

Sky Mountain Charter School

High School Student Manual



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One of the greatest attributes of our school is the amount of educational choices offered to students and families. At times, the diversity of course options can be overwhelming, especially when entering high school. Although with careful planning starting in the 8th and 9th grade, you can make a smooth transition to college or a career after you graduate high school. ***The purpose of this packet is to outline the main educational options that will best support a student's personal interests and career/college goals.***

ESEA/NCLB and Highly Qualified Teachers

Under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the No Child Left Behind Act all students must be served by a 'highly qualified teacher;' that is a teacher who is certified in the subject area that they teach. At Sky Mountain Charter School we use a collaborative model to ensure that all of our students are served by a highly qualified teacher.

Using this model high school students' curriculum in their core courses must be either:

- Online
- A Sky Mountain Charter School SME course
- Through an approved HQT vendor
- At a community college
- Through an ES who holds a secondary (HS) California credential in the high school subject(s)

For more information on meeting ESEA/NCLB guidelines please see the NCLB workshop in our parent manual. Your ES will also be able to assist you.

http://skymountaincs.org/parent/parent_manual.htm

Planning for High School

Outline a General Course Plan

With your ES, first decide upon one of the three basic plans: **Standard Graduation, Community College Prep, or UC/CSU University Prep** (see page titled: *IEM Charter Schools – Suggested Course Plan Schedules for High School Completion*)

Note: If attending a UC/CSU is even a remote possibility, it is recommended that you take “a-g” courses. Completion of these a-g courses is a minimum application requirement for all UC/CSU schools. Generally, if you do not complete all of the a-g courses, you will not be able to apply to any UC/CSU during your senior year without passing special tests (*see part 6 below - UC/CSU Application Process*). *However, it is best to check with the university regarding their current admissions policy.*

Students might choose to go to a community college for two years and then transfer to a UC/CSU. As a transfer student to UC/CSU colleges, your high school courses and grades are not used in the application process – it is strictly based on how you did at the community college. Private colleges and community colleges do not have the a-g requirement for applicants applying as college freshman, and those colleges tend to have a more relaxed policy on specific course requirements.

Colleges that have a competitive application process want to see “**course rigor**” demonstrated by their applicants. These top colleges want to see how students have challenged themselves in high school. Getting excellent grades in high school is not enough to get into these institutions. Since the completion of “a-g” courses is typically a basic application requirement, they do not consider those to be demonstrating “course rigor”. A great way to demonstrate “course rigor” is to take several AP exams and complete community college classes while concurrently enrolled in high school. (*See below for more info on AP exams and Community College courses*)

Awarding Credits (Carnegie Units)

Students should be paced to earn 5 credits for each semester long course. We do not award partial credits or incompletes. Students' progress must be evaluated at each learning record meeting.

If a student does not complete a course then they have earned an 'F' and no units should be awarded.

High school courses must be chosen at least 2 weeks prior to the start of the semester. Courses may not be added or dropped two weeks after the start of the semester.

Explore Careers and Colleges

Most high school students are uncertain on the career pathway they will take in life. Our school has several resources to help you think about a wide variety of career pathways based on your unique personality and interests.

During your junior year, it is recommended that you actively research colleges, attend local college fairs, and visit particular colleges of interest.

ROP (Regional Occupational Programs)

ROP is a great way to explore career choices, get career specific training, and get focused on a career before a student starts college or starts a professional trade. ROP courses give 11th and 12th grade students

exposure to specific careers and often result in official certifications that can be used to jumpstart a career directly out of high school. Here are a few highlights of ROP:

- It is FREE (you don't have to use any of your instructional funds!)
- You can earn upwards of 15 elective credits each semester
- Develop specific job skills
- Build relationships with local employers that could lead to employment opportunities after high school
- Experiment with a specific career field of interest (medical, computer technology, automotive repair, law enforcement, etc).

Availability of ROP courses varies each semester so check your county's ROP website. Any public high school student is eligible to attend ROP courses but priority is given to students enrolled at the sponsoring school location.

Concurrent Enrollment in Community College

The option of taking community college courses while in high school is an excellent opportunity for a student to take advanced courses or trade-school courses, get a head start on their college coursework, and demonstrate "course rigor" to any future college. Instructional funds can be used to purchase college textbooks from approved college bookstores.

Instructional funds are not available to pay tuition or enrollment fees.

Students can use their college coursework to satisfy high school graduation requirements and a-g requirements. *For example, if a student took "History of the United States" at a community college, he could be concurrently enrolled in US History 1A and 1B for that semester at SMCS. The ES would need to see a syllabus from the college course to see that state content standards are covered (some college history courses do not cover the same timeframe as California high school content standards). Standards must be checked for all core courses. The student may have to do supplemental work*

to cover missed standards.

Besides the obvious financial savings of attending a community college first, it is also typically less competitive to get into your top college choice as a transfer student, compared to that of a high school applicant – often the neighboring UC and CSU colleges have a guaranteed admission policy for local community college students who complete all of the course requirements and who have a specified GPA. Students who transfer from a community college to a university generally do not need to take the SAT, ACT, or submit their high school GPA in the application for admission.

It is critically important to check on college and university admission policies directly with the institutions you are considering. The guidelines here are general and may not apply to all institutions.

Requirements for Concurrent Enrollment

- Student must have a minimum 2.7 GPA
- *Student must be enrolled in at least 20 credits at our charter school*
- Complete and sign two forms: 1) concurrent enrollment form obtained from the community college admissions office 2) SMCS pre-concurrent enrollment form:

<http://www.ieminc.org/genericforms/conenrollmentiem.pdf>

Paying for College

College can be very expensive. For example, for students attending the 2009/2010 school year, tuition at most private universities is about \$35,000/yr -- not including fees, books, room and board which can easily add an additional \$15,000/yr. Tuition is currently about \$12,000/yr for a UC

college and about \$6,000/yr at a CSU campus school. A public community college is by far the best deal, with tuition costing only about \$800/yr for a full-time student.

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) is an involved application that is designed to evaluate your family's financial status and relative need for college financial assistance. If you are considering attending any type of college, you are strongly urged to complete the FAFSA application (www.fafsa.ed.gov) during your senior year. Even if you don't think that you will qualify for financial aid, you will need to complete this application during your senior year to apply for most student loans, grants and scholarships.

Cal Grant (www.calgrants.org) is the largest and most generous source of grant money for California college students. The program is designed to help students pay for college. The application process requires two steps: 1) complete the FAFSA application online (www.fafsa.ed.gov) and 2) fill out the GPA verification form, located at the Cal Grant website, and mail it to the Guidance Coordinator by email attachment for a signature. Ask your ES for assistance. The FAFSA application and GPA verification must be completed between Jan 1st and March 2nd. Your application may be given greater preference if it is submitted shortly after the Jan 1st start of the application window. Print out the FAFSA application worksheet in November and gather the necessary info before Jan 1st.

Private Colleges and Universities – application process

Be sure to check with individual colleges and universities for the application requirements.

University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) application process

Be sure to check with the UC of your choice for specific application requirements and application deadlines. UC and CSU schools have been a

popular choice for California students because they offer quality college education, at a fraction of the price of a private college.

UC a-g course requirements -- “a-g” is the course code that indicates the student took courses that were approved by the University of California.

a-g Subject Area Requirements

The intent of the "a-g" [Subject Requirements](#) is to ensure that students can participate fully in the first-year program at the University in a wide variety of fields of study. The requirements are written deliberately for the benefit of all students expecting to enter the University, and not for preparation for specific majors. UC faculty consider the Subject Requirements to be effective preparation, on many levels, for undergraduate work at the University. This [pattern of study](#) assures the faculty that the student has attained a body of general knowledge that will provide breadth and perspective to new, more advanced study. Fulfillment of the "a-g" pattern also demonstrates that the student has attained essential critical thinking and study skills.

Who should take a-g College Prep Courses?

They are required for students who wish to attend the University of California directly out of high school. “A-G” courses are highly recommended for students wanting to attend a private college or university directly out of high school. *Again, it is important that the parent and student check with the university directly regarding their admission requirements.* Students who are planning to attend a community college should discuss this option with their ES. Students who have not completed the a-g college prep sequence may be able to qualify for admission through alternative paths and should talk to the college or university directly.

Subject Requirements	University of California	California State University
a – History/Social Science	2 years	2 years
b – English	4 years	4 years
c – Mathematics	3 years (a-g Algebra 1, a-g Geometry, and a-g Algebra 2); 4 years recommended	3 years (a-g Algebra 1, a-g Geometry, and a-g Algebra 2); 4 years recommended
d – Laboratory Science	2 years , including at least two of the three disciplines of biology, chemistry, and physics; MUST include on-site lab 3 years recommended	2 years , including at least two of the three disciplines of biology, chemistry, and physics; MUST include on-site lab
e – Language Other Than English	2 years of the SAME language; 3 years recommended	2 years of the SAME language
f – Visual and Performing Arts	1 yearlong course	1 yearlong course
g – College Prep Elective	1 year of an elective chosen from any course on the “a-g” course list, EXCEPT for those indicated as not fulfilling the “g” requirement	1 year of an elective chosen from any course on the “a-g” course list, EXCEPT for those indicated as not fulfilling the “g” requirement
Testing Requirements	SAT Reasoning <u>or</u> ACT AND 2 SAT Single Subject Tests (beginning with the Class of 2012, the two Subject Tests are not required)	SAT Reasoning <u>or</u> ACT

NOTE: *Students must earn grades of C or better in all “a-g” courses.*

A current list of our school’s a-g courses can be found at:

<http://www.ucop.edu/doorways/> and click the yellow box “a-g Course Lists”, then type in our school’s name, and current year.

UC and CSU colleges require that you to complete the 15 units of high school coursework to meet minimum eligibility. *One unit is equal to one full academic year of a subject.* **At least 7 of the 15 units must be taken the last two years of high school.**

GPA: GPA for UC purposes is calculated using only “a-g” courses taken after the 9th grade. Although grades from 9th grade are not factored into the eligibility GPA, grades lower than a C in a 9th grade “a-g” course will not count toward satisfying the “a-g” college eligibility requirements.

- Minimum GPA for UC eligibility = 3.00

QUESTION: Can I still get into a UC/CSU college directly out of high school without taking any a-g courses?

Yes, you can satisfy the a-g application requirement by taking specific community college courses (grade of C or better), SAT II subject exams (need qualifying score), and/or AP exams (grade of 3 or better).

Sky Mountain Charter School SME (Subject Matter Expert) a-g Courses

Sky Mountain Charter School offers UC approved a-g courses in English, History and Algebra I. We also offer many other SME courses. These courses were designed by SMCS Education Specialists. Our SME courses provide an alternative to online courses and the offer the support of our ‘expert’ subject matter Education Specialists. Please ask your ES for more information on this year’s course offerings.

AP exams, CLEP and SAT

High school students may take **Advanced Placement (AP) exams** to earn college credits and demonstrate “course rigor” to future colleges. AP exams are offered in May at some local high schools. A score of 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 is given for each exam. Students typically need to earn a score of 3, 4, or 5 (out of 5) to receive college units. You should check with your college of interest since the policy on AP courses varies at each college campus. Visit www.collegeboard.org for more details.

Please note that Sky Mountain Charter School does not offer AP Exams or AP Courses, however, if a student passes an AP Exam please let your ES know. The Guidance Coordinator, at the discretion of the Director, may make a note on the student’s transcript.

For more information on AP Courses please review this information:
<http://www.skymountaincs.org/handbook/highschool/apexams.htm>

CLEP (College Level Examination Program) is the most widely accepted credit-by-examination program in the United States today, helping students earn credit for what they already know, regardless of how that knowledge was acquired. By receiving a satisfactory score, students can earn from 3 to 12 college credits toward a college degree for each CLEP exam taken, depending on the exam subject and the policy of the college or university. For more information, visit:

<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/clep/about.html>

SAT Information/College Board Website

The most up-to-date information on the SAT is at the College Board website www.collegeboard.org. The site will provide you with code searches, SAT registration, and answer questions you might have about the **SAT I** test. The SAT test is offered every year several times each semester along with a summer testing date. Sky Mountain Charter School does not

administer this test, however, we do have a school code. The Sky Mountain Charter School code is 054344. This website also allows parents and students to access college planning tools, SAT test prep and an SAT 'question of the day!'

The **SAT II** tests are the subject tests in English, history, mathematics, science, and languages. They are designed to measure students' knowledge and skills in particular subject areas. Some colleges specify the different subject tests that are required for their admissions. They can also be used for students that have not completed a-g courses for certain subject areas.

The **PSAT** measures verbal reasoning, critical reading, math problem solving, and writing skills. The scoring scale is 20-80. It is usually offered several times in the fall semester. It helps students get ready for the SAT tests and offers students different scholarship opportunities.

Go to www.collegeboard.org to register for the SAT.

POPULAR INTERNET WEBSITES

College Search and Planning

American College Testing (PLAN/ACT)

Art Schools

Black Collegian

California Career Zone

Campus Tours

Cappex

College Apps

College Board (PSAT/SAT/AP)

CollegeXpress

CollegeNet

College and University Search

College View

Web Address (www.)

act.org

aicad.org

blackcollegian.com

cacareerzone.org

campustours.com

cappex.com

collegeapps.com

collegeboard.com

collegexpress.com

collegenet.com

universities.com

collegeview.com

College Zine (Kaplan)	kaplan.com
Historically Black Colleges and Universities	hbcu-central.com
National Association for College Admission Counseling	nacac.com
Nursing Information and Resources	nursingworld.org
Peterson's (searching majors)	petersons.com
Princeton Review	princetonreview.com
Schools in the USA	schoolsintheusa.com
US News and World Report	usnews.com
Women's Colleges	womenscolleges.org
XAP	xap.com
Zinch	zinch.com

College Applications and Information

University of California	universityofcalifornia.edu
California State University	csumentor.edu
California Private/Independent Colleges	aiccu.edu
California Community College Information	cccco.edu
College Options in California	californiacolleges.edu
Common Application	commonapp.org

Financial Aid/Scholarships

Fastweb	fastweb.com
FinAid	finaid.com
National Association Student Financial Aid	nasfaa.org
Nellie Mae	nelliemae.org
Sallie Mae	salliemae.org
Scholarships 101	scholarships101.com
California Student Aid Commission	csac.ca.gov
FAFSA Express	fafsa.ed.gov
FAFSA Forecaster – planning website	fafsa4caster.ed.gov

Athletics

NAIA	naia.org
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NCAA
NCAA eligibility and online application

ncaa.org
ncaaclearinghouse.net

Helpful Resources

Sky Mountain Charter School High School Completion Chart– Suggested schedule of courses:

http://www.skymountaincs.org/guidance/Typesofhighschoolcourses_files/high_school_completion_plan.pdf

Sky Mountain Charter School Graduation Requirements Worksheet:

<http://www.ieminc.org/genericforms/GradReqWorksht2.pdf>

Sky Mountain Charter School Life Skills requirements information:

http://www.skymountaincs.org/guidance/typhsplan/life_skills_information.html

Sky Mountain Charter School Approved (HQT) Curriculum:

<http://skymountaincs.org/guidance/HScurriculum.html>

Sky Mountain Charter School Writing Assignments:

http://skymountaincs.org/handbook/Curriculum/writing_assignments.html

Sky Mountain Charter School Subject Matter Expert (SME) courses and a-g Courses:

<http://skymountaincs.org/guidance/sme%20course%20list.htm>

Sky Mountain Charter School Work Permit Information:

http://skymountaincs.org/es/Resources/Work_permits.html

SAT/AP Test Information:

<http://www.collegeboard.org/>

College and University Information:

<http://www.collegeboard.org/>

State of California Content Standards:

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/>

State of California Released Test Questions:

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/css05rtq.asp>