

FROM: Becky Bitter, Registrar's Office
FOR: Academic Affairs Committee
DATE: 4 February 2015
SUBJECT: Proposal to Revise Rule 2, Freshman Requirements

At its meeting on February 3, 2015, AAC approved the following revision to Rule 2. The suggested changes are supported by the Office of Admissions in order to update the language of the rule and to comply with state law and national standards.

A complete rationale for the proposed changes is included following this memo.

The current language in Rule 2, Freshman Requirements, reads as follows:

“2. FRESHMAN REQUIREMENTS

Freshman applicants are considered for admission based on required high school courses completed, grade point average and the results of the Washington Pre-College Test (WPCT), if taken prior to June 1, 1989, Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), or the American College Test (ACT), and personal statement. On the basis of these criteria, the most qualified applicants are offered admission. Applicants are required to submit a high school transcript showing completion of the following:

- English** 4 credits (three of which must be composition and literature).
- Mathematics** 3 credits of college preparatory mathematics (one year of geometry and two years of algebra, including an introductory component of trigonometry). Additional mathematics is strongly recommended.
- Science** 2 credits of laboratory science, including one credit of algebra-based science (typically chemistry or physics).
- Social Science** 3 credits.
- World Language** 2 credits of the same world language, Native American language, or American Sign language.
- Fine Arts** 1 credit of fine, visual, or performing arts, or one additional credit of academic elective.

Applicants from unaccredited high schools may be required to pass validating examinations.”

Proposed revision approved by AAC:

FRESHMAN REQUIREMENTS

Freshman applicants are considered for admission on the basis of their academic records and other supporting documents, which include official transcripts that show coursework through at least grade 11 or its equivalent, completion of the Washington College Academic Distribution Requirements (CADRs), test scores (ACT or SAT), and other relevant materials as requested or as may be provided. On the basis of these criteria, the most qualified applicants are offered admission.

A complete list of the Washington College Academic Distribution Requirements (CADRs) for admission may be found at the Washington Student Achievement Council's (WSAC) website, linked here www.cadr.wsu.edu.

Applicants from unaccredited high schools may contact the Office of Admissions for additional information.

At this time, Faculty Senate review and approval is recommended, to be effective fall 2015.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Academic Affairs Committee
Dana Baker, Chair

FROM: Wendy Jo Peterson
Director of Admissions

DATE: February 2, 2015

SUBJECT: Proposed Revisions to Rule 2, Freshman Requirements

The purpose of this memo is to propose revisions to Rule 2, “Freshman Requirements,” in order to bring the rule into compliance with the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) and changes in state law (Washington Student Achievement Council) regarding the minimum Washington College Academic Distribution Requirements (CADRs), to update outdated language and to better communicate to applicants what they need to provide in the admission process.

The Admission Section of the WSU catalog provides more detail about the application process but these changes in the Academic Rule 2 will help to clarify the minimum requirements for freshman applicants.

Specific revisions and rationale are provided below:

1. Addition of a statement requiring official transcripts through grade 11.

Rationale:

The National Association for College Admission Counseling requires that admission decisions for incoming freshmen be made only after receipt of an official transcript showing completion of work through at least grade 11. The previous rule does not specify that work through grade 11 is a necessary component of the application. As a member institution, we must comply with this requirement. We are in compliance in practice, but this change would reflect compliance in the rule.

2. Remove the verbiage “Scholastic Aptitude Test.” Refer to as “SAT.”

Rationale:

The “SAT” is no longer referred to as the “Scholastic Aptitude Test” by the College Board. It is now commonly known as the “SAT.”

3. Remove the verbiage “American College Test.” Refer to as “ACT.”

Rationale:

The “ACT” is no longer referred to as the “American College Test” by the ACT Organization. It is now commonly known as the “ACT.”

4. Remove reference to the Washington Pre-College Test (WPCT) in its entirety.

Rationale:

The Washington Pre-College Test has not been administered since 1989. The Admissions Office has not been presented with a WPCT score in over 25 years. If a student were to present results from the WPCT as part of their admission consideration, they would fall under the Adult Admission Requirements as set forth by the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) and would be exempt from providing standardized test scores as part of their admission review.

5. Change the reference to the “personal statement” to “other relevant materials as requested or as may be provided.”

Rationale:

The Washington Student Achievement Council encourages public baccalaureate institutions to have holistic review processes in place for consideration of students whose academic preparation may be less evident as measured by grades, test scores and completion of the Washington College Academic Distribution Requirements (CADRs). According to WSAC, *factors beyond grades, standardized tests and completion of the CADRs, which indicate evidence of the student’s preparedness for college* may be considered.

The personal statement as initially implemented in 2004 was comprised of 6 specific short-answer questions and was intended to seek information that could help inform the admission process.

We held to the personal statement as a required element for several years and found that it presented barriers to many students in the process who were academically prepared and for whom additional information was not necessary, slowing the admission decisions and causing many students not to complete their applications.

As a result, the personal statement was changed from required to optional in 2008 so that those students who wished to provide additional information could do so but it would not delay admission decisions for students whose academic records already showed evidence of preparedness for college-level work and for whom additional information was not needed.

Over the years we have found that due to the personal nature of the questions, it alone often does not provide enough information to assess preparedness for college for students whose academic records are less strong, and in some cases, information provided in the personal statements cannot be used in admission decisions (as is the case with disabilities, which are frequently revealed by students in their personal statements).

In order to meet the intent of the WSAC provision to conduct holistic reviews for students whose academic records alone may not provide enough evidence of preparedness for college, we often need to request additional information. That information may include updated transcripts or grade

reports (depending on the time of year) showing sustained improvement in high school work, or specific questions asked of students based on the academic records they have presented.

In practice, students who do not clearly meet the admission standards but whose records show a basic level of academic preparation are asked to provide additional information. Such information typically includes requests for students to explain inconsistent patterns or negative grade trends and to indicate how they would plan to be academically successful in the university environment, and/or to provide updated transcripts showing improvements students are making in their high school work. Students may also provide any other information they wish to support their application and to show evidence of their preparedness for college. All information provided is read for those students who are not automatically admitted on the basis their academic credentials, and the university has an appeal process for those students who are not admitted after providing information for further review but who wish to appeal the admission decision.

The revised language changing “*personal statement*” to “*other relevant materials as requested or as may be provided*” would not preclude a student from providing a personal statement if they wish to do so, but would more clearly communicate that additional appropriate and relevant information may be requested and/or provided, and is most helpful when it focuses on preparedness for college.

- 6. Removal of the listing of specific courses requirements. Instead we recommend referring to the current statewide requirements as listed on the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) website for current Washington College Academic Distribution Requirements (CADRs). A link is provided at www.cadr.wsu.edu.**

Rationale:

The minimum admission standards for freshman admission to all public baccalaureate universities in Washington are governed by the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) under RCW 28B.77.020. This includes the Washington College Academic Distribution Requirements (CADRs), courses to be completed prior to enrolling as a freshman to any of the public baccalaureate universities. Institutions may add requirements above and beyond these state minimums but may not have fewer requirements.

For many years, WSU’s minimum course requirements mirrored the state minimum requirements for CADRs and Rule 2 was in compliance. However, in recent years WSAC has implemented several revisions and consequently, WSU’s published requirements in Rule 2 are no longer in compliance with the state minimum requirements. More changes are likely to continue at the state level.

Rather than listing the minimum required courses separately which would necessitate ongoing changes to Rule 2 as WSAC adjusts the state minimum requirements, we propose that students be referred instead to the WSAC website for the most current statewide minimum Washington College Academic Distribution Requirements (CADRs) so that Rule 2 continues to be in

compliance with the state requirements. We have created WSU link to WSAC's website at www.cadr.wsu.edu.

7. **Revise the current statement “*Applicants from unaccredited high schools may be required to pass validating examinations*” to read “*Applicants from unaccredited high schools may contact the Office of Admissions for additional information.*”**

Rationale:

There are no validating examinations for unaccredited high schools. This statement has been in the catalog for many years and should be removed. In practice, on the rare occasion we are presented with an application from a student attending an unaccredited high school, the Office of Admissions verifies that the school is authorized and recognized by the appropriate entity, and that it meets state standards for high school level instruction. Applicants from those schools are not required to pass “validating” examinations.

Thank you for your consideration.