

## ENROLLING STUDENT-ATHLETES—CLASS ENTERING 2014

### Introduction

The [Office of Undergraduate Admissions](#) has the final decision-making authority for all candidates for undergraduate admission to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The admissions office follows policies established by the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina system and by the Board of Trustees of UNC-Chapel Hill. By trustee policy, the admissions office also applies procedures approved by the [Advisory Committee on Undergraduate Admissions](#), an appointed committee of Faculty Council.

Trustee policy provides for the admission of students who “give evidence of possessing special talents for University programs requiring such special talents.” The Advisory Committee has approved intercollegiate athletics as one such program and has allocated 160 spaces in each entering first-year class, on average, for students who will be participating. In addition to these 160 student-athletes, other student-athletes—typically between 40 and 50 first-year students per year—are admitted competitively and without regard to their talent in athletics. Together, these student-athletes comprise 4 to 5 percent of the entering first-year class.

To yield this class of student-athletes, approximately 450 candidates each year undergo preliminary admissions evaluations on the basis of their transcripts, test scores, and other information. As a result of these preliminary evaluations, the athletics department refines its list of candidates before presenting its recommendations and before the admissions office conducts a final and more detailed review.

During this final evaluation, all prospective student-athletes, like all candidates for undergraduate admission, are evaluated comprehensively, rigorously, and holistically by the admissions office. The primary criterion for admission is the student’s capacity to succeed academically at the University. Beyond this criterion, there is no formula for admission and no fixed standard that every student must meet. This approach is consistent with guidance provided by the Advisory Committee in its [Statement on the Evaluation of Candidates](#) and its [Guidelines for Standardized Testing](#).

### Committee on Special Talent

Under guidelines established by the Advisory Committee in 2012, the admissions office may offer admission to special-talent students, including special-talent student-athletes, provided they have predicted first-year grade-point averages of 2.3 or higher, fulfill all minimum course and admissions requirements of the UNC system, and meet the same community standards for behavior that all admitted students must meet.

Special-talent students who do not fulfill all of these expectations may be offered admission only if they are reviewed by the Committee on Special Talent, a faculty group established by the Advisory Committee. The [charge, procedures, and membership](#) of the Committee on Special Talent are approved by the Advisory Committee and published on the Faculty Council website.

By charter, a majority of the committee's voting members must be tenured or tenure-track faculty members in the College of Arts and Sciences.

### **About This Report**

This document is the second annual report on the admissions credentials of enrolling first-year student-athletes. The current report follows the same format of the [first report](#) and uses the same data definitions, except where edited for clarity.

The first report was developed by a working group of faculty members and administrators at the request of the Advisory Committee on Undergraduate Admissions, the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, and the Department of Athletics. The group was charged with developing a report that would foster transparency; protect the privacy of individual students; provide context for campus and national conversations about the academic preparation and success of student-athletes; enable assessment of admissions and other academic processes; disaggregate information meaningfully and fairly; encourage ongoing improvement; and provide leadership.

As the working group noted last year, any summary of admissions statistics offers at best a partial portrait, given the wide range of qualities that the University considers in admissions, most of which cannot be quantified. This report necessarily focuses on the two credentials—test scores and high-school grade-point averages—that are most easily measured. But it is worth remembering that these two credentials together predict less than a third of the variance in the eventual academic performance of students who enroll. Other factors, including the personal qualities enumerated in the [Statement on the Evaluation of Candidates](#), account for the rest.

### **Context**

Even scores and GPAs require context—comparisons that can help make the numbers meaningful. Because data about athletics admissions are not widely available, it is difficult if not impossible to compare the credentials of the student-athletes described in this report to those of student-athletes at other universities. Limited comparisons with other UNC-system schools are made possible by the intercollegiate athletics report that is presented annually to the Board of Governors; the most recent annual report is available in Appendix N in the [materials of the January 16, 2015, meeting](#) of the board. Please note that the information in the Board of Governors document cannot be compared directly to the data contained in the current report, since the two reports cover different periods of time and use different data and different data definitions.

Because most colleges and universities nationwide report the test scores of their student bodies to the United States Department of Education, it is possible to compare those scores to the scores earned by UNC-Chapel Hill student-athletes. Among the 175 student-athletes who enrolled at the University in 2014, the 25th percentile test score was 1030, and the 75th percentile was 1220. In comparison, in 2013 the median 25th percentile SAT score for the undergraduate student bodies at 48 public and private not-for-profit four-year institutions in North Carolina was 875, and the median 75th percentile score was 1090. Among UNC-system institutions, the median 25th percentile SAT score was 960, and the median 75th percentile score

was 1125. Among public universities in the Association of American Universities, the median 25th percentile SAT score was 1110, and the median 75th percentile score was 1340.

	Student-Athletes at UNC-Chapel Hill	Student Bodies at 48 NC Schools	Student Bodies at 16 UNC Schools	Student Bodies at 33 AAU Publics
25th %ile	1030	875	960	1110
75th %ile	1220	1090	1125	1340

To put the first of these comparisons another way: if the 175 enrolling student-athletes at UNC-Chapel Hill comprised their own university, their 25th percentile score would rank 10th among 48 four-year colleges and universities in North Carolina, behind the student bodies at four top-30 national universities and colleges, one other major research university, and four selective regional universities. At the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile, UNC-Chapel Hill student-athletes would rank 13th among the 48.

### History

The University has acted repeatedly over the last several years to strengthen student-athlete admissions. In Fall 2009, the Advisory Committee and the admissions office developed a written charge and written procedures for the Subcommittee on Athletics Admissions, the precursor to the Committee on Special Talent. The charge and procedures, which were approved formally by the Advisory Committee in Spring 2010, resulted in the subcommittee's becoming more systematic and detailed in its evaluation of individual candidates. The first students reviewed under the new charge and procedures enrolled in Fall 2010.

During Spring 2012 semester, the admissions office worked with the [Odum Institute](#) to study the extent to which various admissions credentials predicted the eventual academic performance of special-talent student-athletes once enrolled at the University. As a result of this consultation, the admissions office developed a formula, based on the actual academic performance of previously enrolled special-talent student-athletes, to predict the first-year grade-point average of prospective student-athletes.

In November 2012, the Advisory Committee on Undergraduate Admissions:

- Expanded the scope of the Subcommittee on Athletics Admissions to include all special-talent admissions;
- Approved a change in the membership of the renamed Committee on Special Talent that required the majority of the committee members to be tenured or tenure-track faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences; and
- Implemented a new and tougher standard for review by the Committee on Special Talent, based on the predicted grade-point average (PGPA) developed by the admissions office and the Odum Institute, effective for students enrolling in 2013.

Taken together, the reforms since Fall 2009 have strengthened the individualized evaluations afforded to all prospective student-athletes and grounded those evaluations more firmly in evidence. The reforms have also resulted in fewer enrollments of special-talent students with

PGPAs below the 2.3 threshold that requires faculty review. Had the evidence-based PGPA formula been in effect in 2006, 29 enrolling special-talent student-athletes would have required faculty review. In 2012, the number was 23, and in 2013 it was 14. In 2014, the number was nine.

## FACTS ABOUT ENROLLING STUDENT-ATHLETES—CLASS ENTERING 2014

- The first-year class that enrolled in 2014 included 175 student-athletes.
  - The 25th percentile high-school grade-point average (HS GPA) for these 175 students was 3.45, and the 75th percentile was 4.42.
  - The 25th percentile test score was 1030, and the 75th percentile was 1220.
  - Through the end of Fall 2014 semester, the median UNC-Chapel Hill grade-point average for these 175 students was 2.7.
- In regard to UNC-system requirements:
  - 173 of the 175 student-athletes met the testing component of the minimum admissions requirements (MAR) but not the HS GPA component.
  - 173 of the 175 met the HS GPA component of MAR but not the testing component.
  - 174 of the 175 met the minimum course requirements.
- 147 of these first-year student-athletes were admitted under special-talent policies and procedures approved by the Board of Trustees of UNC-Chapel Hill and the Advisory Committee on Undergraduate Admissions, a standing faculty committee appointed by the Chancellor.
  - The 25th percentile HS GPA for these 147 students was 3.35, and the 75th percentile was 4.11.
  - The 25th percentile test score was 1005, and the 75th percentile was 1190.
  - Through the end of Fall 2014 semester, the median UNC-Chapel Hill grade-point average for these 147 students was 2.6.
- Nine student-athletes required review by the Committee on Special Talent.
  - Six of these nine students were recruited to participate in “revenue” sports, which the University, following UNC-system guidelines, defines as football, men’s basketball, and women’s basketball.
  - The nine students requiring faculty review are the lowest number on record—down from 14 last year and down from 23 in each of the entering classes in 2011 and 2012.
  - Through the end of Fall 2014 semester, the median UNC-Chapel Hill grade-point average for these nine students was 2.3.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### **Who makes decisions regarding the admission of student-athletes?**

The [Office of Undergraduate Admissions](#) has the final decision-making authority for all candidates for undergraduate admission to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

### **What are the criteria for admission?**

All candidates for undergraduate admission, including all prospective student-athletes, are evaluated comprehensively and individually. The primary criterion for admission is the student's capacity to succeed academically at UNC-Chapel Hill. Beyond this criterion, there is no formula for admission and no fixed standard that every student must meet. Rather, as the Advisory Committee has instructed in its [Statement on the Evaluation of Candidates](#), the admissions office "evaluate[s] individual candidates rigorously, holistically, and sympathetically" and in light of "the ways in which each candidate will likely contribute to the kind of campus community that will enable the University to fulfill its mission."

### **Why are you reporting admissions data for student-athletes?**

For many years the Office of Undergraduate Admissions provided annual reports to Faculty Council about first-year and transfer admissions, including student-athlete admissions. Last year, at the request of the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, the Advisory Committee on Undergraduate Admissions, and the Department of Athletics, a working group developed a framework for a new report. The current report follows this framework. Data have been compiled using the definitions that appear below, and they have been validated by the Office of Undergraduate Admissions and the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment.

### **Has the admissions process for student-athletes changed?**

The University has acted repeatedly over the last several years to strengthen student-athlete admissions. In Fall 2009, the Advisory Committee and the admissions office developed a written charge and written procedures for the Subcommittee on Athletics Admissions, the precursor of the Committee on Special Talent. The charge and procedures, which were approved formally by the Advisory Committee in January 2010, resulted in the subcommittee's becoming more systematic and detailed in its evaluation of individual candidates. The first students reviewed under the new charge and procedures enrolled in Fall 2010.

During Spring 2012 semester, the admissions office worked with the [Odum Institute](#) to study the extent to which various admissions credentials predicted the eventual academic performance of special-talent student-athletes once enrolled at the University. As a result of this consultation, the admissions office developed a formula, based on the actual academic performance of previously enrolled special-talent student-athletes, to predict the first-year grade-point average of prospective student-athletes.

In November 2012, the Advisory Committee on Undergraduate Admissions:

- Expanded the scope of the Subcommittee on Athletics Admissions to include all special-talent admissions;
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- Implemented a new and tougher standard for review by the Committee on Special Talent, based on the predicted grade-point average (PGPA) developed by the admissions office and the Odum Institute, effective for students enrolling in 2013.

Taken together, the reforms since Fall 2009 have strengthened the individualized evaluations afforded to all prospective student-athletes and grounded those evaluations more firmly in evidence.

### **Why do you publish statistics for “special-talent” student-athletes?**

Both University policy and guidelines established by the faculty through the Advisory Committee on Undergraduate Admissions provide for the admission of students with special talent in athletics, music, and dramatic art. The Office of Undergraduate Admissions has for many years reported annually on the admission of these students. This report builds upon that tradition.

### **Why don’t you publish statistics for each individual sport?**

The working group that developed the framework for this report considered publishing statistics for each individual sport but was concerned that doing so would compromise the privacy of individual students, given the small number of students recruited by some of the sports each year. Readers interested in admissions statistics for the three “revenue” sports—which the UNC system defines as football, men’s basketball, and women’s basketball—may find them in the annual report on intercollegiate athletics received by the Board of Governors; as examples, please see the [2013-2014 report](#) and the [2012-2013 report](#).

### **Why doesn’t this report include more information about the academic performance of student-athletes once they’ve enrolled at the University?**

Neither the admissions office nor the Advisory Committee on Undergraduate Admissions is responsible for detailed reporting on academic performance. This report includes limited information about the performance of students enrolling in 2014 through Fall 2014 semester.

Other information about the academic performance and graduation rates of student-athletes is publicly available on the NCAA website ([NCAA Reports of Academic Performance](#)). The Atlantic Coast Conference also regularly produces reports of student-athletes who earn honor roll distinction ([ACC Honor Roll](#)). The annual report on athletics to the Board of Governors of the university system also includes data on academic performance at each of the sixteen constituent universities, including UNC-Chapel Hill; as examples, please see the [2013-2014 report](#) and the [2012-2013 report](#).

**How were admissions expectations for student-athletes established?**

The primary criterion for admission for all students, including all student-athletes, is the student's capacity to succeed academically at the University. Specific admissions expectations for student-athletes are informed by close attention to the actual academic performance of student-athletes who enrolled at UNC-Chapel Hill. In keeping with guidelines established by the Advisory Committee for all candidates for undergraduate admission, the admissions office does not impose thresholds or cutoffs—that is, scores or GPAs below which students are automatically denied admission or above which students are automatically admitted. Rather, the admissions office evaluates each prospective student-athlete individually and considers both quantitative and qualitative factors in its evaluation.

**How are standardized tests used in admissions?**

The makers of the SAT and the ACT encourage colleges and universities to use their tests in conjunction with other quantitative and qualitative factors. In keeping with this advice, the admissions policies of both the UNC system and UNC-Chapel Hill promote flexibility and fairness in the use of test results. In the UNC system, students who do not achieve designated scores on the SAT or ACT may still be offered admission, provided that faculty members are involved in the evaluation of their applications and provided they are approved by their respective chancellors. At UNC-Chapel Hill, the Advisory Committee has developed [Guidelines for Standardized Testing](#) that instruct the admissions office to consider test scores as “one factor among many.”

**Why do you report data about test scores using the SAT scale for Critical Reading and Math scores combined?**

Test scores are reported on the SAT scale for Critical Reading and Math scores combined so that the test score of every student is reported on a uniform scale. ACT composite scores are converted to the SAT scale for Critical Reading and Math using the [standard concordance table](#) approved by the College Board and ACT.

**Isn't it true that all of the students who require review by the Committee on Special Talent are recruited by the revenue sports?**

Five of the nine students who required faculty review were recruited by revenue sports as defined by the UNC system: football, men's basketball, and women's basketball. The other four students were recruited by four different non-revenue sports.

**How can we compare the credentials of UNC student-athletes to the credentials of student-athletes at other universities?**

We doubt that such a comparison is possible. Few universities publish data about student-athlete admissions. Even when universities do publish such data, they may define the population of student-athletes differently from the way that this report defines the population, or they may use different methods for calculating test scores and grade-point averages.

The Board of Governors of the UNC system publishes information annually about the academic credentials and performance of student-athletes at each of its sixteen constituent universities.



This information cannot be compared directly to the data contained in the current report, since the two reports use different data and different data definitions.

**Where may I read more about the University's admissions policies and practices, including those that pertain to student-athletes?**

More information about the University's admissions policies and practices may be found on the Undergraduate Admissions website ([Policies and Reports](#)). Information about policies and practices that pertain to students with special talent can be found in the [Undergraduate Bulletin](#). The 2013 report on athletics admissions is available in the [2012-2013 annual report](#) of the Advisory Committee on Undergraduate Admissions and also on the [Carolina Commitment website](#).

## KEY TERMS

The data summarized in this report have been validated by the Office of Undergraduate Admissions and the [Office of Institutional Research and Assessment](#) using the definitions and methods described below. In keeping with University policy and practice, and in order to protect the privacy and other rights of individual students, this report does not include aggregate educational data, including admissions credentials, for groups with five or fewer students.

**Enrolling.** Enrolled in the University as of the official census date, which for Spring and Fall semesters is the 10th day of class.

**Class entering 2014.** First-year students who enrolled for the first time at the University during any 2014 term: Spring, Summer I, Summer II, or Fall.

**All student-athletes.** The entire population of student-athletes in the first-year class. This group includes special-talent student-athletes (defined below) and other first-year student athletes who (a) were admitted and enrolled at the University without regard for their special talent in athletics and (b) appeared on the official Fall 2014 squad lists of the athletics department.

**Special-talent student-athletes.** All first-year student-athletes who enrolled at the University through the special-talent policies and procedures approved by the Board of Governors, the Board of Trustees, the Advisory Committee on Undergraduate Admissions, and/or the faculty Committee on Special Talent.

**High-school grade-point average.** Final high-school grade-point average as reported by the student's high school. The results only include official GPAs reported by the student's high school, and only when the school reports GPAs on a 4.0 scale; no estimated GPAs are included. To maintain the integrity of admissions data, the Office of Undergraduate Admissions does not estimate GPAs when high schools do not provide them, and it does not recalculate GPAs when high schools provide them on anything other than a 4.0 scale. For 2014, 72 percent of special-talent student-athletes attended high schools that reported official GPAs on a 4.0 scale.

**25th percentile.** The value below which 25 percent of all the values in the group fall.

**75th percentile.** The value below which 75 percent of all the values in the group fall.

**Median.** The value at the midpoint of the group.

**Test score.** Highest official score earned by each student on either the SAT (Critical Reading and Math combined) or the ACT Composite, with the ACT Composite converted to the SAT Critical Reading and Math scale using the [standard concordance table](#) approved by the College Board and ACT. This method of summarizing test scores best represents the way that scores are used by the University. Under [guidelines for standardized testing](#) approved by the Advisory Committee on Undergraduate Admissions, when any candidate for admission submits results from both the SAT and the ACT, the University considers the test with the stronger results.

**Minimum course requirements (MCR).** The [minimum course requirements](#) for all undergraduate candidates established by the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina system. These requirements include four courses in English; two courses in a language other than English; four courses in mathematics, including one course for which Algebra 2 is a prerequisite; three years of natural science, including one course in life or biological science, one course in physical science, and at least one course with a laboratory component; two courses in social science, including one course in United States history; and one additional course selected from any of these five core academic areas. Under UNC-system and UNC-Chapel Hill policy, students who do not meet MCR may be offered admission only after being reviewed and approved by the faculty Committee on Special Talent, the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, and the Chancellor.

**Minimum admissions requirements (MAR).** The [minimum admissions requirements](#) (MAR) for all undergraduate candidates established by the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina system. The current minimum requirements include a HS GPA of 2.5 and a score of 800 on the SAT (Critical Reading and Math combined) or 17 on the ACT. Under UNC-system and UNC-Chapel Hill policy, students who do not meet MAR may be offered admission only after being reviewed and approved by the faculty Committee on Special Talent, the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, and the Chancellor.

**Require review by the Committee on Special Talent.** In Fall 2012, the Advisory Committee on Undergraduate Admissions approved a framework for the admission of first-year special-talent students that categorized such students in three groups based largely upon their predicted first-year grade-point average (PGPA). Students with PGPA's below 2.3, students who do not meet MAR or MCR, and students who require review for possible violations of community standards may only be offered admission if they are first reviewed and recommended by the Committee on Special Talent. The new framework took effect for students enrolling in 2013; to enable comparisons over time, this same framework has been applied retrospectively to previous classes. Of the nine students requiring review in 2014, none required review for possible breaches of community standards.

**PGPA.** Predicted first-year grade-point average at UNC-Chapel Hill, calculated for each student-athlete based on the student's test score and NCAA core grade-point average and the athletics program (men's or women's) that the student will be joining. The PGPA formula, developed by the Office of Undergraduate Admissions and the [Odum Institute at UNC-Chapel Hill](#), is based on the actual first-year performance of UNC-Chapel Hill special-talent student-athletes and explains approximately 30 percent of the variance in their first-year GPAs. The formula will be revised periodically as new cohorts enter the University and complete their first year.

**NCAA core grade-point average.** Grade-point average calculated by the National Collegiate Athletic Association, the governing body of intercollegiate athletics, based on student-athlete performance in core academic courses (see [NCAA Guidelines](#)). Because the NCAA core GPA is calculated on a standard 4.0 scale and is available for every student-athlete, the NCAA core GPA is used in the calculation of PGPA. High-school grade-point-average is used for reporting purposes to maintain consistency with data reported for all entering first-year students.