



**BOARD OF REGENTS**

SUMMARY OF ITEM FOR ACTION,  
INFORMATION OR DISCUSSION

---

**TOPIC:** Salisbury University Request for Permanent Exception to *BOR Policy on Undergraduate Admissions (III-4.00)*

**COMMITTEE:** Education Policy

**DATE OF COMMITTEE MEETING:** June 1, 2011

**SUMMARY:** The exception sought by Salisbury University is to make optional the standardized test requirement for freshman admission for applicants presenting a high school grade point average of 3.5 or higher. This request follows the five-year pilot program during which the University was able to analyze the outcomes of the program and evaluate its effectiveness.

The data in the final report clearly indicates that the pilot program has met expectations for retention and graduation rates. After four years of study, students in the test-optional and regular test-submitted groups perform similarly based on retention and GPAs. In addition, test-optional students outperform the test-submitted students in the area of course completion. Recently, the final assessment criterion, four-year graduation rates, was evaluated for the 2007 class. The test-optional students are projected to graduate at a higher percentage than those who submitted test scores. Of the 220 test-optional students, 54.1% are expected to graduate in four years compared to 49.4% of the 930 of the test-submitted students, a difference of 4.7 percentage points.

**ALTERNATIVE(S):** The Regents may not approve the request or may require further information.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** There is no fiscal impact.

**CHANCELLOR'S RECOMMENDATION:** That the Committee on Education Policy recommend that the Board of Regents approve Salisbury University's request for a permanent exception to the test requirement for freshman admission and that BOR Policy III-4.00 be amended to reflect the exception.

---

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

DATE:

---

BOARD ACTION:

DATE:

---

SUBMITTED BY: Irwin Goldstein (301) 445-1992 irv@usmd.edu

---



## MEMORANDUM

May 12, 2011

TO: Regent Patricia S. Florestano, Chairman of Education Policy Committee  
University System of Maryland Board of Regents

FROM: Dr. Ellen Neufeldt, Vice President of Student Affairs *EJN*  
Jane H. Dané, Dean of Enrollment Management *JAD*

RE: Assessment Report of the Test-Optional Admissions Policy Fall 2007-Fall 2010 and  
Request to Formally Continue Beyond Pilot

Salisbury University has completed five years of recruitment of incoming freshman classes under the test-optional pilot program. This program allows freshman applicants the option of excluding standardized test scores if they have a minimum 3.5 grade point average (GPA). Based on the most recent data in the enclosed report, SU requests to institutionalize its current test-optional practice of allowing students to exclude standardized test scores from their application packets if they have a 3.5 or higher GPA.

After four years of study, students in the test-optional and regular test-submitted groups perform similarly based on retention and GPAs. Test-optional students outperform the test-submitted students in the area of course completion. Recently, the final assessment criterion, four-year graduation rates, was evaluated for the 2007 class. The test-optional students are projected to graduate at a higher percentage than those who submitted test scores.

Attached is a report for your review. Thank you for your support of this initiative.

# Assessment Report of the Test-Optional Admissions Policy for Salisbury University

Fall 2007 - Fall 2010

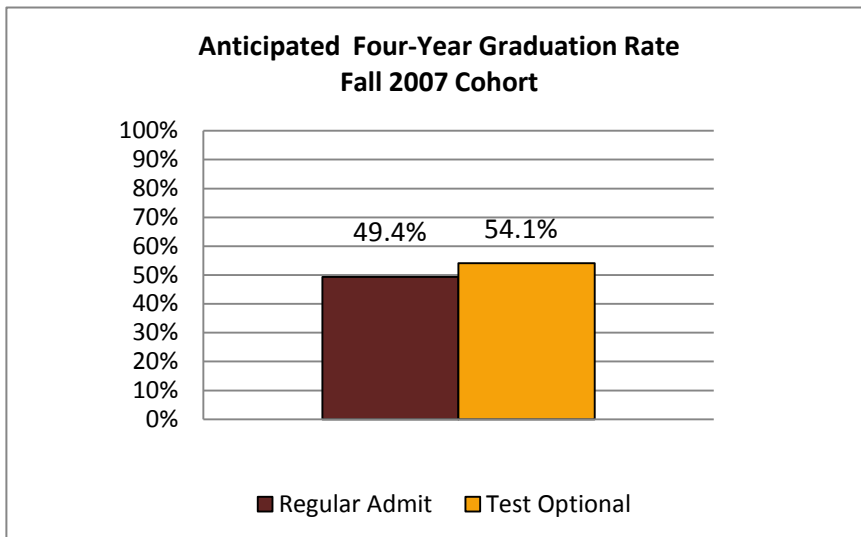
Submitted on Behalf of the Assessment Committee  
May 12, 2011

Salisbury University has completed five years of recruitment of incoming freshman classes under the test-optional pilot program. This program allows freshman applicants the option of excluding standardized test scores if they have a high school grade point average (GPA) of 3.5 or higher. Based on the current data, SU requests to continue its current test-optional practice of allowing students to exclude standardized test scores from their application packets if they have a 3.5 GPA or higher.

After four years of study, students in the test-optional and regular test-submitted groups perform similarly based on retention and grade point averages. Test-optional students outperform the test-submitted students in the area of course completion. Recently, the final assessment criterion was evaluated for the 2007 class with four-year graduation rates. **The test-optional students are projected to graduate at a higher percentage than those who submitted test scores.**

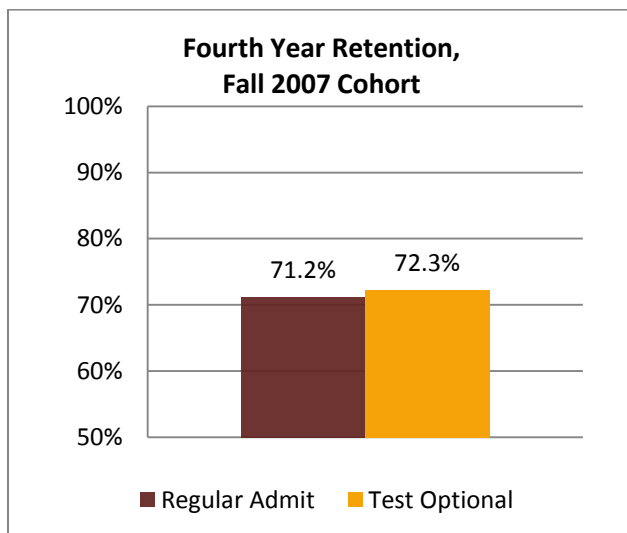
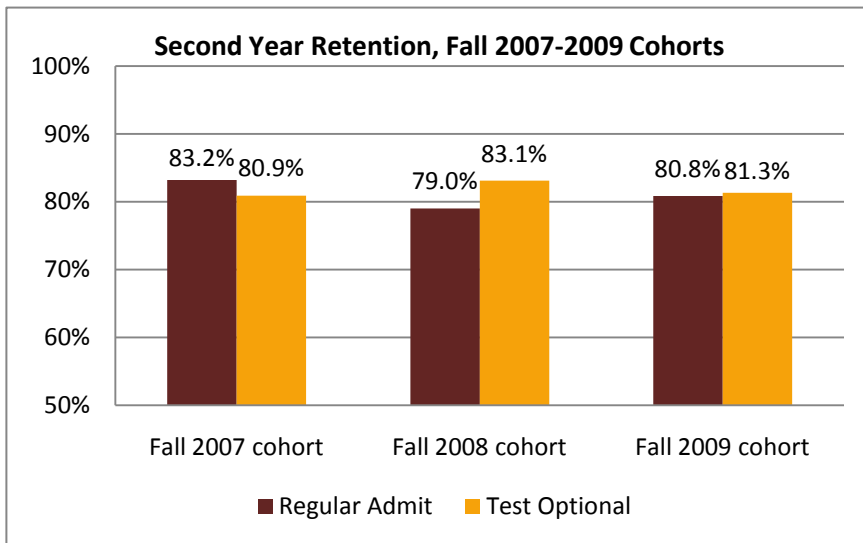
## Graduation

The test-optional and test-submitted students in the fall 2007 cohort who are projected to graduate by summer 2011 are compared here. Of the 220 test-optional students, 54.1% are expected to graduate in four years compared to 49.4% of the 930 of the test-submitted students, a difference of 4.7 percentage points



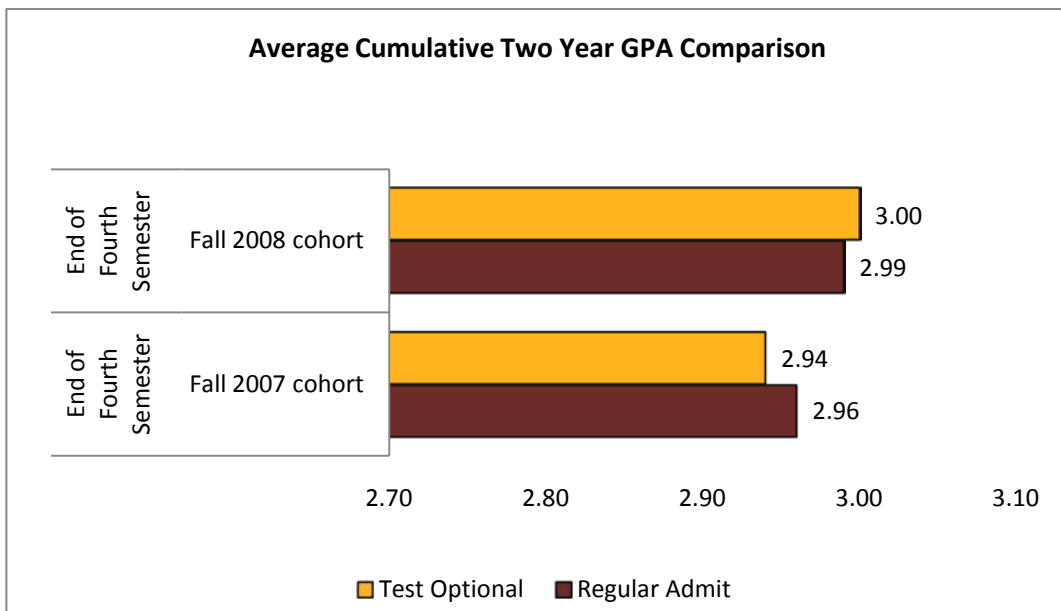
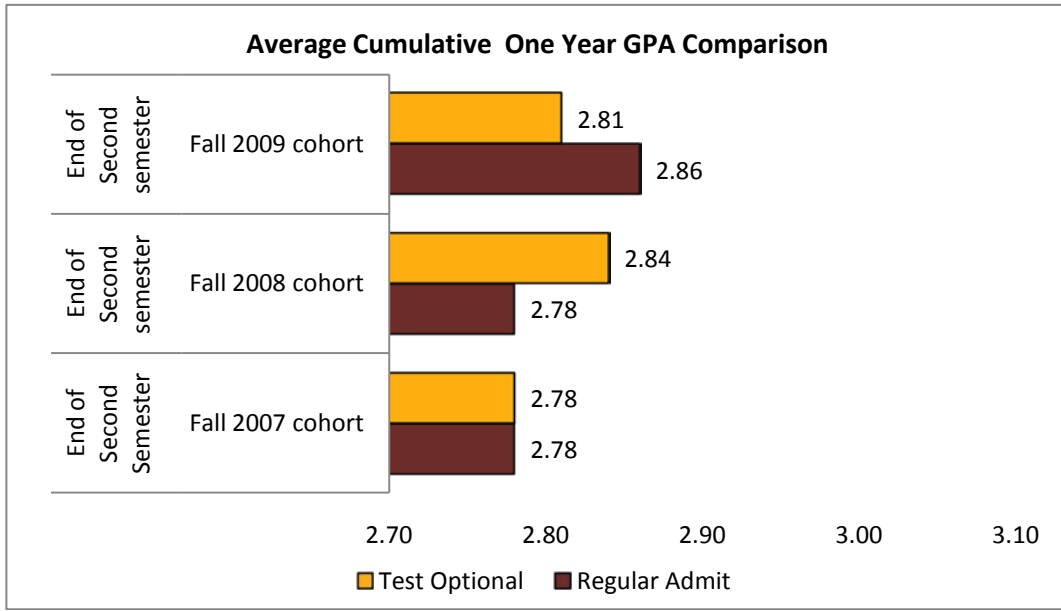
## Retention

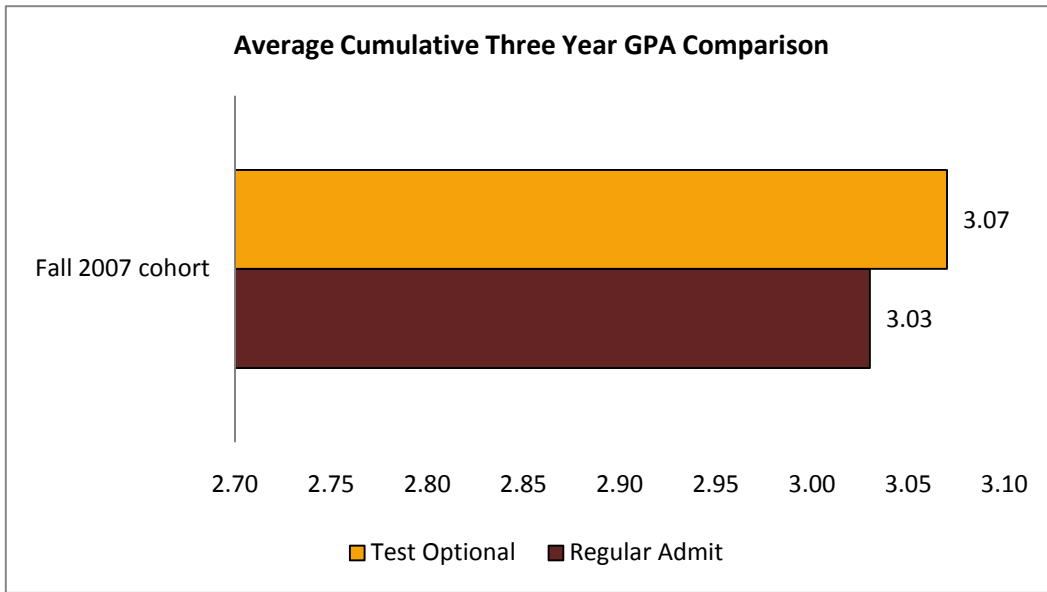
Data from the first three years for the 2007 - 2009 cohorts showed test-optional students retaining as well as test-submitted students. The fall 2008 cohort marked a statistically significant gain in retention for the test-optional admits (83.1%) over the regular admits (79%) during the same year. The retention rates for the fall 2007 cohort showed essentially no difference between the test-optional (72.3%) and test-submitted (71.2%) students as they returned for the fourth year.



## Average Salisbury University GPA

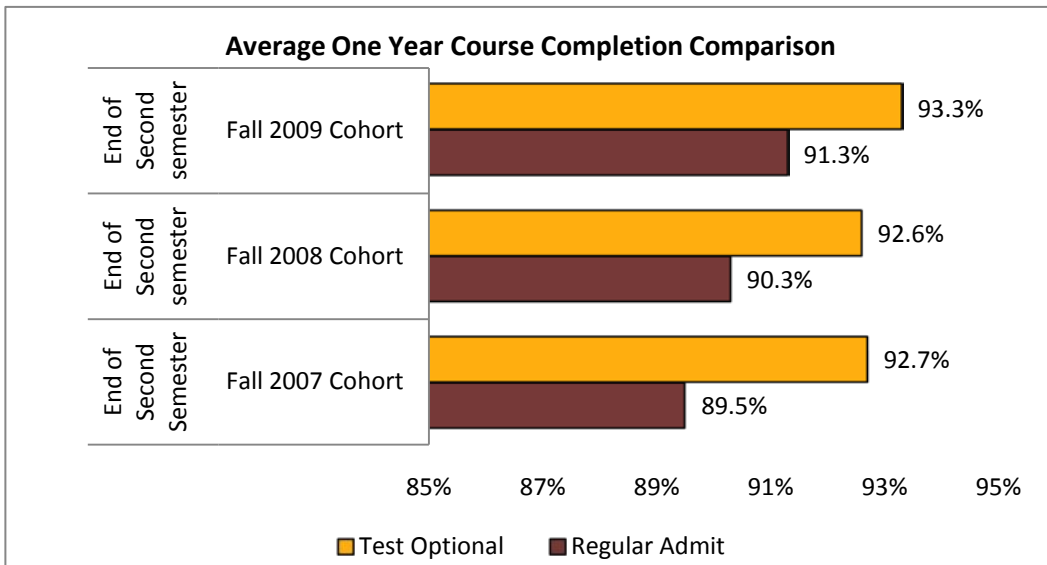
Analysis of average SU GPAs for the three cohorts indicated similar performance between the test-optional and regular-admitted groups. For all three years, the test-optional admits and regular admits had similar GPAs after one, two and three years, where applicable.

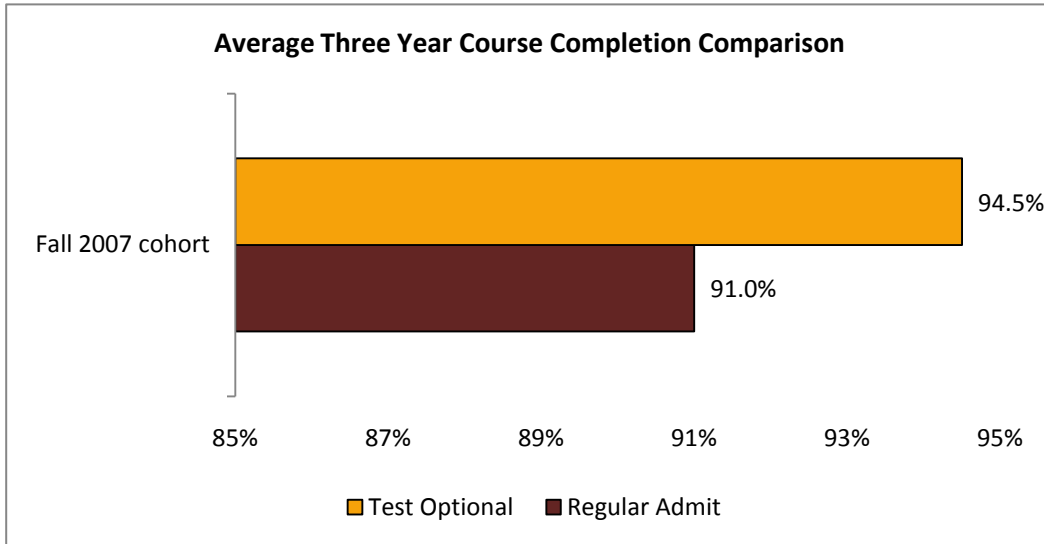
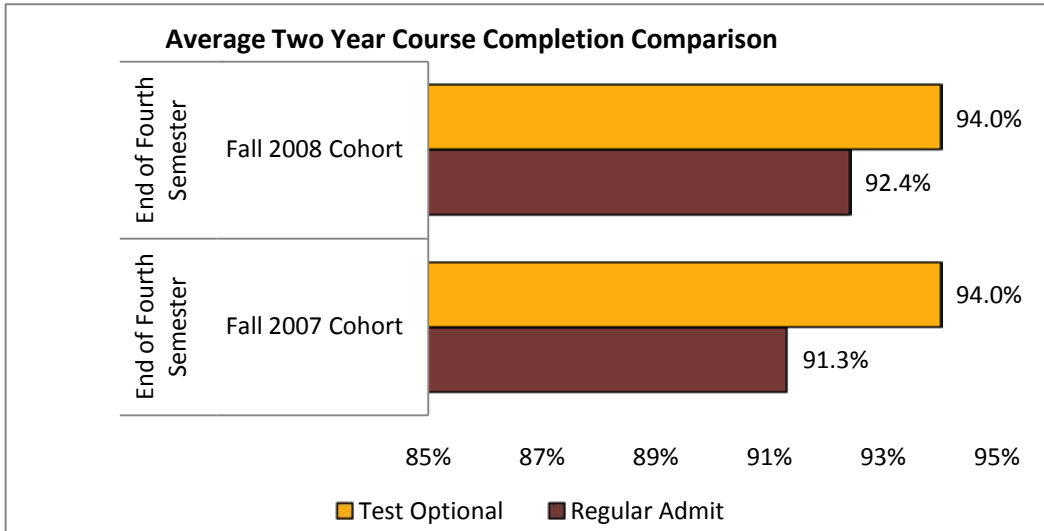




**Course Completion**

Course completion rates provided some of the most compelling and consistent evidence that test-optional admits performed as well as their peers. Test-optional students followed through on the courses for which they registered, providing efficient use of resources. Test-optional students in all three of the cohorts outperformed their peers in course completion after one, two and three years. Course completion rates, represented as a percentage of earned hours divided by attempted hours, were cumulative across all semesters included.







USM Bylaws, Policies and Procedures of the Board of Regents

**III-4.00 - POLICY ON UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS**

(Approved by the Board of Regents, January 11, 1990;

Revised October 4, 1996; Revised October 5, 2001, Revised December 4, 2009, Revised \_\_\_\_\_, 2011)

Admission to the institutions of the University System of Maryland shall be determined without unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, sexual orientation, or disabling condition. The undergraduate student population of USM institutions should draw from all areas of the state and reflect the diversity of the state's population. Consistent with their individual missions, institutions will seek to enroll the students having greatest potential to benefit from their programs. Each institution shall take appropriate actions in its admissions procedures to achieve these goals, consistent with State and Federal laws.

**I. ADMISSION OF FRESHMEN**

Each institution shall publish electronically or in print format its own decision criteria, which may be more rigorous than the systemwide minima stated below.

**A. Minimum Qualifications for Regular Admission**

- (1) High school diploma or its equivalent (See exception in paragraph B.)
- (2) Grade point average  
A high school grade point average equivalent to a C or better is required for admission of full-time and part-time entering freshmen who have graduated from high school within three years of intended enrollment.
- (3) Test Score<sup>1</sup>  
A score on a nationally standardized examination such as the SAT or ACT is required of all applicants who have graduated from high school within three years of intended enrollment.
- (4) Minimum core content proficiency requirements  
In addition to the above stated requirements, high school seniors or graduates must demonstrate their readiness for college-level work by achievement at the appropriate level of competencies<sup>1</sup> in the core content associated with the array of courses that follows:

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Year Courses</b>
English	4
Biological and Physical Sciences <sup>2</sup>	3
Social Science/History	3
Mathematics Must include Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II. Students who complete Algebra II prior to their final year must complete the four-year mathematics requirement by taking a course or courses that utilize non-trivial algebra <sup>3</sup> .	4
Language other than English <sup>4</sup> or in some instances, Advanced Technology Education electives <sup>5</sup>	2



(5) Other criteria

Each institution shall publish other criteria for admission that may include (a) rigor of the high school curriculum as demonstrated by advanced level coursework, (b) academic electives, (c) performance on high school assessments, (d) trends in performance, (e) citizenship and leadership, (f) special talents, and (g) personal circumstances.

B. Early Admission

Early admission may be granted to a high school student who has demonstrated superior scholarship, as evidenced by his or her academic record or performance on standardized entrance examinations. The expectation is that the student will make arrangements to earn a high school diploma or equivalent. Each institution that offers early admission shall publish electronically or in print format its procedures.

C. Admission of Students from Non-accredited/ Non-approved High Schools.

Freshman applicants for admission who are graduates of non-accredited/non-approved high schools will be reviewed individually, with consideration given to factors such as scores on nationally standardized tests, high school course content, performance in high school academic courses, the performance of previous students with similar academic preparation, and other appropriate criteria as developed by each institution.

D. Admission of Students with non-US Records

Students with international records, those who have completed part or all of their secondary and/or post-secondary education outside the United States, may be admitted using the guidelines of the following educational associations:

- (1) Association of International Educators (NAFSA)
- (2) American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO)
- (3) National Association of College Admissions Counselors (NACAC)

Each USM institution will establish procedures to insure consistency in admissions practices for its applicants with academic records from non-US institutions.

E. Admission of Home-Schooled Students

All home-schooled students must demonstrate compliance with state and local education regulations. Demonstration of the competencies outlined in the USM Requirements for Admission may be combined with scores on a nationally standardized examination such as ACT or SAT to satisfy the minimum qualifications for admission. For Maryland students, the home instruction program must comply with 13A.10.01 of the General Regulations of the State Board of Education.

F. Admission of Students with Proficiency-Based standards, Standardized Examinations, or Equivalency Diplomas.

Students who have graduated from regionally accredited secondary institutions with proficiency-based standards will be considered individually. Each secondary institution with proficiency-based standards will be asked to provide documentation of the student's achievement in secondary school.

Admission may be granted to students who have been awarded a high school equivalency diploma by passing a standardized evaluation, such as the General Educational Development (GED) test or the External Diploma Program (EDP). Each USM institution will establish procedures to insure consistency in admissions practices for its applicants presenting external evaluations.

G. Admission of Students Who Have Been Out of School More Than Three Years

Students who have earned a high school diploma (or equivalent) with a minimum GPA equivalent to a C or better, but who are more than three years beyond high school enrollment, may be admitted without meeting the usual criteria for admission if the institution determines that the applicant has the potential for successful college work. This determination may be made by evaluation of successful work experiences, by portfolio assessment, and/or by placement testing.

H. Special Program Requirements

With the approval of the president, an institution may establish additional requirements for admission to specified academic programs.

I. Admission to Two Institutions

USM institutions that have established joint degree or cooperative programs with other institutions will outline procedures to permit students to be admitted simultaneously to two institutions to earn the targeted degree(s).

J. Exceptions

Each institution may admit, to a maximum of 15 percent of its entering freshman class, students who do not meet the minimum qualifications outlined in sections I.A.-G. of this policy but who show potential for success in postsecondary education. Each institution shall develop written guidelines, in accordance with this policy, concerning individual admission.

For those instances in which applicants have not completed all of the required courses for admission, each institution shall establish a method of assessment by which a student can demonstrate competence equivalent to having passed a required high school course to qualify for admission.

II. ADMISSION OF TRANSFER STUDENTS

This section applies to students who have earned at least twelve or more university parallel credits during a regular term or terms following high school graduation. Credits earned in courses taken during the first summer following high school graduation, concurrently with high school, by Advanced Placement, or by examination are not to be counted in the twelve. Each institution shall publish its own decision criteria that may be more rigorous than the systemwide minima stated below.

A. Minimum Requirements

- (1) All transfer students must have a cumulative GPA of at least a 2.0 on a 4.0 scale, or its equivalent, for all attempted college-level work.
- (2) Students who have completed 23 or fewer credits are also required to meet minimum qualifications as set forth in Part I of this policy.
- (3) Students transferring from institutions that are not regionally accredited shall demonstrate proficiencies comparable with Sections II.A.1 and 2.

B. Maryland Public Institutions Of Higher Education

- (1) Students who have completed an associate's degree, or 56 or more semester hours of credit in university parallel courses with a minimum GPA of 2.0 from public institutions of higher education in Maryland, shall be considered qualified to be admitted to a USM institution. In cases where the number of applicants exceeds the number who can be accommodated, or where programs require higher performance standards, admissions decisions shall be based on criteria that provide fair and equal treatment for native and transfer students in accordance with COMAR Title 13B.06.01.02-1.
- (2) Students wishing to transfer from public institutions of higher education in Maryland who have not completed an associate's degree or who have completed fewer than 56 semester hours of credit shall be considered qualified to be admitted regardless of the number of credit hours earned if the student satisfied the admission criteria of the USM institution as a high school senior and attained at least a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale or its equivalent in university parallel courses. In cases where the number of applicants exceeds the number who can be accommodated, or where programs require higher performance standards, admissions decisions shall be based on criteria that provide fair and equal treatment for native and transfer students in accordance with COMAR Title 13B.06.01.02-1.

C. Admission to Two Institutions

To facilitate the enrollment of transfer students and to enhance relationships with community colleges, USM institutions are strongly encouraged to establish agreements with community colleges to provide for dual admission of students who first matriculate at the community college. The agreements shall stipulate requirements for eligibility, conditions for maintaining good academic standing, curricular requirements, and credit/grade transfer acceptance.

D. Providing Transfer Information

Each institution shall participate in the systemwide computerized information system to assist prospective transfer students. In cooperation with Maryland community colleges, programs shall be developed that represent the lower division course work required for completion of a baccalaureate degree at that institution. Information about such recommended transfer programs, updated on a regular basis, shall be available to potential transfer students to serve as a basis for advisement and student planning. Students will be encouraged to seek advisement on a regular basis.

E. Exceptions

At the discretion of the receiving institution, transfer students with special circumstances may be admitted on the basis of criteria other than prior academic performance. Up to 15 percent of the institution's entering transfer cohort may comprise such exceptions.

III. ADMISSION OF SECOND BACCALAUREATE STUDENTS

Each institution shall publish electronically or in print formal procedures for admission of students seeking a second baccalaureate degree.

IV. ADMISSION OF NON-DEGREE STUDENTS

A. Minimum Requirements

Procedures for admitting non-degree students shall be established by each institution. Criteria for changing from non-degree to degree status must be equivalent to, or exceed the minimum requirements set forth in this policy, sections II.A.1 and 2, for students transferring between Maryland public institutions.

B. Concurrent Enrollment

Concurrent enrollment may be granted to a high school student who has demonstrated superior scholarship, as evidenced by his or her academic record or performance on standardized entrance examinations. Each institution may allow such students to enroll in its undergraduate classes concurrently with their enrollment in high school.

V. ADMISSION OF OUT-OF-STATE STUDENTS TO UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

Each institution may establish for out-of-state students standards that are higher than the undergraduate admission standards for in-state students. If a choice must be made between applicants of roughly comparable ability and promise, preference will be given to the Maryland resident.

Excluding UMUC students and all students enrolled exclusively in distance education programs, the number of out-of-state undergraduate students in any institution shall not exceed 30 percent of its total undergraduate student body.

VI. IMPLEMENTATION

A. Effective date

The revised freshman admissions requirements are effective for those students entering ninth grade in the academic year 2011.

B. Mathematics Requirement

The University System of Maryland in collaboration with the Maryland State Department of Education will review local school system courses to determine their appropriateness in meeting this requirement.

C. Publication of Standards

The USM shall publish electronically or in print format the content, competencies, achievement levels, and skills required for success in college. Each institution shall publish its admission standards in its catalog and shall submit them to University System of Maryland Office for information.

D. Maintenance of Records

Each institution shall maintain in each enrolled student's record evidence that minimum criteria for admission have been met. Lacking such evidence, the record shall contain a note that the student is an exception, and whether the exception was based on minimum GPA, lack of standardized test scores or demonstration of competency in the required courses.

E. Application Fee

Each constituent institution in the University System of Maryland may assess a non-refundable admission application fee for each applicant, unless the fee is waived in accordance with institutional policy.

Replacement for: BOR I-1.00, 1.10, 1.11, 1.20, 1.30, 1.40, 1.50, 1.60, 1.80, 13.00 and BOT II-D.3, X-A.1, X-A.2, X-A.3, X-A.4, X-A.5, X-A.7, X-A.8, X-A.9, X-A.11, and X-B

FootNotes:

[1] Students applying to Salisbury University under its test-optional program are exempt from this requirement.

[2] A grade equivalent to a C or better in required courses would normally demonstrate the minimum level of preparation for college-level work.

[3] The courses completed must be in at least two different subject areas. Two of the three must include a laboratory experience. For students interested in Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics (STEM) related careers (such as medicine, engineering, the sciences, veterinary medicine, physical therapy, etc.), four years of science are recommended in three different science areas, with three laboratory experiences.

[4] Non-trivial algebra is intended to mean that the level of mathematical concepts discussed and the level of problems that are used in the course would be at least as sophisticated as those that relate to problems appearing in the Achieve ADP Algebra II test. Examples of courses meeting this requirement include Algebra II, Trigonometry, Precalculus, Calculus and successor courses, Statistics, and College Algebra. An important feature of any such course is that it utilize algebra in a substantive way, so the student does not lose the algebraic and numerical skills achieved in earlier courses.

[5] The two units must be in the same language. American Sign Language is among the languages accepted.

[6] Advanced Technology is an instructional program in which students develop in-depth skills and understanding related to one or more of the following: impacts of technology; technological issues, and engineering design. At the time this policy was approved, Advanced Technology Education electives are acceptable in lieu of language at the following institutions: Bowie State University, Coppin State University, Frostburg State University, the University of Baltimore and the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore. Students should consult the admissions office of the USM institution they are seeking to attend to determine if advanced technology is accepted in fulfillment of this requirement.