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Revision Responsibility: Professional Education Council (PEC)  
Responsible Employee: Chair, Department of Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education

**Purpose:**

To outline the policy for selecting students for admission into alternate-route, initial teacher licensure preparation programs at The University of Southern Mississippi.

**Policy:**

Specific admissions requirements into the two alternate route programs and one pathway differ and can be found on the University's website: <https://www.usm.edu/elementary-special-technology-education/alternate-route-programs-southern-miss>. The following requirements must be met for alternate route admissions in order to comply with CAEP Standards and Mississippi Senate Bill 2188.

- \*A minimum grade point average of 2.75 on content coursework in the requested area of certification
- Successful completion of a nationally normed ability/achievement assessment OR a teacher education normed entrance test:
  - Nationally Normed Ability/Achievement Assessment:
    - An ACT composite score of 21 or higher. If the student did not take the ACT, an equivalent SAT score of 1060 or above satisfies requirements as well.
  - Teacher Education Normed Test:
    - Acceptable scores on the Core Academic Skills for Educators Test (CORE): Reading Test Code 5712 with a score of at least 156, Writing Test Code 5722 with a score of at least 162, and Mathematics Test Code 5732 with a score of at least 150. This is the most recent teacher-normed test approved by the State of Mississippi. MDE will begin accepting this test 9/1/2013 with it becoming mandatory as the new test starting 1/1/2014.

\*While a student must only have a 2.75 GPA for admission, the cohort of students accepted at the time of a student's admission must have at least a 3.00 GPA average as a whole. Thus, an individual student could be denied admission should their individual GPA bring down their cohort of students' GPA average to less than a 3.00.

Furthermore (and pending Mississippi approval), in order to be in compliance with CAEP Standard 3.2 *Admission Standards Indicate That Candidates Have High Academic Achievement and Ability*, the cohort's average performance on a nationally normed ability/achievement assessment such as the ACT must be in the top 50% from the 2016-2017 distribution; the top 40% from the 2018-2019 distribution; and the top 33% by the 2020

distribution. For the purpose of this policy, a cohort refers to all students accepted during a particular term of enrollment (i.e.: Fall, Spring, Summer).

### *Boosting GPA*

Prospective students interested in the TMI or MAT program who do not have a GPA of 2.75 or above may choose to take additional coursework to boost their GPA. Prospective students interested in doing this should take courses in the content area in which they plan to teach. For example, if a student plans to enroll in the MAT program to teach art, they should take undergraduate art courses. Or, if a student plans to enroll in the TMI program to teach English, they should take undergraduate English courses. The prospective student should contact the Office of Undergraduate Admissions as well as the department in which these courses are located to enroll.