College and University Requirements for Admission

California has four systems of education:

1. UC Schools
2. CSU Schools
3. Private Colleges
4. Community Colleges

Each system has a different set of admissions criteria. In order to plan appropriately for college, be sure you are aware of the admissions requirements for the colleges you are interested in!

Important Note: California law says YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BE A CITIZEN OR HAVE A SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER IN ORDER TO ATTEND A PUBLIC COLLEGE IN CALIFORNIA. So if you do not have a social security number, you can still apply to the college and pay California resident fees, which will make it much cheaper. Speak to the financial aid office at the colleges you are interested in, and they will help you understand how much the school is going to cost. Be sure to check out the Scholarships link for a list of scholarships that do not require citizenship.

University of California (UC) Subject Requirements

A. History/Social Science – 2 YEARS REQUIRED
Two years of history/social science, including one year of world history, cultures and geography; and one year of U.S. history or one-half year of U.S. history and one-half year of civics or American government.

B. English – 4 YEARS REQUIRED
Four years of college-preparatory English that include frequent and regular writing, and reading of classic and modern literature. No more than one year of ESL-type courses can be used to meet this requirement.

C. Mathematics – 3 YEARS REQUIRED, 4 YEARS RECOMMENDED
Three years of college-preparatory mathematics that include the topics covered in elementary and advanced algebra and two- and three-dimensional geometry. Approved integrated math courses may be used to fulfill part or all of this requirement, as may math courses taken in the seventh and eighth grades that your high school accepts as equivalent to its own math courses.

D. Laboratory Science – 2 YEARS REQUIRED, 3 YEARS RECOMMENDED
Two years of laboratory science providing fundamental knowledge in two of these three core disciplines: biology, chemistry and physics. Advanced laboratory science classes that have biology, chemistry or physics as prerequisites and offer substantial additional material may be used to fulfill this requirement. The final two years of an approved three-year integrated science program may be used to fulfill this requirement.

E. Language Other than English – 2 YEARS REQUIRED, 3 YEARS RECOMMENDED
Two years of the same language other than English. Courses should emphasize speaking and understanding, and include instruction in grammar, vocabulary, reading, composition and culture. Courses in languages other than English taken in the seventh and eighth grades may be used to fulfill part of this requirement if your high school accepts them as equivalent to its own courses.

F. Visual and Performing Arts (VPA) – 1 YEAR REQUIRED
A single yearlong approved arts course from a single VPA discipline: dance, drama/theater, music or visual art.

G. College Preparatory Electives – 1 YEAR REQUIRED
One year (two semesters), in addition to those required in “a-f” above, chosen from the following areas: visual and performing arts (non-introductory level courses), history, social science, English, advanced mathematics, laboratory science and language other than English (a third year in the language used for the “e” requirement or two years of another language).

Assessments:
The SAT Reasoning Test or the ACT Assessment plus Writing. The critical reading, writing and mathematics scores on the SAT must be from the same sitting. If you take the ACT, you must report your composite score.

Two SAT Subject Tests (Recommended, but not Required)
These must be in two different areas, chosen from the following: English, history and social studies, mathematics (Level 2 only), science or language other than English.

RELEVANT LINKS
To find ISLC UC certified course list, click here.
To access an online application for UC schools, click here.

California State University (CSU) Subject Requirements

A. History and Social Science- 2 YEARS REQUIRED
Including 1 year of U.S. history or 1 semester of U.S. history and 1 semester of civics or American government and 1 year of social science.

B. English- 4 YEARS REQUIRED
4 years of college preparatory English composition and literature.

C. Math- 3 YEARS REQUIRED, 4 YEARS RECOMMENDED
Including Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, or higher mathematics (take one each year)

D. Laboratory Science- 2 YEARS REQUIRED
Including 1 biological science and 1 physical science.

E. Language other than English- 2 YEARS REQUIRED
2 years of the same language; American Sign Language is applicable.

F. Visual and Performing Arts- 1 YEAR REQUIRED
Dance, drama or theater, music, or visual art.

G. College Preparatory Elective- 1 YEAR REQUIRED
One more year of any college preparatory subject.

Grades and Assessments
The grades you earn in high school are an important factor in CSU admission decisions. Your high school grade point average is calculated using your grades in all your college prep “a-g” classes completed after the 9th through 12th grades.

Grades are only part of the equation unless you have a grade point average above 3.0 and are a resident of California. The CSU uses a calculation called an Eligibility Index which combines your high school grade point average with the score you earn on either an SAT Reasoning Test or ACT Test. Even if you have a GPA above 3.0 you must take either an SAT Reasoning Test or ACT.

If you have your high school GPA and the results of your SAT Reasoning Test or ACT Test, then you can calculate your eligibility index. From there you can quickly see whether you meet the minimum admission standards. Remember, some campuses have higher standards for particular majors or those students who live outside the local area.

RELEVANT LINKS
To access an online application and research CSU schools, click here.
Private Colleges

Many private colleges have the same entrance requirements as the CSU’s and the UC’s, with additional recommendations for:
- 3rd year of social studies (Government),
- Advanced math (college preparatory math each year)
- 3rd and 4th year of foreign language.
College preparatory electives are highly recommended, especially in the subject area of interest

Assessments:

- SAT Reasoning or ACT
- 2 SAT Subject Tests (these tests may be optional for some private schools)

Community Colleges

- No subject requirements
- 18 years old, or
- High School Graduate, or
- High School Proficiency test certificate (not CAHSEE)
- Need a HS Diploma or proficiency to receive financial aid
Students are most successful when they continue to take college preparatory courses each semester.
Placement exams are given at the community college in English and Mathematics.

For more information on community colleges, click here.