



RESOURCE TITLE:

# 50-State Comparison: Statewide Admissions Policies

In an effort to ensure standard levels of college preparedness among incoming students, some states or systems have adopted common admissions policies applicable to first-time, first-year students seeking admission at a four-year, baccalaureate institution. Statewide or systemwide admissions standards commonly include minimum measures of academic performance, including class rank, GPA, completion of high school coursework, or standardized assessment scores.



While some states allow individual institutions to have autonomy over additional requirements, more than half of states require a baseline of academic standards for admission to postsecondary institutions. Education Commission of the States researched admissions policies in all states to provide this comprehensive resource. Click on the questions below for 50-State Comparisons that show how all states approach the specific statewide admissions policies. Click **here** to view individual state profiles detailing data elements for a single state.

**50-State Comparisons:**

1. Does the state have a common statewide or systemwide admissions policy?
2. Does the policy include multiple measures to determine admission?
3. Are alternative opportunities for admission available for students who do not meet minimum standards?
4. Does the state have a guaranteed admissions policy?
5. **All data points for all states.**

### Key Takeaways

- **Twenty-eight states** have either a statewide or systemwide admissions policy for four-year institutions.
- **Twenty-five states'** admissions policies provide alternative opportunities for admission to students who do not meet minimum standards.
- **Twelve states** have guaranteed or automatic admissions policies for high school students who meet certain criteria.

### Definitions

**Common statewide admissions policy:** A policy that sets minimum admissions standards for first-time, first-year students. The policy is applicable to all public postsecondary institutions in the state, all postsecondary institutions in a certain sector, and/or all postsecondary institutions in a certain system.

**Multiple measures to determine admission:** Whether a student is admitted to an institution or system is determined by a combination of factors, including performance on assessments, class rank, GPA, completion of high school coursework, or an index.

**Alternative opportunities for students who do not meet minimum standards:** Policies that allow students who do not meet minimum admissions standards to be admitted to institutions or systems based on other criteria outlined in policy. For the purposes of this comparison, Education Commission of the States examined alternative opportunities for first-time, first-year students, although states offer alternatives for specific student populations (e.g., transfer students, out-of-state students).

**Guaranteed admissions:** Sometimes referred to as “automatic admissions,” guaranteed admissions policies ensure admission to a public institution for students who meet or exceed predetermined academic requirements per state policy.

### Related Resources

- **Addressing Inequities in Higher Education**
- **State Information Request: FAFSA Completion as a Graduation Requirement**
- **State Information Request: Higher Education Enrollment**

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 **PUBLISHED:** May 10, 2022

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 **RESOURCE TYPE:** **50-State Comparison**

 **EDUCATION LEVEL:** High School, Postsecondary

 **STATE(S):** Nationwide

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