



A comparative summary report of the ETS Proficiency Profile results for incoming freshman and graduating seniors during the 2019-2020 academic year.

ETS Proficiency Profile 2019-2020 Comparative Summary Report

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Table of Contents

Overview	2
Findings	4
Trends in Incoming Freshmen Performance	4
Trends in Graduating Seniors Performance	6
Freshmen/Senior Comparative Analysis	9
Freshmen Comparative Group Analysis	10
Graduating Seniors Comparative Group Analysis.....	12
Appendix A. Comparison Group Listings	14

Overview

The Office of University Assessment (OUA) administers the ETS Proficiency Profile (EPP) Test to Florida A&M University's incoming freshmen and graduating seniors to assess their general education knowledge and skills. The EPP evaluates critical thinking and college-level reading, writing, and mathematical skills in the contexts of the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. Colleges and universities nationwide use the EPP to assess general education outcomes and provide valuable data for accreditation, strategic planning, curriculum improvement, performance-based funding, benchmarking, and for investigating learning gains.

The EPP is comprised of multiple-choice questions arranged in blocks of three to eight items. Each section contains items that assess the same types of skills. The test is structured to mitigate the effect of test fatigue on student performance. Students receive a total score on the test that is reported on a scale of 400-500. Additionally, students receive a subscale score on a range from 100-130 on each skill area (i.e., Critical Thinking, Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Humanities, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences). Institutions also receive proficiency classifications that range from Level 1 (*not proficient*) to Level 3 (*proficient*) based on students' performance taken as a group in each skill dimension. A comprehensive overview of the proficiency levels for each skill area is provided on the OUA website.

This report is intended to summarize key findings related to students' performance on the EPP. The results are provided using data for three years (Fall 2017 to Spring 2020). The EPP is administered twice a year, to incoming freshmen in the Fall semester and to graduating seniors in the Spring semester. Within the past three years (Fall 2017 to Spring 2020), ($n = 1,053$) freshmen and ($n = 510$) seniors have participated in the EPP test.

Four central questions guided the preparation of this report:

1. How have incoming freshmen at FAMU performed on the ETS Proficiency Profile?
2. How have graduating seniors at FAMU performed on the ETS Proficiency Profile?

3. How does the performance of **incoming freshmen** at FAMU compare to the National Average, institutions in our Carnegie Classification, HBCU's, and institutions in the State University System of Florida taken as a group?
4. How does the performance of **graduating seniors** at FAMU compare to the National Average, institutions in our Carnegie Classification, HBCU's, and institutions in the State University System of Florida taken as a group?

Additionally, information on EPP performance by College/School is provided on the OUA website.

Findings

This section of the report highlights the findings for each of the guiding questions, which informed the preparation of this report.

Trends in Incoming Freshmen Performance

Guiding Question 1: How have incoming freshmen at FAMU performed on the ETS Proficiency Profile?

Descriptive techniques were employed in addressing this question. Specifically, mean and standard deviation of scores were computed for each skill dimension.

In Fall 2019, ($n = 164$) incoming freshmen attempted to take the EPP test. Results were calculated for ($n = 158$) of those students who completed 75% or more of the test items. Table 1 provides a summary of the results for the scaled scores. The mean total score for Fall 2019 cohort of incoming freshmen was 429.32 ($SD = 15.08$). The overall mean performance of FAMU freshmen was below the national average of 434.40 ($SD = 18.90$). The FAMU entering freshmen performance was compared to the performance of entering freshmen enrolled in all institution types administering the unproctored version of the EPP test. A review of the trends associated with the performance of FAMU incoming freshmen on the EPP revealed variability in overall mean performance and the skill dimension performance among entering freshmen. Table 1 provides a comprehensive overview of the performance of FAMU incoming freshmen on the EPP spanning 2017-2019.

Table 1

Trends in Incoming Freshmen Average Performance on ETS Proficiency Profile (2017-2019)

Skill Dimension	2017		2018		2019	
	N=406		N=412		N=158	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Total Score*	427.01	13.06	430.51	13.59	429.32	15.08
Critical Thinking	107.09	4.51	107.75	4.72	107.08	4.65
Reading	112.74	6.41	113.83	6.24	113.74	6.63
Writing	111.24	4.89	111.9	4.68	111.92	4.89
Mathematics	109.45	4.33	110.56	4.41	110.13	4.53
Humanities	112.38	5.2	112.92	5.54	112.67	5.47
Social Sciences	109.65	5.52	110.48	5.43	109.88	5.58
Natural Sciences	110.79	5.59	111.57	5.42	111.22	5.38

Figure 1 presents the FAMU entering freshmen mean total scores plotted against the national averages for the cohorts from Fall 2017 to Fall 2019.

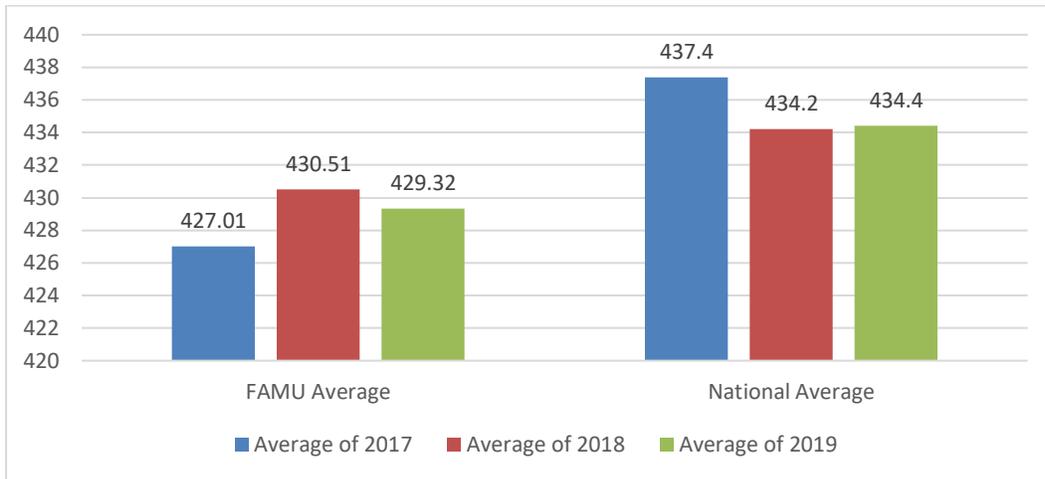


Figure 1. FAMU Freshmen Performance on ETS Proficiency Profile Compared to National Average for 2017 to 2019.

Similarly, the disaggregated data indicates that the mean performance of FAMU freshmen in each skill dimension fell below the national average. Please refer to Table 2 for a summary of these results. While the overall performance of FAMU entering freshmen lagged behind national averages, it should be noted that the largest difference was evidenced in the critical thinking skill dimension and the smallest difference was evidenced in the humanities skill dimension.

Table 2
FAMU Incoming Freshmen Average Scaled Scores for Fall 2019

	Range of Scores	FAMU		National		Difference Indicator
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Total Score	400 to 500	429.3	15.08	434.4	18.9	↓
Critical Thinking	100 to 130	107.1	4.65	109.1	5.9	↓
Reading	100 to 130	113.7	6.63	114.3	7.4	↓
Writing	100 to 130	111.9	4.89	112.3	5.4	↓
Mathematics	100 to 130	110.1	4.53	111.5	5.7	↓
Humanities	100 to 130	112.7	5.47	113	6.4	↓
Social Sciences	100 to 130	109.9	5.58	111.2	6.2	↓
Natural Sciences	100 to 130	111.2	5.38	112.8	6.2	↓

Note. ↓ Denotes FAMU Mean Performance below National Average. ↑ Denotes FAMU Mean Performance above National Average.

Table 3 presents the percentage of entering freshmen exhibiting proficiency in each skill dimension at FAMU and in the national sample from 2017 to 2019. A review of each skill dimension measured

on the ETS Proficiency Profile revealed that since 2017, the highest percentages of entering freshmen demonstrated proficiency in reading level 1 and writing level 1, followed by mathematics level 1. These results are similar to those of the national sample. Also, the lowest percentages of entering freshmen demonstrated proficiency in critical thinking, writing level 3, and mathematics at FAMU and nationally. The results of all skill dimensions measured by the test suggest a decrease or stagnancy in proficiency in almost all skill dimensions, suggesting serious concerns as it relates to the preparedness of incoming students entering FAMU.

Table 3
Trends in Incoming Freshmen Classified as Proficient (2017-2019)

Proficiency Levels	FAMU			National		
	2017 N=406	2018 N=412	2019 N=158	2017	2018	2019
Reading, Level 1	26%	29%	32%	38%	38%	38%
Reading, Level 2	8%	11%	11%	16%	16%	17%
Critical Thinking	0%	0%	0%	2%	2%	2%
Writing, Level 1	28%	38%	35%	40%	40%	41%
Writing, Level 2	6%	7%	8%	11%	12%	12%
Writing, Level 3	2%	2%	3%	3%	4%	4%
Mathematics, Level 1	18%	26%	21%	34%	35%	36%
Mathematics, Level 2	4%	7%	6%	15%	16%	16%
Mathematics, Level 3	1%	0%	2%	3%	3%	3%

Trends in Graduating Seniors Performance

Guiding Question 2: How have graduating seniors at FAMU performed on the ETS Proficiency Profile?

Descriptive techniques were employed in addressing this question. Specifically, mean and standard deviation of scores were computed for each skill dimension.

In Spring 2020, ($n = 227$) graduating seniors took the EPP. Results were calculated for the 204 graduating seniors who completed 75% or more of the test. Table 4 provides a summary of the FAMU results for the scaled scores for graduating seniors between 2018 and 2020. There was an increase in mean total score between 2018 and 2019, from 431.11 ($SD = 14.42$) to 432.71 ($SD = 19.36$),

respectively. However, there was a slight decrease in mean total score in 2020 ($M = 432.50$, $SD = 17.72$).

Table 4

Trends in Graduating Seniors Average Performance on ETS Proficiency Profile (2018-2020)

Skill Dimension	2018		2019		2020	
	N=216		N = 143		N = 204	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Total Score	431.11	14.42	432.71	19.36	432.50	17.72
Critical Thinking	107.94	5.11	108.82	6.12	108.54	5.88
Reading	114.16	6.56	114.43	7.49	114.38	7.14
Writing	112.13	4.84	111.8	5.63	112.43	5.07
Mathematics	110.36	4.18	111.25	5.76	110.64	5.19
Humanities	113.01	5.81	113.01	6.20	113.27	5.94
Social Sciences	110.85	5.50	111.03	6.38	111.02	6.04
Natural Sciences	111.47	5.55	112.81	6.14	112.13	6.23

Similar to the results for incoming freshmen, FAMU graduating seniors' total score was below the national average for 2018 and 2019. As of the preparation of this report, the national data for 2020 was not available. Figure 2 presents the FAMU graduating senior mean total scores plotted against the national averages for the cohorts from Spring 2018 to Spring 2020.

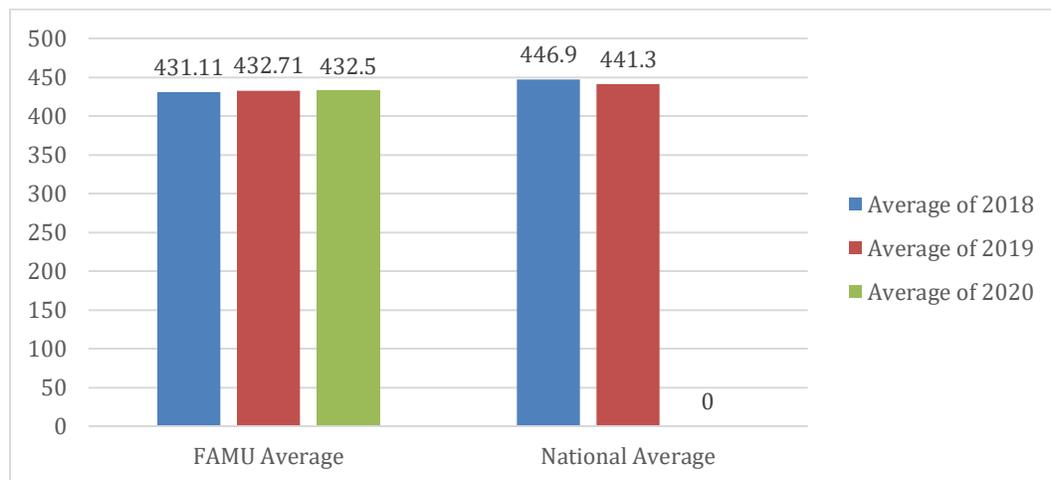


Figure 2. FAMU Senior Performance on ETS Proficiency Profile Compared to National Average for 2018 and 2019.

Please refer to Table 5 for a summary of FAMU graduating seniors' performance in each skill dimension in comparison to the national averages.

Table 5

*FAMU Graduating Seniors Average Scaled Scores for Spring 2020 *pending release of 2020 comparative data*

	Range of Scores	FAMU		National		Difference Indicator
		M	SD	M	SD	
Total Score	400 to 500	432.5	17.72			
Critical Thinking	100 to 130	108.54	5.88			
Reading	100 to 130	114.38	7.14			
Writing	100 to 130	112.43	5.07			
Mathematics	100 to 130	110.64	5.19			
Humanities	100 to 130	113.27	5.94			
Social Sciences	100 to 130	111.02	6.04			
Natural Sciences	100 to 130	112.13	6.23			

Note. ↓ Denotes FAMU Mean Performance below National Average. ↑ Denotes FAMU Mean Performance above National Average.

A review of each skill dimension measured on the EPP for graduating seniors revealed declines in the percentage of students exhibiting proficiency in reading level 1, writing level 3, and mathematics levels 1 through 3. Meanwhile proficiency percentages remained steady in reading level 2 and critical thinking. Since 2019, there have been small increases in writing level 1 and 2 proficiency. Please refer to Table 6 for a comprehensive overview of these results.

Table 6

Trends in Graduating Seniors Classified as Proficient (2018-2020)

Proficiency Levels	2018	2019	2020
	N=216	N=143	N=204
Reading, Level 1	31%	40%	37%
Reading, Level 2	13%	13%	13%
Critical Thinking	1%	1%	1%
Writing, Level 1	36%	36%	37%
Writing, Level 2	10%	8%	10%
Writing, Level 3	1%	4%	3%
Mathematics, Level 1	24%	33%	25%
Mathematics, Level 2	5%	13%	11%
Mathematics, Level 3	1%	5%	4%

Freshmen/Senior Comparative Analysis

Figures 3 and 4 provides a comparison of freshmen results to those of seniors assuming four and six years to time of graduation. Assuming a four-year graduation for the cohort of incoming freshmen who took the test in 2014 and 2015, overall mean performance between incoming freshmen and graduating seniors showed an increase. Conversely, assuming a four-year graduation for the cohort of students entering in 2016, there was a slight decrease in average total score for incoming freshmen in 2016 ($M = 432.94$) and graduating seniors in 2020 ($M = 432.5$). Assuming a six-year graduation there was an increase for the 2013-2019 and 2014-2020 cohorts, while there was a decrease for the 2012-2018 cohort.

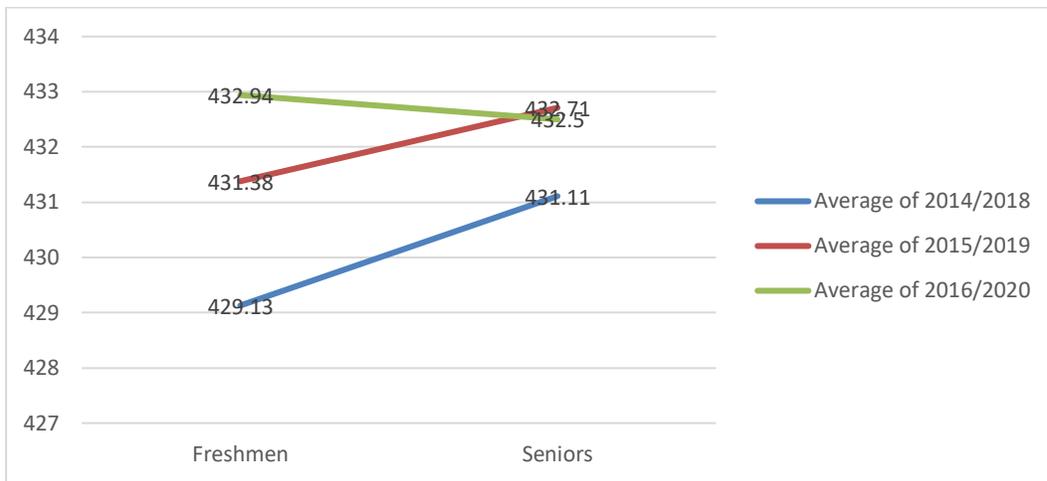


Figure 3. Comparison assuming 4-year Graduation.

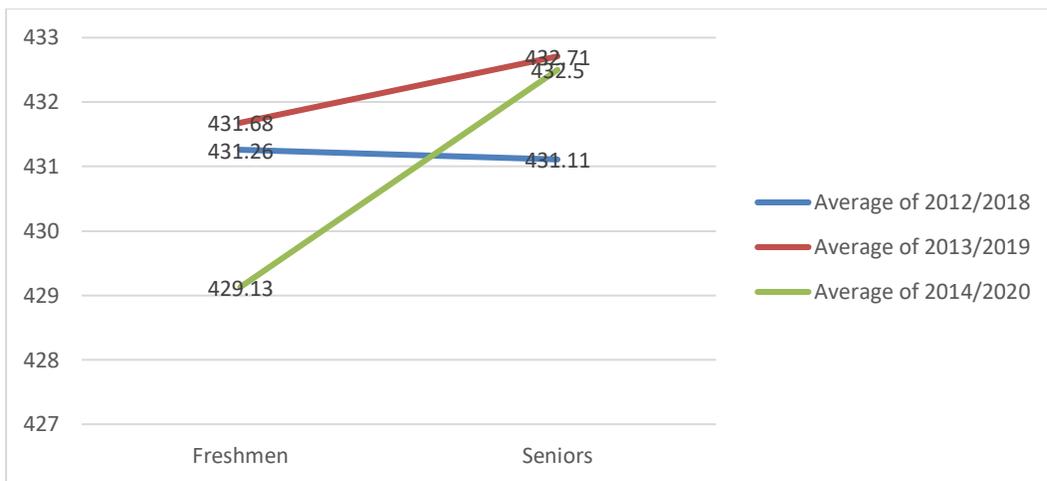


Figure 4. Comparison assuming 6-year Graduation.

Freshmen Comparative Group Analysis

Guiding Question 3: How does the performance of incoming freshmen at FAMU compare to the National Average, institutions in our Carnegie Classification, HBCU's, and institutions in the State University System of Florida taken as a group?

First, comparison groups were identified then descriptive techniques were employed in addressing this guiding question. Specifically, mean and standard deviation of scores were computed for each skill dimension. Additionally, the percentage of incoming freshmen classified as proficient in each skill dimension was reported.

The Carnegie classification of institutions was developed based on the institution's basic classification (Doctoral/Research University I & II). The HBCU list of institutions was developed based on institutions land grant status. Once institutions were identified, further work was required in an effort to ascertain whether they participated in the EPP. This process helped to narrow the relevant group of institutions for comparison. Relative to institutions in the State of Florida, all participating institutions were included in the comparison group. Please refer to Appendix A for a list of all institutions in the comparison groups.

Following, is a comparative summary of the performance of FAMU freshmen from Fall 2014 to Fall 2019 and that of the ETS provided National Averages (July 2014-June 2019), Carnegie classification institutions (July 2014-June 2019), HBCUs taken as a group (July 2015-June 2019), and participating institutions in the State of Florida (July 2015-June 2019). The data provided in Tables 7 and 8 were taken from the custom comparative data report and annual comparative report generated by ETS. These reports provided descriptive statistics based on the number of students who completed the ETS Proficiency Profile between July 2014 and June 2020. A rolling average is utilized to normalize the scores.

As can be discerned from the data provided in Table 7, the mean score of FAMU freshmen, total score and for the skill dimensions, trailed those of the national average, the Carnegie comparison group, and the Florida comparison groups. However, FAMU freshmen taken as a group outperformed the HBCU comparison group on mean total score and mean skill dimension scores. Please refer to Table 8 for a comprehensive overview of percentage of students exhibiting proficiency in each skill dimension.

Table 7

Comparative Summary of the Performance of FAMU Freshmen to Comparison Groups (2014-2019)

Skill Dimension	National Average		Carnegie Comparison Group		HBCU Comparison Group		Florida Peer Group		FAMU Cumulative Results	
	N=35,524		N=2,552		N=10,557		N=5,532		N=2,445	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Total Score	434.4	18.9	434.5	18.7	427.50	15.8	433.9	17.4	430.52	15.42
Critical Thinking	109.1	5.9	109.1	5.9	107.3	5.0	108.9	5.6	107.70	5.05
Reading	114.3	7.4	114.7	7.3	113.1	6.7	114.6	7.0	113.72	6.68
Writing	112.3	5.4	112.5	5.3	110.7	5.0	112.4	5.2	111.97	4.97
Mathematics	111.5	5.7	111.7	5.7	109.5	4.7	111.3	5.4	110.60	4.82
Humanities	113.0	6.4	113.5	6.3	111.2	5.6	112.9	6.0	112.76	5.67
Social Sciences	111.2	6.2	111.4	6.1	109.7	5.5	111.0	5.9	110.27	5.60
Natural Sciences	112.8	6.2	112.7	6.3	111.2	5.4	112.7	6.0	111.63	5.83

Table 8

Comparative Summary of the Proficiency of FAMU Freshmen to Comparison Groups (2014-2019)

	National Average	Carnegie Peer Group	HBCU Peer Group	Florida Peer Group	FAMU Cumulative Results
Reading, Level 1	38%	38%	34%	41%	31%
Reading, Level 2	17%	17%	11%	16%	12%
Critical Thinking	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Writing, Level 1	41%	39%	31%	41%	35%
Writing, Level 2	12%	12%	6%	11%	8%
Writing, Level 3	4%	4%	2%	4%	3%
Mathematics, Level 1	36%	34%	24%	35%	27%
Mathematics, Level 2	16%	16%	7%	14%	8%
Mathematics, Level 3	3%	4%	1%	2%	1%

Graduating Seniors Comparative Group Analysis

Guiding Question 4: How does the performance of graduating seniors at FAMU compare to the national average, institutions in our Carnegie Classification, HBCU's, and institutions in the State University System of Florida taken as a group?

The same approach outlined to address the third guiding question was employed in the identification and development of the comparison group of institutions. See Appendix B for a list of institutions that comprised the comparison groups. Descriptive techniques were employed in addressing this question. This information will be updated with the release of the annual comparative data from ETS.

APPENDIX

Appendix A. Comparison Group Listings

Following are the comparison groups used in the analyses.

Table A
Carnegie Comparison Group

Carnegie Peer Group	
Freshmen	Seniors
Arizona State University	
Bowie State University	
Colorado State University- Global Campus	
Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University	
Northern Arizona University - Flagstaff	
Saint Philips College	
Seattle University	
Texas A&M University - San Antonio	
University of Alaska Fairbanks	
University of Nevada	
University of South Florida - Sarasota-Manatee	
Walden University	

Table B
HBCU Comparison Group

HBCU Peer Group	
Freshmen	Seniors
Alabama A & M University	
Alabama State University	
Benedict College	
Bennett College for Women	
Elizabeth City State University	
Fisk University	
Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University	
Norfolk State University	
Spelman College	

Table C
 Florida Comparison Group

SUS/Florida	
Freshmen	Seniors
The Baptist College of Florida	
Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University	
Florida International University	
Florida Polytechnic University	
Palm Beach Atlantic University	
Southeastern University	
University of North Florida	
University of South Florida - Sarasota-Manatee	
University of South Florida - St. Petersburg	
University of Tampa	
Webber International University	