

Applying to College: Information for the Class of 2026

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What is ‘College Fit’?

During their college search, students are encouraged not to limit their college search to schools with quickly recognizable names and perceived reputations. The *ideal goal* is for students to create a list of schools that will meet their unique needs as individual students.

Academic	Social	Financial	Preferences	Atmosphere
Major(s)	Student Activities	Cost of Attending	Location	Visit - Appts or self-guided
Class Size	Diversity	Affordability	Size	Virtual Tour
Academic Resources	Weekend Activities	Available Aid	Religious Affiliation	YouTube ‘Day in the Life @’
			Athletic Designation	

Consider: Where do you want to live?

- Do you want to stay in California, or are you open to colleges in other states?
- Do you prefer an urban campus surrounded by lots of activity or a less busy suburban surrounding?
- Do you prefer a rural setting surrounded by lots of natural beauty?
- Does it matter how far you have to travel to go home, even within California?
- Do you want a large campus or small college environment?

Consider: What do you want to study?

- If you know what you want to study, then use your intended major to refine your search.
 - It is essential you select a campus that offers your preferred and optimally an alternate major(s) you are interested in.
 - Consider adding an alternate or secondary major if it is an available option.
- If undecided or unsure of your field of study, then choose “Undecided” as your major on the application, if undecided/undeclared is an available major.

CaliforniaColleges.edu

**WE BELIEVE ALL STUDENTS
DESERVE THE OPPORTUNITY
TO SUCCEED.**

CaliforniaColleges.edu is a student's
one-stop shop for the tools they
need to plan for life after high school.



Resources to Research Majors and Campuses

- CaliforniaColleges.edu online platform is officially LIVE at PGHS!
- CaliforniaColleges.edu is California's official college and career planning platform.
- PGHS students have access to tools to:
 - **Launch college and financial aid applications.**
 - Discover your interests and values.
 - Find careers, colleges, or training to reach your goals.
 - Learn how to find money to pay for college.
 - Monitor all your progress in one place.
- [CaliforniaColleges.edu](https://californiacolleges.edu) ★

Why should I
use the **Launch**
Feature for my
high school
coursework UC
and CSU
applications?

Course titles MATTER

- Students **must use their transcripts** to complete college applications.
- The course title that is printed on the transcript **MUST** match the course students select on their applications.
 - **Biology** is not the same as Biology A & Biology B.
 - **English 1** is not the same class as English 9.
- The drop down menu allows students to select all a-g course offerings to include online a-g recovery.
- **LAUNCHING ensures the correct classes are added to the application.**

Application Strategies



Application Strategies: Select School(s) or Transfer Pathway

Are you a “Berkeley or Bust” student?

- Some students only want to attend a specific university or a select group of schools. If they do not get into their ideal school(s), then they would prefer to go to MPC or other community college and then transfer into their dream school as a transfer student.
- **Is this you?** If so, then using admission rate to inform how you create a balanced application list is not as critical.



Associate Degree
for Transfer
A Degree with a Guarantee.™



Application Strategies: Preference for a Select School

- Most transfer agreements from community college to a four year college are structured for students to transfer to a 4-year college as a junior.
 - However, some colleges offer lower division transfers. Research your options!
- In California, students transferring from a California Community College have priority before students transferring from another four year institution.
 - [Transfer Admission Guarantee \(TAG\)](#) ★
 - [Associate Degree for Transfer | California Community Colleges - Enroll Today](#) ★
- Students planning on attending MPC (or another community college) and then transferring to complete their degree, should schedule quarterly appointments with their Community College Counselor to ensure they are on track to transfer on schedule.

Application Strategies: Preference for a 4-Year Campus

If attending a community college is not an option you want to consider, then:

- *It is essential to apply broadly, including a number of 4-year colleges that have generous admission rates in your college list.*
- Ensure you build a balanced list of schools you can see yourself wanting to attend.
- So, how do I build a Balanced College List? Research:
 - Acceptance rates
 - Selectivity
 - Yield
 - Admitted GPA



Evaluating Acceptance Rates

- Admission rates are the **number of students admitted** divided by the **number of students that applied**.
- THEREFORE: A popular school with a recognizable name (and healthy marketing budget) may receive thousands of applications for a limited number of freshman spaces.
- While it is true that selective schools receive increased numbers of applicants because of their *reputation*, acceptance rates are not necessarily an assessment of the quality of education you will receive but a reflection of the school's *popularity*.

Selectivity

- **Selective colleges** admit less than 50% of applicants
 - CSU Long Beach, , UC Davis, University of Washington, Santa Clara University, Fresno State
- **Highly-selective colleges** admit less than 35% of applicants
 - CalPoly SLO, Pepperdine, UC Irvine, UC Santa Barbara, UC San Diego, University of Florida, SDSU
- **Super-selective** admit less than 20% of applicants
 - UC Berkeley, University of Southern California (USC), Middlebury College, Wellesley College
- **Ultra-selective colleges** admit less than 10% of applicants
 - UCLA, Brown, Duke, CalTech, MIT, Harvard, Princeton, Stanford, University of Chicago, Yale

CONTEXT: Research of overall college admissions indicates the average acceptance rate for US colleges is 64-67%.

Demystifying ‘Yield’

- Yield is calculated by dividing the **number of students who enroll** (accept their admissions offer) divided by the **number of students offered admissions**.
- FOR EXAMPLE:
 - UCLA offered admissions to **12,844** first-time students in 2023. Of the **12,844** students who were accepted, 6,462 enrolled in the Fall of 2023. Therefore, the 2023 **Yield for UCLA was 50%**.
 - Claremont McKenna College offered admissions to **591** first-time students in 2023. Of the 591 students who were accepted, 322 enrolled in the Fall of 2023. Therefore, the 2023 **Yield for Claremont McKenna was 54.48%**.
 - Harvard offered admissions to 1,970 first time students in 2024. Of the 1,970 students who were accepted, 1,647 enrolled in Fall 2024. Therefore the 2024 **Yield for Harvard was 83.60%**.
- Interesting articles on Yield:
 - [Universities, Colleges Where Students Are Eager to Enroll](#) ★
 - [Comparing Yield Rates for Popular Colleges](#) ★ (Has links to many selective schools Common Data Sets)

Consider: What schools are an academically good match for you with a strong likelihood for admission?

- Check the admission rates for the colleges you are interested in attending. Look at the GPA/test scores of the current year admitted freshmen to see if your GPA is in line with the average admitted student for that university/college.
- **Explore more than just admissions rates.** Research student retention rates, four year graduation rates, and financial aid offers.
- A school's Common Data Set is a good 'one stop' research tool:
 - To find Common Data sets, Google the school name and Common Data Set.
 - [CalPoly Common Data Set Tutorial](#) ★
 - [Common Data Set 2023](#) ★

GPA

- Every college calculates GPA according to their own scale. When asked for your PGHS GPA, use the GPA listed on your transcript. However, when you enter your course work into your application, your GPA will be recalculated using the college or university scale.
- The UC/CSU calculate GPA based on courses taken from the summer after 9th grade until the summer after 11th grade.
 - [GPA requirement | UC Admissions](#) ★
 - [GPA Calculator | CSU](#) ★

Balanced College List

A balanced college list includes colleges and universities in your “Reach,” “Target,” and “Likely” categories that you are excited about applying to and can see yourself attending.

Your List of Colleges: What Are Likely, Target, and Reach Schools?★

Creating a Balanced College List

Reach/Dream

- Ideally, these schools are *not* “out of your academic range” but at the very top of it.
- All Ultra-selective schools should be classified as a Reach/Dream School due to their admissions rates.

Target

- Schools match your GPA and standardized test scores (if required or used).
- While chances of being accepted is reasonable there’s still the possibility of being waitlisted or denied, especially the more competitive a school is.

Likely

- The school should check off all of your boxes (size, location, degree) but consistently accept students with GPAs and test scores at or slightly below yours.
- You want the college to fall within, **not below**, the academic range so you are challenged and get out of the college what you need.
 - Thoughtful selection of schools that fall within your likely range will help protect you from ‘yield protection.’

Balanced List ...



...

TEST SCORES

Bottom 25%

Mid-50%

Top 25%

Most Selective <25%

UNLIKELY

UNLIKELY

UNLIKELY

Highly Selective 26-35%

UNLIKELY

REACH

REACH

Selective 36-50%

REACH

REACH

TARGET

Moderate 51-75%

REACH

TARGET

LIKELY

Less Selective 76+%

TARGET

LIKELY

LIKELY

FINAL LIST:

7-10 SCHOOLS:

Likely (3-4)

Target (3-4)

Reach (2-3)

Unlikely (1+)

COLLEGE ADMIT RATE

How many schools should I apply to?

- Applying to a larger number of schools is less critical than making sure you have a balanced college list that includes the colleges with generous acceptance rates.



UC Campuses

[First-year admit data | UC Admissions](#)★

Please be cautious in drawing conclusions from this information. The numbers are useful only as a general guide to selectivity and not as a predictor of your chances for admission to a particular campus.

Keep the following in mind:

- Data for several colleges on a campus are grouped together, which masks the differences in the degree of competition for admission among them. Some campuses and colleges admit students directly into individual majors, and the degree of competition among majors may vary widely.
- The data reflect the selection process for fall 2025 applicants. The selection process may vary from year to year; therefore the results may differ significantly.
- GPA is defined as a student's grade point average in the "A-G" subjects. The average high school GPA listed for each campus is computed from 10th and 11th grade coursework, including up to eight honors courses. These GPAs are drawn from application data at the system-wide admissions office.

UC Freshman Admission Rate: Class of 2025

UC Berkeley (<i>Cal</i>)	11%	UC Riverside	87.1%
UC Davis	44.6%	UC San Diego (<i>UCSD</i>)	28.4%
UC Irvine (<i>UCI</i>)	28.7%	UC Santa Barbara (<i>UCSB</i>)	38.3%
UCLA	9.4%	*UC Santa Barbara Engineering	9%
*UCLA Nursing	1%	UC Santa Cruz	72.7%
UC Merced	95%		

[First-year admit data | UC Admissions](#)★

CSU Campus	Acceptance Rate	CSU Campus	Acceptance Rate
CSU Bakersfield	85%	CSU Northridge	93%
CSU Channel Islands	89%	Cal Poly Pomona	74%
CSU Chico	92%	CSU Sacramento	93%
CSU Dominguez Hills	91%	CSU San Bernardino	93%
CSU East Bay	76%	San Diego State University	31%
CSU Fresno	47%	San Francisco State University	84%
CSU Fullerton	91%	San José State University	85%
Cal Poly Humboldt	92%	Cal Poly San Luis Obispo	28%
CSU Long Beach	46%	CSU San Marcos	95%
CSU Los Angeles	91%	Sonoma State University	92%
Cal Maritime Academy	*	CSU Stanislaus	98%
CSU Monterey Bay	97%		

Cal Poly & Cal Poly Maritime Academy Update

Cal Poly San Luis Obispo

- Cal Poly San Luis Obispo now has two campuses:
 - the **San Luis Obispo Campus** and the **Solano Campus**.
- The Solano Campus will continue to be home to the Cal Poly Maritime Academy.
- Students at both campuses will earn a Cal Poly San Luis Obispo college degree. It is now one program with two campuses.
- Students can select a primary and secondary major that includes only one of the campuses or a combination of campuses.
- **CAREFULLY check when you pick your major which campus you have selected on your application.**
- **Major changes, especially between campuses will be extremely difficult if not impossible.**
- Cal Poly Maritime offers 3 undergraduate majors that do not require participation in the Corp of Cadets: Business Administration, Facilities Engineering Technology, and Oceanography.

Please Select an Alternate Program For Aerospace Engineering

Your choice will be used in case your first-choice program is not available. You may change this choice at any time prior to submission on the Add Program or Submit Application pages.



Add	Program Name	Campus Name	Degree Type	Start Term	Academic Year	Location	Deadline ?
CAL POLY AND CAL POLY MARITIME ACADEMY UNDERGRADUATE							
	Agricultural Business	Cal Poly and Cal Poly Maritime...	BS	Fall		San Luis Obispo Campus	12/01/2025
	Agricultural Communication	Cal Poly and Cal Poly Maritime...	BS	Fall	2026	San Luis Obispo Campus	12/01/2025
	Agricultural Science	Cal Poly and Cal Poly Maritime...	BS	Fall	2026	San Luis Obispo Campus	12/01/2025
	Agricultural Systems Management	Cal Poly and Cal Poly Maritime...	BS	Fall	2026	San Luis Obispo Campus	12/01/2025
	Animal Science	Cal Poly and Cal Poly Maritime...	BS	Fall	2026	San Luis Obispo Campus	12/01/2025

☐

I am not interested in an Alternate Program

[Cancel](#)
[Save this Choice](#)

or press ESC key to continue



Search for a Program or Organization



Add	Program Name	Campus Name	Degree Type	Start Term	Academic Year	Location	Deadline ?
CAL POLY AND CAL POLY MARITIME ACADEMY UNDERGRADUATE							
+	Materials Engineering	Cal Poly and Cal Poly Maritime...	BS	Fall	2026	San Luis Obispo Campus	12/01/2025
+	Mathematics	Cal Poly and Cal Poly Maritime...	BS	Fall	2026	San Luis Obispo Campus	12/01/2025
+	Mechanical Engineering	Cal Poly and Cal Poly Maritime...	BS	Fall	2026	San Luis Obispo Campus	12/01/2025
+	Mechanical Engineering (Cal Poly Maritime Academy)	Cal Poly and Cal Poly Maritime...	BS	Fall	2026	Solano Campus	12/01/2025
+	Microbiology	Cal Poly and Cal Poly Maritime...	BS	Fall	2026	San Luis Obispo Campus	12/01/2025
+	Nutrition	Cal Poly and Cal Poly Maritime...	BS	Fall	2026	San Luis Obispo Campus	12/01/2025

☐

I am not interested in an Alternate Program

Cancel

Save this Choice

or press ESC key to continue



UC and CSU Admission Timeline

- **December 1, 2025:** All applications due by this date.
- **March 31, 2026 :** All applicants will be notified of admission decisions by this date. Notification can begin as early as mid-February, depending on campus. Decisions commonly are sent out beginning March 1st.
- **May 1, 2026 :** Deadline for applicants to commit to attending the one university of their choice.
- *Campuses that use rolling admission will notify regarding decisions as they occur.*

What Does *Impaction* Mean in College Admissions?

- **Impaction** occurs when there are more eligible applicants than openings in a major. As a result, the university cannot accommodate all eligible applicants.
- The admission rate for impacted programs is significantly more narrow. Levels of impaction vary at each campus.
- For a list of CSU Impacted Programs go to:
 - [2025-2026 CSU Undergraduate Impacted Programs Matrix](#) ★
- The UC uses the following terms to define impaction: Selective Major, Screening (only UCSC), High Demand (only Berkeley), or Capped (only UCSD).

Rolling Admissions

- If a school has *rolling admissions* it means that they evaluate applications as they are submitted. They do not wait until the whole group of applicants have submitted on the final deadline date before reviewing them.
- *For schools with rolling admissions, it is better to apply earlier, at the beginning of the application period.*

Filling Out College Applications.

Where to Start and How to
Get Help.

Starting the Application

■ Applying to a UC?

- [Apply now | UC Admissions](#) ★

■ Applying to a CSU?

- [Cal State Apply | CSU](#) ★

■ Applying to a Private College?

- Go online to [Common App](#) ★ to see if your college is there.

■ Applying to an Out-of-State Public University?

- Some non-California public universities use the Common Application. If the public university is **not listed** on the Common App, then you must go to the school's individual website and follow the posted instructions for submitting an application.

PGHS Application Assistance



■ Apples to Apps Workshops

- PGHS Library CCC
- October - November
- Every Tues.& Wedn.
- 2:00-3:00 PM
- *Or by Appointment

CSU & Common App Application Support

- Cal State Apply Help Center
 - [Cal State Apply Applicant Help Center - Liaison](#) ★
 - [CalState Top 5 Do's and Don'ts](#) ★
- Ask for Help with the Application: Common App
 - [Student Solutions Center](#) ★

UC Application Assistance

- **UC application and Application Center:** The UC provides help and support throughout each of its application sections.
 - Applicants can view answers to their commonly asked questions on each page of the application by clicking ‘Help’ on the top navigation bar.
- Students needing further assistance can contact the UC Application Center via phone or email.
 - The center is available Monday–Friday, 10 a.m.–6 p.m. (Pacific Time).
 - **(800) 207-1710 (within the U.S.)**
 - **ucinfo@applyucsupport.net (email)**
- [Contact us | UC Admissions](#) ★

Considering College Costs

Private Colleges and Out-of-State Public Universities

- The tuition published by private universities is discounted for 90% of applicants.
- Use the school's “**net price calculator**” to get an estimate of what the cost could be for your student.
 - [Undergraduate Net Price Calculator | Cal Poly](#) ★
- Private colleges do not offer in-state or out-of-state tuition; tuition is the same for everyone.
- Out-of-State Public universities are more expensive for residents of states other than their own. However, qualifying CA students may get a discount at universities that offer a *Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) program*.
 - [Western Undergraduate Exchange \(WUE\) - Tuition Savings](#) ★

Out-of-State Public Universities

- **Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE):** WUE gives a tuition discount to qualifying California students. WUE is available at select schools in:
Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho,
Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon,
South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.
- Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) - Tuition Savings ★
- Check the WUE website to see if schools you are interested in offer a WUE discount.
 - Research the eligibility requirements for each participating WUE school.
- Even schools that don't participate in WUE typically have some type of out-of-state aid program.

Out-of-State Universities Examples

- The *University of New Mexico* in Albuquerque has 9 Engineering programs, none of which are impacted. With its generous Amigo scholarship program, it can come in at a cost slightly less than a CSU.
- The *University of Hawaii* in Honolulu (Manoa campus) has renowned Business and Marine Science programs, and with the WUE discount, tuition comes in at around the cost of a CSU for California residents.

Financial Aid at Private Colleges/Universities

- At private colleges students in the top 25-33% of the applicant pool are more likely to get merit-based financial aid.
- Students near the bottom of the college's admitted group may be offered financial aid, but it may not meet as much need.

What this means to you:

- If money is a factor in your college search and will impact your final choice, *ensure that you apply to some colleges where you are at the top of the applicant pool.*
- Compare your numbers to those of the typical freshman admitted.

Check individual college websites to confirm when students can apply for campus scholarships.

- A number of CSU campuses allow students to apply for scholarships before they are officially admitted.
- Other campuses will allow students to apply for scholarships as soon as they are admitted. This is an advantage for campuses with rolling admissions.

Scholarships Ideas

- Check the **PGHS Local Scholarship Calendar**, research outside scholarship organizations, and college webpages for scholarship opportunities.
 - [MASTER Scholarship Calendar](#) ★
 - Research whether your parent/guardian's work place has scholarships
 - Military branches or organizations also often have national scholarships funds for children of military members or veterans.
 - Research organizations you have volunteered with such as CHOMP or the Aquarium.
 - Research community or cultural organizations you have participated in.
 - Google search your interests and college scholarships: i.e. knitting and college scholarships.

Common Mistakes

*Don't take
chances with your
admission by
filling out the
application
incorrectly.*

Not Using Your Transcript to Fill Out Applications

- **All self-reported information entered must match the transcript exactly.**
 - Launch your application using your californiacolleges.edu account.
 - Use a copy of your transcript when checking the Academic History sections to ensure the information is correctly uploaded.
- Enter all A-G coursework taken during high school, even if you earned a grade of a D or F.
 - Do not enter non-academic courses such as PE.
- If you have taken Dual Enrollment courses, ensure you print a copy your unofficial MPC transcripts as well.
 - [Student Records - Monterey Peninsula College](#) ★

Parchment:

Pacific Grove High School uses

Parchment.com, an online transcript service that allows students to view, and order official and unofficial transcripts electronically.

- All PGHS 12th-grade students should have a Student Parchment account so you can view/order official or unofficial transcripts this year and in the future.
 - Parchment only allows one account per student.
 - If the sole account is a Parent account, the account will be disabled upon student graduation.
 - Students need access to their Parchment accounts during the summer before starting college.
- For Parchment assistance, contact Johanna Biondi, jbiondi@pgusd.org

Adding All Coursework Taken During High School under PGHS

- If you transferred from another high school, either in California, from another state, or another country, you will need to add that school to your applications. IE you will have **2 high schools identified in your applications**.
- If you have taken Dual Enrollment Coursework from a California Community College, you **MUST** add that coursework to your application as a college class.
- If you have taken an elective course from another high school, you must add that high school to your application and add your additional class in the correct section of your application.

Leaving Senior Year Classes Blank on Applications

- **Students frequently forget to include their current senior year classes on the application.**
- Even though you don't yet have grades for your first semester of senior classes, the courses you are taking and plan to take in Semester 2 must be included.
- *Semester 1 classes reported as “In Progress/IP” and Semester 2 classes are “Planned/PL”.*
- Any changes in course selections in the second semester must be reported to each college you applied to.

Using High School Email as Contact Information

- After you graduate in May, your PGUSD email account will be deactivated.
- Use **a personal email** (not your PGHS email) for all college, scholarship, and job applications in your senior year.
- Create a personal email that you would be confident and comfortable using for a job interview and potentially for a number of years.

Not Checking Student Portals Frequently After Submitting Applications

- Colleges will communicate with you via the student portal you set up with each campus.
- If they need more information from you, or if something was done incorrectly and needs to be changed, that is how they will contact you.
- Don't let a fixable error be the reason you miss out on an admission. It's crucial to stay on top of your student portal!

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I go to a CSU my first year and then transfer to a UC?

This ‘strategy’ will not increase your chances for admission.

The UC’s make admission decisions using the following priority:

1. Transfer students from CA community colleges with an Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) or Transfer Application Guarantee (TAG) coming in as a junior.
2. Incoming Freshmen
3. **Transfer students from other 4 year colleges**

Can I apply to a less competitive program and then switch majors?

- College admissions staff universally answer *No*.
- Some campuses, like Cal Poly SLO and many of our UC campuses, do not allow major changes from non-selective majors to selective or impacted programs.
 - Other campuses have extremely limited transfer options into impacted programs.
- **The UC and CSU recommended pathway is for a student who wants a particular major but did not get accepted to attend a California Community College and transfer as a junior.**

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

A dark blue diagonal shape, resembling a stylized mountain or a corner piece, occupies the bottom right portion of the slide. It is a solid, dark blue color and contrasts with the light beige background.