

PA 9: Affordability and Access

Rationale

This credit recognizes institutions that are working to ensure that its education programs are affordable to and inclusive of low-income and first-generation students. For the higher education sector to help society address inequality and move toward greater equity, its admissions policies and fees must be structured with these students in mind.

Applicability

Applicable to all institutions.

Points available

A maximum of 3 points are available for this credit.

Criteria

9.1 Number of paid work-hours per year required to meet the average net price of attendance for low-income students

An institution earns 1 point when 500 or fewer paid work-hours over the course of a year are sufficient to meet the **average net price of attendance** for **low-income** students. Partial points are available and earned as outlined in Tables I and II.

Table I. Number of paid work-hours per year required to meet the average net price of attendance for low-income students

Average net price of attendance for low-income students		Local hourly minimum wage for students		Work-hours required
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Table II. Points earned for indicator 9.1

Number of paid work-hours per year required to meet the average net price of attendance for low-income students (Table I)	Points earned
751 to 1,000	0.25

501 to 750	0.5
500 or fewer	1

Measurement

Report the most recent data available from within the previous three years for undergraduate students, if present, or else the institution's **predominant student body**.

Report the local minimum hourly wage or the minimum hourly wage that the institution pays student workers, whichever is most representative of the work opportunities available to entering students.

Report the average annual net price of attendance for full-time, beginning degree/certificate-seeking students in the lowest family income range tracked by the institution (e.g., 0 to 30,000 USD), for example, as posted on the institution's website or a source such as the US [College Navigator](#). If the average annual net price of attendance is not published or tracked by the institution, it may be calculated using the guidance provided in the [STARS Help Center](#).

Documentation

Report the following information in the online Reporting Tool, with the monetary figures provided in the institution's local currency.

- Does the institution have the required data and wish to pursue this indicator? (required)

If Yes, the following three fields are also required:

- Local currency code. Report the three-digit ISO alphabetic code of the currency used to document the financial data for this credit (e.g., AUD, CAD, or USD).
- Local hourly minimum wage for students
- Average annual net price of attendance for low-income students

If wage and price data are provided, the Reporting Tool will automatically calculate the following figure:

- Number of paid work-hours per year required to meet the average net price of attendance for low-income students

9.2 Percentage of students that are low-income

An institution earns 1 point when at least 50 percent of its students are low-income. Partial points are available and earned as outlined in Table III.

Table III. Points earned for indicator 9.2

Percentage of students that are low-income	Points earned
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50 percent or greater	1
25 to 49 percent	0.5
10 to 24 percent	0.25

Measurement

Report the most recent data available from within the previous three years. This may be a representative snapshot (e.g., at the beginning of an academic term) or the average of a one to three year period. An institution may report on its entire student body or limit its analysis to the predominant student body and/or entering students.

Low-income students may be identified by their receipt of or qualification for need-based assistance, a family income threshold (e.g., a local, national, or international poverty line), geographic origin (e.g., economically divested communities), or as otherwise tracked by the institution. Further guidance is available in the [STARS Help Center](#).

Documentation

Report the following information in the online Reporting Tool, with the percentage figure provided within a range of 0 to 100.

- Does the institution have the required data and wish to pursue this indicator? (required)

If Yes, the following two fields are also required:

- Percentage of students that are low-income
- Description of the methodology used to identify low-income students

9.3 Legacy and donor admissions

An institution earns 1 point when an applicant's relationship to the institution's alumni or donors is not a factor that is positively considered in admission decisions.

Measurement

Report on the current status of the institution's admissions policies and procedures.

Documentation

Report the following information in the online Reporting Tool.

- Is an applicant's relationship to the institution's alumni or donors a factor that is positively considered in the institution's admission decisions? (required)
- Narrative and/or website URL providing an overview of the factors that are considered in the institution's admission decisions (optional)

Glossary

Average net price of attendance – The average yearly price actually charged to first-time, full-time students receiving student aid after deducting such aid. [Adapted from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).]

Low-income – Having or earning relatively little money compared to others. This may include individuals who are living in poverty, at risk of poverty, or eligible for or in receipt of need-based assistance. Low-income students may be identified by their receipt of or qualification for need-based assistance (e.g., US Pell or Canadian Full-Time/Part-Time Student Grants), a family income threshold (e.g., a local, national, or international poverty line), geographic origin (e.g., economically divested communities), or as otherwise tracked by the institution.

Predominant student body – The primary academic division (e.g., undergraduate or graduate) that enrolls the greatest share of the total student population. For example, the predominant student body of an institution with 5,000 undergraduate students, 2,000 graduate students, and 500 post-graduate students would be undergraduate students.