



Frequently Asked Questions

University Prep hosts over 200 college admissions representatives each fall.

University Prep students attend a diverse range of colleges and universities around the country and globe.

The College Counseling Office hosts application boot-camps and application essay writing workshops for seniors each summer and fall.

Typically, at least one third of the senior class will matriculate at a college to which he or she applied under an early application program.

We encourage each student to apply to between 6-12 colleges. On average, the College Counseling Office processes over 625 applications to college each year.

There has been an increased interest in gap year programs among University Prep students. Popular Gap Year programs include Global Citizen Year. For more information on the programs, please visit the University Prep website: https://www.universityprep.org/uploaded/m_folder/Gap_Year_Spring_Admits.pdf

The college selection process is overwhelming and exciting all at the same time. A myriad of questions arises from students and parents as they progress on their college search. 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 SAT gets redesigned every decade or so, and the current format has scores that range between 400 -1600 points and sections in evidenced-based reading and writing, math, plus an optional essay, which is scored separately. We encourage all students to sign up for the optional essay portion of the exam. Registration is online at www.collegeboard.com.

SAT SUBJECT TESTS – The College Board also 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. Students thinking of attending an engineering program should take the Math II and a science test. If a student is considering one of these highly selective schools, it is to a student's advantage to take Subject Tests in as many areas of strength as possible. Students taking a one-year course (i.e., biology, physics, U.S. history) should take the Subject Test at the end of the year (although they should take the Chemistry Subject Test only after completing UPrep's advanced Organic Chemistry elective); 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. Registration is online at www.collegeboard.com.

2. Are there fee waivers available for standardized tests?

Yes, fee waivers for the SAT, Subject Tests, and the ACT are available through the College Counseling Office. Students who receive significant financial aid to attend University Prep will qualify for fee waivers for exams, and are eligible for reimbursement for the costs associated with sending additional standardized test scores (up to \$200 per student or at the discretion of the College Counseling and Financial Aid offices).

3. What are Advanced Placement (AP) exams?

Advanced Placement (AP) exams are NOT required for college admission. AP exams are 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 \$110 each. Fee waivers are available for those who qualify.

4. Are standardized tests offered at University Prep?

No. University Prep is not a testing site for the SAT, ACT, or SAT Subject Tests (although we are a test site for most 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 require extended time. The Director of Learning Support must be notified of testing intentions well before the designated test dates so that proctors may be employed. Some high schools, the University of Washington, Seattle Pacific University, and Seattle University are all testing sites. 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 UPrep juniors each October. Students do not need to register in advance; registration is automatic through the College Counseling Office.

6. Is there a pre-ACT exam?

U Prep offers a practice ACT examination to all sophomores in October, administered by University Tutoring Services. Students will receive a comprehensive score report in preparation for taking the ACT in the spring of the junior year. Students do not need to register in advance; registration is automatic through the College Counseling Office.

7. 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, and AP tests.

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. How does a student with diagnosed learning differences receive standardized testing accommodations?

Students with a diagnosed learning difference or health disability may be eligible to take the SAT and/or the ACT with extended time or with other accommodations. Current documentation (within the last three years) will be required through the form of a verification of a diagnosis which demonstrates the need for accommodations and a current ILP or 504 Accommodation Plan. Having an ILP on file does not automatically ensure testing accommodations. Students who believe they may qualify for extended time should contact Julie Smith, Learning and Testing Specialist, at JSmith@universityprep.org early spring of their sophomore 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 the SAT/ACT (see Julie Smith).
- The Professional Evaluation from a qualified professional must:

1. State the specific disability as diagnosed
2. Provide complete educational, developmental, and medical history
3. Describe tests/techniques used to arrive at diagnosis
4. Establish professional credentials of evaluator
5. Describe specific accommodations being requested

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 over 500 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 (EA) – EA is an early application process in which a student can submit an application by November 1 (or other designated date) and receive a decision by mid-December or mid-January. An EA 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 (ED) – ED is 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 ED applications 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 (EDII). This deadline is usually around January 15 with notification one month later.

EARLY ACTION SINGLE CHOICE (EASC) – 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 EASC 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 (RD) – RD is the most common application process in the United States. Students usually apply to colleges between January 1 –15, are notified of the decision by April 1, and then must let the college know whether they will matriculate by May 1.

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 email 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, UPrep students have been following the national trend and have applied to an increasing number of colleges. In recent years, UPrep students have applied to an average of 8 schools. We recommend that students apply to between 6 and 12 schools, depending on the student and the types of schools he or she is applying to. We work individually with students to make sure that their final college lists are balanced.

18. Since UPrep does not offer Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate courses, and since GPAs 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 UPrep 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.