

Introduction and description of data

The purpose of this study is to determine the success rates of students taking English 110: College Composition I using high school GPA and how it compares to ACT English scores. The results of this study will also illustrate a potential appropriate substitute for current guidelines using high school GPA.

For the purposes of this study, 'passing' Engl 110 means a student has earned a C or above in the course in their first attempt of the course. Students were only included in this study if they graduated from a North Dakota high school 2016-2022, enrolled in an NDUS institution in the fall semester immediately following high school graduation, and took English 110 in that semester. This was done to remove the possible effect of students delaying enrollment in the course.

High school GPA and success in Engl 110

Figure 1 and Table 1 below shows the percent of students passing Engl 110 in their first attempt by high school cumulative GPA (scaled to 4.0).

Figure 1: Percent of ND high school students passing Engl 110, 2016-2022 graduates

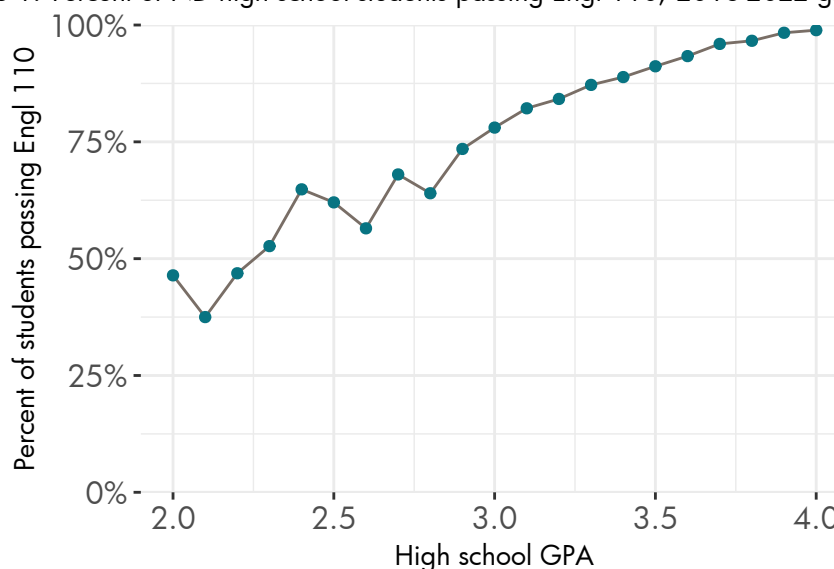


Table 1: Percent of ND high school students passing Engl 110 by high school GPA, 2016-2022 graduates

GPA	Student count	Engl 110 pass rate	GPA	Student count	Engl 110 pass rate
2.1	48	37.5%	3.1	331	82.2%
2.2	64	46.9%	3.2	373	84.2%
2.3	93	52.7%	3.3	359	87.2%
2.4	91	64.8%	3.4	404	88.9%
2.5	137	62.0%	3.5	385	91.2%
2.6	131	56.5%	3.6	421	93.3%
2.7	172	68.0%	3.7	396	96.0%
2.8	225	64.0%	3.8	415	96.6%
2.9	264	73.5%	3.9	422	98.3%
3.0	287	78.0%	4.0	363	98.9%

Comparing current ACT guidelines to high school GPA

Per NDUS policy 402.1.2, a student requires an ACT English score of 18 for placement into English 110. Figure 2 below shows that if we plot student ACT English scores compared to the average high school GPA for students with that score, students meeting the threshold historically set have approximately a 3.2 GPA or better (on average).

Figure 2: Average high school GPA for students by ACT English score, 2016-2022 graduates

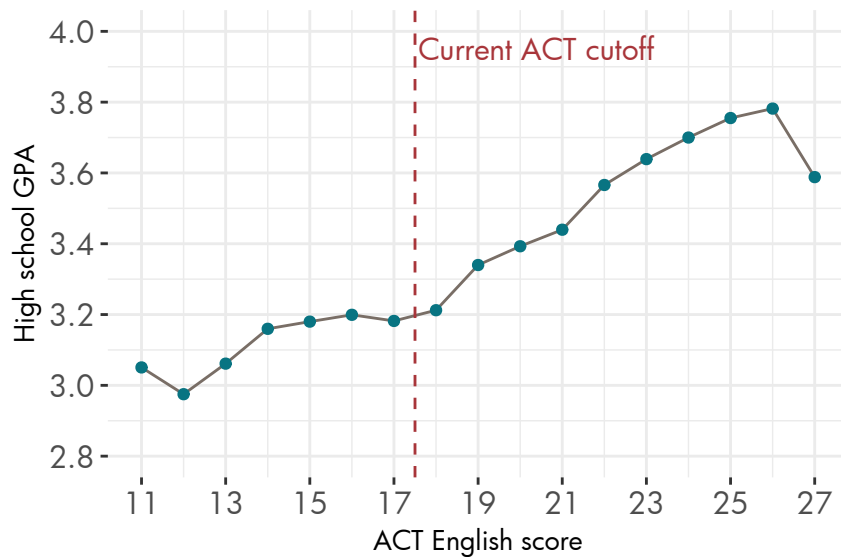


Figure 3: Engl 110 success rates by ACT English score, 2016-2022 graduates

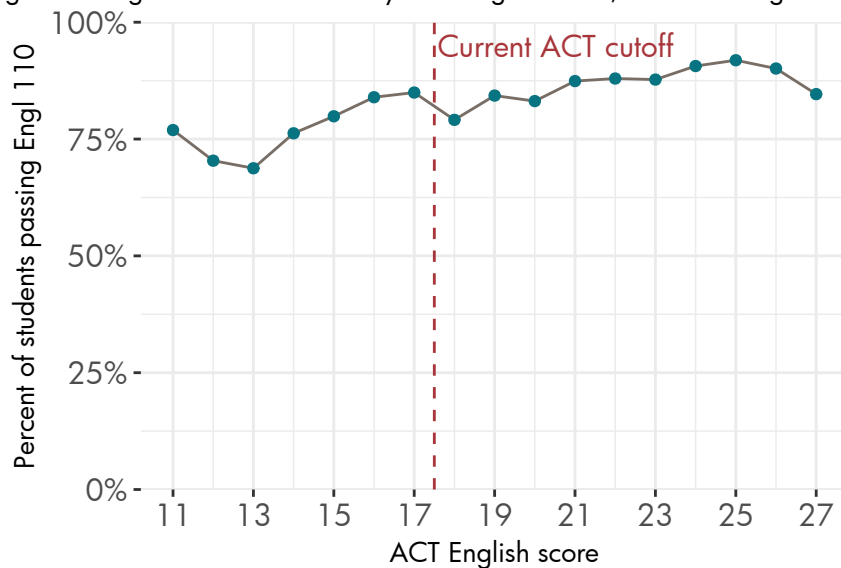


Figure 3 indicates that students with an ACT English score of 18 had a 79.1% success rate in Engl 110. However, this is a dip in the success rates when looking at strictly English ACT scores; students with a 17 or 19 had roughly an 85% success rate. This correlates well to the 84.5% success rate held by students with a 3.2 GPA, further indicating that a 3.2 GPA would likely be an appropriate substitute for an ACT English score of 18 at present.

Recommendation

Regardless of any GPA threshold set, strictly using a student's GPA as placement for Engl 110 must be done with caution as time goes on, as previous research conducted for the University System has shown that high school GPAs in North Dakota have become artificially inflated over time. Any threshold for placement should be re-evaluated regularly for appropriateness.