

## Understanding A-G Courses

### What are the A-G Requirements?

The **A-G Requirements** refer to the high school courses required for entrance to the University of California (UC) and the California State University (CSU) systems. They are called “A -G” because there are seven general subject area requirements labeled “A” through “G” (see the list on the next page). These requirements should not be confused with the courses required by the state of California or individual school districts for high school graduation, as requirements are less in some subjects and greater in others.

### Minimum Grades for A-G Courses

- The CSU system requires a minimum of a “C” grade in all A-G courses
- The UC system requires a 3.0 grade point average in the A-G courses. This means that a “C” grade can be balanced by an “A” grade in another class.

It should be noted that both the number of required A-G courses and the grade standards are the *minimum* requirements just to apply. Historically, few “C” average students are admitted to a CSU school and it can be difficult for 3.0 students to get into a UC campus. Taking the *recommended* number of math and science courses can double a student’s chances of admission to a UC school compared with just taking the minimum number of courses.

### Does Your High School Require A-G Courses to Graduate?

In recent years, there has been a push in some school districts to align the high school graduation requirements with the A-G Requirements. A key reason for this movement is to give more students the opportunity to qualify for more higher education options. Some districts are making the A-G Requirements the “default” *pathway* for high school coursework. This means that all students are expected to take courses to meet the A-G Requirements unless they actively opt out. By setting higher expectations, students can rise to the occasion and meet the requirements.

### What’s Different About A-G Requirements?

The major differences between most high school graduation requirements and the A-G Requirements are in the areas of **Mathematics, Foreign Languages, and Sciences**.

- Most high schools require two years of Mathematics, while the A-G Requirement is three years (four recommended) and specifically includes Algebra II or Integrated Math Course III
- High schools often accept Science credits from accredited courses other than the Biology/Chemistry/Physics lab courses that are necessary to meet the A-G Science Requirement.
- The A-G Requirement for Foreign Languages is two years (three recommended), while most high schools require a two to three year combination of Foreign Language and/or other electives.

### A-G Resources

- [University of California A-G Guide](https://hs-articulation.ucop.edu/guide) (https://hs-articulation.ucop.edu/guide)
- [University of California A-G Overview](http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/freshman/requirements/a-g-requirements/index.html) (http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/freshman/requirements/a-g-requirements/index.html)
- [California State University A-G Overview](https://www2.calstate.edu/apply/freshman/getting_into_the_csu/Pages/admission-requirements.aspx) (https://www2.calstate.edu/apply/freshman/getting\_into\_the\_csu/Pages/admission-requirements.aspx)
- [Academic Planner](http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/files/My_Academic_Planner-EAOP.pdf) (http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/files/My\_Academic\_Planner-EAOP.pdf)

## The Required A-G Courses

### 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 at least two of these three foundational subjects: 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, as may the final two years of an approved three-year integrated science program that provides rigorous coverage of at least two of the three foundational subjects.

### E | **Foreign 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).