, since admissions officers consider a wide range of factors in when reviewing students' applications, and the state universities and UMass campuses can establish additional requirements. For information about any additional requirements, please [contact the admissions office at the institution\(s\) to which the student is interested in applying](#).

Note These standards do not apply to the community colleges, which implement open admissions and enrollment policies. For additional information about admissions policies at the community colleges, please [contact the admissions office at the institution\(s\) to which you are interested in applying](#).

FRESHMAN APPLICANTS

The admissions standards for freshmen applicants at Massachusetts public four year institutions have three primary components:

1. Successful completion of required academic courses in specific subjects; and
2. A minimum average and weighted grade point average (GPA) earned in high school level academic courses; and
3. The submission of SAT or ACT scores.

ACADEMIC COURSE REQUIREMENT

All freshman applicants are required to successfully complete the following courses in each academic subject. Currently, these applicants are required to have completed 16 courses; starting with students who are enrolling during the fall of 2016, the number of required courses will increase to 17 given the required completion of four mathematics courses in high school.

The table on page 3 provides detailed information about the course requirements for each academic subject.

Table 1: Academic Course Requirements for Entering College Freshmen

Subject	Requirements for Entering College Freshmen					
	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017 and beyond
English	4 courses					
Mathematics	3 courses (Algebra I & II and Geometry or Trigonometry or comparable coursework)				4 courses (Algebra I & II and Geometry or Trigonometry, or comparable coursework) including mathematics during the final year of high school	
Sciences	3 courses (from Natural Science and/or Physical Science and/or Technology/Engineering, including 2 courses with laboratory work).				3 courses (from Natural Science and/or Physical Science and/or Technology/Engineering), including 3 courses with laboratory work	
Social Sciences	2 courses (including 1 course in U.S. History)					
Foreign Languages	2 courses (in a single language)					
Electives	2 courses (from the above subjects or from the Arts & Humanities or Computer Sciences)					

Note: comparable courses are defined as coursework that is equal to or beyond the content defined in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

If a high school designates a course as a comparable mathematics course or designates a science course as a science laboratory course, college admissions officers must accept that the course meets the above requirements. High school

transcripts should clearly indicate that the course(s) are mathematics or science courses.

MINIMUM GPA REQUIREMENT

The minimum average GPA for freshman applicants, weighted for accelerated (Honors and Advanced Placement) courses, is 3.0 for both the state universities and the UMass undergraduate campuses. Detailed information about calculating the weighted GPA is presented in the Appendix, pages 13 - 18.

This GPA is based on all courses completed and grades received for courses in which the student is currently enrolled (for example, mathematics courses in which the student is enrolled during the senior year of high school).

SAT/ACT SCORE REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLICANTS WHO DO NOT MEET THE GPA REQUIREMENT

All freshman applicants who meet the minimum average GPA requirement of 3.0 and are within three years of their high school graduation must submit their SAT scores (for Critical Reading and Mathematics) or ACT scores.

For freshman applicants who do not meet the minimum GPA requirement, they must earn the following SAT or ACT scores in order to be eligible for admission.

NOTE: NO APPLICANT WITH A HIGH SCHOOL GPA BELOW 2.0 MAY BE ADMITTED TO A STATE UNIVERSITY OR UMASS UNDERGRADUATE CAMPUS.

Table 2: Required SAT or ACT Scores for Freshman Applicants to UMass Undergraduate Campuses

Weighted Average GPA	Combined SAT Score (Critical Reading and Mathematics)	ACT Score
2.51 - 2.99	950	20
2.41 - 2.50	990	21
2.31 - 2.40	1030	22
2.21 - 2.30	1070	23
2.11 - 2.20	1110	24
2.00 - 2.10	1150	25

The required SAT or ACT scores for freshman applicants to state universities are presented in Table 3 on page 4.

Table 3: Required SAT or ACT Scores for Freshman Applicants to State Universities

Weighted Average GPA	Combined SAT Score (Critical Reading and Mathematics)	ACT Score
2.51 - 2.99	920	19
2.41 - 2.50	960	20
2.31 - 2.40	1000	21
2.21 - 2.30	1040	22
2.11 - 2.20	1080	23
2.00 - 2.10	1120	24

TRANSFER APPLICANTS

Applicants who are interested in transferring to a state university or undergraduate UMass campus must meet one of the following criteria:

1. Applicants must have earned between 12 and 23 transferable college credits and a minimum 2.5 college GPA; or
2. Applicants must have earned up to 23 transferable college credits and a minimum 2.0 college GPA, and must also submit a high school transcript that meets the admission standards for freshman applicants; or
3. Applicants must have earned 24 or more transferable credits and a minimum 2.0 college GPA.

The college GPA must be calculated based on grades received in credit-bearing courses; grades received in developmental or remedial courses cannot be included in the calculation of the GPA. Transferable college credits are those that will be accepted by the institution to which the student is applying; they do not need to be transferrable to a specific degree program at the institution.

MassTransfer is a statewide policy regarding the transfer of credits among our community colleges, state universities, and undergraduate UMass campuses. This policy has two primary purposes: first, to provide community college students who complete associate's degrees and enroll in MassTransfer programs with full transfer of credit, guaranteed admission, and a tuition discount for enrollment at state universities or undergraduate UMass campuses; and second, to provide any student who completes the MassTransfer block with the benefit of satisfying the general education, course distribution, or core requirements at any other public institution of higher education (the receiving institution can require no more than six additional credits).

Additional information about the MassTransfer policy is available at the following DHE website: <http://www.mass.edu/masstransfer/home.asp>.

Note: students who have earned college credits while enrolled in high school are not transfer students, and must therefore meet the admissions standards for freshman applicants.

NON-TRADITIONAL APPLICANTS

Non-traditional applicants include the following: 1) students applying for admission more than three years after graduating from high school; 2) students who completed the General Educational Development (GED) or the High School Equivalency Testing Program (HiSET); 3) students who have dropped out of high school but have completed the GED or HiSET; and 4) home schooled students.

- Students who are applying for admission more than three years after graduating from high school and students who have completed the GED or HiSET (and are applying for admission three to five years after the graduation of their high school class) must demonstrate their ability to successfully complete college courses and degrees based on both high school and/or college performance.
- Students who have completed the GED or HiSET and are applying for admission within three years of the graduation of their high school class must meet the same standards as the students who are applying for admission within three years of graduation from high school.
- Home schooled students are subject to the same admissions standards as other students; as such, they must meet both academic course and GPA requirements. If these students do not meet these requirements, and they also do not meet requirements for other types of students, they may be admitted under the special admissions category (please refer to page 9) at the discretion of the admissions office at the state university or undergraduate UMass campus.

Non-traditional applicants should contact admissions offices at the institutions to which they are applying to request additional information about specific requirements.

EXCEPTIONS AND ALLOWANCES FOR SPECIFIC GROUPS OF STUDENTS

APPLICANTS WHO ARE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

An English language learner or limited English proficient student is defined as a student who does not speak English (or whose native language is not English) and is not currently able to perform ordinary classroom work in English, or a student who was identified as an English language learner or limited English proficient student at any point during his or her high school career. Students who were English language learners during high school must complete all required high school level academic courses with two exceptions:

1. They may substitute up to two electives for the two required foreign language courses; and
2. They may substitute up to two years of English as a Second Language courses for English courses.

APPLICANTS WITH LEARNING OR OTHER DISABILITIES

Applicants with professionally diagnosed and documented learning disabilities (documentation must include diagnostic test results) are exempt from taking standardized tests for admission to any public institution of higher education in the Commonwealth. However, these applicants must complete all required academic courses and earn a minimum average GPA of 3.0 or present other evidence of the potential for academic success.

Note: an applicant with learning or other disabilities may substitute two electives for the two required foreign language courses if s/he has submitted to the high school the results of an evaluation, completed within the past three years, that indicates a specific diagnosis of a learning disability that affects the ability to learn a foreign language.

APPLICANTS ENROLLED IN CAREER/VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Applicants enrolled in career/vocational technical high school programs must complete the required number of college preparatory courses, distributed in the same manner and with the same minimum grade point averages required of other high school graduates, with the following exceptions.

1. Two vocational and technical courses may be used to fulfill the two required electives.

2. Applicants who do not complete the two required foreign language courses must complete an additional elective course, for a total of three such courses, and also satisfy one of the following options:
- Complete at least one full academic year of study of foreign language or
 - Complete a fourth full academic year of study of science technology/engineering, which need not be a laboratory course; or
 - Complete one full academic year of study of computer science.

APPLICANTS WHO ARE GRADUATES OF HIGH SCHOOLS OUTSIDE OF THE U.S.

Admissions officers may use the appropriate means to determine whether the transcript of a student who graduated from a high school outside of the U.S. is comparable to the required transcript. Applicants from these high schools may substitute the same number of high school level academic courses or their equivalent for the required courses per subject area.

A weighted high school GPA must be calculated for these students. If an applicant from a high school outside of the U.S. does not meet the GPA requirement of 3.0, s/he must submit required SAT or ACT scores unless it is not possible to take these tests due to extreme circumstances.

PRE-COLLEGE SUMMER PROGRAM APPLICANTS

Students who do not meet the applicable requirements with other exception allowances may demonstrate their preparedness for the rigors of college-level work through the successful completion of a DHE-approved pre-college summer program prior to their enrollment in the freshman class.

CONSIDERATION OF APPLICANTS WHO DO NOT MEET ADMISSIONS STANDARDS EVEN WITH ALLOWANCES

SPECIAL ADMISSIONS APPLICANTS

Applicants not eligible for admission based on the standards for freshman, transfer, or non-traditional students may be admitted based upon the demonstration of their potential for academic success at a state university or undergraduate UMass campus. Appropriate indicators of success include steadily improving high school grades and academic achievement, a high class rank, special talents, and/or strong recommendations from appropriate individuals who have direct knowledge of the student's ability to succeed in college (such as teachers, principals, and guidance counselors; employers; and mentors).

Note: special admissions students are limited to 10 percent of new enrollees at the state university or UMass campus.

APPENDIX

DEFINITIONS OF DIFFERENT COURSES THAT MEET THE MINIMUM ADMISSIONS STANDARDS

HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL ACADEMIC COURSES

These courses are designed to prepare students to continue their academic education at two- and four-year colleges. They require well-developed reading, writing, verbal, conceptual, mathematical, and study abilities, as well as substantial outside preparation.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT AND HONORS COURSES

These courses include highly challenging material that is presented at an accelerated and more intensive pace, and require advanced reading, writing, verbal, conceptual, mathematical, and study abilities.

Advanced Placement courses meet standards for content and rigor that are established by The College Board, and they will be weighted differently in order to calculate the average high school GPA.

Note: International Baccalaureate (IB) courses may also be weighted differently in order to calculate the average high school GPA.

DUAL ENROLLMENT COURSES

The Commonwealth Dual Enrollment Partnership (CDEP) offers an alternative for students who may not have access to AP courses at their high school. This program gives high school students with average GPAs of 3.0 or higher the opportunity to enroll in courses at a local college while they are still enrolled in high school. Credits for the college courses can apply to both the high school and college transcript. As an additional incentive to students to tackle more challenging coursework, grades received in dual enrollment courses will receive additional weight in the calculation of applicants' weighted GPAs. The additional weight will be the same as that given for grades earned in Advanced Placement courses.

EIGHTH GRADE COLLEGE PREPARATORY COURSES

College preparatory courses taken in the 8th grade which appear on the high school transcript may be used to meet the subject-specific academic course requirement – provided that the student successfully completes the next level course with a grade of “C” or better – but not toward the total number of required academic courses. The student may meet the course requirement by substituting additional electives or courses in other required subject areas.

Grades earned in 8th grade college preparatory courses should be used in calculating the weighted GPA if the course and grade appear on the high school transcript.

COMPUTER SCIENCE COURSES

Computer Science courses may be credited as electives or can be considered either a mathematics or a science course by the high school based on the inclusion of rigorous mathematical or science concepts and topics.

In order to be accepted as meeting the mathematics or science course requirement, a computer science course must be:

1. Significantly aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks;
2. Offered for mathematics or science credit after review by the district as meeting district guidelines for mathematics or science courses; and
3. Equivalent to a full year of learning.

TECHNOLOGY/ENGINEERING COURSES

In order to be accepted as meeting the science course requirement, a technology/engineering course must be:

1. Significantly aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks;
2. Offered for science credit after review by the district as meeting district guidelines for science courses; and
3. Equivalent to a full year of learning.

CALCULATION OF WEIGHTED GPA

The minimum admissions standards for freshmen students require that students earn the following average GPAs.

State Universities	UMass Undergraduate Campuses
3.0	3.0

Grade point averages are to be calculated based upon grades earned in all high school level academic courses. Grades earned in honors, Advanced Placement or dual enrollment courses should be given extra weight.

Each state university or UMass undergraduate campus to which a student applies will calculate the GPA for purposes of applying the admissions standards.

In order to calculate a weighted GPA, individuals must convert each final grade earned in high school level academic courses to a 4-point grading scale (where A = 4.0; B = 3.0; C = 2.0; D = 1.0 and F = 0.0). A chart is provided with these materials so that letter or numeric grades may be converted. Further, the level of each course must be identified (for example, Honors or Advanced Placement). Full-year Honors level and Advanced Placement courses will receive an extra .5 and 1.0 points on the 4-point scale, respectively. A dual enrollment course will receive an extra 1.0 point on the 4-point scale.

Computer software for use in calculating the weighted GPA also is available on-line via the DHE website at <http://www.mass.edu/forstufam/admissions/gpacalc.asp>.

All applicants must present a weighted high school GPA. Schools with uncommon grading schemes should develop a conversion to letter grades.

Calculating the weighted GPA

Use the following steps to complete the weighted GPA calculation:

- Step 1. Convert each final grade to its equivalent on the 4.0 scale.
- Step 2. Weight grades by adding .5 to each converted grade earned in an Honors level course, and 1.0 to each converted grade earned in an Advanced Placement or dual enrollment course.
- Step 3. Multiply each converted grade or, if applicable, each weighted grade by the course credits earned. (Where a full-year course equals one unit; a semester course equals .5 units; a quarter course equals .25 units; etc.)
- Step 4. Total the products from Step 3.
- Step 5. Divide total from Step 4 by total number of course credits attempted.
- Step 6. Quotient is the student's weighted GPA.

Note: students may not have completed all required high school level academic courses prior to applying to college, particularly in English, where four years are required. GPAs should be based upon all completed academic courses for which students are able to report *final* grades.

As presented on page 3, the required academic courses are as follows.

English	4 years
*Mathematics	3 years (Algebra I & II, Geometry/Trigonometry, or comparable coursework)
*Sciences	3 years (drawn from Natural Science and/or Physical Science and/or Technology/ Engineering, including 2 courses with laboratory work)
Social Sciences	2 years (1 year of U.S. history)
Foreign Language	2 years (in a single language)
Electives	2 years (choose from subjects listed above or from the Arts & Humanities and/or Computer Sciences)

* *Mathematics*

Effective for the freshman class entering fall 2016: Mathematics, 4 courses (Algebra I & II and Geometry or Trigonometry, or comparable coursework) including mathematics during the final year of high school.

* *Sciences*

Effective for the freshman class entering fall 2017: Science, 3 courses (drawn from Natural Science and/or Physical Science and/or Technology/ Engineering), including 3 courses with laboratory work. Technology/engineering courses must be designated as science courses (taken for science credit) by the high school.

NOTE: The weighted GPA should be based on final grades earned in *all* high school level academic courses. Grades earned in courses that are not high school level academic courses may not be used to calculate the weighted GPA.

SAMPLE CALCULATION

Courses	Column A Final Grade in Academic Course	Column B Step 1: Convert Grade to 4.0 Scale	Column C Step 2: Weight Grade (if applicable)	Column D Course Credits Earned	Column E Step 3: Multiply Column B or C (if applicable) by Column D	Column F Step 4: Calculate the Total for Column E	Column G Step 5: Calculate the Total for Column D	Column H Step 6: Divide Column F by Column G
ENGLISH								
1. College English 9	B-	2.7		1	2.7	47.7	17.4	2.74 = Weighted GPA
2. Honors English 10	C	2.0	2.5	1	2.5			
3. Honors English 11	D-	.7	1.2	1	1.2			
MATHEMATICS								
1. Algebra 1	B+	3.3		1	3.3			
2. Geometry	B-	2.7		1	2.7			
3. Algebra II	B-	2.7		1	2.7			
SCIENCES								
1. Earth Science	B-	2.7		1	2.7			
2. Biology	C	2.0		1.2	2.4			
3. Chemistry	C	2.0		1.2	2.4			
SOCIAL SCIENCES								
1. Ancient Cultures 1	B+	3.3		.5	1.65			
2. Contemporary Issues	B	3.0		.5	1.5			
3. AP U.S. History	C	2.0	3.0	1	3.0			
4. Psychology	B-	2.7		.5	1.35			
5. World Cultures	B	3.0		.5	1.5			
FOREIGN LANGUAGE								
1. Spanish I	B+	3.3		1	3.3			
2. Spanish II	A-	3.7		1	3.7			
3. Spanish III	B+	3.3		1	3.3			
ELECTIVES								
1. Intro. to Computers	B+	3.3			3.3			
2. Fine Arts	C	2.0		.5	1.0			
3. Theater	B	3.0		.5	1.5			
TOTAL								
				17.4	47.7			

CONVERSION TO 4.0 SCALE

<u>Letter Grading</u>		<u>4.0 Scale</u>			
		<u>Minimum Passing Level *</u>			
<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>4.0 Scale</u>	<u>Numeric Grade</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>70</u>
A+	4.3	100	4.3	4.3	4.3
A	4.0	99	4.3	4.3	4.2
A-	3.7	98	4.2	4.2	4.1
B+	3.3	97	4.2	4.2	4.0
B	3.0	96	4.1	4.1	4.0
B-	2.7	95	4.1	4.0	3.9
C+	2.3	94	4.0	4.0	3.7
C	2.0	93	4.0	3.9	3.7
C-	1.7	92	3.9	3.8	3.5
D+	1.3	91	3.8	3.7	3.4
D	1.0	90	3.7	3.6	3.3
D-	0.7	89	3.6	3.4	3.2
F	0.0	88	3.5	3.3	3.0
		87	3.4	3.2	2.9
		86	3.3	3.1	2.8
		85	3.2	3.0	2.7
		84	3.1	2.9	2.5
		83	3.0	2.8	2.3
		82	2.9	2.7	2.2
		81	2.8	2.6	2.1
		80	2.7	2.4	2.0
		79	2.6	2.3	1.9
		78	2.5	2.2	1.7
		77	2.4	2.1	1.6
		76	2.3	2.0	1.4
		75	2.2	1.9	1.3
		74	2.1	1.8	1.2
		73	2.0	1.7	1.0
		72	1.9	1.6	0.9
		71	1.8	1.4	0.8
		70	1.7	1.3	0.7
		69	1.6	1.2	0.0
		68	1.5	1.1	
		67	1.4	0.9	
		66	1.3	0.8	
		65	1.2	0.7	
		64	1.1	0.0	
		63	1.0		
		62	0.9		
		61	0.8		
		60	0.7		
		59	0.0		

GPA Calculation Based on Seven Semesters of High School Coursework

The new admissions policy stipulates that the minimum required GPA should be based upon seven semesters of coursework; however, most students apply to an undergraduate UMass campus or a state university before final grades for their seventh semester are available. Therefore, it is permissible to base the GPA calculation on academic coursework completed at the time that the application is submitted. Further, it will not be necessary to recalculate the GPA upon receipt of the applicant's final transcript.

*** Schools may develop a conversion from numeric to letter grades and print this conversion on the transcript for use in GPA calculation.**

ADMISSIONS OFFICES FOR STATE UNIVERSITIES AND UNDERGRADUATE UMASS CAMPUSES

The admissions standards for the state universities and UMass establish minimum levels; each campus may adopt higher standards. Further, the standards do not apply to the state's community colleges, which admit students based on open enrollment policies. For additional information about the admissions policies of particular institutions, please contact the admissions offices for the specific institution(s).

State Universities

Bridgewater State University

<http://www.bridgew.edu/admissions/undergraduate>

508.531.1237

Fitchburg State University

<http://www.fitchburgstate.edu/admissions/undergraduate/>

978.665.3144

Framingham State University

<http://www.framingham.edu/admissions/undergraduate/freshmen-applicants.html>

508.626.4500

Massachusetts College of Art and Design

http://www.massart.edu/Admissions/Undergraduate_Students.html

617.879.7222

Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts

<http://www.mcla.edu/Admissions/>

413.662.5410

Massachusetts Maritime Academy

<http://www.maritime.edu/index.cfm?pg=381>

800.544.3411

Salem State University

<http://www.salemstate.edu/admissions/undergraduate.php>

978.542.6200

Westfield State University

<http://www.westfield.ma.edu/admissions/undergraduate-admissions>

413.572.5218

Worcester State University

<http://www.worcester.edu/Undergraduate-Admissions/>

508.929.8040

UMass Undergraduate Campuses

UMass Amherst

<https://www.umass.edu/admissions/>

413.545.0222

UMass Boston

<http://www.umb.edu/admissions/ug>

617.287.6100

UMass Dartmouth

<http://www.umassd.edu/undergraduate/>

508.999.8605

UMass Lowell

<http://www.uml.edu/admissions/default.aspx>

978.934.3931

FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION

For additional information about financial aid – including scholarship, grants, tuition waivers, and loans – you can contact the financial aid offices at the institutions to which you would like to apply and also visit the Massachusetts Office of Student Financial Assistance website (www.osfa.mass.edu).

In addition, you can also access detailed information about federal loans at the following U.S. Department of Education websites: <https://studentaid.ed.gov/> and <https://fafsa.ed.gov/>.