

MEMORANDUM

14 February 2012

To: UH System Academic Advising and Transfer Network
From: Ruth O. Bingham, UHM's Pre-Health/Pre-Law Advising Center
Re: Exam scores in STAR

The Issue: Some of the UH campuses have asked that students' STAR academic records show exam scores entered into Banner, while other campuses have asked for limited access to the scores. The main points are:

1. Which exam scores can/should be posted onto STAR
2. Who has access to students' STAR academic records
3. Whether students have released their exam scores to those who have that access
4. Whether everyone who has that access has a need to know those exam scores

Background and Relevant Information:

1. **Exam scores.** There are two questions here: first, whether any exam scores should be part of students' STAR academic records; and second, if any, which ones? If any exam scores are to be posted on STAR, we need to be able to explain their relevance to students' UH academic record (i.e., advising, taking actions, transcripts, etc.).
 - a. If there is relevance, we need to clarify which scores are relevant and why. Perhaps the strongest argument is for posting general placement exam scores (e.g., COMPASS, etc.) because those scores help all of us guide the students' choices of courses. Although I don't agree, I can also see a weaker argument for posting admission exam scores (e.g., SAT, ACT, etc.) because (almost) all students have them and the scores presumably have some relevance as to students' academic readiness (although very little relevance to students' academic success).
 - b. I think it would be much more difficult to argue for posting program-specific scores (e.g., NLN, MCAT, PPST, GMAT, etc.), which are required only for admission and only for one of the many programs and campuses that can see STAR records.
2. **Access.** Access to STAR is very broad, which means that advisors/counselors on all campuses can see the STAR records not only of their own students but of all students on their campus and of all students in the UH System. The information that appears on a STAR academic record should be of relevance to those who have access to it. Program-specific exam scores have relevance only to that one program and should not be posted for all to see. Consider the following possible cases, and whether we can ensure that the non-relevant score does not influence the admissions decision?
 - a. A student who scored poorly on the LSAT and was not accepted to the School of Law applies to the College of Business: should the LSAT score be visible to Business' admissions officer?
 - b. A student was not admitted to UHM's Nursing program, so applies to KAP's Nursing program: should the NLN score for UHM be visible to KAP (which requires the TEAS exam)?

3. **Release of Scores.** Students release exam scores to specific schools, colleges, and programs, so their scores should not be released more broadly without the students' permission. This is why no LSAT or MCAT scores appear on students' STAR academic records. If we treat different program-specific exam scores differently, we will need some legal justification for doing so, and I cannot at the moment imagine any such justification.
4. **Need to Know.** This one seems self-explanatory; in short, I find it difficult to imagine why anyone outside the specific program needs to know students' program-specific exam scores.

Recommendation: The simplest, most straightforward solution is to post no exam scores on STAR. If that is not possible, then posted scores should be limited to placement exams (e.g., COMPASS, languages, etc.). If we are going to consider posting other exam scores, particularly program-specific scores, I recommend we first get legal counsel.

DRAFT