

Frequently asked questions

Why is the university proposing to change its categories of admission?

To encourage K-12 students to better prepare for college, and to improve student retention and graduation rates.

What are the main differences between the current and proposed admission standards?

Right now, to be assured admission to UW, a Wyoming high school graduate needs to have taken at least four years of English, three years of math, science and social studies, and have a grade point average of at least 2.75; in-state students are conditionally admitted if their GPAs are between 2.25 and 2.75, if their ACT scores are 20, and if they haven't completed the above-listed coursework. Under the new plan, to be assured admission to UW, a Wyoming high school graduate needs to have taken at least four years of English, math (to include Algebra I, Algebra II and Geometry), and science, three years of social studies, two years of the same foreign language, have a GPA of 3.0 or higher, and an ACT score of at least 21. Students with minimum high school GPAs of 2.25 and ACT scores of 20 who haven't met the coursework standard can still be admitted, but they'll have to participate in UW's Synergy program or other academic transition programs.

Will the changes mean that some Wyoming high school graduates won't be allowed to enroll at UW?

All students who would be admitted under the current standards will continue to be admitted under the proposed standards. The change is that UW will identify those students who will benefit from additional support and provide it to them.

What is the Synergy program?

It's for students in their first year of college whose high school GPAs and ACT scores indicate a need for some extra help to succeed. Students are organized into small groups and take general education classes together, and they receive help from peer mentors and others.

Why the emphasis on ACT scores and high school grade-point average?

Our analysis of UW students shows that both ACT scores and high school GPA are excellent predictors of success at UW. For example, nearly half of students who score below 21 on the ACT are on academic probation at the end of their first year; the same for students with high school GPAs of less than 2.75. Keep in mind that the average GPA for Wyoming high school graduates who are first-time students at UW is 3.53.

What if a student has a sufficient ACT score and GPA and has taken all the required coursework for assured admission except one class – for example, only three years of math?

That student would be enrolled with support. The difference between students who take four years of math vs. three years is significant, according to our analysis of UW student performance.

How do UW's proposed standards compare with other universities in the region?

They would be right about in the middle. For example, Colorado State University requires a high

school GPA of 3.25, and Montana State University-Bozeman requires an ACT score of 22.

What about students who transfer to UW from community colleges?

UW's admission policy for transfer students remains unchanged in the present proposal. A student who's earned at least 30 credit hours at a community college with a GPA of 2.0 or better is admitted to UW with no other requirements.

When will the changes take effect?

If approved by the UW Board of Trustees, the new standards will be in place starting in the fall of 2013.