

Louisiana

2016 College- and Career-Readiness Policies and Practices

The Southern Regional Education Board has long emphasized the critical need to strengthen students' readiness to succeed after high school. SREB's recommendations to improve readiness (SREB.org/Readiness) cover standards, assessments, transitional courses, postsecondary placement and remedial education. To support states' efforts, SREB compiled information through interviews of P-16 education agency staff and review of numerous documents to determine state progress as of fall 2016 on the recommendations. This state profile summarizes selected findings for each of the five areas. SREB plans to update this information annually.

Standards

Does the state have statewide college- and career-readiness standards in reading, writing and mathematics? Do K-12 and postsecondary education agree on the same standards?

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adopted new standards in 2016 following legislation in 2015 requiring the Board to review and develop state content standards for English language arts and mathematics; it approved the Louisiana Student Standards and schools are implementing them.

Readiness Assessments

How does the state assess high school students' readiness? What are the options for students who do not meet them?

The state requires public high schools to administer the ACT or ACT WorkKeys to all 11th graders. High school students take end-of-course examinations aligned with the state standards. Preparation modules for ACT mathematics are integrated into the math courses. Students who meet the state readiness standards and score at least 19 on ACT mathematics and 18 on ACT English may enroll in credit-bearing classes at a public postsecondary institution. The Louisiana Board of Regents sets statewide minimum admission standards for all academic majors, but individual institutions may increase admission requirements for selected academic majors, including science, technology, engineering and math. Minimum placement standards apply statewide, but placement assessments and qualifying scores for specific courses (such as calculus) do not.

Transitional Courses and Interventions

Does the state require transitional readiness courses or other interventions for students who are not ready to succeed in college-level courses?

There is no policy or statute requiring schools to offer transitional courses. Four Louisiana high schools have implemented the SREB Math Ready and Literacy Ready courses; students may take them as electives. The mathematics course did not count for fourth-year mathematics because it did not fit a structure set by the Louisiana State Legislature. The Louisiana Department of Education encourages districts to follow SREB recommendations for implementation of the courses. The Remedial Education Commission, created by Louisiana Act 187 (2011), requires the Board of Regents and the State Board of Education to review data on remedial education at postsecondary institutions and to recommend best practices and strategies.

Postsecondary Placement

How do institutions place a student who is not ready for college-level work? Are the same standards, assessments and qualifying score levels applied statewide or systemwide? Are multiple criteria and measures used in placement decisions?

The Louisiana Board of Regents sets minimum placement scores for college-level mathematics and English. ACT, SAT, Compass and Accuplacer are used with minimum scores, such as ACT subscores of 18 for English and 19 for college-level math. The Board of Regents supports local institutional placement decisions for specific courses, such as an ACT score of 20 to 22 for college algebra. If faculty set qualifying scores, they regularly analyze historical data.

Remedial and Developmental Education

Are there state or system policies for remedial and developmental education in colleges? What curricular and support paths are available for students? Is corequisite instruction—an academic course taken in conjunction with another course—required or optional? How do institutions and the state monitor student progress? What evidence is available on the effectiveness of these interventions?

Two-year colleges are the primary providers of remedial and developmental courses in Louisiana and establish placement guidelines within the remedial course sequence. Regional universities may admit students who need one remedial or developmental course, which the student must take at a two-year college or a public historically black college or university. Students may retake ACT, Compass or Accuplacer tests at their own expense. Tailored academic support for students who need it varies by college or university. The Board of Regents collects and analyzes student performance data.