

Career & College Pathways

Frequently-Asked Questions:

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

A strong career and college readiness system is an important value in our school district. This includes ensuring that our students are as competitive as they can be for admissions and scholarships as they prepare for postsecondary education. HSD recently asked college and university admissions counselors which high school courses are viewed as academically rigorous and provide that “competitive edge” for admissions. While these survey answers provide important perspective, you should always contact the postsecondary institutions your student is interested in attending to confirm their current admissions requirements and expectations.

DISCLAIMERS: The purpose of this document is to build general understanding among students and parents regarding how higher education institutions view transcripts for admissions. It is neither comprehensive nor definitive. This data was gathered through single contacts of a sampling of colleges and universities.

Always go to the admission officers of the colleges you are interested in to make sure you have met their requirements and know their perspectives on high school transcripts. Colleges change their expectations for admissions and/or perspectives on transcripts over time.

November 2016

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

- Some colleges consider courses designated as accelerated, honors and advanced as high level of rigor. All stated that AP/IB are valued as the strongest courses of rigor available.
- Some schools stated the accelerated/honors marks show a student has challenged themselves. However, a full course load in junior and senior years, with extra core courses in math and science, were noted to demonstrate a challenging course sequence as well.
- Some schools stated they do not value honors, accelerated and advanced courses with higher standing because there is no consistent definition district-to-district of what these courses mean, unlike AP/IB courses which have national standards.
- Most colleges do a holistic review process that looks at the student’s GPA, coursework, extracurricular involvement, special circumstances, etc.

WHAT OTHER THINGS DO COLLEGES LOOK AT?

- A full schedule for junior and senior years
- Community service and volunteerism
- Additional math and science courses
- Writing samples
- Admission interviews

<p>SCHOOL/ FINDINGS</p>	<p>Q1 What courses does your institution value for academic rigor? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AP/IB? • Accelerated? • Advanced? • Honors? • All? </p>	<p>Q2 Although the rigor of AP/IB seems to be universally accepted, there are no consistent definitions or standards for “honors” or “accelerated” courses across districts or states. How do you count (or do not count) honors or accelerated courses as “rigorous” offerings in your admissions process?</p>	<p>Q3 What other factors are considered in the admissions process at your institution? Are any listed below valued more greatly than others? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full schedules for junior/senior years? • Community volunteering? • Internship experience? • Fourth year of math, science or other (explain other)? </p>	<p>Q4 Does your institution consider weighted or unweighted GPAs for admissions and/or scholarships?</p>	<p>Q5 How much does a student’s SAT or ACT score impact admissions consideration at your institution?</p>	<p>Q6 Is there anything else you would like to share about your admissions process that would be helpful for students and parents to know?</p>
<p>GENERAL FINDINGS</p>	<p>AP/IB courses are generally accepted as having the highest level of academic rigor due to their national recognition and standardized curriculum and testing, as noted by comments from Brigham Young University, University of California, and University of Portland.</p>	<p>AP/IB courses are generally accepted as having the highest level of academic rigor due to their national recognition and standardized curriculum and testing, as noted by comments from Brigham Young University, Claremont-McKenna College, and University of Portland.</p>	<p>Full courseload junior and senior years, student’s writing sample, and a holistic review of student’s involvement with extracurriculars, volunteerism, test scores, etc. are factors for admission.</p>	<p>For admissions, universities use unweighted GPA, but some may use weighted GPA for scholarships.</p>	<p>SAT/ACT scores may be a part of the holistic student review for admissions. Many colleges have become test-optional or use standardized test scores when a student’s GPA is below institutional standard.</p>	<p>We recommend checking in with each admission office that a student is applying to and accessing specific information on a university’s website.</p>
<p>Brigham Young University</p>	<p>AP/IB courses receive “extra consideration.”</p>	<p>For the very reasons you mentioned, we give no extra consideration in the admission review for anything other than AP or IB courses.</p>	<p>In our holistic review, we consider the spirituality and academic background of the applicant, and “social” factors such as talents, leadership, service rendered, and unique personal circumstances that could have an impact on the review.</p>	<p>We use unweighted GPA.</p>	<p>ACT is only one of many factors we look at as mentioned in our answer to question 3.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Claremont-McKenna College</p>	<p>All</p>	<p>We value honors or accelerated courses as college-preparatory, but not as strong as AP/IB. AP/IB courses provided by the high school are considered the strongest courses of rigor.</p>	<p>We hope students take four years of math, science, English, social sciences/history, foreign language.</p>	<p>We look at weighted GPA over unweighted.</p>	<p>It is considered a strong factor for admission, but certainly not the most indicative feature as to if a student is/isn’t competitive. We superscore both ACT and SAT.</p>	<p>We strongly consider interviews, either on-campus or with an alumnus in the student’s region.</p>
<p>Oregon State University</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>We evaluate applications holistically, taking into account: GPA; the required 15 core subjects met with a C or better; SAT/ACT scores; and the written essay of our application. Academic rigor for courses is not considered during the admissions process, but will be reviewed for scholarship consideration.</p>	<p>Evaluators will review all those factors when reviewing applications, as explained in our insight resume (essay portion) of the application. All of these will be taken into consideration, especially if the applicant does not quite meet the suggested 3.0 GPA, or may have lower test scores.</p>	<p>The evaluators only consider the unweighted student’s GPA during the application process.</p>	<p>SAT/ACT scores are important in the review process as well, but if the student does not have the recommended GPA or has lower test scores, their insight resume and extracurricular activities hold more importance. Test scores are also important in scholarship consideration: http://admissions.oregonstate.edu/resident-scholarships</p>	<p>Here are the admissions requirements for first-year students: http://admissions.oregonstate.edu/admission-requirements</p>
<p>Portland State University</p>	<p>All</p>	<p>We accept all AP/IB credits. In order for a student to be awarded college credit for these courses, they must submit their test scores for these courses and score a certain amount. Find out more at: https://www.pdx.edu/undergraduate-admissions/psu-credit</p>	<p>We really look at two things for admissions: 1) GPA must be at least 3.0; and 2) complete all 15 units of college-prep courses with a C- or better. Students who meet these requirements will be automatically granted admissions to PSU. All other factors are valued if the student does not meet minimum requirements and undergo our holistic review process.</p>	<p>We look at a student’s unweighted GPA when it comes to admissions and scholarships.</p>	<p>The only time we take the SAT/ACT test scores into account for admissions is if the student’s GPA is below 3.0. In this case, test scores become an important part of the holistic review process.</p>	<p>Although PSU has rolling admissions, students should be applying by our priority deadline to ensure they are being considered for many of our scholarships.</p>

<p>SCHOOL/ FINDINGS</p>	<p>Q1 What courses does your institution value for academic rigor? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AP/IB? • Accelerated? • Advanced? • Honors? • All? </p>	<p>Q2 Although the rigor of AP/IB seems to be universally accepted, there are no consistent definitions or standards for “honors” or “accelerated” courses across districts or states. How do you count (or do not count) honors or accelerated courses as “rigorous” offerings in your admissions process?</p>	<p>Q3 What other factors are considered in the admissions process at your institution? Are any listed below valued more greatly than others? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full schedules for junior/senior years? • Community volunteering? • Internship experience? • Fourth year of math, science or other (explain other)? </p>	<p>Q4 Does your institution consider weighted or unweighted GPAs for admissions and/or scholarships?</p>	<p>Q5 How much does a student's SAT or ACT score impact admissions consideration at your institution?</p>	<p>Q6 Is there anything else you would like to share about your admissions process that would be helpful for students and parents to know?</p>
<p>University of Arizona</p>	<p>All</p>	<p>We look to see whether students have challenged themselves academically by taking honors and/or accelerated courses when evaluating for entrance into our Honors College.</p>	<p>We look most heavily at GPA in the core academic courses (4 years of English, 4 years of math [Algebra 1 counts as the first year whether taken in middle school or high school], 3 years of science, 2 years of social studies, 2 years of a second language, and 1 year of fine arts or career and technical education. We require an ACT or SAT score if a student is applying to our engineering or nursing majors, to honors, and/or if a student wants to be considered for a merit scholarship.</p>	<p>We use unweighted GPA calculation for honors and general admissions decisions.</p>	<p>See answer to question 3.</p>	<p>No response to this question.</p>
<p>University of California system</p>	<p>AP/IB and college courses are viewed equally as more rigorous than the standard college prep curriculum. For out-of-state schools, the terms “accelerated,” “advanced” and “honors” would not be treated in the same manner as AP/IB since the local criteria for using these labels is unknown to UC. More information can be found here: http://www.ucop.edu/agguide/a-g-requirements/honors/index.html</p>	<p>In our comprehensive review process, they would be viewed in light of the entirety of the academic history and courses taken. However, the grades from those courses would not receive the extra honors weight in the official UC-GPA calculation.</p>	<p>The criteria used for selection are here and priorities are set by the local campus faculty each year: http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/freshman/how-applications-reviewed/index</p>	<p>We look at both.</p>	<p>It is only one of the 14 factors of our comprehensive review.</p>	<p>We have a great deal of information available on our website: http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/freshman/out-of-state</p>
<p>University of Colorado at Boulder</p>	<p>All</p>	<p>We honor courses that are marked as honors or AP courses as academically rigorous. We typically make decisions based on the school’s available offerings—not comparing between applicants that go to different schools and don’t offer the same courses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A full schedule for junior and senior years • Foreign languages—we ask students to get to level 2 or even to level 3 of one language. • A fourth year of math and science if applying to the College of Engineering—though definitely not a requirement. 	<p>We take the weighted GPA for merit-based scholarship consideration.</p>	<p>We look at the ACT or SAT as one of the primary factors when reviewing students for admission.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

<p>SCHOOL/ FINDINGS</p>	<p>Q1 What courses does your institution value for academic rigor?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AP/IB? • Accelerated? • Advanced? • Honors? • All? 	<p>Q2 Although the rigor of AP/IB seems to be universally accepted, there are no consistent definitions or standards for “honors” or “accelerated” courses across districts or states. How do you count (or do not count) honors or accelerated courses as “rigorous” offerings in your admissions process?</p>	<p>Q3 What other factors are considered in the admissions process at your institution? Are any listed below valued more greatly than others?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full schedules for junior/senior years? • Community volunteering? • Internship experience? • Fourth year of math, science or other (explain other)? 	<p>Q4 Does your institution consider weighted or unweighted GPAs for admissions and/or scholarships?</p>	<p>Q5 How much does a student's SAT or ACT score impact admissions consideration at your institution?</p>	<p>Q6 Is there anything else you would like to share about your admissions process that would be helpful for students and parents to know?</p>
<p>University of Montana</p>	<p>Our perspective of academic rigor is that the student completes the college-preparatory program in high school, which includes four years of English, three years of math, three years of social studies, two years of laboratory science, and an elective.</p>	<p>We will accept and award AP/IB credits. Here is a link to these requirements on our admissions page: http://admissions.umt.edu/admissions/advanced-credits</p>	<p>While our admissions evaluators look over applications, they will take into consideration full schedules for junior and senior years, community volunteering, internships and a fourth year of math/science/etc.</p>	<p>Our admissions evaluators will be primarily looking at the unweighted cumulative GPA score (minimum 2.5 GPA required) and the ACT (minimum 22 composite) or SAT (minimum 1120 combined) score. These scores also will be applied toward any scholarships that students may qualify for within our department. For further information regarding scholarships, our Financial Aid office (406-243-5373) can go into further detail with you.</p>	<p>See combined answer to question 4.</p>	<p>See combined answer to question 4.</p>
<p>University of Oregon</p>	<p>The UO considers all classes with these designations to have value in academic rigor.</p>	<p>This is difficult to answer because some students in some school districts in Oregon and across the U.S. do not have access to AP, IB or “honors” classes.* We do not recalculate GPAs for admission purposes at the UO, meaning that however a student’s high school defines cumulative GPA is how we will define it (weighted or unweighted).</p> <p>*NOTE: In HSD, Hilhi offers IB courses, and the other high schools offer AP courses.</p>	<p>The web pages below provide information on how UO holistically reviews its applications as well as our requirements for admission.</p> <p>http://admissions.uoregon.edu/requirements http://admissions.uoregon.edu/requirements/freshmen-admission http://admissions.uoregon.edu/search/node/holistic</p> <p>In a nutshell, we want students who demonstrate that, if admitted, they will succeed at UO and make us a better institution of higher learning.</p>	<p>If a student’s high school lists a cumulative weighted GPA, we will use that GPA for purposes of admission and scholarships. If not, we use the cumulative unweighted GPA.</p>	<p>The UO holistically reviews all applications, so there is no one factor that will make or break student’s admission decision, including test scores. That said, a good SAT or ACT score will very likely help a student in our process.</p>	<p>It is important for students and families to know that UO does not have a required GPA or SAT/ACT score that students must possess in order to be a strong applicant. We evaluate all applications holistically. Every year, there will be some students with GPAs above 3.90 who are not admitted and some students with GPAs below 3.00 who are.</p>
<p>University of the Pacific</p>	<p>All of the above.</p>	<p>We consider AP and IB courses to be rigorous, but also recognize that honors courses at high schools are challenging, too. We know that not all schools offer AP/ IB—like some private high schools. We conduct a holistic review and consider the overall rigor of a student’s schedule.</p>	<p>We mostly focus on academic achievement: GPA, test scores, and the courses taken. We also are looking for a strong writing sample and students who participate in extracurricular activities. Students should continue challenging themselves in their senior year. We value English and writing courses, along with additional math and science, particularly if a student is entering into a STEM major.</p>	<p>We look at the unweighted GPA, but take AP/ IB/ honors courses into consideration.</p>	<p>SAT/ACT score is an important part of the review process; however, a high GPA could help with a lower test score.</p>	<p>I recommend checking in with each admission office that a student is applying to.</p>

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<p>University of Portland</p>	<p>We value all, but AP/IB would be viewed as the most rigorous.</p>	<p>We value all, but AP/IB would be viewed as the most rigorous.</p>	<p>UP takes a holistic approach to the admissions process and we value a well-rounded student. All of the above are considered, along with letters of recommendation, test scores, writing sample, other qualities and extracurricular activities. Class selection and quality of curriculum are viewed as the most important. We strongly recommend full schedules in junior and senior years. The majority of admitted students will have a fourth year of math and science, along with four years of English, three to four years of social studies/history and two to four years of a second language.</p>	<p>We only look at the unweighted GPA for admission and scholarship.</p>	<p>Test scores are important and we take them seriously. However, standardized tests take about four hours to complete and high school takes four years; thus, we place the most importance on quality of curriculum and if a student has demonstrated mastery in the classes they have opted to take.</p>	<p>Students interested in nursing need to complete one year of chemistry in high school. It is strongly preferred that students interested in an engineering or a science major be at or above pre-calculus and have a strong science background.</p>
<p>University of Puget Sound</p>	<p>We consider all of these courses to be rigorous.</p>	<p>If an institution's most rigorous course is an honors level or accelerated course, then we also consider this rigorous. However, if high schools also offer AP/IB, then that is the highest level of rigor. On the Common Application, the counselor will usually indicate the level of rigor in a student's schedule, with AP/IB rated the most challenging.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full schedules for junior and senior years—we look at grades from junior year and the first semester of senior year. We also consider freshman and sophomore years and take a look at the types of course taken, if there is an upward trend in grades, etc. • We will note volunteering on the extracurricular section, but we don't expect a certain number of hours. • We will note internship experience on the extracurricular section, but do not require it. • A fourth year of math, or math beyond pre-calculus looks good to us and shows that a student is prepared to enter a rigorous college institution. Same with science, though it is not required. • We also pay attention to the essay on the Common Application—we want to see strong writing skills up to a college level. 	<p>We look at the unweighted GPA when reviewing applications and scholarships. GPA is the main factor since we are SAT/ACT test-optional.</p>	<p>It does not. We are test-optional. Students can submit two short-answer questions instead of the SAT/ACT.</p>	<p>We offer optional interviews—if a student has a concern about grades or something else in their application, then we encourage them to interview with an admission counselor to explain this to us.</p>

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<p>University of Washington</p>	<p>All</p>	<p>The UW considers all advanced courses (AB, IB, honors, accelerated, college in the high school, etc.) as rigorous courses in our admissions process. We understand that all schools do not offer the same type of rigorous or advanced courses, which is why our admissions processes view all advanced courses equally, including college courses taken while a student is still in high school. The UW does not have a preference between the different kinds of courses and we view them all equally in our admissions process.</p>	<p>For our freshman review, we look primarily at the student’s high school courses and GPA for the academic portion, with some focus on ACT or SAT scores. We want to see students who take a challenging curriculum with core classes (math, science, English, social studies, world language) throughout all four years, including some honors/AP/IB/college courses if they are offered. While one or two rough semesters will not completely break the chances of admission, we do encourage students to address any situations that have held them back from achieving their potential in the additional notes section at the end of the application.</p>	<p>The UW only accepts unweighted GPAs in our application review. Please note that we do not accept weighted GPAs.</p>	<p>While test scores are an important part of the application, in our holistic review we consider all factors of an applicant’s academic history. We want students to be satisfied with test scores they are submitting; however, we do not want students to overwhelm themselves by taking the SAT or ACT multiple times in an attempt to achieve a certain score. Since our holistic application review looks at all factors of an applicant’s academic history, test scores are only one of many parts reviewed in the application.</p>	<p>Our freshman admissions and class profile can be found here: http://admit.washington.edu/why-uw/about#freshman-admission-class-profile. This profile contains the average GPA and test scores of our admitted students. Please note that earning scores and a GPA in this range does not guarantee an applicant’s admission; however, it does provide data to see the relative academic performance of the most recently-admitted freshman class.</p>
<p>Willamette University</p>	<p>Willamette values all courses above the traditional requirements as rigorous.</p>	<p>We will weigh any course designated as AP/IB, honors, advanced or accelerated with an extra point. We believe that students who take courses above the normal load should be rewarded.</p>	<p>Strong Common Application essay, full schedule junior and senior years. Looking for well-rounded students so that can include volunteering, internship, etc.</p>	<p>We recalculate all GPAs and make them weighted.</p>	<p>This year (2016) we are going test-optional, so students who decide not to submit an ACT or SAT score will have to complete an additional essay instead. Students who go the test-optional route are still eligible for merit-based awards.</p>	<p>N/A</p>