

## Comparing High School Graduation and College Admission Requirements

The quality and level of high school course work and instruction and their level of alignment with college admission requirements determine how well prepared high school graduates are to succeed in college. States are uniquely positioned to try to improve students' transition between high school and college by successfully aligning K-12 standards and post-secondary expectations, and thereby reducing college remediation rates and increasing college completion rates. Beginning in 2003, the Minnesota Legislature first adopted and then subsequently amended required and elective K-12 academic standards and coursework. The following table compares Minnesota's current and future high school graduation requirements and current admission requirements at the state's public colleges and universities.

### Minnesota's Current and Future High School Graduation and Current College Admission Requirements

	<b>K-12 Graduation Standards* for students beginning 9<sup>th</sup> grade in the 2004-2005 school year or later</b>	<b>K-12 Graduation Standards for students beginning 9<sup>th</sup> grade in the 2011-2012 school year or later</b>	<b>Four-year College Admission Requirements 2006-07</b>
<b><i>Language Arts</i></b>	4 language arts credits	No additional requirements	4 years high school English, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ writing</li> <li>▶ literature</li> </ul>
<b><i>Mathematics</i></b>	3 mathematics credits, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ algebra</li> <li>▶ geometry</li> <li>▶ statistics and probability</li> </ul>	Algebra I or equivalent by the end of 8 <sup>th</sup> grade, and 3 mathematics credits, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ 1 geometry</li> <li>▶ 1 statistics and probability, and</li> <li>▶ 1 algebra II credit or equivalent</li> </ul>	3 years high school math, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ elementary algebra</li> <li>▶ intermediate algebra</li> <li>▶ geometry</li> </ul>
<b><i>Science</i></b>	3 science credits, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ 1 biology</li> </ul>	3 science credits, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ 1 biology and</li> <li>▶ 1 chemistry or physics credit</li> <li>▶ An agriculture science credit may fulfill the additional science requirement</li> </ul>	3 years high school science, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ biological science</li> <li>▶ physical science</li> <li>▶ lab experience</li> </ul>
<b><i>Social Studies</i></b>	3½ social studies credits, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ U.S. history</li> <li>▶ geography</li> <li>▶ government and citizenship</li> <li>▶ world history and economics, or</li> </ul> 3 credits of social studies, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ U.S. history</li> <li>▶ geography</li> <li>▶ government and citizenship</li> <li>▶ world history</li> <li>▶ ½ credit of economics taught by the social studies or business department</li> </ul>	No additional requirements	3 years high school social studies, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ geography</li> <li>▶ U.S. history</li> </ul>

	<b>K-12 Graduation Standards* for students beginning 9<sup>th</sup> grade in the 2004-2005 school year or later</b>	<b>K-12 Graduation Standards for students beginning 9<sup>th</sup> grade in the 2011-2012 school year or later</b>	<b>Four-year College Admission Requirements 2006-07</b>
<b><i>Foreign Language</i></b>	World languages is an elective standard	No additional requirements	2 years of a single second or world language
<b><i>Arts</i></b>	One arts credit	No additional requirements	1 year visual or performing arts, or 1 year world culture or fine arts
<b><i>Elective standards</i></b>	School districts must establish elective standards for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ vocational and technical education</li> <li>▶ health and physical education and</li> <li>▶ world languages</li> </ul> School districts must offer courses in all elective standards		No additional requirements
* School districts decide if students meet course credit requirements by (1) successfully completing an academic year of study or (2) demonstrating mastery of the applicable subject matter. Minn. Stat. § 120B.024. One high school credit is equivalent to a year of study for college admission requirements.			

***Revising academic standards and benchmarks***

The Education Commissioner must revise required K-12 academic standards and related benchmarks in the 2006-2007 through 2010-2011 school years. The benchmarks (1) specify the knowledge and skills that students must have to satisfy the academic standards and (2) contain information used to develop graduation tests.

***Postsecondary remedial and developmental education***

Despite the apparent alignment of K-12 graduation and college admissions requirements, reports on recent high school graduates show that many entering students at Minnesota’s public postsecondary institutions take remedial and developmental courses.

The percentage of students taking remedial courses varies by institution type, institution admission standards, and year of high school graduation. The percentage of students at the University of Minnesota taking remedial classes has declined from 15 percent for 1999 high school graduates to 8 percent for 2002 graduates. At four-year state universities in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system (MnSCU) the percentage of students taking remedial classes has increased from 21 percent for 1999 graduates to 29 percent for 2002 graduates. Two-year MnSCU colleges are open enrollment institutions with much higher rates of remedial and development course work (46 percent for 2002 high school graduates). (Source: *Getting Prepared: A 2005 Report on Recent High School Graduates Who Took Developmental/Remedial Courses*, Minnesota State Colleges and the University of Minnesota, August 2005, page 6.)

**For more information:** Contact legislative analysts Lisa Larson at 651-296-8036 or Kathy Novak at 651-296-9253. Also see the House Research publication [Minnesota’s K-12 Academic Standards and Assessments](#), August 2006.

The Research Department of the Minnesota House of Representatives is a nonpartisan office providing legislative, legal, and information services to the entire House.