
Back to first-year admission basics

UC High School Webinar Series: 2025–26

October 21, 2025



Agenda

- Defining a “first-year” applicant
- Minimum requirements
 - A-G subject areas
 - Additional A-G considerations
 - UC GPA
- First-year selection
- Applying to UC
- Resources

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Applicant definitions

First-year (freshman)

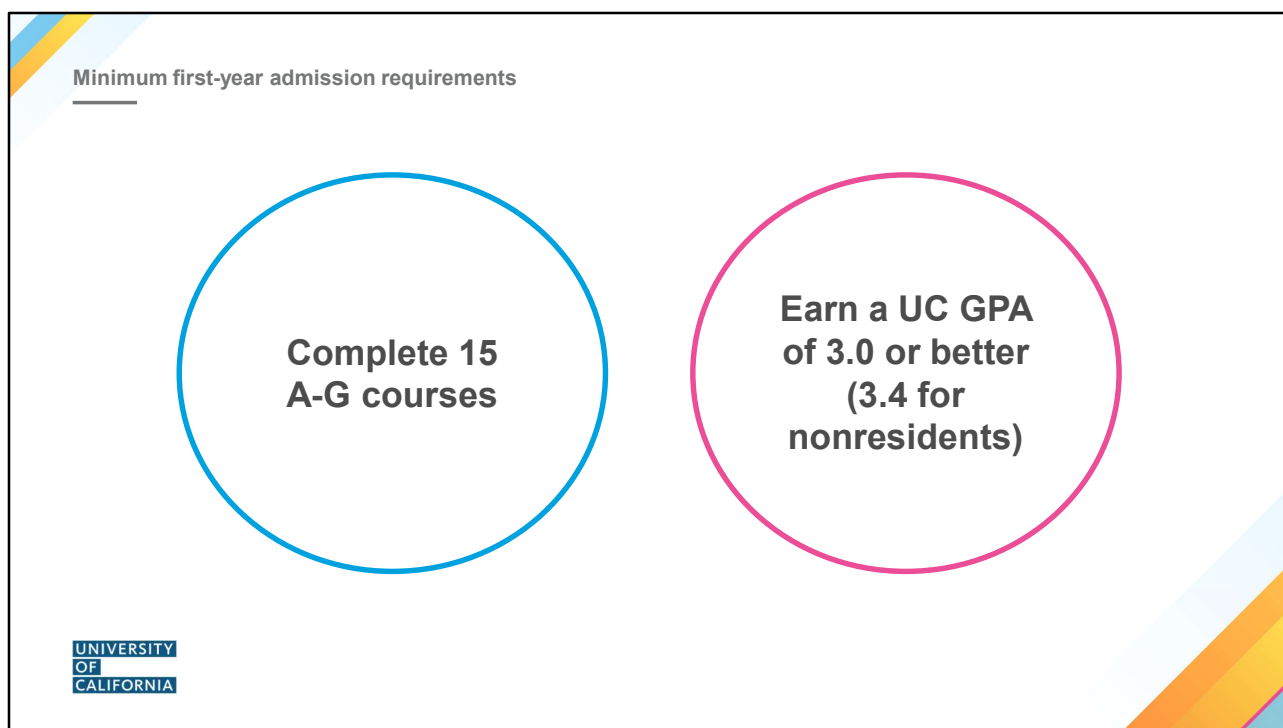
- ✓ Currently in high school
- ✓ Has not enrolled in a regular session (fall, winter, spring) at a college/university *after* high school graduation*
- Summer after high school graduation is OK
- Dual enrollment/college courses completed while in high school is OK

Transfer

- ✓ Has enrolled in a regular session (fall, winter, spring) at a college/university *after* high school graduation

Students who graduate mid-year are permitted to take college courses in the spring term and not jeopardize their first-year status if they've applied to enroll the following fall.





Systemwide minimum requirements that all first-year applicants must meet for UC admission:

1. A-G course requirements
2. UC GPA of 3.0 or better (3.4 for nonresidents)

While selection is discussed later in this presentation, it is important to remember that these are the *minimum* requirements for admission. We encourage applicants to not only meet these requirements, but to exceed them to be more competitive.



A-G subject areas

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A-G subject requirements

A-G requirements

- Complete a minimum of **15** A-G courses with a grade of C or better
- Prior to beginning the last year of high school, students must complete 11 of these courses



Check out the A-G charts in the Quick Reference Guide (pages 11-14)

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- A. **History** — 2 years
- B. **English** — 4 years
- C. **Mathematics** — 3 years (*4 years recommended*)
- D. **Science** — 2 years (*3 years recommended*)
- E. **Language other than English** — 2 years (*3 years recommended*)
- F. **Visual & performing arts** — 1 year
- G. **College-preparatory elective** — 1 year

To qualify for first-year admission, students must meet UC's subject requirements, which includes 15 yearlong (or 30 semester) courses. Applicants must complete these courses with a letter grade of C or better.

While we are going to dive deeper into each A-G subject area, you are encouraged to check out our Quick Reference Guide which includes detailed A-G charts on **pages 11-14** that outline the subject area requirement, as well as ways that students can alternatively meet these requirements with AP or IB exams, as well as college coursework.

<https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/files/documents/quick-reference-guide-to-uc-admissions.pdf>

Area A: History/Social Science

History/social science

- **2 years required**, including:
 - One year of world history, cultures or historical geography **AND**
 - One year of U.S. History (or a semester of U.S. History and a semester of Civics/American Government)

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Two parts to the Area A requirement:

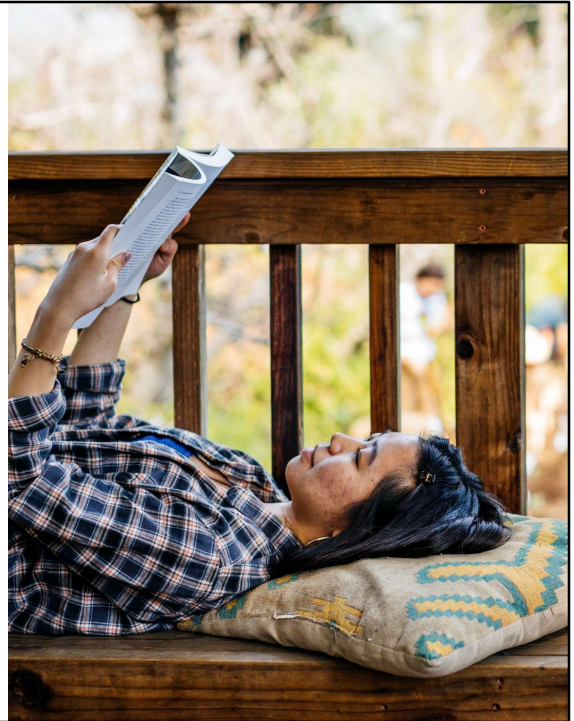
1. A year of world history, cultures or historical geography coursework
2. A year of U.S. History
 - Alternatively, students could complete a semester of U.S. History + a semester of Civics/American Government to meet this U.S. History requirement.

Area B: English

English

- **4 years required**
- College-preparatory English composition and literature
- A UC-approved Advanced ESL/ELD course can meet one year of the requirement and a non-ESL/ELD college-prep English course is required in the senior year

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Mathematics

- **3 years required / 4 years recommended**
- Foundational math requirement includes:
 - Algebra 1 + Geometry + Algebra 2 **OR**
 - Math 1 + Math 2 + Math 3
- Math courses completed in the 7th or 8th grade may be used to meet part or all of this requirement.



Math is considered a sequential subject area, and students may be able to “validate” the foundational math requirements with higher-level coursework.

A yearlong geometry course (or equivalent integrated course – Math 2) is required!

7th and 8th grade math courses can be used to meet part or all of this requirement and that is largely because math is considered sequential, and students can “validate” the foundational requirement by successfully passing higher-level coursework.

Science

- **2 years required / 3 years recommended**
- Must include two of the three fundamental disciplines: **biology, chemistry and physics**
- Interdisciplinary or earth and space science coursework can be used to meet one year of the requirement.
- Computer science, engineering and applied science coursework is acceptable for the third year and beyond only (must be approved under Area D)



Note that UC's Area D requirement is distinct from CSU, which requires 1 year of physical science and 1 year of biological science

Language Other Than English (LOTE)

- **2 years required / 3 years recommended**
- Must meet the **second level** of high school instruction.
 - Ex. Spanish 1 + French 1 does **not** meet Area E
- LOTE courses completed in the 7th or 8th grade may be used to meet part or all of this requirement.



LOTE is considered a sequential subject area and students may be able to “validate” the requirement with higher-level coursework.

Think of the LOTE requirement as a proficiency requirement, rather than the number of years of coursework completed. We are looking for a student to meet the second level of high school instruction.

Math and LOTE are the only two subject areas for which 7th and 8th grade coursework can meet the requirement.

Area F: Visual and performing arts

Visual and performing arts (VPA)

- **1 year required**
- Acceptable disciplines include dance, music, theater, visual arts and interdisciplinary arts
- VPA courses may be repeated multiple times for credit

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Area G: Additional college-preparatory elective

College-preparatory elective

- **1 year required**
- Includes any A-F coursework beyond the minimum requirement **OR** a year of coursework approved under Area G.

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Courses specifically approved in the G subject area include those such as political science, economics, geography, humanities, psychology, sociology, anthropology, journalism, speech or debate, computer science, computer programming and others or will be interdisciplinary in nature, drawing knowledge from two or more fields.

A-G course lists (CA high schools)

A-G course lists

- Only available for accredited California high schools.
- Courses meet A-G requirements based on the area and discipline in which the course is approved under, regardless of how your high school may use a course to meet local graduation requirements.
- The A-G Course Management Portal (CMP) is what feeds into the UC application, allowing for California high school courses to pre-populate.
- While non-CA high schools cannot establish a course list, the “Courses” search function is a valuable resource for out-of-state counselors.



hs-articulation.ucop.edu/agcourselist

<https://hs-articulation.ucop.edu/agcourselist>

Additional A-G course considerations

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Combining semesters

If my student took two semesters of separate coursework, can that meet a yearlong requirement?

- For all A-G subject areas, two semesters of coursework **can** be combined to meet a yearlong requirement, *so long as they fall within the same subject area and discipline as reflected on the approved A-G course list.*
- Semesters do not need to be taken consecutively.

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As noted, the A-G requirements include 15 yearlong OR 30 semester courses, because there are instances where two semesters of separate courses may be combined to meet part of the requirement. Most often we see this with Area F.

Combining semesters: Example 1

▼ Beginning Jazz Ensemble P	Music	Classroom-based
▼ Calligraphy	Visual Arts	Classroom-based
▼ Ceramics	Visual Arts	Classroom-based
▼ Color and Design P	Visual Arts	Classroom-based
▼ Culinary Arts 3	Interdisciplinary Arts	Classroom-based

Example 1

10th grade: Fall semester of **Calligraphy**
 11th grade: Fall semester of **Ceramics**

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?

Yes, this is an acceptable combination to meet Area F!

Let's walk through some examples.

In this scenario, this student would be considered to have met Area F as both Calligraphy and Ceramics fall under the "Visual Arts" discipline within Area F. It doesn't matter that both semesters are the fall semester and they do not need to be taken consecutively.

Combining semesters: Example 2

▼ Photography 1 P	Visual Arts	Classroom-based
▼ Play Production	Theater	Classroom-based
▼ Playwriting	Theater	Classroom-based
▼ Product Innovation & Design 1	Visual Arts	Classroom-based
▼ Product Innovation & Design 2	Interdisciplinary Arts	Classroom-based

Example 2

9th grade: Fall semester of **Photography**
 11th grade: Spring semester of **Playwriting**

? No, this is not an acceptable combination to meet Area F!

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Let's look at another example.

In this scenario, this student would not meet Area F, as Photography and Playwriting fall under different disciplines within Area F. This student would need to complete a second semester of another course in either discipline to complete the requirement.

Grades



Letter grades only

Only coursework passed with a letter grade of C or better can be used to meet A-G requirements.

Pass or Credit grades are not acceptable.



Whole grades only

UC does not consider +/- grades for high school coursework.

A C- is acceptable and calculated as a C.

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Coursework must be passed with a letter grade of C or better to meet A-G requirements. We will not accept Pass or Credit grades for A-G credit.

Additionally, the UC only considers whole grades for high school coursework even if the high school awards plus and minus grades. This means a C- is viewed as a C and is therefore considered passing. This is important, because the UC has rules about repeating A-G coursework that was previously passed.



What if a student earns a D or F grade in an A-G course?

- A student is allowed to repeat each course in which a D or F was originally earned as many times as necessary until they earn a letter grade of C or better.
- The new grade will replace the original grade in the UC GPA calculation if the repeat is completed by the summer after 11th grade. UC does not average the grades.
 - Coursework repeated in the 12th grade will not replace any non-passing grades in the GPA calculation, but can be used to meet A-G requirements.
- Repeats of high school coursework where a grade of C or higher (including C-) was originally earned will **not** be accepted.

Students need to report all attempted A-G coursework in the UC application, including any original non-passing grades for coursework that was later repeated!



College courses can meet A-G requirements if:

- ✓ College is accredited by one of the former seven regional accrediting agencies
- ✓ Course is UC-transferable*
- ✓ Course is at least 3 semester/4 quarter units in value (each)
- ✓ Course clearly falls within an A-G subject area ([view A-G charts in QRG](#))
- ✓ Course is taken for a letter grade
- ✓ Letter grade of C or better (not C-) is earned



**Non-transferable English and math courses may also meet portions of the Area B and C requirements*

Dual enrollment website for counselors:

<https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/preparing-freshman-students/dual-enrollment.html>

Dual enrollment guide for counselors:

https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/_files/documents/uc-dual-enrollment-guide.pdf

“Rodeo ready: A dual enrollment roundup” presentation from 2025 Counselor Conference:

<https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/events/counselor-conference.html>

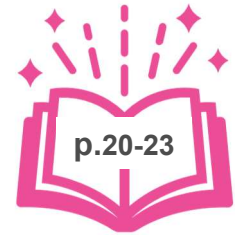
Dual enrollment and financial aid webinar recording & PDF (Sept 30):

<https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/events/high-school-webinars.html>



High-school level courses in mathematics (Area C) and languages other than English (Area E) completed in 7th and/or 8th grade with grades of C or better may be counted toward the subject requirements.

- No other subject areas may be met with coursework completed in middle school, including college coursework.
- No coursework completed in 6th grade or earlier will be accepted.
- 7th and 8th grade math and/or LOTE courses do not need to be reported on the high school transcript.



Mathematics (Area C) and languages other than English (Area E) are considered sequential and students can validate lower-level coursework by the successful completion of a higher-level course.

Validation of subject omission

Validation of a lower-level course that was not actually completed.

Validation of deficient grade*

Validation of a lower-level course in which a D or F was earned.

**Validating a deficient grade is not the same as repeating it and won't replace the original D or F grade in the UC GPA calculation.*

Please refer to pages 20-23 of the Quick Reference Guide for further detail on validation, including validation charts for both math and LOTE.

UC GPA

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UC GPA

UC GPA minimum requirement

- California residents: **3.0**
- Nonresidents: **3.4**

The UC GPA is calculated automatically when a student applies using their self-reported academic history in the UC application.



Students should aim to exceed this minimum requirement to be a competitive applicant.



- **All** grades received in A-G courses completed in 10th and 11th grade (including the surrounding summers) will be factored into the GPA calculation.
- +/- grades for high school courses are not used.
- The UC GPA is weighted and capped. Up to 8 semesters of extra points are added for passed AP, IB, college-level or UC-approved honors courses (*CA only*) with no more than 4 points for 10th grade coursework.
- Campuses may consider a weighted an uncapped GPA and/or unweighted GPA for selection purposes.
- Honors points are not applied to specific courses.

Honors points

- Up to 8 semesters of extra points in AP/IB/CL/UC honors courses (only A-C grades)
- Max 4 extra points in 10th grade
- One college course = one grade = one honors point
- For out-of-state schools, AP/IB/CL are factored into the UC GPA, but not honors-level courses. This GPA is what's used to ensure applicant's meet the minimum 3.4 UC GPA for first-year admission (nonresident). However, campuses *may choose* to use an uncapped GPA which does weight these honors-level courses for *selection* purposes.

Calculating the UC GPA:

- Include only A-G courses taken in 10th and 11th grades (including the summer before and after 10th and the summer after 11th)
- Include all A-G courses, even those courses above and beyond the minimum requirements. This includes A-G courses with low grades
- Convert grades to grade points (A=4, B=3, etc). Do not factor in +/- grades
- Add 1 GPA point for up to 8 semesters of UC approved honors (AP, IB, college level, and UC honors courses). A maximum of 4 honors points is factored for 10th grade
 - Note: Many students ask *which* courses get the extra point – the extra points are added into the overall calculation. They are not assigned to any specific course.
- Divide the total GPA points by the total number of semesters for your UC GPA out to two decimal points. UC does not round the GPA up or down.

How to enter grades into the application: Students should enter grades into the application exactly as they appear on their transcript. All attempts at a course, including original and repeated grades, should always be included. For students with a grading scale other than A-F, they must enter their grades exactly as they appear on the transcript – they should not convert any grades themselves.

Selection



Minimum requirements vs. selection

Minimum requirements

- A-G coursework
- UC GPA minimum
- Consistent for all campuses

Selection

- Comprehensive review (13 factors)
- Varies by campus
- Done independently by the campuses



*Detailed charts with campus-specific policies and procedures for reviewing applicants can be found on **pages 28-31**.*

*First-year admit data can be found on the **UC Admissions website**.*

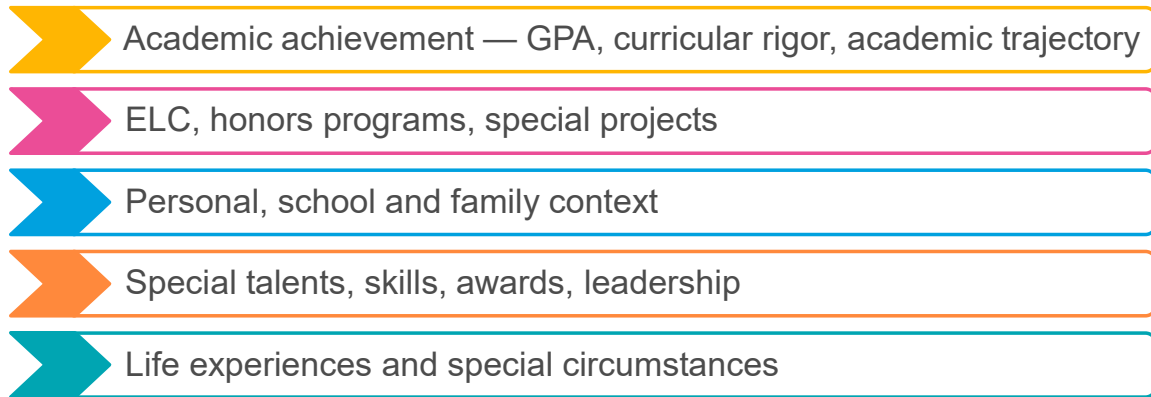
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Requirements: UC has systemwide requirements for first-year admission. These are the minimum qualifications an applicant must have in order to be considered for admission. Includes: minimum GPA and A-G course requirements

Selection: Each campus conducts an individual review of applicants to identify the most competitive students in their applicant pool. Most campuses admit students above the minimum eligibility criteria and each campus has their own selection criteria based on individual campus factors. However, all campuses are using the 13 comprehensive review factors (<https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/how-to-apply/applying-as-a-first-year/how-applications-are-reviewed.html>)

First-year admit data: <https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/campuses-majors/first-year-admit-data.html>

Comprehensive review for first-years



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It is important to note that this is not a checklist, nor does this list all the factors. This is only intended to show that UC campuses consider many factors and the whole context of the student in and outside of class. Students may meet multiple criteria of comprehensive review, but these are considered by campuses within the context of the entire application.

In general, campuses are looking for well-qualified students who have taken advantage of the educational opportunities presented to them both inside and outside of the classroom. The categories listed here comprise a range of factors that campuses may consider when selecting students. For example, academic achievement includes GPA, honors courses, ELC status, A-G courses, quality of senior year program and achievements in special projects.

ALL UC campuses do a comprehensive review, but there are different methods of Comprehensive Review. Think of it like this – all campuses use the same ingredients but may have different recipes. Some are holistic, others are not. The faculty at each campus determines what factors will be used and in what way. Again, this should not be seen as a checklist, where the more “boxes you can check, the more competitive you will be”. This is just a list of all the factors that may be used in some way in the review process.

We’re also going to look at a student’s achievement within the context of their educational environment and the resources and opportunities that were available to them. This is found in a number of areas of the application, not just in responses to the PIQs.

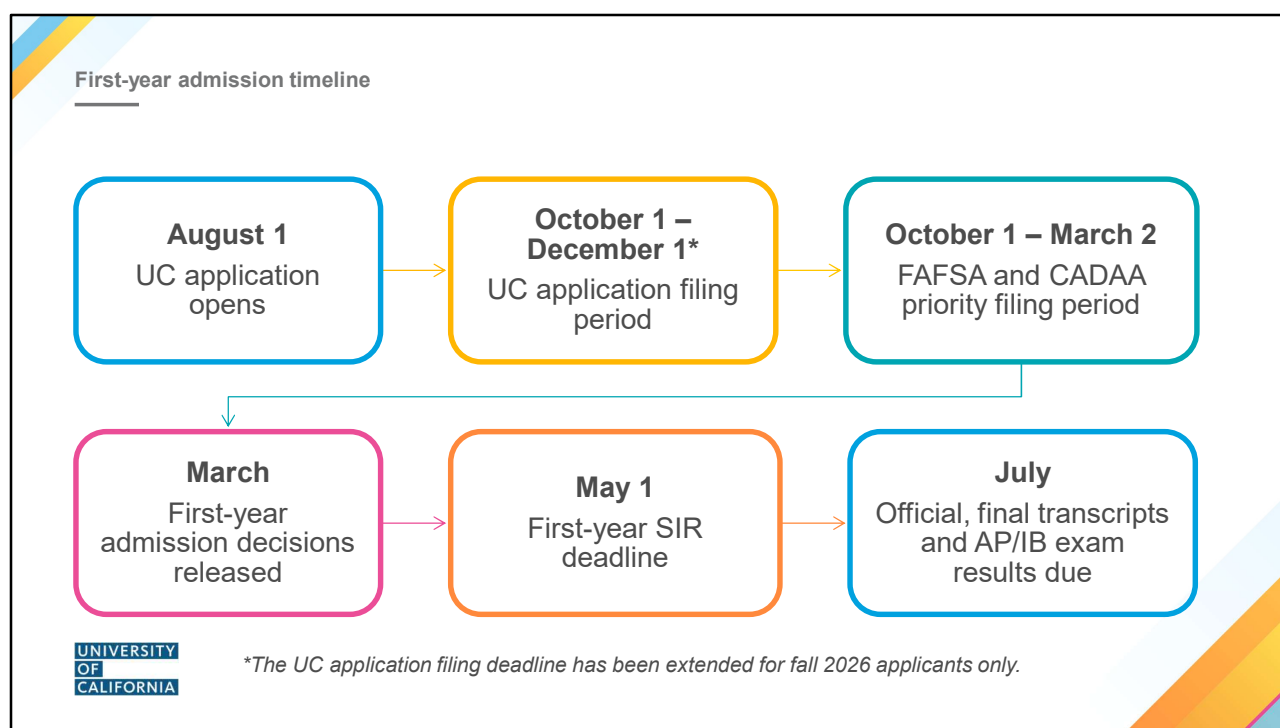
The faculty-approved comprehensive review criteria are:

- Grade point average
- Courses completed/planned
- Honors courses
- Top 9% Local Context (ELC)
- Quality of senior-year program of study
- Academic opportunities in California high schools

- Performance in academic subject areas
- Achievements in special projects
- Improvement in academic performance
- Special talents, achievements, and awards
- Participation in educational preparation programs
- Academic accomplishment within life experiences
- Geographic location

The UC undergraduate admission process does not discriminate against, or provide preferential treatment to, any individual on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity or national origin, consistent with federal and state law.





The UC application and admission process is a year-long cycle.

August 1: The UC application opens. Students can begin to craft each part of their application. Remember, since UC does not use letters of recommendation, interviews, or portfolios unless required for admission to a specific major, the UC application is the only way for students to present and advocate for themselves. Some campus majors do require supplemental materials, such as Nursing, or some fine arts majors. Students should speak with the campuses they're interested in for information on applications for those majors. The UC application will also indicate whether a supplemental application or materials are required.

October 1 – December 1: UC students can submit applications beginning October 1. **The deadline has been extended to December 1 for Fall 2026 applicants** given the timing of the Thanksgiving holiday. The typical deadline is November 30. Applicants are not considered on a first-come, first-serve basis, so applicants should take their time in filling out the application thoroughly before submitting.

Important: Once submitted, applicants can update very little in the UC application. Students should ensure their UC application is accurate and complete before submission.

October 1 – March 2: All students should submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or a California Dream Act Application (CADAA). The majority of students at UC receive financial aid and scholarships. We'll cover that in more detail later in this presentation. Campuses use information from the FAFSA and CADAA for both admission and scholarships. The FAFSA for the fall 2026 admission cycle is anticipated to become available on October 1.

March: First-year admission decisions are released throughout the month of March. Campuses do not all release decisions on the same day, but will have all first-year decisions released by March 31.

May 1: This is the deadline for students to submit the Statement of Intent to Register (SIR). Students must submit

the SIR by that date in order to ensure a place on campus in the fall. Students may only SIR to one UC campus.

July: Campuses use self-reported information to admit students, so UC does not require (nor want) students to submit any transcripts when they apply for admission. Instead, UC will ask for official transcripts only from admitted students who have submitted their SIR by May 1. Official transcripts for all institutions attended are due July 1, with AP/IB exam results due by July 15.

Applying to UC

Nine campuses, one application

- Select which campuses they want to receive their UC application
- \$80 fee for each UC campus (\$95 for international applicants)
- Fee waiver available for up to four campuses for qualified students
- Unsolicited supplemental materials not considered; no interviews



This application is specific to the UC system and distinct from others, such as the Common Application or CSU application. While students may select multiple campuses, they will only submit ONE UC application.

The traditional application cycle opens August 1 for fall admission. Some campuses may offer a second admission opportunity in the year for spring/winter admission.

There is a fee associated with each campus selected, but a fee waiver is available for eligible students that will waive the application fee for up to four campuses. Eligibility for the fee waiver is determined by family and financial information provided within the UC application.

Importantly, though students will be able to apply to multiple UC campuses at once, they do not need to “rank” them or indicate any campus preference. All campuses who receive their application will give it a thorough and careful review – independently from one another. Students are encouraged to apply broadly across the UC to increase their chances of being admitted to the UC system. All of our campuses – without exception – provide outstanding opportunities for students to learn and grow.

Access the UC application at <https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/apply-now.html>



Important resources for counselors

UC Counselors website &
Resource Library



Quick Reference Guide to UC
Admission



A-G course lists



*When in doubt, ask! Email the Undergraduate Admissions team with any systemwide questions at **AskUC@ucop.edu**.*

UC Counselors website: <https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/>

Counselor Resource Library:

<https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/connect-to-resources/resource-library.html>

QRG: https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/_files/documents/quick-reference-guide-to-uc-admissions.pdf

A-G course lists: <https://hs-articulation.ucop.edu/agcourselist>

First-year admission resources to share with your students



General admission information

admission.universityofcalifornia.edu

UC admission requirements

admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/admission-requirements/first-year-requirements

UC admission selection process

admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/how-to-apply/applying-as-a-first-year/how-applications-are-reviewed.html

Filling out the UC application

admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/how-to-apply/applying-as-a-first-year/filling-out-the-application.html



These are valuable resources to share with your students and their families:

<https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/>

<https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/admission-requirements/first-year-requirements/>

<https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/how-to-apply/applying-as-a-first-year/how-applications-are-reviewed.html>

<https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/how-to-apply/applying-as-a-first-year/filling-out-the-application.html>

Thank you

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