

Mississippi

High School Graduation Requirements for Current Seniors

Districts must require students to complete at least 21 units before issuing a high school diploma.

Students may choose the traditional academic or career diploma pathways. The latter requires students to complete four units in one of 16 career clusters. The Early Exit Exam Option is a new diploma pathway available to students who demonstrate readiness for college and careers by completing an abbreviated curriculum and showing mastery on multiple assessments (e.g., the ACT, ACT *QualityCore* end-of-course exams, and Mississippi Institution of Higher Learning-approved tests).

Subjects	Traditional Pathway	Career Pathway	District Option	Early Exit Exam Option	Common Requirements
English	4	4	4	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ English I ➤ English II
Mathematics	4	3	4	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Algebra I
Science	4	3	3	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Biology I
Social Science	4	3	3	2.5	<u>Full-Unit Courses</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ American history <u>Half-Unit Courses</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ American government ➤ Mississippi studies
Health	.5	.5	.5	.5	
Physical Education	.5			.5	
Business and Technology	1	1	1	1	
Career and Technical Education	—	4	—		
Arts	1	—	1	1	
Electives	5	2.5 units in student's career pathway	4.5	5	
TOTAL	24	21	21	17.5	

Assessment Requirements

Mississippi administers the **Subject Area Testing Program 2** to high school students. The program requires students to pass a series of end-of-course tests in order to graduate. Students take tests in Algebra I, Biology I, English II and U.S. history. Before graduation, students have at least three opportunities per year to retake exams they have not passed.

The Mississippi Department of Education has adopted rules that allow students to satisfy assessment requirements through alternative means, such as qualifying ACT sub-scores, earned college credit, or an earned industry certification.

College and Career Readiness

Mississippi adopted the Common Core State Standards in June 2010. Districts implemented the new English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics standards starting in the 2013-14 school year. Mississippi is a Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) governing state. The state will implement the PARCC assessments during the 2014-15 school year after a field test in spring 2014.

SREB High School to College and Careers

The Mississippi Department of Education holds districts and schools accountable through school and district report cards. The high school reports contain three readiness metrics: (1) student performance on end-of-course assessments; (2) student ACT scores; and, (3) graduation rates.

College and Career Planning

The Mississippi Department of Education created the **Pathways to Success** initiative to train counselors, teachers, and school administrators in delivering a career-based advisement system. The state requires schools to develop individual career and academic plans (iCAPs) for students beginning in eighth grade. Students explore 16 career clusters, choose graduation pathways and begin exploring postsecondary options.

Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs Mississippi (www.GearUpMS.org) operates as part of Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning, Office of Academic and Student Affairs in collaboration with the Mississippi Community College Board, and the Mississippi Department of Education. GEAR UP Mississippi provides the following services:

- Enrichment and remediation supports
- Tutorial and instructional coaching services
- Assistance with completing college admissions applications
- Financial aid information and counseling
- Career readiness and mentoring information
- Professional development for teachers, counselors and school administrators, and,
- Family and community engagement opportunities.

RiseUpMS and the **College Knowledge Project** are college access initiatives of the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning. These initiatives are funded by the College Access Challenge Grant Program and provide (1) early postsecondary awareness and planning workshops to students, their families, and the community; (2) professional development in college and career advising and financial literacy; and, (3) post-secondary planning and preparation publications. RiseUpMS hosts the Mississippi Articulation and Transfer Tool. The Tool provides the most current degree pathway information to students transferring between Mississippi's institutions of higher education and the community and junior college systems. RiseUpMS is also home to the State Financial Aid website. More information is available at RiseUpMS.com.

Accelerated Learning Options

Dual and Concurrent Enrollment

State law requires school districts and postsecondary institutions to sign memoranda of understanding to create a dual credit program. Students may qualify for enrollment in dual credit courses if they receive a written recommendation from their principal or counselor and accomplish one of the following:

- 3.0 GPA on 4.0 scale for all high school courses with successful completion of 14 core high school units
- 3.0 GPA for all high school courses with junior standing; or
- 3.0 GPA and minimum ACT composite of 30.

Admission and placement testing requirements, as well as tuition and fees vary by institution. Also, districts may establish additional guidelines with postsecondary institutions to allow students to enroll in dual credit classes who do not qualify based on the above requirements.

SREB High School to College and Careers

Early College Admission

Students who complete the requirements of the Mississippi Early Exit Diploma may continue to take Advanced Placement or dual credit courses, enroll full-time in a career-technical education program, or graduate high school early and enroll in a local community college.

Career and Technical Education

The Pathways to Success initiative has developed career pathway documents that align with the 16 fields contained in the National Clusters Framework. Each one-page fact sheet contains course recommendations for core and elective credits, including career-technical courses for students pursuing the career pathway diploma.

Postsecondary Admissions and Placement

University Admissions

Students seeking admission to a Mississippi public university must meet the minimum **Required College-Preparatory Curriculum (CPC)**. Beginning in summer 2012, the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning encourage (but do not require) students to complete the more rigorous **Recommended College-Preparatory Curriculum**.

Subject	Required Curriculum	Recommended Curriculum	Common Requirements
English	4	4	
Mathematics	3	4	➤ Algebra I ➤ Geometry ➤ Algebra II
Science	3	4	
Social Studies	3	4	➤ American history ➤ World history ➤ American government (1/2 unit)
Arts	—	1	
Advanced electives	2	2	
Computer application	.5	.5	Students can take a computer applications course, a STEM course, or Information and Communication Technology 2 (ICT2)
Total	15.5	19.5	

Required Curriculum—Courses

- **Science:** Students may choose from biology, advanced biology, chemistry, advanced chemistry, physics and advanced physics or comparable rigorous courses. One unit may be a physical science course that is an introduction to physics and chemistry. Two units must be lab-based.
- **Advanced electives:** This requirement is satisfied by one unit in either foreign language or world geography and an additional unit chosen from among foreign language, world geography, advanced math, and advanced lab-based science.

Recommended Curriculum—Courses

- **Science:** Students must take Biology I, Chemistry I and any two additional units of comparable rigor chosen from biology, advanced biology, botany, chemistry, advanced chemistry, human anatomy and physiology, microbiology, physics and advanced physics.
- **Advanced electives:** This requirement is satisfied by two sequential units of foreign language, one unit each of foreign language and world geography, or any combination chosen among English, math, or lab-based science courses as rigorous as those required by the CPC.

SREB High School to College and Careers

Unconditional Admission

Students receive admission if they complete the 15.5-unit required college-preparatory curriculum and meet one of the following requirements:

- 3.2 GPA on the college-preparatory curriculum;
- ACT score of 16 and either a 2.5 GPA on the required college-preparatory curriculum or class rank in the top 50 percent; OR,
- ACT score of 18 and a 2.0 GPA on the required college-preparatory curriculum.

University Placement

Students who do not meet the requirements for unconditional admission may be admitted but must participate in an on-campus placement process at the institution. Students who are admitted without sufficient skills in English, reading or math are required to enroll in the **Summer Developmental Program**. Successful completion of the summer semester program entitles the student to continue enrollment at the university.

Students must have ACT or other valid placement test scores to confirm placement in English/reading and math courses. A minimum ACT English sub-score of 17 is required for placement into English Composition I. A minimum ACT math sub-score of 17 is required for placement into College Algebra.

Community Colleges – Admissions and Placement

Students must have valid high school diplomas or GED credentials. Students enrolling in career/vocational programs may also be admitted based upon minimum scores on tests demonstrating their ability to benefit from instruction.

For placement, students must have ACT or other valid placement test scores to confirm placement in English/reading and math courses. A minimum ACT English sub-score of 17 is required for placement into college level ENG 1113 English Composition I. A minimum ACT math sub-score of 19 is required for placement into college level MAT 1313 College Algebra.

Feedback Reports

Mississippi does not provide feedback reports from colleges to high schools on student admission, placement and performance.

SREB High School to College and Careers

State Financial Aid

The majority of state financial aid dollars for first-time, full-time freshmen are allocated based on **academic merit**.

	Mississippi Eminent Scholars Grant	Mississippi Tuition Assistance Grant	Higher Education Legislative Plan for Needy Students
Who Can Apply?	High School Seniors Full-Time Undergraduates	High School Seniors Full-Time Undergraduates	High School Seniors Current College Freshmen
Initial Requirements	29 ACT or 1290 SAT 3.5 high school GPA Enroll in 12 or more credits per semester National Merit finalists or semifinalist	15 ACT 2.5 high school GPA Enroll in 12 or more credits per semester	20 ACT or 940 SAT 2.5 high school GPA Complete College Preparatory Curriculum (see above), plus 2 additional units Demonstrate financial need and meet certain income requirements
Awards	Up to \$2,500	\$500 per year for freshmen and sophomores \$1,000 per year for juniors and seniors	Tuition and required fees at a public institution
Continuing Eligibility Requirements	Full-time enrollment Minimum GPA of 3.5	Full-time enrollment Minimum GPA of 2.5	Full-time enrollment Minimum GPA of 2.5 Continued financial need

The state administers several smaller grant programs as well as a number of forgivable loan programs for students planning to enter the workforce in high-need fields such as nursing and teaching. The State Financial Aid website is located at www.mississippi.edu/financialaid.

Special Thanks

We would like to thank the staff at the following agencies for their assistance in carefully reviewing and confirming the accuracy of the policies and programs described in this document:

Mississippi Community College Board
Mississippi Department of Education
Mississippi Institutes of Higher Learning

Sources

GEAR UP Mississippi
Mississippi Department of Education
Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning
Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid
Mississippi State Summer Development Program
Rise up Mississippi
University of Mississippi System

<http://www.gearupms.org>
<http://www.mde.k12.ms.us>
<http://www.ihl.state.ms.us>
<http://www.mississippi.edu/financialaid>
<http://sdp.msstate.edu>
<http://www.riseupms.com>
<http://www.mississippi.edu>