

College Planning

Making The Grade: Getting High School Seniors Ready For College

(NAPSA)—Nearly 17 million high school seniors graduate each year, the U.S. Department of Education estimates, and many plan to attend college. But are they all really college-ready?

Data suggests the answer is a resounding “no.” According to the 2015 “Condition of College & Career Readiness” report from American College Testing (ACT), 31 percent of the ACT-tested graduating class is not meeting any of the four subject benchmarks: reading, English, science and mathematics.

These low-readiness test scores coincide with college dropout figures that top 29 million, making the number of Americans who have dropped out of college greater than the number of American adults who have not obtained their high school degrees.

“While test scores provide a benchmark for high school seniors, college readiness is an important issue for everyone headed to college, whether they are a new high school graduate or an adult learner returning to the classroom,” said Jennifer Fletcher, Ph.D., program dean for general education at University of Phoenix. “Being prepared for the challenge can help ensure students aren’t forced to take remedial course work and are able to stay motivated and on top of their workloads, ultimately resulting in a successful collegiate experience.”

The pressure to earn a college degree is higher than ever. The White House has set an ambitious goal of producing a higher share of college graduates than any other nation by 2020. The plan is to return the United States to the top-ranked nation after dropping into twelfth place.

“More and more, employers are seeking college graduates for jobs that previously required a high school diploma or other subbaccalaureate training,” Dr. Fletcher said. “For the nearly two-thirds of U.S. adults who do not have a bachelor’s degree or higher, this can create barriers to career growth, unless they are able to pursue higher education.”



A few simple steps before you go to college can help make sure you do well when you get there.

She offers the following advice to high school seniors and adult learners heading off to college:

- Use summer months to take courses in English and mathematics to refresh high school level skills. Courses can be taken at community colleges or via online professional development resources such as University of Phoenix’s continuing education programs, Udemy, StraighterLine and Lynda.com.

- Don’t overburden your first semester course load. There are always opportunities to add courses deeper into your college career or over summer and winter intersessions.

- Team up with your college adviser your first semester. College advisers are available to discuss your goals and a graduation timeline and can offer guidance on the best ways to manage coursework.

- Attend skills center sessions for assistance in coursework and free proofreading.

- Organize study groups with peers to work together on complex materials and to gain different perspectives to approaching assignments.

- Take advantage of college tools and resources. Computers, Internet access, office hours and a study location free of distractions are all things students can access that affect student success. When you couple this with healthy organizational and study habits, students can improve their chances of having a positive academic journey.

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