



Frequently Asked Admissions Questions

The college selection process is overwhelming and exciting all at the same time. There are a myriad of questions that arise from students and parents as they progress on their college search; and they'll change along the way, too. Here, we've tried to answer some of the most commonly asked questions by University Prep students.

1. What standardized tests are required for college admission?

ACT - The ACT focuses on four subject areas: English, math, reading skills, and natural sciences, and includes an optional writing section. Scores range from 1-36, with the optional writing section scored between 1-12. The composite score is the average of the subject areas. A combined English Writing score will represent 2/3's weight for the multiple-choice section and 1/3 for the writing. Students are encouraged to take the ACT **with writing** in the spring of their junior year and many will take it again in the fall of their senior year. Students register for the ACT online at www.actstudent.org.

SAT - The College Board offers the SAT Reasoning Test as a measurement of the verbal, mathematical, and writing abilities a student has acquired throughout the years of his or her education. Combined scores for the SAT range from 200-2400 or 200-800 for each of the 3 divisions, plus an essay section in which scores range from 1-12. Like the ACT, students are encouraged to take the SAT in the spring of their junior year and many will take it a second time in the fall of the senior year. Students register for the SAT online at www.collegeboard.com

SAT SUBJECT TESTS - The College Board offers Subject Tests to measure a student's ability in particular subject areas. Some highly competitive colleges require three Subject Tests, in addition to the SAT, or the ACT (though some schools allow students to substitute the Subject Tests with the ACT exam). Students thinking of attending an Engineering program should take the Math 11C and a science test. It is to a student's advantage to take the Subject Test in as many areas of strength as possible. Students who are taking a one year course (i.e. biology, chemistry, physics, American and European history), should take the Subject Test at the end of year of study; students finishing sequential study in a particular area (i.e. math, foreign language) should take the SAT Subject Test at the end of the most advanced level of study prior to submitting scores to college.

2. Are there fee waivers available for standardized tests?

Yes, fee waivers for the SAT, Subject Tests, and the ACT are available in the College Counseling Office. Fee waivers are granted based on family income.

3. What are Advanced Placement (AP) exams?

Advanced Placement (AP) exams are NOT required for college admission. AP exams administered by the College Board (the same organization that administers the SAT and Subject Tests) and allow highly motivated high school students the opportunity to demonstrate college-level achievement while still in high school. If students achieve the requisite scores, they may obtain advanced placement or credit from most colleges and universities. Scores range from 1-5, and many schools offer college credit for scores of a 4 or 5. Some schools offer credit for scores of 3 or higher if the subject area is particularly advanced. AP examinations are administered at University Prep the first

two weeks of May. Students must register for these in the College Counseling Office by mid-March; exams cost \$100 each.

4. Are standardized tests offered at University Prep?

No. University Prep is not a testing site for the SAT, ACT, or SAT Subject Tests (though we are a test sight for AP exams); however, students with current documented learning differences may be tested on site at University Prep with special accommodations or at national test sites if they only require 25-50% extended time. The Learning Resource Coordinator must be notified of testing intentions well before the designated test dates so that proctors may be employed. The University of Washington, Seattle Pacific University, and Seattle University are all testing sites. Do register early to assure a convenient test site to your home.

5. What is the PSAT?

Offered by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) and the College Board, the PSAT is designed to measure mathematical, verbal, and writing abilities necessary for success in colleges. Scores range from 20 to 80 for each of three divisions of the test. The test is a practice exam for the SAT. It is also used by the NMSC to determine candidates for the National Merit Scholarship Program and the National Achievement Program for African American Students. 1% of students with the highest nationwide scores may be eligible for further scholarship consideration. Many students scoring between 95-99% are awarded Letters of Commendation in recognition of their achievement. The PSAT exam is offered to all U Prep juniors each October. Students do not need to register in advance; registration is automatic through the College Counseling Office.

6. What is the PLAN?

Offered by the ACT, the PLAN is designed to measure mathematical, verbal, writing, and science abilities necessary for success in colleges. It also includes a diagnostic test which provides information on potential careers and areas of study for students after high school. Scores range from 1 to 32 for each section of the test. The test is a practice exam for the ACT. The PLAN exam is offered to all U Prep sophomores each October. Students do not need to register in advance; registration is automatic through the College Counseling Office.

7. How does a student receive testing accommodations such as extended time for or use of a computer for standardized testing?

Students with a diagnosed learning or health disability may be eligible to take the SAT and ACT with extended time or with other accommodations. Current documentation (within the last three years) will be required through the form of a current IEP, 504 Accommodation Plan, and/or verification of a diagnosis which demonstrates the need for accommodations. Students who believe they may qualify for extended time should meet with Dr. Cutter early spring of their sophomore year or fall of the junior year to complete the necessary paperwork, which will be in addition to the regular registration materials.

To be eligible the student must:

- Have a disability that necessitates testing accommodations.
- Have documentation on file. Documentation must be current (within three years).
- Complete an eligibility form for SAT/ACT (see Dr. Cutter).
- The Professional Evaluation from a qualified professional must:
 1. State the specific disability as diagnosed
 2. Provide complete educational, developmental, medical history
 3. Describe tests/techniques used to arrive at diagnosis
 4. Establish professional credentials of evaluator
 5. Describe specific accommodations being requested

8. What if a student’s standardized test scores are not as high as he or she would have liked?

Please do not worry. There are over 800 colleges and universities in America that do not require standardized testing for admission, and that number is rising. A student’s transcript (a cumulative record of their academic work throughout high school) is the most important factor in college admission. Standardized test scores do not measure a student’s humanity or work ethic. Fair Test, an organization that promotes the holistic review of a student in the admission process maintains a listing of colleges that are test optional: www.fairtest.org

9. What is University Prep’s High School Code (also known as CEEB code)?

Our Code is 481169. Every secondary school in the United States has a distinctive identification number. It is unique to each school and it ensures that students testing results are sent to the correct school. This code number is needed when taking SAT, ACT, PSAT, PLAN and AP tests.

10. What is required of an athlete applying to college?

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) establishes rules on eligibility, recruiting and financial aid for athletes. The NCAA Eligibility Center processes the eligibility forms that can be filled out online. Student athletes should take the SAT/ACT in the junior year and start the certification process early in the senior year. Only students thinking of playing at the Division 1 and Division 11 level are required to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center: www.eligibilitycenter.org.

11. How should a musician, artist or thespian, prepare for the college process?

In most cases, if you are a musician, artist or thespian your application process will be the same as your peers. You will, though, want to submit a special resume detailing your musical, artistic, and acting accomplishments. Moreover, a portfolio, recording, or video of your work is recommended. Some colleges, especially those with conservatories, may have special requirements and audition or portfolio days. Look closely at the fine print in their applications.

12. How do I set up a college visit?

College visits can be made any time during the junior and senior years. To learn how to best maximize a visit to a college campus, visit the college’s website or call the admissions office. A tour, information session and, if offered, an interview are three productive ways to spend your time while visiting a college. For a complete list of what to ask while on a college campus, please refer to your college handbook.

13. What is the Common Application?

The Common Application is used by just under 400 colleges, mostly private, throughout the country. One form utilized by so many colleges allows for students to streamline the college application process. Students can create an online account the summer before the senior year and can work on the application over the course of several months before submitting it. Most colleges also require a supplement to the Common Application, which typically includes additional essay questions, a graded writing sample, or more information on a students’ family background. The Common Application can be found on line at www.commonapp.org.

14. What is the difference between Early Action, Early Action Single Choice, Early Decision, Early Decision II, Rolling Admissions and Regular Admission?

EARLY ACTION – An early action process whereby a student can submit an application by November 1 (or other designated date) and receive a decision by mid-December. The Early Action student, if accepted, is not bound to enroll. Students are not required to notify the college of their enrollment decision until May 1, and they can apply to other colleges’ early action or early decision.

EARLY DECISION – An early application process that carries a binding commitment to enroll, if accepted, to the college. Student and parent must sign that if admitted, the student will attend the college/university regardless of financial aid award. Colleges will share early decision lists, so all other applications must be withdrawn. Students not admitted under Early Decision are reconsidered with the regular decision candidates. Students and parents will not be informed of financial aid prior to admission. A small number of colleges have a second round of early decision called early decision II. This deadline is usually around January 15th with notification one month later.

EARLY ACTION SINGLE CHOICE - An early application process used by a few Ivy League Universities (Stanford, Harvard, Yale for example) where students typically apply by mid-November and are notified by mid-December. Students are not required to notify the college of their enrollment decision until May 1. Under the early action single choice policy, students are not allowed to apply to other colleges under early decision or early action programs. They can, however, apply to other colleges through regular decision programs.

ROLLING ADMISSION – Colleges offering Rolling Admission accept applications throughout the school year – and sometimes through the summer – and make decisions as applications are received. Depending on the time of year, many rolling admission schools are able to make decisions within two weeks of receiving an application. Students still have until May 1 to make their final decision.

REGULAR DECISION - The most common application process in this country. Students usually apply to colleges between January 1st and the 15th, are notified of the decision by April 1st, and then must let the college know whether they will matriculate by May 1st.

15. What type of academic program should I take while a student at University Prep.?

Students should take the most demanding academic schedule in which they can succeed. Most selective colleges would like for students to enroll in all five academic majors (Math, Science, History, English and a Foreign Language) for all four years of high school.

16. When should a student begin preparing for college, and when will he or she begin meeting individually with a college counselor?

The College Counseling Office is often asked when students should start addressing the college process in earnest. Our emphatic response is: the second semester of junior year. A high school student's primary role is to focus on his or her academic work and extracurricular activities. The majority of the necessary tasks associated with the college process do not occur until spring semester of the junior year. It's important that our time be dedicated first and foremost to the juniors and seniors with whom we are currently working; rest assured, when your student enters the junior year, you can expect that our office will be equally as dedicated to their needs. In the meantime, we are more than happy to answer your questions and will mail or e-mail you with any pertinent college-related information (regarding the PLAN and PSAT exams, for example).

17. How many schools do students typically apply to?

Over the years, U Prep students have been following the national trend and have applied to an increasing number of colleges. In 1979, U Prep students, on average, applied to 2.4 colleges. In 1989, that number increased to 4.3; in 1999, it was 5.4, and by 2009, students applied to an average of 7.4 different colleges. We recommend that students apply to between 6 and 10 schools, depending on the student and the types of schools he or she is applying to.

18. Since U Prep does not offer Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate courses, and since GPA's aren't weighted, are students at a disadvantage in the college process?

No. Most colleges review applications holistically and take into consideration the context of a student's high school when making admissions decisions. Students at U Prep aren't penalized for not taking advantage of courses not available to them, nor are they penalized for having a grade point average on a 4 point scale instead of a 5 point scale. Likewise, the College Counseling Office maintains ongoing relationships with the college admission counselors who make admission decisions for our students. Through our regular visits to colleges locally and nationally, and through meeting with over 100 college representatives who visit University Prep each fall, our office communicates clearly to colleges University Prep's curriculum, culture, mission, and college outcomes.