UPREP
LEAD A LIFE OF LEARNING

Frequently Asked Questions

UPrep hosts more than 125 college admissions representatives each fall.

UPrep 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 they applied under an early application program.

We encourage each student to apply to between 6–12 colleges. On average, the College Counseling Office processes more than 800 applications to colleges each year.

There has been an increased interest in gap year programs among UPrep students. Popular gap year programs include Global Citizen Year, and School Year Abroad. For more information on gap year programs, please visit the UPrep website.

The college selection process is overwhelming and exciting all at the same time. A myriad of questions arises from students, parents, and guardians as they progress on their college search. Here, we've tried to answer some of the most asked questions by UPrep families.

1. What standardized tests are required for college admission?

Colleges and universities in the U.S. that require standardized testing typically require either the SAT or the ACT (there is no preference between the two exams). Some international universities might also require AP Exam results in certain subjects. There are many colleges that are "test optional," meaning they will consider but do not require standardized testing for admission, and there are institutions that are "test blind," which means that they do not use standardized testing at all in the admission process. To see an up-to-date list of test optional and test blind schools, visit www.fairtest.org.

2. What standardized tests do most UPrep students take?

Even though many colleges don't require standardized testing for admission, the College Counseling office recommends that students register to take the SAT and/or the ACT beginning in the spring of the junior year. We offer both exams on campus during the school day for juniors (spring) and seniors (fall). Online registration for UPrep students for School Day Tests can be found at https://aptsusa.com/uprep/. Alternatively, students can register to take the exams at a national test site during select Saturdays.

The ACT focuses on four subject areas: English, math, reading skills, and natural sciences, and includes an optional writing section. Recently, the ACT made the sciences section optional, but we encourage students to take the science section since some colleges might require it. We don't recommend that students take the optional writing section, as most colleges don't require it. 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 two-thirds weight for the multiple-choice section and one-third for the writing. Students are encouraged to take the ACT in the spring of their junior year, and many will take it again in the fall of their senior year. Students register for the weekend ACT exams at www.actstudent.org. The ACT is offered in a paper format or in a digital format, but UPrep's School Day ACT is only offered on paper.

The SAT gets redesigned every decade or so, and the current format is an adaptive digital exam. Students bring their own devices to the test, with Bluebook software downloaded in advance. The SAT scores range between 400–1600 points, including one 800-point section in Evidenced-Based Reading and Writing and one 800-point section in Math. Students are encouraged to take the SAT in the spring of their junior year, and many will take it again in the fall of their senior year. Registration for the weekend SAT exam is at www.collegeboard.com.

3. I thought there were more tests than that? What about the SAT Subject Tests?

The College Board cancelled the SAT Subject Tests in 2020. They are no longer a requirement for admission at any college in the U.S. and there is no plan to restore Subject Tests in the future. Schools in the UK, who have historically relied heavily on Subject Tests, have switched their focus to the Advanced Placement Exams (see item #5 below). We recommend that students who are interested in attending a university outside of the U.S. sign up for AP Exams.

4. Are there fee waivers available for standardized tests?

Yes, fee waivers for the SAT, the ACT, and AP Exams are available through the College Counseling Office. Students who receive significant financial aid to attend UPrep 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).

5. What are Advanced Placement (AP) Exams?

Advanced Placement (AP) Exams are NOT required for college admission at U.S. colleges and universities but may be required for students applying to universities overseas, particularly in the United Kingdom. AP Exams are administered by the College Board (the same organization that administers the SAT) 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 Exams are administered at UPrep the first two weeks of May. Students can see an AP FAQ, calendar of exams, and registration information at www.aptsusa.com/uprep; each exams cost $150. Fee waivers are available for students who qualify. Registration takes place between September 1–November 1 each fall; there is a late registration period from November 2–March 1, where students are charged a $40 late fee.

6. Are standardized tests offered at UPrep?

Yes. We offer the SAT and ACT on campus for juniors in March and the SAT and ACT for seniors in October. Students with 100 percent time accommodations will take the SAT and ACT during the weekend at UPrep with support from the Integrated Learning Office. We are also a test site for most AP Exams for juniors and seniors in May. These exams are for UPrep students only, and registration takes place separately from the national test centers at https://aptsusa.com/uprep.

7. 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 (for students nationwide who earned the highest scores on the PSAT), the National Recognition Scholars (celebrating the academic achievements of rural area/small town, African American/Black, Hispanic/Latino, Indigenous/Native American, and first-generation students), the School Recognition Award (celebrating students who demonstrate academic excellence within their school community), and the AP Scholar Award (for students who received a three or higher on two or more AP Exams by the 10th grade). 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.

Students with current documented learning differences will need to contact the Integrated Learning Office early in their sophomore year to start the application process to request accommodations.

8. Is there a pre-ACT exam?

UPrep offers a practice ACT examination to all sophomores in March. 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.

9. What is UPrep's high school code (also known as CEEB code)?

The UPrep code is **481169**. Every secondary school in the U.S. 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.

10. 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 as well as verification of a diagnosis which demonstrates the need for accommodations. Students must also have a current ILP or 504 Accommodation Plan. Having an ILP on file does not automatically ensure standardized testing accommodations. Students who believe they may qualify for extended time should contact Julie Smith, learning and testing specialist, at JSmith@universityprep.org in the 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)
- Have a professional evaluation from a qualified professional that must:
    - State the specific disability as diagnosed
    - Provide complete educational, developmental, and medical history
    - Describe tests/techniques used to arrive at diagnosis
    - Establish professional credentials of evaluator
    - Describe specific accommodations being requested

11. 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 2 level are required to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center: www.eligibilitycenter.org. Students interested in playing sports at Division 3 schools should contact the coach at the school to express their interest.

12. 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.

13. 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 the UPrep College Handbook.

14. What is the Common Application?

The Common Application is used by more than 1,100 colleges throughout the country and at some international institutions. 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 an additional form where students self-report their academic transcript, additional essay questions, a graded writing sample, or more information on a student's family background. The Common Application can be found online at www.commonapp.org.

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

EARLY ACTION (EA)/Non-binding: EA is an early application process in which a student can apply by November 1 (or other designated date) and receive a decision by mid-December or mid-January. This is not a binding agreement. Students may apply to other colleges. Students have until May 1 to make a decision and send in their deposit. If a school offers EA, we typically recommend that students take advantage of it. The vast majority of UPrep students typically apply to at least one EA institution.

EARLY ACTION SINGLE CHOICE (EASC): This is a restrictive early application process used by a few highly selective universities (Stanford, Harvard, Yale, for example) where students typically apply by mid-November and are notified by mid-December. Under the EASC policy, students are not allowed to apply to any other college early decision or early action. They can, however, apply to other colleges through regular decision programs. Students have until May 1 to make an enrollment decision and send in their deposit.

EARLY DECISION (ED)/Binding: ED is an early application process that carries a binding commitment to enroll. Students and parents must sign a form that states that if admitted they will enroll and withdraw any other submitted applications. If students are deferred admission, they will be reconsidered with the regular decision candidates. Some 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. They usually are given two weeks from the decision date to send in their deposit. In a typical year, about half of a graduating class will apply using an Early Decision application, and about one quarter to one third of a class will enroll at an institution to which they applied ED.

ROLLING ADMISSION/Non-binding: 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 and send in their deposit.

REGULAR DECISION (RD)/Non-binding: RD is the most common application process in the U.S. Regular decision deadlines are usually between January 1–15 and students are notified by April 1. Students have until May 1 to make a decision and send in their deposit.

16. What type of academic program should I take while a student at UPrep?

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 subjects (math, science, history, English and a foreign language) for all four years of high school.

17. When should a student begin preparing for college, and when will they 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 their 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 Pre-ACT and PSAT exams, for example). Beginning in the fall of the junior year, we will start working with the juniors in group settings to prepare for meeting with visiting college representatives, introducing students to Scoir, our online college counseling software, and hosting information sessions about college admission.

18. 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 nine schools. We recommend that students apply to between six and 12 schools, depending on the student and the types of schools the student is applying to. We work individually with students to make sure that their final college lists are balanced.

19. Since UPrep does not offer Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate courses, and 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 nearly 150 college representatives who visit UPrep each fall, our office communicates our curriculum, culture, mission and college outcome clearly to colleges.