

# The Facts on Education

## Do good grades in high school guarantee post-secondary success?

High school grades are routinely used as the main criteria for admission to college or university. However, research shows that although high school grades alone are a moderate predictor of post-secondary success, nearly 75% of student success is predicted by other factors. These factors are often described as 21st century skills and they form a long list in the research literature. The key factors that contribute to successful completion of post-secondary education at the individual student level are motivation, good study habits, and the ability to manage stress. Others include critical thinking, problem solving, communication, collaboration, creativity, self-direction, digital literacy, and social responsibility. Successful students have also been shown to have clear educational goals as well as strong financial and social support networks.

While it is true that a good mix of all the above factors would be the best predictor of student success, it is likely that strengths in one area can make up for deficits in other areas. For example, students with lower grades in high school can be successful in university if they have clear goals about their future and seek out academic support from within the institution. On the other hand, scholarships and awards are often based on high school grades and financial difficulties are a common reason for dropping out of university, so students who will need financial support will find that high school grades are extremely important.

Although high school grades will be used to determine if a student is admitted into an academic program, beyond admission, the student's ability to navigate the academic, social, and financial geography of the post-secondary world will determine their success. Good high school grades do not guarantee post-secondary success; secondary schools and parents can be key players in helping to support the development of well rounded, independent thinking students who will be able to succeed at the post-secondary level.

For the research references that inform this issue, please visit:

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