One Size Does Not Fit All: Advising Students with non-California Academic Records

UC High School Counselor Conference
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Topics

- Definitions and acronyms
- Meeting A-G requirements with non-California coursework
- Evaluation tips and tools
- Resources
- **Academic Record**: usually called a “transcript” in the U.S.
- **Mixed Record**: an academic record with both CA and non-CA coursework
- **Study Abroad**: short-term program(s) for U.S. students to study in another country
- **LOI**: Language of Instruction, or UC’s area “b” freshman admission subject requirement
- **LOTE**: Language other than English (Language other than LOI), or UC’s area “e” freshman admission subject requirement
- A mixed record student could have an out-of-state U.S. record and a CA record
- Or the student could have an international record for part of secondary school
  - Grade 9 may appear on a middle school/junior high international record
- Or the student may be a CA student who did a study abroad program during high school
- Student may have attended non-CA school for just 9th, for 9th & 10th, or for 9th, 10th & 11th
- These are just some examples of mixed record combinations; students may also have mixed records within a single academic year (e.g., first semester at an international school, second semester in one of your CA high schools), or a single student may have multiple types of mixed records (e.g., 9th grade international, 10th & 11th out-of-state, 12th in CA high school)
Each subject area requirement will be reviewed with examples from actual student transcripts.

We'll start with History/Social Science, but will **not** proceed in a-g order.

Instead, we will start with the subject areas that are fairly straightforward in determining whether courses meet a-g requirements, and then we'll gradually progress to more complicated subject areas.
To meet the “a”/history subject requirement, students must complete 1 year of world history and 1 year of U.S. History (or 1 semester of American Government combined with 1 semester of U.S. History)

Students graduating from a U.S. high school must meet the U.S. History requirement prior to high school graduation, even if the student is only in the U.S. for the senior year and even if the student is studying in the U.S. on a student visa

All courses used to meet a-g subject requirements must be passed with a grade of C or better, or the equivalent

In the example above, the student completed a course called “History” (Historias) in 9th grade in Mexico

• UC would allow this course to meet the one-year world history portion of the area “a” requirement
• The grade of 9.5 in Mexico is considered the equivalent of an A grade in the U.S., so the student has met the World History requirement
• The student will need to complete U.S. History in the U.S. to complete the requirement
• If the student were applying for UC admission directly from Mexico, we would expect to see a History of Mexico (or history of the home country) course to compensate for our U.S. History requirement
• A course may not be called “History” but could still meet area “a”
• In this example from a Nigerian secondary school, the “Social Studies” course from 9th grade could be used to meet the world history portion of the “a” requirement
• As with the Mexico example, once the student transfers to a U.S., the student must complete 1 year of U.S. History or 1 semester U.S. History and 1 semester American Government to complete the remainder of the “a” requirement
We'll move on to laboratory science, since this subject area is fairly straightforward. Areas “b” and “c” are a bit trickier, so we’ll come back to those later.
• Lab science courses from out-of-state will meet the area “d”/lab science requirement if the courses are comparable to courses that are typically approved for area “d” in CA high schools
• In this example from Colorado, the student has completed Biology Honors for 2 semesters with B grades
  • This will meet one year of the lab science requirement
  • The student needs a second year of lab science from a different science discipline to finish the 2-year lab science requirement
  • Remember that school-created honors courses from out-of-state are not eligible for the extra point in the GPA; only AP, IB, and transferable college courses from out-of-state will be weighted in the GPA calculation
• In some countries, individual science subjects are not taught separately in different years; instead, schools will teach an integrated-style science which teaches multiple science disciplines in one course. The course may simply be titled “Science,” as it is in the Canadian example above; this is presumed to be integrated science.
• UC requires completion of three full years of integrated science in an international curriculum to meet the “d” requirement (two years)
• Students who have successfully completed a three-year integrated science sequence (IS 1 + IS 2 + IS 3) at an international school will have met the two-year laboratory science (“d”) requirement AND the one-year elective (“g”) subject requirement.
• Students who complete one or two years of an integrated-style science sequence outside the U.S. and then transfer to a U.S. school can combine IS courses with single discipline courses to meet the requirement.
  • Acceptable combinations for integrated science can be found in “Options for Satisfying UC’s A-G Subject Requirements for Freshman Applicants” in the Quick Reference Guide to UC Admission (page 12 in the 2018 edition). Some potential options are:
    • IS 1 + IS 2 + IS 3;
    • IS 1 + IS 2 + one year in biology, chemistry or physics;
    • IS 1 + two years in biology, chemistry and/or physics;
    • IS 1 + one year in biology, chemistry or physics + IS 3;
• One last comment: UC will accept online (high school and college) laboratory science courses if the course includes a hands-on, supervised, on-site wet labs.
• UC requires students to complete either a yearlong VPA course, or two semesters of course work **from the same VPA discipline**
  • The five VPA disciplines are: dance, music, theater, interdisciplinary, and visual arts
  • The two semesters of a yearlong course may be completed in different academic years (e.g., first semester in 9th, second semester in 11th)
• Students from non-CA high schools are also expected to meet the VPA requirement, just as they are expected to meet all of our other a-g requirements
• Some options for a mixed record student who may not be able to fit VPA into their U.S. high school schedule:
  • Online courses: UC **does** accept online high school and VPA courses, but the online school must have a UC-approved a-g course list and the course must be on that list for the year in which the student takes the course
  • **Transferable** college/university online VPA courses are acceptable as long as the single course is 3 semester or 4 quarter units minimum.
• While UC tends to be flexible with courses intending to meet the VPA requirement when students apply directly from outside of the U.S., the same flexibility does not apply to a ‘mixed record’ student graduating from a U.S. high school
  • U.S. high school graduates **must** meet our VPA requirement as stated (one yearlong or two semester courses from the same VPA discipline)
• In the example above, the student attended a school in the Northern Mariana Islands for 9th grade
  • Although the CA transcript has labeled 9th grade as “Out of USA,” Northern Mariana Islands is a U.S. commonwealth and students should be able to access course work similarly to students applying from any other state in the U.S.
  • The student completed Art 1 (visual arts discipline) and Drama (theater discipline) in 9th grade
  • Neither course is a full year (10.0 credits); each course only earned 7.5 credits
  • While the combination of Art 1 and Drama would equal more than a full year of VPA course work, the courses are not from the same VPA discipline; therefore, the courses cannot be combined and the requirement is not met
  • At the CA high school, the student could complete one semester of a visual art or one semester of a theater course to finish the VPA requirement
• In this example from a boarding school in Maine, the school awards “Expected” or “Not Meeting” grades for some courses. This is just the first trimester of 9th grade, but the grades for the second and third trimesters for these courses were also “Expected.”
• UC must be able to calculate a GPA from a-g course work. “Expected” is akin to a “Pass” grade, which is not acceptable for a-g courses.
• Even though this student has a full year of Varsity Art, a full year of Advanced Band, and a full year of Jazz Band in 9th grade, this student has NOT met the VPA requirement because the student did not earn actual letter or numerical grades in the course.
• UC requires 3 years of math – Elementary Algebra, Intermediate Algebra, and Geometry – to meet our area “c” requirement
• Successful completion or validation of Algebra I & Algebra II and successful completion of Geometry is required from all applicants regardless of where they attended high school
• The requirement may be met with single subject math courses, integrated math courses, or a combination of single-subject and integrated math courses
• Specific scores on AP, IB, SAT or ACT exams can validate the Algebra I and Algebra II requirements, but not the Geometry requirement
• Much like laboratory science, math courses at international institutions are often taught as integrated math, combining elements of Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2, Statistics, Precalculus and even Calculus in each year of the course.
• In many instances of integrated math overseas, the courses are simply called "Mathematics" or "Maths" – as with the example above from China – rather than “Integrated Math.”
• The 9th grade “Mathematics” course and 10th grade “Maths” course on the Chinese transcript above would be sufficient to clear the Algebra 1 and Geometry requirements, but not the Algebra 2 requirement.
• When the student starts at the U.S. high school in 11th grade, the next logical level of math would be Algebra 2 (if the school teaches single-subject math) or Integrated Math 3 (if the school is teaching an integrated math sequence).
  • Although the student has only completed Math for two years in China, it is very possible that the student has completed concepts beyond Algebra 1 and Geometry.
  • Using a placement test to ensure the student is placed into the proper math course at your school would be advisable.
• REMINDER: Students who have attended Year 9 in a country where 9th grade is considered middle school are still required to report the courses and grades from the 9th year on the application AND, if offered admission, provide an official record from their 9th year school that issued those grades.
The standard national curriculum in India is a four-year secondary school program with external examinations after 10th and 12th grade. The Year X exam represents the completion of two years of secondary schooling.

- The exams are administered by an examination board specific to the region of India where the test was taken.
- They are often known as the CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education) exams, but may have other names depending on the region.
- All assessment is based on the external exam marks; internal school marks tend to be much lower than the exam results and are usually not considered for promotion to the next class or for university admission.
- A student, such as the student above, who has completed a Year X (10th year) external exam with passing marks in the subject of Mathematics, is assumed to have completed Integrated Math 1 & 2. This would be sufficient to clear the Geometry requirement.
- The student would then need to complete Algebra 2 or Integrated Math 3 or a more advanced math course to complete the area “c” requirement.
- If the student had only completed the 9th year in India (the circles in Green) and then came to the U.S., (so ignore the 10th year here), you would have to use the internal marks awarded by the school.
  - The student would then only have completed the equivalent of Integrated Math 1. The student then would need to complete Integrated Math II and III (or just IM III) or Geometry and Algebra 2 in the U.S. to complete the area “c”/math requirement.
A-G Requirements

A. History/Social Science
B. English or Language of Instruction
C. Mathematics
D. Laboratory Science
E. Language Other Than English
F. Visual Performing Art
G. Elective

• The final two a-g subject areas that generate the most questions for students with mixed records from outside of the U.S. are the “b”/English and “e”/Language Other than English (LOTE) requirements.
• Referring to the “b” requirement as the “English” requirement generates confusion about how a student with an international mixed record can meet the requirement.
• It’s best to refer to the “b” requirement as the “Language of Instruction (LOI)” requirement, as this provides a clue as to which courses UC will use to meet this subject area.
• Students are required to complete four years of composition and literature course work in the primary language of instruction at the school attended
  • For U.S. schools, the primary LOI is almost always English, hence the 4-year English requirement for students completing all of their secondary education in the U.S.
  • Outside of the U.S., the primary LOI is the language in which the majority of courses are taught at the school – which may or may not be the native language of the country in which the school is located
  • While a student is in a school where the primary LOI is not English, the student must complete literature/composition courses each year in that LOI to meet the “b” requirement
  • When the student transfers to a U.S. high school, the student must then complete English courses for the years that they were in the U.S. school to complete the “b” requirement
    • Students do not need to “make up” English courses for the years that they were outside of the U.S.
    • Only one year of approved advanced ESL/ELD course work may be used toward the “b” requirement
    • Students graduating from a U.S. high school must complete a regular (non-ESL/ELD) English course in the 12th grade, even if 12th grade is the first/only year that the student is in the U.S.; the course does not need to be a 12th grade English course (i.e., a course intended for seniors)
• How does UC know what the primary LOI is for a particular school? We ask for the LOI for every international school that a student reports on the application.
In this example from Brazil, the primary LOI was Portuguese, and this transcript represents the 10th and 11th grade. The 9th grade was also in Brazil with Portuguese as the primary LOI.

The student transferred to a U.S. high school for senior year.

For UC admission purposes, campuses will use the Portuguese Language and Literature courses to meet area “b” for 9th, 10th, and 11th grade. The student will need to complete a regular (non-ESL/ELD) English course in the 12th grade at the U.S. high school to meet the final year of the “b” requirement.

Tips:
- If you aren’t sure what the primary LOI is in this case, just look at the number of hours that are required for the Portuguese Language and Literature course vs. the English course (200 annually vs. 40 annually – green circules). If you have the number of hours available, usually the language course with the most required hours is the primary LOI.
- In some countries, the location of a course on the transcript is also an indicator of the primary LOI; oftentimes, the primary LOI is the first language listed on a transcript, while the second language is listed further down on the transcript.
• Students with an international mixed record may need some guidance to fill out the application correctly.
• These next few slides will show a student from Turkey who completed grades 9 and 10 in a Turkish school, and grades 11 and 12 in a CA high school.
• Students are asked to report the LOI for each international school that they report. This helps us determine whether a student has met minimum requirements or not. Students in U.S. high schools are not prompted for the language of instruction; it is presumed to be English.
The student should work from the Turkish transcript to accurately report the courses and grades from Turkey.

In this example from Turkey, Turkish is the primary LOI in grades 9 and 10.

As with the Brazilian example, UC will use Turkish to meet the “b” requirement for grades 9 and 10. The English courses that the student completes in grades 11 and 12 at the CA high school will round out the last two years of the “b” requirement.
• The image above shows the correct way that area “b” course work should be reported on the application for this same Turkish student.
  • Turkish Literature is reported under area “b” for the years that the student was in Turkey, even though the application labels the subject area as “B-English.”
  • Note also that the student must report the numerical grades assigned by the Turkish school and should not attempt to convert those grades to a letter-grade system.
  • The student is allowed one year of ESL in the U.S. high school, but not in 12th grade.
  • The student is enrolled in a regular (non-ESL) English course in 12th grade.
  • This student will have met area “b” at the end of 12th grade, assuming that the student earns C or better grades in the 12th grade English course.
If we refer to “English” as the “Language of Instruction,” then it stands to reason that we would refer to the “Language other than English” (LOTE) as the “Language other than the Language of Instruction” (LOTLI).

To meet the area “e” requirements, students must complete 2 years of the same LOTE/LOTLI, or through the 2nd level of high school instruction.

If the primary LOI in the high school was not English, students can use English as their LOTLI; other languages are also acceptable.
In the example above, the student completed 9th grade in Iran.

Since Persian Language is the primary LOI, UC will use Persian Language in 9th grade toward the area “b”/English (LOI) requirement.

English 1 in 9th grade would be used toward the area “e”/LOTE (LOTLI) requirement, although Arabic can also be used as one year of LOTLI.

If the student transfers to a U.S. school after the 9th grade, then the one year of English combined with the one year of Arabic in 9th grade is not sufficient to meet the 2-year LOTE/LOTLI requirement; **BUT, the student is NOT deficient in the “e” subject area:**

- A student educated through the 6th grade or higher in a school where the primary LOI was not English is considered proficient in that language (of instruction) and is not required to take additional LOTE courses.
- The student must include a note in the Additional Academic Comments section of the application explaining that the requirement has been met through formal schooling through 9th grade (in the above example) in that language.
Other options for demonstrating LOTE proficiency to clear the area “e” requirement include:

- Earning a satisfactory score/grade on a proficiency test administered by a college or university; a statement of competency on official letterhead is required
  - For example, the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at UCLA administers placement exams for Arabic, Armenian, Hebrew, Persian, and Turkish, and they will issue a letter with the results.
- Certification by high school principal with a notation on the official high school transcript that includes the language and level of proficiency, expressed as “equivalent to ‘X’ years of high school level instruction”.
  - Certification should be based on the judgment of language teachers, advice of professional or cultural organizations with an interest in maintaining language proficiency, or other appropriate sources of expertise.
• Working with non-California high school records isn’t difficult, especially when you have the right information to guide you.
• This final section of the presentation will provide you with some tips and tools to help you determine whether your students have met minimum a-g requirements or not.
• Some California students choose to do a foreign exchange program for one or two semesters – usually during the sophomore or junior year of high school.
• Depending on the study abroad program, students may or may not receive a transcript from the overseas high school for the course work completed.
• If the student receives an official academic record for the time spent overseas, the student must report the courses and grades on the UC application exactly as they appear on the transcript
  • Sometimes the grades earned on an exchange program are lower than a student might have expected; they must still report those grades and they will be factored into the overall UC GPA for admission purposes (10th and 11th grade only)
  • UC international specialists understand the various grade scales used overseas and are aware of the level of rigor and/or grading practices used in other countries, and the entire application is reviewed in context
  • Only courses in which letter or numerical grades were earned (based on the country’s grading system) will meet a-g requirements
  • Courses in which a student was simply assigned a “Pass” grade by the overseas school will not meet a-g, except by validation (math and LOTE subjects only)
  • Students should not report “Pass” on the application if the international school assigned actual grades
• In the two examples above from France, one student earned grades on the French grading scale, while the other student earned only Pass grades. The student with Pass grades cannot use any of that coursework toward a-g requirements.
• Note: UC will accept pass-along credit for a foreign exchange program, as long as the courses are itemized under the appropriate academic year with credits and actual grades (not Pass) on your transcript; **this is the only international course work for which UC will accept pass-along credit**
When a student has completed fewer than 3 years of high school in an English-speaking school, that student will be expected to demonstrate English proficiency

- TOEFL and IELTS tests are the most common method of demonstrating proficiency, but students may be able to demonstrate proficiency with SAT, ACT, AP, or IB scores – see page 48 of the *Quick Reference Guide to UC Admissions*
- Students will self-report their English proficiency scores on the application, just as they would self-report SAT/ACT scores.
- Official SAT, ACT and TOEFL scores should then be sent to one UC campus; the scores will be shared with all campuses to which the student applied.
- IELTS scores must be sent to each individual campus.

Keep in mind: A UC campus may require a score higher than the minimum for admission selection. And, some campuses may request an interview to determine English skills during the application review process.
• If your student sat for external exams before enrolling at your high school, the student must report their results on the International External Exams page in the Test Score section of the application.

• External exams may include: I/GCSE exams, AS or A Levels, IB exam predicted results, India year X (as in the example above) or year XII exams, and more.
  • Note that some U.S. schools are offering the British curriculum of education, so it is possible to see GCSE and/or A-level exams from U.S. students.
  • AP and IB actual results and planned exams are not reported on this page.
Repeating Courses

Courses used to meet “a-g” requirements must be completed with letter grades of C or better or the equivalent (depending on the school’s grade scale).

Each “a-g” course in which a student received a grade of “D” or “F” may be repeated as many times as necessary until the first instance in which the student earns a letter grade of “C” (or better).

• **Important**: If a student repeats a course used to meet the “a-g” requirements in which he or she initially earned a letter grade of C or higher, the repeated grade will not be used in calculating the GPA.

• A course can be repeated at a different institution, and it may have a different course title. The content/curriculum of the course must be the same or similar to the original course to be considered a repeat. For example, a student with a D in English 9 at an out-of-state school may repeat the subject at a CA high school with a course titled English I or Freshman English.

• When filling out the application, the student **must** report both the original grade and the repeated grade; UC will only use the better grade in the GPA calculation (grades are not averaged).
• Ultimately, your school must decide on the appropriate placement of a student, particularly when they come from an international school.
• As we’ve attempted to demonstrate with this presentation, course work from non-CA high schools can meet a-g requirements, so it may not be necessary to have a student repeat an entire academic year.
• Even if your school requires the student to repeat a full academic year, or any part of an academic year (9th grade, 2nd Semester was repeated at a CA high school in the case above), UC requires students to report all attempted coursework and grades on the application, and UC will decide which courses and grades to include for admission.
• Students may not omit the year(s) completed at another institution; omitting any part of academic record is a serious academic integrity issue.
• When the above student applies for admission, the student will report ALL a-g subjects from both 9th grade years under the 9th grade (the courses and grades from the Chinese 9th grade year should be reported as they appear on the Chinese transcript, NOT as they were interpreted by the CA high school).
• If an “a-g” subject is originally completed with the U.S. equivalent of a “C” or better grade, UC will not use the repeated grade in the GPA calculation.
• If your school does decide to have a student repeat a full academic year, we would encourage you to place the student into courses that do not duplicate course work already passed at the previous school.
• As a quick review, these are some do’s and don’ts when working specifically with students who have an international mixed record.
  • Encourage students to use the additional comments section to explain complex academic histories, such as the school calendar, grading system, external marks, challenges or obstacles to meeting minimum A-G, e.g. a class they need is not offered at their school or is not possible with the school schedule, etc.
    • Three additional comments boxes: Freshman Gaps, Additional Academic Comments, Additional Comments (at the end of application)
    • If the information the student provides in the application is unclear, we will look at the additional comments box for an explanation
    • Information in additional comments helps to provide context when we review applications.
  • Pass-along credit is not acceptable for international course work. Students must work from the international transcript to report course work and grades accurately, and students should be prepared to provide UC with official academic records from all institutions they’ve attended or external exams they’ve taken.
  • Obtaining official academic records from some countries may require weeks or even months; students should request a sealed copy of their international transcripts as early as possible and keep those records sealed so that they remain official.
  • UC very rarely makes exceptions for submitting official academic records/transcripts of international coursework.
    • If your student reports difficulty with obtaining official records, encourage them to contact the Ministry of Education in their country for the records.
• Remember that UC will accept many courses from outside of CA to meet our requirements; review the course guidelines and expectations for each a-g subject area in our A-G Guide (https://www.ucop.edu/agguides/a-g-requirements/index.html)
• UC does its own in-house evaluations when a student applies for admission; credential evaluations from outside agencies are not accepted and can be costly to the student
• UC does not allow students to repeat courses in which a letter grade of C or better (or the equivalent) was previously earned
Counselor Resources

*Quick Reference Guide to UC Admissions 2018*

*A-G Guide*
https://www.ucop.edu/agguide/

*Counselors & Advisers Bulletin*
http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/resources/counselors-advisers-bulletin/index.html

*Future Questions*
AskUC@ucop.edu