

University of California  
**Guide to “a-g” Requirements and Instructions for Updating**

This guide provides comprehensive information about the "a-g" subject area requirements and the process for updating the schools' list of approved courses for the 2002-2003 academic year. We recommend that you become familiar with the information and share it with all teachers, counselors, and administrators.

<b>CONTENTS</b>
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- ◆ Revisions to policies and new procedure for 2002-03 .....2
- ◆ Purpose, responsibility, and general criteria for the subject requirements .....3
- ◆ General requirements, by subject area .....3
- ◆ Specific subject area requirements .....4
  - (a) History / Social Science .....4
  - (b) English .....4
  - (c) Mathematics .....5
  - (d) Laboratory Science .....5
  - (e) Language other than English .....6
  - (f) Visual and Performing Arts .....7
  - (g) College Preparatory Elective .....7
- ◆ Visual & Performing Arts requirement .....8
- ◆ Sheltered and bilingual courses .....9
- ◆ Honors level courses .....9
- ◆ Interdisciplinary and/or integrated courses .....11
- ◆ Updating the school’s course list .....11
- ◆ New course certification .....14
- ◆ Contacting UC .....14

# What's New?

## Revisions to policies and new processes for 2002-03

UC continues to implement changes to streamline the course list update and course approval processes, improve communications with you and your staff, and develop resources to assist schools in developing and submitting new courses for approval. The information below explains recent changes.

**a-g On-line web site.** We have launched a new on-line tool for updating your course list and submitting new courses, found at [www.ucop.edu/a-gonLine](http://www.ucop.edu/a-gonLine). The site is designed to be user-friendly, and replicate the paper process used in the past. Access to the site requires a User ID, which is included in this mailing, but in a separate, small envelope. Enclosed, you will also find a [training schedule](#) and [registration form](#) for upcoming workshops designed to ensure that all schools are comfortably able to use this new electronic tool. The staff member who has primary responsibility for completing the course update process is encouraged to attend. Of course, schools that prefer to continue using the paper process are free to do so. The web site will be available for use after December 15, 2001.

**Enhancement of the “a-g Interactive Guide” web site.** This web site, at [www.ucop.edu/a-gGuide](http://www.ucop.edu/a-gGuide), was created last year to supply high school teachers, administrators, and counselors with a wealth of resources and tools designed to assist in designing new courses to meet the UC subject area requirements. Up until now, the site included primarily “innovative” course descriptions in areas such as engineering, environmental science, media and multimedia, and more. Recently, we have added “standard” and “honors” course descriptions. This web site is also your best resource for breaking news regarding the course list update and course approval processes.

**Honors clarification.** Over the past year, the UC faculty worked to clarify the policy regarding “UC honors” courses. The new clarifications explaining what the University considers honors level work for purposes of UC admissions are summarized on pages 10-11 of this guide. Please take time to review these revised criteria.

**Visual & Performing Arts requirement.** The new Visual and Performing Arts (VPA) requirement takes effect for students entering the University in 2003 (your incoming Seniors) and all students that follow. The requirement and the timeline for implementation is described in detail on pages 6-7 and pages 8-9 of this guide. Schools that have not yet submitted new VPA courses for approval should do so in February along with other course list update requests. Otherwise, students applying to the University for the fall of 2003 may not be eligible. Please note that VPA courses that were previously approved as “f-elective” courses will automatically roll over onto the VPA list sometime this spring.

**Universal changes to “a-g” course lists.** UC staff has been working to clean up the Doorways database, which houses the course lists of all schools in California. In doing so, several universal changes will be made to the “a-g” course lists for all high schools in California. Please review them carefully (enumerated below), and, as appropriate, forward this information to teachers, parents and students. All changes will affect the 2002-03 course lists.

1. Several years ago, UC faculty redefined policies regarding acceptance of **Journalism, Speech/Debate, Creative Writing and Drama** courses for the English requirement and decided only to accept these courses for the “g-elective” area, not the “b-English” area. For several years, this policy has been in effect for new courses that have been presented for review. We are now moving to the “g” Elective area all the long-standing courses that were listed in the “b” English area prior to the change in policy.
2. According to the newly clarified “UC Honors” statements found on page 10-11 of this guide, **Algebra II and Algebra II/Trigonometry courses** no longer qualify for extra UC honors credit. All such courses will continue to be listed in the “c-Mathematics” area, but will no longer be identified as UC honors. (Note: This shift is consistent with the *Mathematics Content Standards for California Public Schools, Kindergarten through Grade Twelve*, adopted by the California State Board of Education in December 1997.)
3. **Sheltered and SDAIE English courses** are not acceptable to meet the “b-English” requirement. Over the years, some of these courses have been approved by mistake and will be removed from course lists. However, ESL and ELD courses will continue to be acceptable within the limitations listed on pages 4, 5, and 8 of this guide. In addition, sheltered and SDAIE courses in all other subject areas continue to be acceptable as long as they cover the same material as regular courses in that subject area. If the SDAIE English courses are (1) actually ESL or ELD courses that are titled SDAIE, or (2) identical to standard English courses, but carry a “SDAIE” tag simply to indicate teacher credentialing, then the course might be acceptable, but schools will have to re-submit their courses with appropriate explanation as to why the course(s) should be re-instated onto the school’s course list.

4. Over the years, some **International Baccalaureate (IB) Standard Level (SL)** courses have been accepted for UC **honors level credit**. According to UC faculty policy, only IB Higher Level (HL) courses are acceptable for honors level credit, not Standard Level. Therefore, all identifiable IB Standard Level courses that were previously approved for UC honors level credit will remain on the school’s course list, BUT will no longer be identified as UC honors.
5. In order to accept **Advanced Placement** courses, UC expects schools to use the College Board course/test titles. For example, some schools use titles such as “British Literature AP” instead of the College Board title “English Literature AP”. UC also expects that schools utilize AP nomenclature only for AP College Board courses. In the coming year, we will work with schools to clean up these inconsistencies.

To review your current UC-approved “a-g” course list and determine if these adjustments will affect your school, go to [http://www.ucop.edu/pathways/infoctr/doorway\\_index.html](http://www.ucop.edu/pathways/infoctr/doorway_index.html) . If you have questions, feel free to contact Jeanne Hargrove at (510) 987-9592 or via e-mail at [jeanne.hargrove@ucop.edu](mailto:jeanne.hargrove@ucop.edu) .

## Purpose, responsibility, and general criteria for the “a-g” requirements

The purposes of the a-g subject area requirements are to ensure that entering students...

- ◆ Can participate fully in the first year program at the University in a broad variety of fields of study;
- ◆ Have attained the necessary preparation for courses, majors and programs offered at the University;
- ◆ Have attained a body of knowledge that will provide breadth and perspective to new, more advanced studies; and
- ◆ Have attained essential critical thinking and study skills.

The following general criteria must be satisfied for courses to meet the requirement.

- ◆ Be academically challenging
- ◆ Involve substantial reading and writing
- ◆ Include problems and laboratory work, as appropriate
- ◆ Show serious attention to analytical thinking as well as factual content
- ◆ Develop students’ oral and listening skills

The Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) establishes the subject areas and pattern of courses required for minimum eligibility for freshman admission to the University of California. BOARS is a committee of the University’s Academic Senate and includes faculty representatives from each campus of the University. The Academic Senate has been given the responsibility from the UC Regents to set the conditions for admission, subject to final approval of the Board of Regents.

*The California State University system has agreed to accept courses certified by the University of California to meet its subject area requirements, which, beginning with students entering in the fall of 2003 are virtually the same as California State University’s requirements.*

## General requirements, by subject area

The following sequence of high school courses is required by the University of California of high school students to be minimally eligible for admission. It also illustrates the minimum level of academic preparation students ought to achieve in high school to undertake university level work.

The a-g requirements can be summarized as follows:

- (a) **History / Social Science** – Two years required, including one year of U.S. history or one-half year of U.S. history and one-half year of civics or American Government; **and** one year of world history, cultures, and geography.
- (b) **English** – Four years of college preparatory English that include frequent and regular writing, and reading of classic and modern literature.
- (c) **Mathematics** – Three years of college preparatory mathematics that include the topics covered in elementary and advanced algebra and two- and three-dimensional geometry.

- (d) **Laboratory Science** – Two years of laboratory science providing fundamental knowledge in at least two of these three disciplines: biology (which includes anatomy, physiology, marine biology, aquatic biology, etc.), chemistry, and physics.
- (e) **Language other than English** – Two years of the same language other than English
- (f) **Visual & Performing Arts** – One year, including dance, drama/theater, music, and/or visual art
- (g) **College Preparatory Elective** – In addition to those courses required in “a-f” above, one year (two semesters) of college preparatory electives are required, chosen from visual and performing arts, history, social science, English, advanced mathematics, laboratory science, and language other than English.

## Specific subject area requirements

### (a) HISTORY / SOCIAL SCIENCE

Two units (equivalent to two yearlong courses or four semesters) of history / social science courses are required. Coursework must include:

- ◆ **U.S. History** – One-half year, if combined with one-half year of American government (civics); or one year, if not combined with American government (civics)
- ◆ **American Government (civics)** – No requirement unless only one-half year of U.S. History is taken
- ◆ **World history, cultures, and geography** – One year, which can be met by a single integrated course or by two one-semester courses

NOTES on World History, Culture, and Geography:

1. A wide variety of courses may be used.
2. Courses do not need to cover every culture or period in the history of mankind. For example, a suitable course could be an in-depth study of a single culture, such as a yearlong study of Chinese civilization. Alternatively, several cultures might be studied and compared, as in more traditional world history, culture and geography courses.
3. Courses must focus on cultures outside the U.S., and, whenever possible, should limit study of cultures very similar to our own, e.g. England and Canada.

### (b) ENGLISH

Four units (equivalent to four yearlong courses or eight semesters) of college preparatory composition and literature are required. **Both reading and writing components must be included in the courses.**

- ◆ **Reading.** Acceptable courses must require extensive reading of a variety of literary genres, including classical and/or contemporary works. Reading assignments must include full-length works. Excerpts from anthologies, articles, etc. can be supplemental but cannot constitute the main component of reading assignments.
- ◆ **Writing.** Courses must also require substantial, recurrent practice in writing extensive, structured papers. Student must demonstrate understanding of rhetorical, grammatical, and syntactical patterns, forms and structures through responding to texts of varying lengths in unassisted writing assignments.

NOTES:

1. It is expected that courses appropriate for the final years of high school study will demand a substantially higher level of reading and writing requirements and skills outlined above.
2. For expected competencies in English reading and writing, consult “An Information Booklet for the University-wide Subject A Examination” for discussion of writing standards and examples of acceptable college freshman-level scored essays. This booklet can be found at <http://www.ucop.edu/sas/sub-a/>.
3. English as a Second Language (ESL) courses may be acceptable for a maximum of one unit (equivalent to one year), provided they are advanced college preparatory ESL courses, with strong emphasis on reading and writing. Such courses must specifically deal with rhetorical, grammatical, and syntactical forms in English, especially those that show cross-linguistic influence, and must provide explicit work in vocabulary development. A second

year of approved ESL coursework may meet one year of the college preparatory elective requirement described below.

4. Courses in speech, debate, creative writing, drama or journalism do not meet the “b” English requirement, but may meet the elective requirement as described under college preparatory electives. In order for these courses to meet the elective requirement, they must require substantial reading and writing, including expository writing.
5. Not more than two semesters of ninth grade English can be used to meet this requirement.

### (c) MATHEMATICS

Three units (equivalent to three one-year courses) of college preparatory mathematics are required. Four units are strongly recommended.

- ◆ **Elementary Algebra.**
- ◆ **Geometry.** Courses must include topics in two and three-dimensional geometry.
- ◆ **Advanced Algebra.**

#### NOTES:

1. This requirement could be met by three one-year courses in algebra, advanced algebra and geometry or by a three-year integrated course sequence.
2. One-year mathematics courses (e.g., algebra) taken over three or four semesters are acceptable to meet the “c – Mathematics” requirement, but credit will be granted for only one year (two semesters) of work.
3. Although only three years are required, four years are strongly recommended. Among regularly admitted freshmen, most complete a mathematics course in each grade from 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup>.
4. The 1997 version of the *Statement on Competencies in Mathematics Expected of Entering College Students* can be downloaded from the UC Academic Senate’s web page at <http://www.ucop.edu/senate/index2.html>.
5. Traditionally, most entering college freshmen have taken pre-calculus and often calculus, however, other advanced courses such as statistics and discrete mathematics can also deepen students’ understanding of mathematics.
6. The Calculus Readiness tests of the Mathematics Diagnostic Testing Project (MDTP) provide a good indication of the skill attainment upon completing a pre-calculus course. All UC campuses use these tests to determine student placement into calculus. For more information on MDTP, contact Immouna Ephrem at (510) 987-9422 or [immouna.ephrem@ucop.edu](mailto:immouna.ephrem@ucop.edu).
7. Students who take calculus in high school are encouraged to take one of the Advanced Placement (AP) Calculus Examinations in order to place out of the comparable college calculus course.
8. College prep courses taken in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades with grades of C or better may be counted toward the subject requirement. However, the principal of the high school from which a student graduates must certify on the transcript that the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade courses are comparable in content to those offered at the high school.

### (d) LABORATORY SCIENCE

Two units (equivalent to two one-year courses) in at least two of the three fundamental disciplines of biology, chemistry, and physics. Three units are recommended.

- ◆ **Integrated Science.** The science requirement could be met by a two-year integrated course sequence (see Note 6 below).
- ◆ **Alternative Courses.** Laboratory courses such as Earth Science, Oceanography, Geology, Microbiology, Marine Biology or Environmental Science may also be appropriate for this requirement if they have the necessary prerequisites and address basic concepts and skills in one of the three core sciences: biology, chemistry, or physics. Courses that combine topics from biology, chemistry and/or physics, but do not address a substantial number of core concepts from any of the three core sciences will be considered for “g” elective credit, rather than “d” lab science credit.

NOTES:

1. Laboratory activities in approved science courses should occupy at least 20% of course time.
2. It is expected that courses submitted to meet the Laboratory Science (“d”) requirement will have elementary algebra as a prerequisite or co-requisite.
3. Courses must be completed in grades 9-12, however students will receive credit for not more than one year of UC certified laboratory science work completed in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade.
4. Basic science concepts must be addressed in each course; courses organized around issues of scientific or public interest may not adequately address basic concepts.
5. Laboratory science courses that meet the quality standards expected for the “d” requirement but which are applied or vocationally focused may also qualify. These courses, however, are more likely to be acceptable if taken following completion of the “d” requirement courses. Examples include biotechnology and environmental science.
6. Students who have successfully completed a 3-year integrated science sequence will have met the two-year “d” requirement plus the one-year elective requirement. However, students who do not successfully complete the 3-year sequence will fall short of meeting the “d” requirement. For example, a student that completes only two of the three years will have met one year of the “d” requirement and one year of the elective requirement.

(e) **LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH**

Two units (equivalent to two one-year courses) of coursework in a single language. Three units are recommended.

- ◆ **Minimum Performance Objectives.** Courses should emphasize speaking and understanding, and include instruction in grammar, vocabulary, reading, and composition. At this level, emphasis should not be on the ability to describe grammatical features of the language. In any language studied, the minimum performance objectives after two years of high school study should be the following:
  - The ability to sustain a brief conversation on simple everyday topics demonstrating good use of the whole sound system (good pronunciation), and the basic structural patterns in the present, past, and future tenses, the subjunctive, and commands
  - Summarize orally and in writing, the main points of a relatively simple reading passage not involving specialized vocabulary

NOTES:

1. Classical languages (e.g., Latin, Greek) are acceptable to fulfill the “e” requirement.
2. American Sign Language is a natural language and can be used to fulfill the “e” requirement.
3. Courses taken in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades may be used to fulfill part of this requirement if the high school accepts them as equivalent to its own courses.

(f) **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

One unit (equivalent to one yearlong or two semester courses) required in any of the following areas: dance, drama/theater, music or visual art.

- ◆ **Prerequisites.** Acceptable courses need **NOT** have any prerequisite courses.
- ◆ **Co-Curricular Work.** Work outside of class must be required: for example, portfolio/performance preparation, reading, writing, and critical listening/viewing.
- ◆ **Course Standards.** Courses should provide students with an experience in the arts that implement the intent of the California Department of Education’s Visual and Performing Arts Standards. For a more detailed description of the VPA standards, go to <http://www.cde.ca.gov/shsd/arts/standards.htm> . Each VPA course should explicitly address all five of the standards, as follows.
  1. Artistic Perception: Processing, analyzing, and responding to sensory information through the language and skills unique to a given art.

2. Creative Expression: Creating, performing, and participating in a given art.
  3. Historical and Cultural Context: Understanding historical contributions and cultural dimensions of a given art.
  4. Aesthetic Valuing: Responding to, analyzing, and making critical assessments about works of a given art form.
  5. Connection, Relations, and Application: Connecting and applying what is learned in a given art form to learning in other art forms, subject areas, and careers.
- ◆ **Intention.** The intention is to provide a meaningful experience and breadth of knowledge of the arts so that students may apply their knowledge and experience to the creation of art and/or are better able to understand and appreciate artistic expression on the basis of that experience and knowledge.
  - ◆ **Performance and Production.** Courses emphasizing performance and/or production must include appropriate critical/theoretical and historical/cultural content. “Appreciation” courses should focus on the ability to make aesthetic judgments about arts works and performances.
  - ◆ **Acceptable and Unacceptable Courses.** Courses which are primarily recreational, athletic, or body conditioning, or for social entertainment, are NOT acceptable visual and performing arts courses. Commercial courses or courses specifically designed for training for a profession in these areas are not acceptable. See specific examples below.
    - **Dance.** Acceptable courses include ballet, modern dance, jazz and ethnic dance, choreography and improvisation, dance history, dance production/performance. Unacceptable courses include aerobics, drill team, cheerleading, recreational dance, and ballroom dance.
    - **Drama / Theater.** Acceptable courses include acting, directing, oral interpretation, dramatic production, dramaturgy/history/theory, and stage/lighting/costume design. Unacceptable courses include speech, debate, or courses in other disciplines that require students to perform occasional skits.
    - **Music.** Acceptable courses include band (concert, symphonic, jazz), orchestra, choir (e.g. jazz, soul, madrigal), music history/appreciation, and music theory/composition. Unacceptable courses include those that emphasize performance for sporting or other events.
    - **Visual Art.** Acceptable courses include painting, drawing, sculpture, art photography, printmaking, video production, contemporary media, ceramics, and art history. Unacceptable courses include crafts, mechanical drafting, and photography if offered as a photojournalism component in a yearbook or school newspaper.

#### (g) COLLEGE PREPARATORY ELECTIVE COURSES

One unit (equivalent of two semester courses) required. Course(s) can be taken in 9-12 grades, but must fall within the following subject areas: visual and performing arts, history, social science, English, advanced mathematics, laboratory science, and languages other than English.

- ◆ **Intent of this Requirement.** The intent of the college preparatory elective requirement is to encourage prospective UC students to fill out their high school programs with courses that will meet one or more of a number of objectives:
  - To strengthen general study skills, particularly analytical reading, expository writing, and oral communications;
  - To provide an opportunity to begin work that could lead directly into a major program of study at the University; and
  - To experience, at some depth, new areas of academic disciplines that might form the basis for future major or minor studies at the University.
- ◆ **Quality.** All courses selected to meet the “g” elective requirement are expected to meet standards of quality similar to those required for the “a” through “f” requirements.
- ◆ **Advanced Level.** While it is preferred that elective courses would be at an advanced and/or specialized level, introductory courses in all of the required academic disciplines are acceptable as well.

- ◆ **Alternatives.** Courses such as political science, economics, geography, humanities, psychology, sociology, anthropology, journalism, speech or debate, computer science, computer programming, and others may also qualify for the “g” elective requirement. In addition, courses that are interdisciplinary in nature, drawing knowledge from two or more of these fields, are also acceptable. Approved alternative courses must provide academically challenging study at the same level of rigor as advanced courses in the “a-f” subject matter fields. These elective courses must be at the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grade level, have appropriate prerequisites, and present material at a sufficient depth to allow students to achieve mastery of fundamental knowledge that prepares them for University work or a future career path.

- ◆ **Subject Specific Guidelines.**

History: Courses should enable students to establish a breadth of understanding of history (e.g., world history, political history, or economic history) and should provide an understanding of the human past, including its relation to the present. Courses should develop a student’s ability to think critically, to evaluate historical data, and to analyze and synthesize evidence. All history courses should require extensive reading and writing.

Social Science: Courses should be in one of the social sciences: anthropology, economics, geography, political science, psychology, or sociology. Alternatively, courses could also be interdisciplinary in nature, drawing knowledge from two or more of these fields. Course objectives should include as many of the following as are applicable to the field: (1) an understanding of the development and basic features of major societies and cultures, (2) an examination of the historic and contemporary ideas that have shaped our world, (3) an understanding of the fundamentals of how differing political and economic systems function, (4) an examination of the nature and principles of individual and group behavior, and (5) a study of social science methodologies. In order to develop a student’s ability to think critically, to evaluate ideas and information, and to analyze and synthesize qualitative and quantitative evidence (in the laboratory or in the field), a social science course must include a body of basic knowledge, extensive reading, and written and oral exposition. Courses that are designed to meet state-mandated social studies graduation requirements are acceptable provided that they meet the above criteria. Courses with applied, service, or career-related content are acceptable only if those components are used to augment the strong academic content of the course.

English: Courses should require substantial reading with frequent and extensive practice in writing that is carefully evaluated and criticized, as noted in the “b” requirement (above). Courses in journalism, speech, debate, creative writing, or advanced-level ESL are acceptable electives if they meet the general requirements in reading and writing stated above.

Advanced Mathematics: Courses in mathematics with second-year algebra as a prerequisite such as trigonometry, linear algebra, pre-calculus (analytic geometry and mathematical analysis), calculus, probability and statistics are acceptable electives. A computer science course is an acceptable mathematics elective if it fulfills the following objectives: (1) enables students to express algorithms in a standard language; (2) requires students to complete substantial programming projects; and (3) involves the study and mastery of various aspects of computer science (e.g. how computers deal with data and instructions, the internal components of a computer, and the underlying computer logic).

Laboratory Science: Acceptable courses should cover topics from the biological or physical sciences and include laboratory activities. A terminal course designed only to meet graduation requirements is not an acceptable science elective.

Language Other Than English: Elective courses in the same language used to satisfy the “e” requirement must have at least two years of the language as a prerequisite. In order for a second language other than English to qualify as an elective, at least two years of this language must be completed.

## Visual & Performing Arts (VPA) requirement

The Visual & Performing Arts requirement is now in effect. Students who plan to enter the University in the fall of 2003 (and all students that follow) must meet the new requirement. By this time, all schools should have submitted their VPA courses for review and certification. For schools that have not yet done so, it is essential that they do so by the February 28, 2002, deadline so that students can meet the requirement.

The VPA requirement includes a phase-in process, as described below:

- ◆ Students entering in the fall of 2003 may present two semesters of acceptable VPA courses from any one or two of the VPA areas (dance, drama/theater, music, or visual arts)

- ◆ Students entering the fall of 2004 or the fall of 2005 may present any two semesters of acceptable VPA courses provided that both courses are from a single VPA area (dance, drama/theater, music, or visual arts)
- ◆ Students entering in the fall of 2006 or later must satisfy the VPA requirement by completing an appropriate single course in a yearlong sequence (i.e., the second semester must be the continuation of the first semester, requiring the first semester as a prerequisite). If scheduling challenges demand, students may divide the yearlong course in two different academic years, as long as the course curriculum is designed as a yearlong sequence and approved as such by the University.
- ◆ Students may satisfy this requirement by taking an approved community college course. Acceptable community college courses are those approved for the Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC), area 3A. Please refer to [www.assist.org](http://www.assist.org).

IMPORTANT NOTE: Any VPA course that is approved for the 2000-01, 2001-02 and/or 2002-03 course list will be accepted retroactively to 1999. As a result, if a student in the Class of 2003 has taken a VPA course in his/her freshman or sophomore year, before the school was able to add the course to the UC-approved course list, the student will not be disadvantaged in the University's application and admission process.

## Sheltered and bilingual courses

Sheltered/bilingual courses may be used to satisfy the “a-g” subject requirements with the exception of the English (“b”) requirement. Acceptable sheltered/bilingual courses must be equivalent in content and skills development to comparable courses taught in English in the same subject area (e.g., Sheltered Algebra should be equivalent to Algebra 1).

## Honors level courses

The University grants special “honors” designation and extra credit in students’ grade point average computation only to those high school honors level courses that meet the following criteria. The University strongly encourages that such courses be available to all sectors of the school population.

- ◆ **AP Courses.** Advanced Placement (AP) courses in the “a-g” subjects which are designed to prepare students for an Advanced Placement Examination of the College Board are automatically granted honors status, even if they are offered at the 10<sup>th</sup> grade level (i.e. newly developed courses/exams in Human Geography and World History). For more information about AP, go to the College Board’s web site at [www.collegeboard.org/ap/](http://www.collegeboard.org/ap/).
- ◆ **International Baccalaureate.** International Baccalaureate (IB) higher level courses offered by schools participating in the IB program are automatically granted honors status. For more information about IB programs, go to [www.ibo.org](http://www.ibo.org).
- ◆ **College Courses.** College courses in the “a-g” subjects that are transferable to the University of California. To determine whether a course is transferable, go to [www.assist.org](http://www.assist.org).
- ◆ **Other Honors Courses.** Other honors courses (that are not AP, IB, or college courses) specifically designed by the high school are acceptable *if they are in the disciplines of history, English, advanced mathematics, laboratory science, and languages other than English* and have distinctive features which set them apart from regular high school courses in the same discipline areas. These courses should be seen as comparable in terms of workload and emphasis to AP, IB Higher Level, or introductory college courses in the subject. Acceptable honors level courses are specialized, advanced, collegiate-level courses offered at the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade levels. Please refer to the notes below for special requirements for the certification of these honors courses.

NOTES on honors courses other than AP and IB:

1. Honors level courses should have established prerequisites, as appropriate to the discipline. See subject specific explanations below.
2. Honors level courses must have a comprehensive written final exam. The purpose of the final examination is to permit students to exhibit depth of knowledge and sustained mastery of subject material. The final examination permits each student to demonstrate knowledge that is acquired, integrated, and retained.
3. Honors level courses must be designed for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders who have already completed foundation work in the subject area. Ninth and tenth grade level high school courses that schools might designate as

“honors” do not meet the UC honors level requirement and therefore are not granted special “honors” credit by the University. (Note: Tenth grade students who have the necessary preparation to complete UC designated honors courses (i.e. those designed for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders) will receive UC honors credit; however, they will receive credit for not more than two units of these courses completed in the tenth grade.)

4. In addition to ninth and tenth grade courses, other courses that a school may designate as “honors” for local purposes but that do not fill the requirements stated in this section will not be granted special credit by the University.
5. In addition to AP and IB higher level courses, high schools may certify as honors level courses not more than one unit in each of the following subject areas only: history, English, advanced mathematics, each laboratory science, and each language other than English.
6. If there are no AP or IB higher level courses in a given subject area, the high school may certify up to, but not more than, two units at the honors level in that area. Exceptions to this rule require strong justification and documentation.
7. Most high school courses, which are not an AP or IB higher level course, shall be designated an honors level course only when there is a regular course offered in the same subject area at the same grade level. Exceptions to this rule require strong justification and documentation. See subject specific explanations below.

#### **Descriptions for UC Approval of Honors Level Course, by subject**

- a) **History/Social Science.** UC approved honors level history / social science courses used to satisfy the “a” requirement characteristically consist of courses in US government, US history, European history, world history, world cultures, and geography. Such courses are expected to provide both breadth and depth of exploration in the subject area, developing writing, research, and analytical skills. The courses must offer content and/or experience that are demonstrably more challenging than what is offered through the regular college preparatory courses in the same field. Factors considered for UC approved honors courses that satisfy the “a” requirement include but are not limited to: the assignment and evaluation of one long or numerous short challenging and properly annotated research papers, and a comprehensive final examination. The use of college-level textbooks is encouraged. The regular college preparatory courses in the subject areas should be offered as well.
- b) **English.** UC approved honors level courses in English should have as prerequisite at least two years of college preparatory composition and literature. Such courses should require extensive reading of poetry, prose, plays and novels chosen from a variety of historical periods and styles. The curriculum must emphasize advanced critical analysis and interpretation in order to develop sophisticated written arguments about assigned literature. Frequent writing assignments, especially of papers averaging 3-5 pages in length, should emphasize the stages of composing sustained arguments based on detailed textual analysis: pre-writing, drafting, revising. Writing instruction and carefully designed prompts should aim at enabling students to express complex and interrelated ideas with clarity and a mature, sophisticated style. Regular feedback on written assignments is essential to the success of honors level courses. Regular college preparatory sections in English must also be available in the curriculum. The UC honors approved courses must be demonstrably more challenging than regular college preparatory sections, requiring: more extensive and challenging reading assignments; more frequent, complex, sustained writing assignments; and written examinations, including a comprehensive written final examination.
- c) **Mathematics.** UC approved honors level courses in mathematics must be at the mathematical analysis (pre-calculus) level or above. These courses should have three years of college preparatory mathematics as prerequisite work. Mathematical analysis that includes the development of the trigonometric and exponential functions can be certified for UC honors credit. If mathematical analysis is certified at the UC honors level, there should be a section of the regular college preparatory course offered as well. The honors level course should be demonstrably more challenging than the regular college preparatory sections. Calculus, with four years of college preparatory mathematics as prerequisite, qualifies as an honors level course if it is substantially equivalent to an AP calculus course. Statistics, with a three-year mathematics prerequisite, may also be approved for honors credit if it is substantially equivalent to an AP statistics course. These two courses do not require a separate section in the regular college preparatory curriculum. Each UC approved honors level course in mathematics must include a comprehensive final examination.
- d) **Laboratory Science.** UC approved honors level courses in laboratory sciences are generally in the disciplines of biology, chemistry, and physics. Honors level courses in these disciplines typically require one year of prior

laboratory science. Honors level courses in any other laboratory science (i.e. Environmental Science, Marine Biology, etc.) may also be considered for UC honors certification if they require a year of biology, chemistry, or physics, as well as at least Algebra as prerequisites. The third course in an integrated science sequence may be considered for honors designation if it has the appropriate breadth, depth, and prerequisites. All UC approved honors level laboratory science courses should be demonstrably more challenging than the college preparatory courses required as prerequisites. Topics covered and laboratory exercises must be in depth and involve analysis and research. Each UC approved honors level course must have a comprehensive written final examination including laboratory concepts. There should be a section of the regular college preparatory course offered for each UC approved honors-level laboratory science course.

- e) **Language Other Than English.** UC approved honors level courses in languages other than English must have as a prerequisite at least two years of college preparatory instruction in that language. Modern language courses should focus on the use of the language for active communication and provide advanced training in oral/aural proficiency and literacy skills. Courses should include instruction in grammar, culture, reading comprehension, composition, and conversation and should be conducted exclusively in the target language. Coursework should be developed around authentic texts from diverse genres, including literary works of art, recordings, films, newspapers, and magazines. There should be a comprehensive final examination that evaluates levels of performance in the use of both written and spoken forms of the language. Classical language courses should include as many of these elements as appropriate. If the third year of any language other than English is certified at the UC honors level, there should be a regular third year college preparatory course offered as well. A UC approved honors course in a language other than English at the fourth or fifth year level must have as a prerequisite three or four years, respectively, of college preparatory instruction in that language and does not necessarily require a corresponding regular college preparatory section.
- f) **VPA.** Only Advanced Placement and higher level IB courses in the visual and performing arts are approved for UC honors designation. Guidelines for other UC approved visual and performing arts courses are being discussed.

## Interdisciplinary and/or integrated courses

Interdisciplinary and/or integrated programs may be used to satisfy one or several of the subject requirements. For example, an integrated Humanities program may be used to satisfy part of the “a”, part of the “b”, and part of the elective requirements. When these interdisciplinary / integrated courses are submitted for review and certification, please indicate clearly which subject area requirements are satisfied by the course.

We understand that many schools are guided by reform initiatives that encourage the integration of academic and career-related content to form courses that are both rigorous and relevant. These rigorous applied academic courses may be approved by UC if teachers focus on the academic content, using the career-related content as an application and extension of the core knowledge taught in the academic area.

As noted above in the detailed description of the “elective” requirement, interdisciplinary electives are also acceptable.

## Updating the school’s course list

**\* \* \* NOTE NEW DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 28, 2002 \* \* \***

Schools now have a choice between updating their course lists on-line or via hard copies. Either one is equally acceptable to UC. Please do not complete both processes.

### **Option A: New On-line update process**

1. **Review materials.** Before you revise your course list, be sure to review all materials in this packet.
2. **Coordinate with school and district personnel.** UC knows that, in some public school districts, a district administrator coordinates the update of course lists for all high schools in the district, while in other districts,

schools take on this responsibility themselves. This packet of information has been sent to all schools and all districts. Please coordinate with your counterparts at the school or district level so that everyone is familiar with the material in this packet and so that efforts are not duplicated. For public school districts, UC has assigned a User ID for both school and district personnel so that both can access the new web site and work together on updating the course list, if desired.

3. **Log onto [www.ucop.edu/a-gOnline](http://www.ucop.edu/a-gOnline)** . This web site will be accessible after December 15, 2001. In order to get into the new on-line system, you will need a User ID. Your User ID is included in this packet in a sealed letter-size envelope. If you did not receive a User ID, you can e-mail technical support (accessed from the log in page of the web site), or call the help line at (800) xxx-xxxx.
4. **Follow prompts.** As you move through the web site, it is best to do so sequentially the first time, using the “next” button at the bottom of each page. Once familiar with the site, you can use the navigation bar on the left to jump around.
5. **Complete all information.** There are several required fields marked with a red asterisk (\*). Please be sure to include all required information. To help your students, UC is interested in storing more information about your school and courses. For example, UC is asking schools to provide accurate course titles, and to include transcript abbreviations and course codes/numbers, if appropriate.
6. **Take your time.** This new on-line system allows you to come back to the update process over a period of weeks or months, as you choose.
7. **Submit to UC.** Once you have completed updating all three sections (school information, revise current courses, submit new / reinstate courses), go to the “Summary and Submit” page to review your submission, and then follow steps to send it electronically to UC. The deadline is February 28, 2002.
8. **Keep a copy.** After you submit to UC, print a hard copy of your submission. This is your timed, stamped receipt.
9. **Communicate ideas for improvement.** Please recognize that this web site is new. Undoubtedly, there will be improvements applied to newer versions. However, we need your help to find out how the site can better serve your needs. Please send any recommendations for improvement to [jeanne.hargrove@ucop.edu](mailto:jeanne.hargrove@ucop.edu) . Thank you.

### **Option B: Hard copy submission**

1. **Review materials.** Before you revise your course list, be sure to review all materials in this packet.
2. **Coordinate with school and district personnel.** UC knows that, in some districts, a district administrator coordinates the update of course lists for all high schools in the district, while in other districts, schools take on this responsibility themselves. This year, this packet of information has been sent to all schools and all districts. Please coordinate with your counterparts at the school or district level so that everyone is familiar with the material in this packet and so that efforts are not duplicated.
3. **Revise the list of courses for 2002-03.** Mark all changes to course titles in Column 1 of the enclosed form. (NOTE: The enclosed list may not contain courses that have been submitted since August 1, 2001. If you have already submitted courses, please do not resubmit them.)
  - If there are no changes, simply return the list signed at the bottom.
  - Mark all changes in RED.
  - Do not retype the list.
  - Cross out courses you plan to delete from your list.
  - Write in any new courses you plan to add to your list for the 2002-03 academic year.
  - Underline the honors, Advanced Placement, and International Baccalaureate courses that, in your estimation, meet the University guidelines and specifications noted in the section above (pp. 10-11).

- List only those courses that will be offered by your school during the 2002-03 academic year.
- Be certain that either the course titles or transcript abbreviation exactly agree with students' transcripts.

#### 4. Add Transcript Abbreviations and Course Codes/Numbers.

- If the school uses course abbreviations on the student transcript, please update all abbreviations in the Column 2 of the enclosed form exactly as they appear on the transcript, including punctuation (periods, hyphens, slashes, etc.).
- If the school uses course codes/numbers on the student transcript, please update all course codes/number in Column 3 of the enclosed form.
- The enclosed list may not contain course titles, transcript abbreviations, and/or course codes of courses that have been submitted in the past 2-3 months. If you have already submitted courses, please do not resubmit them.

#### 5. Provide necessary documentation. Incomplete documentation may delay the production of your list and/or lead to disapproval of courses.

- Complete course descriptions must be provided for any new “a-g” courses being added to the list, with the exception of AP and IB courses. Course descriptions should include information outlined in the “Course Description Template”, downloaded from [www.ucop.edu/a-gGuide](http://www.ucop.edu/a-gGuide) .
- Documentation is NOT necessary if the course has already been approved for another school in the district, assuming that the course content/curriculum is substantially equivalent. However, on the cover page of the “Course Description Template”, on Line 15, please indicate the name and city of the school at which the course was approved, and indicate if it is in the same district.
- If the school would like to reinstate a course that it removed from the UC-approved list less than three (3) years ago, simply provide the cover page of the “Course Description Template”, indicating on Line 14 the year the course was removed from the course list.
- Documentation should be provided to justify honors courses beyond the maximum number allowed, or honors courses for which your school does not offer a parallel, regular course, in the same subject area at the same grade level, as required. Documentation should consist of a description of the distinguishing features that set this course apart from the regular course. Please refer to specifications listed on pages 10-11 above.
- For “b” English courses, include: (1) a complete reading list, indicating which works are required, and whether works are read in their entirety or partially, and (2) the number, length, and type of writing assignments.
- For “d” Lab Science courses, include a list of laboratory activities.
- For “f” Visual and Performing Arts courses, clearly indicate how the course meets the five (5) VPA state standards.

#### 6. Submit form.

- Sign the bottom of the enclosed form.
- By February 28, 2002, return the form to...

Martha Beames  
 UC Office of the President  
 Outreach, Admissions, and Student Affairs  
 1111 Franklin St., 9<sup>th</sup> floor  
 Oakland, CA 94607-5200

**Individual School lists vs. District lists.** UC is no longer accepting district lists. Whether the high school or the district office takes responsibility for modifying the list of courses, UC needs a separate list for each individual high school.

**New Course Submissions.** In response to (and with feedback from) K-12 educators around the State, we have developed a “Course Description Template”. Although we do not require schools to submit new courses using this

format, we do encourage it. By using this template as a guide, you will ensure that you have included the detail that UC expects in order to review your course without having to request additional information. The new On-line format for updating course lists makes use of this template. For schools submitting hard copies of course list updates, an electronic version of this template can be downloaded from [www.ucop.edu/a-gGuide](http://www.ucop.edu/a-gGuide).

**Course Evaluation Checklists.** In the past year, UC began providing feedback to schools on “Course Evaluation Checklists” that indicate specific reasons why a course was not approved. Our hope is that schools may use this information should the school wish to revise the course and re-submit it. Whether submitting On-line or using hard copies, these checklists are returned to the school along with the newly approved course list.

## New course certification

New developments and directions in high school curricula have generated considerable interest in the process of course approval. To foster and facilitate our cooperation in these matters, UC offers the following recommendations:

- Make the material in this packet regarding the “a-g” requirements widely known to your staff. Feel free to photocopy this material, or refer staff to the “a-g Interactive Guide” at [www.ucop.edu/a-gGuide](http://www.ucop.edu/a-gGuide). In addition to the information in this packet, the “a-g Interactive Guide” includes dozens of standard, honors, and innovative course descriptions, as well as tools and resources designed to assist schools in the course design and submission process.
- Consult with UC Admissions staff (contact information below) early on as you plan new courses and new ways to restructure your curriculum and patterns of course offerings. The process of early consultation has worked very well in the past.
- Consult nearby UC faculty for assistance in developing new curriculum. They may be willing to work with you to ensure that a course is appropriately rigorous (in content and level) before submitting it for approval.
- Ensure that new courses are intellectually challenging, include substantial reading and writing, require critical thinking and problem solving (as appropriate), and show attention to patterns of critical thinking.
- Use the “Course Description Template” to ensure that all necessary information is included. The template can be downloaded from [www.ucop.edu/a-gGuide](http://www.ucop.edu/a-gGuide).

## Contacting UC

For questions relating to the certification process, deadlines, or the status of your list, contact:

**Martha Beames, Articulation Specialist**

(510) 987-9570

(510) 987-9522 Fax

[martha.beames@ucop.edu](mailto:martha.beames@ucop.edu)

For questions regarding your plans for curricular changes at your school, the purpose of the “a-g” subjects, and other matters relating to your school’s course offerings and University admission requirements, contact:

**Jeanne Hargrove, Principal Analyst**

(510) 987-9592

(510) 987-9522 Fax

[jeanne.hargrove@ucop.edu](mailto:jeanne.hargrove@ucop.edu)

For ideas to improve or add resources/materials to this Guide or the “a-g Interactive Guide” web site, needs for professional development, and advice on curriculum design and the course approval process, contact:

**Roman Stearns, Project Director, a-g Interactive Guide**

(510) 987-9696

(510) 987-9522 Fax

[roman.stearns@ucop.edu](mailto:roman.stearns@ucop.edu)