The 411 on ELC

Eligibility in the Local Context

April 29, 2025

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Overview

- Overview of ELC & requirements
- School participation requirements
- The ELC portal
- FAQs
- Resources & Q&A

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1999	2000–2011	2012-present
UC Regents endorse ELC	Applied to the top 4%	Applies to the top 9%

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Eligibility in the Local Context (ELC) is a program by which the University of California identifies top-performing California resident high school students. Unlike the broader statewide pathway, which seeks to recognize top students from throughout the state, ELC draws qualified students from among the top of each participating high school.

Brief History Lesson:
- In 1999, the UC Regents endorsed ELC as a new path to eligibility and spelled out the requirements for the program.
- From 2000 to 2011, ELC policy guaranteed first-year/freshmen admission to the top 4 percent of graduates from each participating high school.
- Starting with the 2012 admission cycle, the ELC policy was expanded from the top 4 percent to the top 9 percent.

School participation in ELC is voluntary, but the majority of California public and private schools have participated since the program's inception in 2000. The program has continued to grow with over 1,700 schools set to participate in 2025.

ELC goals

- Increase pool of UC-eligible students.

- Help UC meet guidelines of the CA Master Plan to enroll the top one-eighth of public high school graduates.

- Recognize and reward the academic accomplishment of students who have made the most of the opportunities available to them.

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The ELC policy was designed to increase the pool of UC-eligible students, help meet the University's role under the California Master Plan to enroll the top one-eighth of public high school graduates, and to recognize and reward the academic accomplishment of students who have made the most of the opportunities available to them.

ELC overview

Recognition within the local context

Top 15% of rising seniors receive an outreach letter from UC

ELC status is one of the 13 comprehensive review factors for admissions

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As noted earlier, ELC is designed to recognize and reward students that have made the most of the opportunities available to them at their high school -- in that local, school context. If a school does not offer many AP or honors courses, the top 9 percent may still receive ELC status even if their overall GPA may be lower than students who attend high schools where there may be greater opportunities to boost their GPA.

Each participating high school is asked to annually send student information for the top 15 percent of rising seniors. For these students, UC sends an outreach letter in the fall that congratulates the student on their academic achievement to date. The letter provides information about the UC admissions process and financial aid and encourages consideration of applying to UC campuses. The letter notes that UC will waive application fees for up to four campuses for qualified students.

While this outreach letter does not guarantee the student will be designated with ELC status after they apply to UC, we hear from families very proud to have received the letter and many students are pleased to have their hard work recognized.

Lastly, if a student is designated in the top 9%, that ELC-status is value added in the comprehensive review process for admission.

Benefits of ELC for schools

ELC participation can help stimulate a college-going culture, especially at schools that historically do not send many graduates to UC.
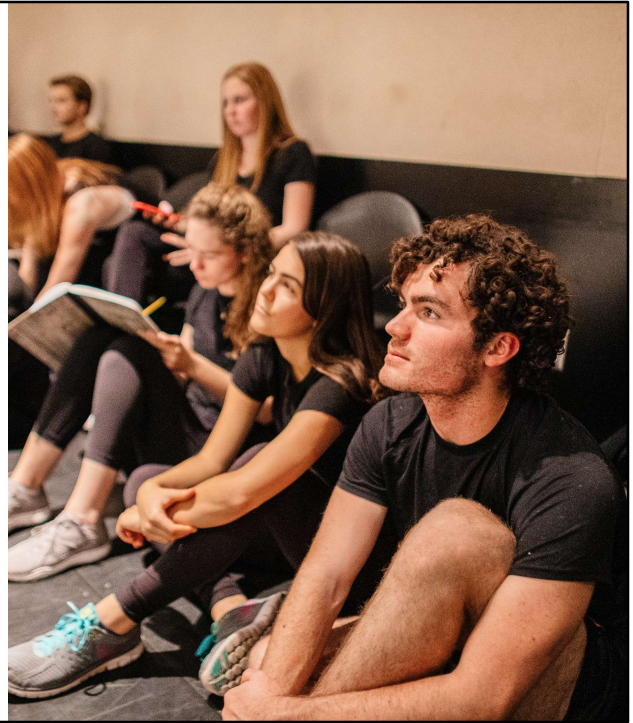
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Finally, school ELC participation may help stimulate a college-going culture. All UC applicants from an ELC-participating school have a chance to meet the ELC criteria and receive the benefits of the ELC designation.

ELC guarantee

- Students designated in the top 9 percent statewide or in the local context (ELC) are guaranteed a spot within UC.

- This does **not** guarantee them admission to the campus of their choice.

- If offered admission via the referral process, applicants will be able to choose from an available major at that campus.

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For students who are ultimately designated in the top 9 percent via ELC after applying, it can be considered value-added in the admissions process since ELC is one of the 13 comprehensive review factors that UC campuses can consider when reviewing applications.

As noted earlier, ELC is one of the two guarantee programs we have for California residents. UC applicants in the top 9 percent statewide or in the top 9 percent by the local path – ELC – receive the same UC guarantee; if not admitted by any of their UC campus choices, a spot at a campus with space will be offered. The UC guarantee is to the system, not necessarily the campus of choice. In recent years, the only campus with space has been UC Merced.

This is known as the "referral process" and takes place in early to mid-April once all the first-year admission decisions have been reported. Students should look for an email regarding the enrollment opportunity and follow the time-sensitive instructions outlined in the email carefully.

ELC status is determined automatically when the UC application is submitted.

California residents who apply from an ELC-participating high school will be designated ELC if they:

✓ Have completed the specific pattern of 11 A-G courses prior to 12th grade

✓ Have a UC-calculated GPA that meets or exceeds the 9 percent benchmark GPA for that high school.

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Let's talk a bit about how students are ultimately granted ELC status – again, that is being identified as in the top 9% of their high school.

ELC status is determined by the UC application system when the application is submitted. All UC applicants from participating schools will automatically be screened for ELC – no extra steps need to be taken.

California resident UC applicants receive ELC status if they:
- attend an ELC-participating high school,
- have taken a specific pattern of 11 A-G courses prior to 12th grade, and
- have a UC-calculated GPA that meets or exceeds the nine percent benchmark GPA calculated by UC for their high school.

ELC status is only assessed if the applicant meets the CA resident for admission purposes definition. International students, even if attending a CA high school, are ineligible for ELC.

Required course pattern for ELC

- ✓ History (1 year)
- ✓ English (2 years)
- ✓ Mathematics (2 years)
- ✓ Science (1 year)
- ✓ Language other than English (1 year)
- ✓ Other A-G courses (4 years)

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To be considered for ELC, students must have completed 11 specific A-G courses prior to 12th grade. The specific course pattern for ELC includes courses taken in 9th grade and the summer after 11th grade.

The Visual and Performing Arts course requirement is not included in the ELC criteria and can be taken in 12th grade.

ELC students also must meet UC's minimum first-year admission requirements.
(15 specific A-G courses by the end of 12th grade, and at least a 3.0 UC GPA which is weighted and capped and based on 10th/11th A-G course grades)

Benchmark GPA

- Represents the GPA cutoff for the expected top 9 percent of that high school's graduating class.

- Weighted and uncapped GPA.

- No lower than a 3.0 but may be higher than a 4.0.

- Reset every **other** year.

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The 9 percent benchmark used in the ELC determination represents the GPA cutoff for the expected top 9 percent of the school's graduating class, according to UC calculations.

This GPA is calculated on grades in approved A-G courses taken by students in the 10th and 11th grades, weighted for honors courses. The 9 percent benchmark GPAs are weighted and **uncapped** (no limit to extra grade points for UC-approved honors courses). This is different than standard weighted and capped GPA used for the minimum admission requirement. In the ELC determination, the benchmark GPA is compared to the applicant's UC GPA that is *also* weighted and uncapped, based on the courses and grades entered on the UC application.
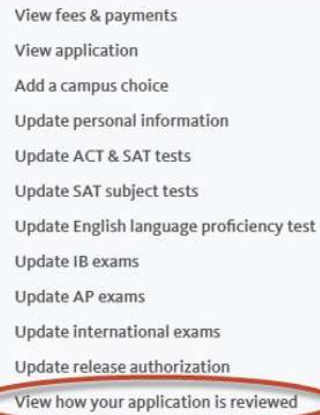
For the ELC determination, the system compares the applicant's weighted and uncapped UC GPA to the 9 percent benchmark GPA school of attendance at the end of 11th grade.

The lowest benchmark GPA is 3.0. Some schools have benchmark GPAs above 4.0, if their students take a lot of AP, honors, or college courses earning extra grade points.

Transcripts are collected in the fall from ELC participating schools to allow inclusion of course work taken the summer before 12th grade. Transcripts received one fall are used to reset the benchmark GPAs for the next year's cycle, so the benchmark GPAs are always based on past transcripts. In other words, the benchmark GPAs are based on transcripts from a previous class than the class applying to UC that year. We collect transcripts from the top 15 percent, rather than top 9 percent, as this allows us to have more transcript records to work with since we know high schools have different GPA practices.

How applicants learn they have ELC status

After submitting their UC application, students can log in to view their ELC status in the "*View how your application is reviewed*" section.

View fees & payments
View application
Add a campus choice
Update personal information
Update ACT & SAT tests
Update SAT subject tests
Update English language proficiency test
Update IB exams
Update AP exams
Update international exams
Update release authorization
View how your application is reviewed

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While students may have received that letter from UC earlier in the fall if they were included in your top 15% list, how do students know whether or not they are in the top 9%?

UC applicants learn they have ELC status by logging back in to their submitted application to view messages in the "View how your application is reviewed" section.

Top 9 percent messaging

Campuses review each individual application carefully and consider more than just grades. There are multiple factors that all UC campuses weigh, although campuses often apply these factors differently. To review these factors ⧉ , visit UC's admission website.

You rank in the top 9 percent of your graduating class according to UC calculations. We refer to this as "Eligibility in the Local Context" or ELC. If you meet the minimum admission requirements and aren't admitted to any UC campus to which you applied, you will be offered a spot at another campus if space is available. For more information about ELC, visit the "Local Path" ⧉ page on UC's admission website.

Return to "Application status"

Campuses review each individual application carefully and consider more than just grades. There are multiple factors that all UC campuses weigh, although campuses often apply these factors differently. To review these factors ⧉ , visit UC's admission website.

You rank in the top 9 percent of California high school students, based on your A-G course totals, UC GPA and our admissions index ⧉ . If you meet the minimum admission requirements and aren't admitted to any UC campus to which you applied, you will be offered a spot at another campus if space is available.

Return to "Application status"

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Many students are in the top 9 percent by both the statewide and local path (ELC) and in these instances only the ELC message is displayed.

This is the message that displays if the applicant has been designated as ELC. We note that campuses consider many factors and can weigh these factors differently. We also note that ELC status guarantees a spot at another campus if not admitted by their campus choices.

Unlike the ELC message that states the applicant is in the top 9 percent of their graduating class, the top 9 percent statewide message notes the applicant is in the top 9 percent of California high school students. Similar to the positive ELC message, we note that being in the top 9 percent by the statewide index guarantees a spot at another campus if not admitted by their campus choices.

Not in the top 9 percent

Campuses review each individual application carefully and consider more than just grades. There are multiple factors that all UC campuses weigh, although campuses often apply these factors differently. To review these factors ☑ , visit UC's admission website.

Return to "Application status"

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Applicants that are not in the top 9 percent by either the statewide path or local path (ELC) see a message that notes that many factors are considered and links to the "How applications are reviewed" page on the admissions website.

ELC is not a requirement for admission, but is value-added during the comprehensive review process. It is also one of 13 factors that campuses consider, so ELC designation does not mean a student will be accepted to any particular campus that they apply to.

School participation requirements

Public or private schools must:

✓ Be located in California.

✓ Possess an American Testing Program (ATP) code.

✓ Have a full list of UC-approved courses for the most recent academic cycle.

Participating schools must:

✓ Forward student contact information annually.

✓ Submit student transcript data.

✓ Obtain parental authorization.

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To be eligible to participate in the ELC program, public or private schools must:

- be located in California,
- possess an American Testing Programs (ATP) code, and
- have a full list of UC-approved courses for the most recent academic cycle

In order to participate in ELC, schools must:
- Provide the names and addresses of the top 15 percent of rising seniors each summer, following the student's junior year. As noted earlier, this information is used to provide targeted outreach to these students in the fall.
- When it is time for a school's 9 percent benchmark GPA to be reset, the ELC instruction email will note transcripts are also needed for the same population of rising seniors the school identified as being in the top 15 percent of their class.
- Obtain parental authorization (which we'll discuss next)

Parent/guardian authorization

- Privacy laws protect students' personal data and transcripts. In order to legally release this information to UC as part of the ELC program, schools must have authorization from the parents or legal guardian(s).

- Schools are responsible for obtaining authorization prior to forwarding the student information to UC.

- Sample authorization letters and forms are provided in the ELC portal.

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Schools should obtain parent or guardian authorization prior to submitting student data to ELC, to protect the high school. This task should be started in the spring early enough to allow submitting the student data by the June 30th deadline and avoid under or late submission. The authorizations are kept for the school's records and not forwarded to UC. Examples of authorization letters and forms can be found in the ELC school portal

Submitting student data

- Participating schools must submit student data for the top 15% of rising seniors annually by **June 30**.

- The top 15% is based on your school's own determination or ranking process.

All students applying from an ELC-participating high school are assessed for ELC status automatically upon submission of the UC application, even if not included in your top 15% list.

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Each year your school will be required to send student contact information for the top 15% of rising seniors by June 30.

Most schools perform a rough ranking of juniors in the spring, in order to identify those most likely to be in the top 15% of their class after final junior year grades are entered and these are the students they target for getting the parent authorization to submit student data to ELC. There are several methods for ranking students, and you may choose the method that is most appropriate to your school policies and local capabilities. There is no "wrong" way for your school to rank its students for submission to the ELC program, as long as your ranking identifies the top 15 percent of students in the rising senior class.

All students applying to UC from an ELC school are assessed for ELC, even if not on the school's list as a top student due to lack of parent permission or other issue.

Submitting transcripts

- About ½ of ELC-participating schools are selected each year to submit transcripts for benchmark GPA resetting.

- Transcripts are due **September 30** to allow for the inclusion of summer after 11th grade coursework.
    - Exception: Schools first joining ELC must submit transcripts by June 30.

- The ELC school portal includes instructions for mailing transcripts or submitting electronically.
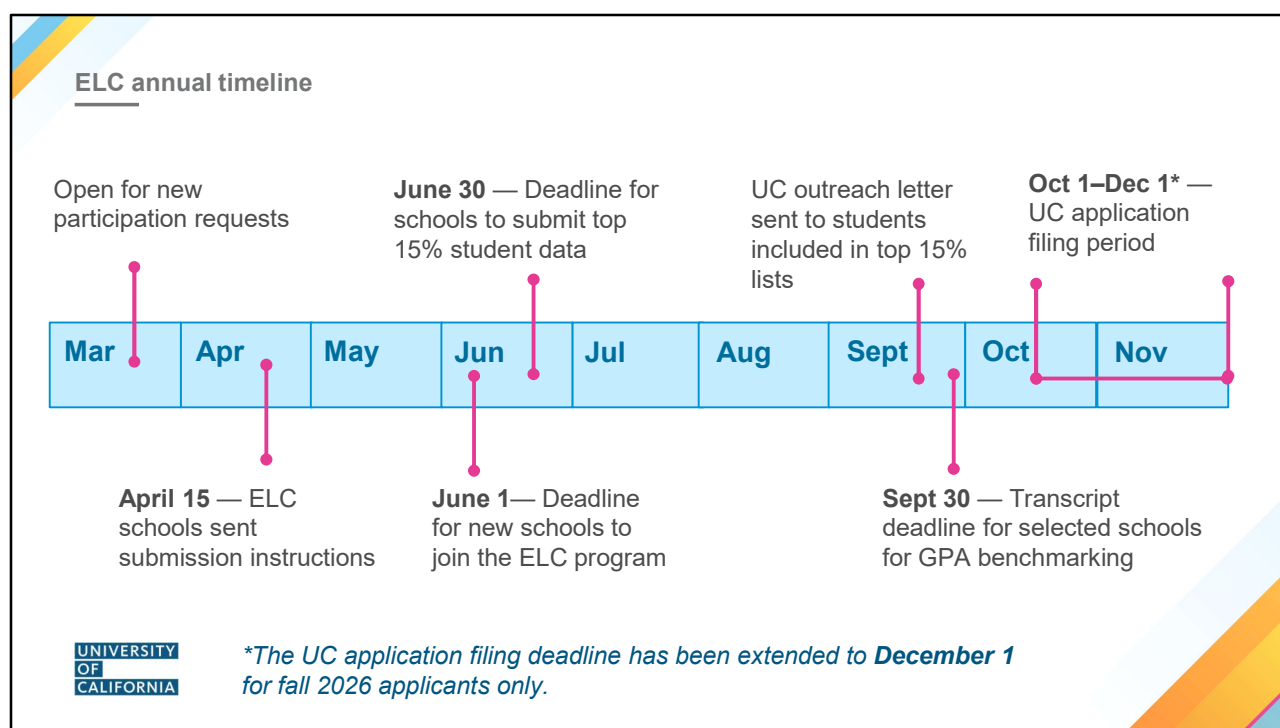
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> **To allow UC to calculate the 9 percent benchmark GPA, schools will submit transcripts for the top 15% of rising seniors based on your own determination or ranking process.**

The benchmark GPA is calculated using the transcript data shared by your high school. As noted earlier, the benchmark GPA is recalculated every other year, so your school does not need to send transcripts annually.

If requested for GPA recalculation, you will submit transcripts within the ELC school portal. You'll find instructions for submitting transcripts electronically or mailing them if you choose. This must be done by September 30, giving time for you to include coursework that may be taken after 11th grade. However, if you are first joining ELC, you must submit transcripts by June 30th.

As with the student data, you will submit transcripts for the top 15% of your rising seniors based on your own ranking process.

ELC annual timeline

Open for new participation requests

June 30 — Deadline for schools to submit top 15% student data

UC outreach letter sent to students included in top 15% lists

Oct 1–Dec 1* — UC application filing period

Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov

April 15 — ELC schools sent submission instructions

June 1— Deadline for new schools to join the ELC program

Sept 30 — Transcript deadline for selected schools for GPA benchmarking

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The UC application filing deadline has been extended to **December 1 for fall 2026 applicants only.*

Mid- April -- the annual ELC submission instructions are sent by email to the ELC contact(s) at participating high schools. The instruction includes a school-specific code the school uses when accessing the ELC data submission website.
- The ELC instructions were emailed on April 15 to the school's ELC contact in our records. If you are the ELC contact and did not see the email, please check your spam or junk folder to see if that is where the email landed. You can also contact the ELC program to get the email resent to you.

June 1 - Eligible schools that have not participated in ELC can join as late as June 1, by contacting ELC@ucop.edu

June 30 - all ELC schools submit the names, mailing and email addresses, and date of births for students in the top 15 percent of their rising senior class.
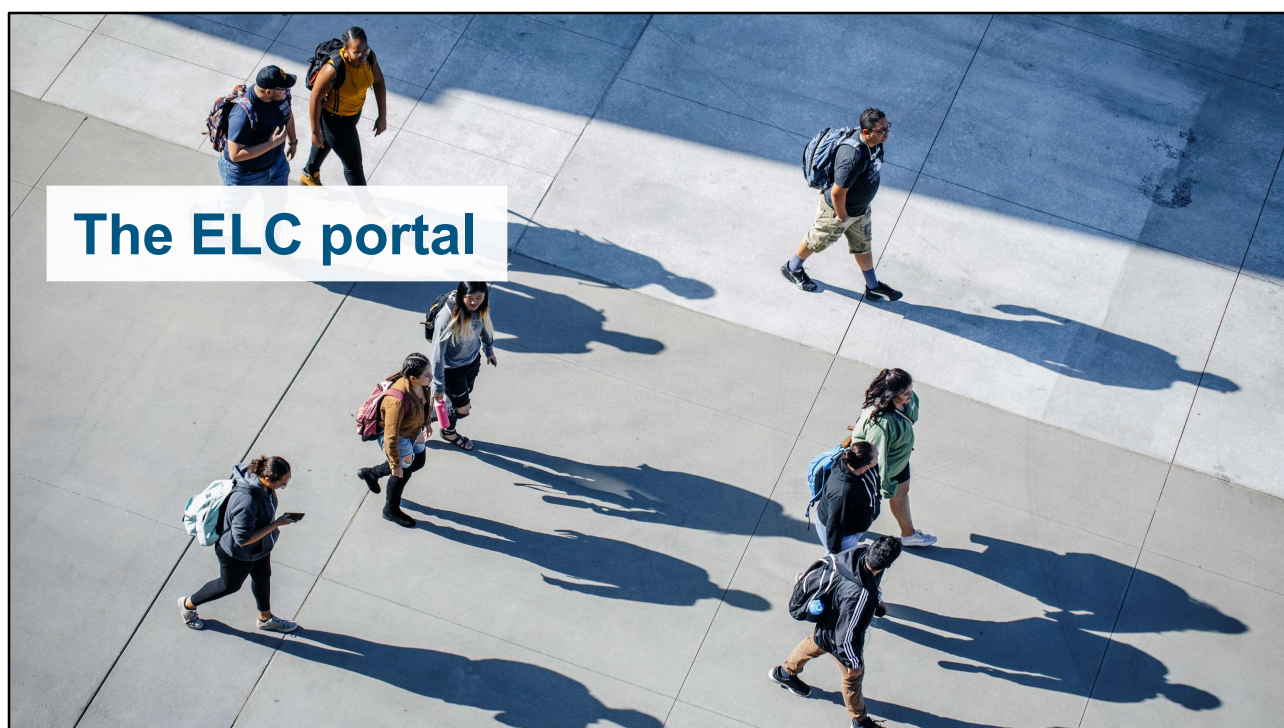- In addition, new schools joining ELC must submit transcripts by June 30 to allow UC to calculate the nine percent benchmark GPA for the school that will be in place for the upcoming application filing period.

September 30 - Participating schools are selected to submit transcripts at regular intervals to allow UC to "reset" the school's 9 percent benchmark GPA, usually every other year. If selected for benchmark GPA resetting, those transcripts are due September 30 and the benchmark GPAs are refreshed the following year.

Early fall - usually in late September, UC sends the submitted top 15 percent rising seniors an outreach letter to encourage consideration of applying to UC.

October – December 1 – UC applicants can check their application after submission to see if they are designated ELC. ELC status is sent to campuses as part of the admissions file.
- *Note, the UC application deadline has been extended to December 1 (typically November 30) for fall 2026 applicants only.*

The ELC portal

ELC instructions were sent to the prior year's ELC contact on April 15 with instructions on accessing the ELC school portal. That email is important because it includes information you'll need to access the ELC portal.

While your school may not be new to ELC, you/your school will need to re-register each year.

ELC school portal: Registration & login

UC ELC School Portal

ELC Overview
High School Eligibility
Parental Authorization
ELC Program Calendar

Welcome

The 2025 ELC Instructions will be sent by email to the school's ELC contact(s) on April 15th.
Check your spam folder if the April 15th ELC instructions email is not found in your inbox.

Welcome to the University of California's Eligibility in the Local Context (ELC) website for participating high schools.

All UC ELC School Portal users must register each year beginning April 15th.

Need to register for 2025?

REGISTER

Already registered for 2025?

User ID:

Password:

To change your password, click here: ☐

LOGIN

Forgot Your User ID?
Forgot Your Password?

How do I get a User ID?
Participating schools are emailed a new Initial Access Code each year to allow registration on the ELC School Portal website. User IDs are selected by the high school as part of the registration process.

Need Help?
Please call the ELC Help Desk at 800-839-8507 for assistance or Contact Us.

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After the ELC instructions are received, the high school's ELC contact first step should be to promptly register on the ELC Portal, which is the secure website where student data is submitted. Registering informs us that you received the instructions and your school plans to participate. As part of the registration process, the ELC contact sets up their User ID and Password that will be used when logging in to the ELC Portal. They will need the initial access code provided in the instruction email.

Once registered, the school ELC contact can log in to the ELC portal. The login page includes Forgot User ID and Forgot Password functionality, and also allows the user to change their password.

On the left side of the Welcome page, tabs provide an ELC overview, the high school eligibility to participate, the program calendar, sample letters and forms a school can choose to use to obtain parent/guardian permission to submit student data to ELC.

The right side of the page includes the ELC Help Desk contact information in the "Need Help?" section.

SIS stands for Student Information System and is the system your school uses to manage student data. If your school has their own system, choose "Homegrown". If you know your school's SIS type but it isn't listed, choose "Other" and then enter the SIS name. If you don't know your school's SIS type, choose "Other" and then enter "Unknown".

ELC school portal: Student contact data file

Due annually by **June 30**.

1. A "Student Contact File" Excel template is available for download in the portal.

2. Complete the template for the top 15% of rising seniors.

3. Upload the completed file to the ELC portal.

Contact us if assistance or a deadline extension are needed.

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Schools can submit student contact data by either:
- Entering individual student records using the "Add Students" tab above OR
- Uploading a completed "Student Contact File". Reference the Student Contact File Upload Directions to the right.

⬇ Download Student Contact File Template

Upload Completed Student Contact File

Number of Students to Submit: 1

Choose File   No file chosen

SUBMIT

Once logged in to the ELC portal, the ELC contact lands on the page that facilitates the Student Contact File upload.

The Excel template to be completed is available on that page as well as instructions about downloading the spreadsheet to complete and how to upload the completed file. The population to submit is the top 15% of the rising senior class, after their final junior year grades have been entered.
- If the school has a very small class size, the ELC contact can choose to go to the "Add Students" tab to type in the names/addresses/DOBs directly on that page, rather than work with the excel file template. The "Add Students" tab can also be used if a school needs to add a student after their file was uploaded, for example, if the high school left a student off their list in error or has agreed to accept a late parent permission.

While the ELC portal will note the number of students to submit based on the class size entered, some schools will under-submit if they did not receive all the parent permissions.
- If ties occur among the lowest-ranked student who will be submitted, all students who are tied with that student should be included, even if those additional students submitted exceed 15 percent of the class.

Once you've filled out the template with all of the student data, you will upload it directly in the portal.

ELC school portal: Other tabs

Again, if the school has a very small class size, the ELC contact can choose to go to the "Add Students" tab to type in the names/addresses/DOBs directly on that page, rather than work with the excel file template. The "Add Students" tab can also be used if a school needs to add a student after their file was uploaded, for example, if the high school left a student off their list in error or has agreed to accept a late parent permission.

Once the student contacts are added, the "Review/Edit Student Contacts" tab allows the ELC contact to confirm the data submission is correct and make any needed corrections.

If the school was selected to submit transcripts, the "Transcripts" tab includes information for mailing transcripts or submitting transcripts electronically. Transcripts can be unofficial or official, but must include final junior year grades. Several Student Information Systems include an ELC extract, such as Aeries, Infinite Campus, PowerSchool, Synergy, and the LAUSD's MiSIS system.

The "Transcripts" tab also includes contact information to receive technical support or a "walk through" of the transcript submission process from an ELC program representative.

The "Manage Users" tab allows the ELC contact to add additional contacts for the school to receive the ELC instructions and deadline alerts.

Frequently Asked Questions

FAQs

How can my school join ELC?

Schools can request to join the program by emailing ELC@ucop.edu.

Once the request is received, the ELC coordinator will confirm the school is eligible to participate and will pass on instructions regarding the next steps. Schools are eligible to participate if located in California, they have a full A-G course list and can meet the ELC data submission requirements.

Requests to join the ELC program must be received no later than **June 1** as the transcript submission deadline is June 30. The transcripts are needed from new schools in June to allow UC to calculate the 9 percent benchmark GPA to add to the application system for the next application cycle.

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FAQs

How do I know if my school participates in ELC?

Your Registrar or Head Counselor probably knows if the school participates in ELC if they have been responsible for submitting the student data. You can also contact the ELC program to have ELC participation confirmed.

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School ELC participation is voluntary, but most California high schools do participate in ELC. If the school's participation status is unknown, please contact the ELC program. We appreciate finding out if a past ELC contact is no longer at the school, so a new ELC contact can be lined up and instructions sent to the correct person.

UC doesn't post a list of ELC schools because each year some schools join and others drop out of the program, and we don't want students making school choice decisions based on a school's ELC participation status that may change. However, anyone that contacts the ELC program can have a school's ELC participation confirmed.

FAQs

What if I didn't receive the ELC submission instructions?

The ELC instructions were sent by email to the ELC contact in our records on April 15. Please check your spam folder if the email is not in your inbox.

Email ELC@ucop.edu if you need the instructions re-sent, you want instructions sent to a different email address or if there is a new ELC contact for the school.

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How can I find the ELC status of my students?

If a specific student has checked the appropriate release on their UC application, the ELC program coordinator can discuss their ELC status with the counselor.

Students can log in to their submitted application and share with their counselor what message they see displayed.

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If a student has attended multiple schools, how is ELC status determined?

The ELC determination uses the benchmark GPA that has been established for the high school the student attended at the **end of 11th grade**.

For example:

- If a student transfers to a new school for 12th grade, the ELC status determination will use the benchmark GPA for the school the student previously attended in 11th grade if that school is an ELC participant.

- If the student attended two schools in 11th grade, the benchmark GPA for the last school attended is used.

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The ELC determination uses the benchmark GPA that has been established for the high school the student attended at the end of 11th grade.

- if a student transfers to a new school for 12th grade, the ELC status determination will use the benchmark GPA for the school the student previously attended in 11th grade if that school is an ELC participant.
- If the student attended two schools in 11th grade, the benchmark GPA for the last school attended is used.

Also, if a student attended an ELC school in 10th grade but transferred to a school that does not participate in ELC for 11th grade, the ELC determination is not triggered since there is no benchmark GPA for the 11th grade school.

Can students appeal if they weren't designated as ELC?

ELC status appeals are not accepted.

If a high school counselor has concerns regarding ELC results for students at their school, they should email ELC@ucop.edu to report the concerns.

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ELC status appeals are not accepted. Students should confirm that they have entered their school and course work data correctly on the UC application. Students should follow the normal procedure for reporting changes in their academic record to the campuses they applied to if their application record is not correct. Academic record changes are considered at the campus level and ELC status is not recalculated centrally. Students should be assured that campuses consider many factors when making admission decisions.

The annual ELC outcomes for each school are impacted by several variables, including the number of students that apply to UC from the school that year, the academic strength of the students that apply from the school that year, the academic performance of the class from which transcripts were used for the benchmark GPA creation compared to the academic performance of the class applying to UC, and the accuracy of the student-reported courses and grades on their UC application.

If a high school counselor has concerns regarding ELC results for students at their school, he or she should e-mail to elc@ucop.edu to report the concerns. The ELC Coordinator will check to make sure the systematic ELC determination process is working correctly and that there are no programming errors. If there are no programming errors, we can offer to move up the school's benchmark GPA resetting schedule.

FAQs

Do all campuses consider ELC in the same way?

ELC status is one of the 13 factors UC campuses may consider. While all UC campuses can consider the same 13 factors to evaluate applications, they often apply these factors differently. The review process and specific weight given to each factor can differ from campus to campus and year to year.

ELC status is not a guarantee of admission to any specific campus.

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https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/how-to-apply/applying-as-a-freshman/how-applications-are-reviewed.html

ELC contact information

Phone: (800) 839-8507

Email: ELC@ucop.edu

Learn more about the ELC and statewide guarantee on the UC admissions website!

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https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/admission-requirements/freshman-requirements/california-residents/

Resources

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<td style="text-align:center">**UC Counselors
website**</td>
<td style="text-align:center">**Subscribe to the Counselors
& Advisers Bulletin (CAB)**</td>
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UC Counselors website: https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/
Subscribe to the CAB:
https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/connect-to-resources/counselors-and-advisers-bulletin.html

Thank you!

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