

Direct Admissions FAQ for High School Partners

1. What is the goal of this program?

The Direct Admissions pilot is designed to encourage all high school seniors to view themselves as “college ready” and to help alleviate some of the anxiety around the college search process by proactively informing students of colleges who are committed to admitting them, if the student opts to apply. Students receive letters indicating they have met the criteria for admissions to participating colleges and outlines the steps required for students to select their institution(s) using a common or universal application.

2. Are other schools participating in this program?

Yes, during the 2022-2023 school year, approximately 20-40 high schools will be participating. In future years, the Minnesota Office of Higher Education hopes to expand the program to all public and charter high schools in the state.

3. Is there any cost to the school or students for participating in this program?

There is no cost for participating schools and there is funding available to ensure that the high school does not incur any additional costs for staff work on the program. There is no cost for students or families.

4. Is there any financial incentive or allocation for participating in this program? Is there funding available to cover staff time needed to complete this work?

The Minnesota Office of Higher Education will be funding any vendor software development costs incurring as part of enhancing the school’s student information system for Direct Admissions. In addition, OHE will make available funds to schools to cover staffing and related administrative costs for work incurring above and beyond current staffing contracts as identified by the school.

5. What are the specific roles and responsibilities for participating schools and school staff members? How much staff time will be required? Will staff receive training or professional development for participating in this program?

There are seven steps to the Direct Admissions process for districts and schools.

1. Work with your SIS vendor to implement the free technology upgrades required for Direct Admissions which allow academic criteria to be loaded into your system for comparison against student data.

2. Sign the Memorandum of Understanding with the Minnesota Office of Higher Education to ensure Direct Admissions is compliant with FERPA and Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, and to ensure reimbursements for costs incurred by the school.
3. Identify staff and receive training from the Office of Higher Education for the Direct Admissions process.
4. Identify eligible high school juniors, complete the academic review, and review results for accuracy.
5. Prepare staff, students, parents, leadership, and community stakeholders for the launch of Direct Admissions through training and outreach with assistance and materials provided by the Office of Higher Education.
6. Send Direct Admissions notifications to students (phase 1), and then to parents (phase 2).
7. Record student selections in the SIS system and upload data to OHE nightly or weekly. OHE will send schools program progress reports.
8. Schools and OHE will work to determine if additional steps are needed

6. Can students opt out of this program?

Yes, parents or students can let their student's counselor (or the Minnesota Office of Higher Education) know that they (or their student) do not wish to receive college planning information from Direct Admissions Minnesota. If emailing OHE directly, emails should include the students name, high school, and counselor name (if known).

7. Are we allowed to share student data (names, addresses, high school transcript data) with you?

Yes. Participating high schools and the Minnesota Office of Higher Education will complete the necessary data sharing agreements and memorandums of understanding to ensure compliance with all applicable data privacy and security regulations.

8. Why was our school selected to participate?

The Office of Higher Education and the Direct Admissions workgroup is seeking participation from high schools that represent the geographic and demographic diversity of Minnesota as well as schools that identified increasing college going rates for their students as a priority or part of their strategic plan.

9. Which colleges/universities are participating in this program?

All 37 of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities; the University of Minnesota Crookston, Duluth, and Morris, and several private non-profit colleges including Augsburg University, have expressed in participating. Colleges will sign formal participation agreements by the end of May 2022.

10. Will this include information for students who want to go into trade programs?

Yes, all 30 of Minnesota's community and technical colleges and Dunwoody College are participating. The Minnesota Office of Higher Education recognizes that any and all forms of education and training

beyond high school are important. If there is a specific college or technical school you would recommend, please let the Minnesota Office of Higher Education know.

11. What kind of assistance will OHE provide during implementation?

OHE will work directly with participating high schools to identify steps need to implement, a mutually agreed upon timeline, and provide technical support in collaboration with external software vendor identified to assist with transcript evaluation. OHE will also provide financial support for high school staff time associated with the project.

12. What is the timeline for this program?

High schools and colleges will be asked in April – May 2022 to commit to participating in the program. Participating schools and colleges will work with the Office of Higher Education to implement and test software for Direct Admissions, and to initiate the academic review process in June and July 2022. Minimal work will be done in August and September to not conflict with the start of the school year. At the beginning of October 2022, the first notifications will be sent.

13. If we opt in, do we have to agree to continue in the program if it is funded for future years?

At this time, we are not asking for an on-going commitment. The program is currently a pilot so future years will require additional funding before we identify how to scale up the program.

14. Who is responsible for sending the letters? Are they physical letters?

In order to maximize the privacy of students, high schools will be sending the letters (or emails or portal notifications) using the means of communication the high school feels is most effective. We've received feedback from schools that some prefer physical letters, some prefer emails, and some prefer portal notifications. Direct Admissions is seeking to use the method that will have the highest level of student responsiveness and trust that schools know their students best.

15. Are undocumented students eligible for the direct admissions program?

Yes, there is no citizenship requirement for participation in the direct admissions pilot.