

San Marcos High School Counseling Department – FAQs

Please read this over with a parent/guardian before choosing your courses for next year.

Please notify your counselor of any course change requests by the May 31, 2019 deadline.

TIMELINE FOR INCOMING SENIORS

Friday, January 25	Monday, January 28	Week of February 4 – 8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive transcript, FAQs and course selection sheet in English class. Review at home with parent/guardian 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counselor presentation in English class <p>With parent/guardian review the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAQs Course selection sheet AP/Honors testimonials (info. about AP/H courses) Online course catalog (course descriptions) Graduation requirements (next page) College requirements (A-G listed below) Choose courses & sign sheet Have parent/guardian sign course selection sheet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring signed course selection sheet to school Presentation in C3 with history class on financial aid with Mrs. Liu One-on-one meeting with counselor to go over course selection sheet as related to career and/or major goals

TIMELINE FOR INCOMING JUNIORS

Tuesday, February 19	Week of February 25 – March 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counselor presentation in theater with English class Receive transcript, course selection sheet, FAQs <p>With parent/guardian review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAQs Course selection sheet AP/Honors testimonials (info. about AP/H courses) Online course catalog (course descriptions) Graduation requirements (next page) College requirements (A-G listed below) Choose courses & sign sheet Have parent/guardian sign course selection sheet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring signed course selection sheet to school Meet in C3 with history class for career exploration lesson with Mrs. Liu One-on-one meeting with counselor to go over course selection sheet as related to career and/or major goals

Review your transcript with a parent/guardian before you choose classes:

- Highlight any Ds and/or Fs on your transcript.
- During your counselor meeting, go over any Ds/Fs for a remediation plan.
- Look at the “Need” column on your transcript as well as page 2 of FAQs for SMUSD graduation requirements. 10 credits = 1 year.
- Consult the A-G chart to the right for college admissions minimum requirements. Please consult the admissions websites of private/independent schools as they sometimes require more than the A-G minimum coursework.

UC & CSU “A-G” Eligibility Requirements

Selective universities and majors strongly recommend coursework above minimum requirements. “C” or better required in each course.

A	US History/Social Science	2 years
B	English	4 years
C	Math (including Algebra II)	3 years (4 recommended)
D	Lab Science	2 years (3-4 recommended)
E	Language other than English (LOTE)	2 years same language (3-4 recommended)
F	Visual or Performing Art	1 year
G	College Prep Elective	1 year

SMUSD Graduation Requirements Classes of 2019 & 2020	
ENGLISH	4 Years (40 credits)
MATH	2 Years (20 Credits) *Including one year of Algebra 1
SOCIAL STUDIES	3 Years (30 Credits) *10th grade World History, 11th grade U.S. History, 12th grade Economics/Government
SCIENCE	2 Years (20 Credits) *Life Science, Physical Science
WORLD LANGUAGE/LOTE	2 Years (20 Credits) *Can be satisfied with 1 year of a level 2 course **(Successful completion of 10 credits of CTE^ may count for 1 year of World Language or VAPA)
VAPA	1 Year (10 Credits) **(Successful completion of 10 credits of CTE may count for 1 year of World Language or VAPA)
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	2 years (20 Credits)
ELECTIVES	Any area of study (70 Credits)
TOTAL	230 Credits (Grade of "D" or better in all courses)

Keep up to date with counseling department info. and events

Subscribe to counseling office text message updates via Remind 101

Text number: 81010

Message: @smhsoun

If you have Verizon Wireless:

As of January 28th, 2019, Remind will no longer be able to send text messages to anyone using Verizon Wireless as their phone carrier. This is due to an additional fee that Verizon Wireless will begin charging Remind for sending text messages to Verizon Wireless customers.

You can still receive important updates from SMHS Counseling Department by downloading the mobile Remind app or click to enable email notifications—both of which are free of charge and keep you connected.

Read our monthly newsletter online at:

<https://sanmarcoshigh.smusd.org>

Click on: Departments → Counseling → Newsletters

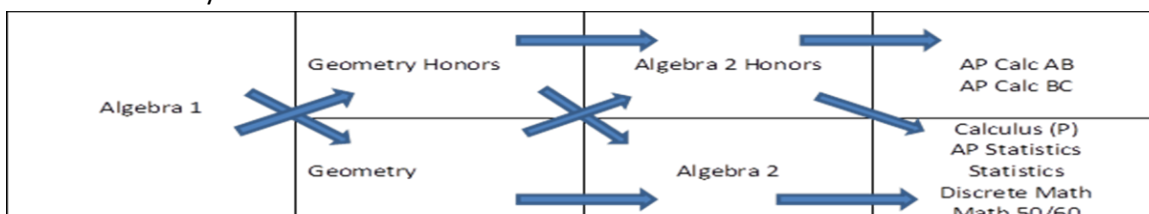
Questions frequently asked to counselors (FAQs)

How many classes do I have to take?

Typically, a student in grades 9-11 takes six classes each year (60 credits). Students in Marching Band, AFJROTC and AVID are often enrolled in seven periods. School policy does not allow students to enroll in seven courses unless enrolled in the special programs mentioned above. Some seniors who are ahead in credits, opt to take the minimum number required by SMUSD, which is four periods. Please see your transcript for your graduation requirements and read below (under senior-specific questions) about college admissions requirements.

Do I have to take math all four years? Which math class should I take?

SMHS strongly recommends that students be enrolled in a math course for all four years of high school. Community colleges (CC) and many universities use the senior year math course to determine placement. Students who do not place in transferrable math courses or remedial level math in college will spend time in lower levels of math that do not apply to a degree or transfer, therefore wasting time. Four-year universities also want to see a rigorous course schedule, which includes math, to meet selective admissions standards. Consult this chart as well as your current math teacher and counselor if you're not sure what course to take.



What is the difference between Algebra 2 (P) and Algebra 2 Honors? Which one should I take?

First, please review the course catalog with a description of each written by the math department. You should also ask your current math teacher for course suggestions. Algebra 2 is a college prep course that leads to other college prep courses such as Statistics and Calculus. Algebra 2 Honors is considered a pre-AP course and includes pre-calculus material. This course is meant for preparation for AP Calculus. It is fast-paced and challenging.

*Please note that starting in Fall 2019 we have a new college prep course “Algebra 2 for Strategic Business Management” being taught by Mr. Patalano. Please read the description in the online course catalog and see him in room 395 for any further questions.

How can I learn more about the expectations and content in SMHS AP/Honors courses?

Go to the SMHS home page: www.sanmarcoshigh.smusd.org. On the left side under Site Shortcuts, go to #ChallengeAccepted → AP/Honors Testimonials. For each course, students can see a sample course syllabus, which provides a course overview and course goals. Then students can click on “Testimonials” for each AP/Honors course. Here you can read how SMHS students rated the course in four key areas:

1. The Level of Difficulty of this Course
2. The Time Commitment to this Course Outside of School
3. The Amount of Academic Supports this Course Provides
4. The Continued Level of Interest in this Course

You can also read SMHS students’ comments:

1. “What I Wish I Knew Before Entering the Course”
2. “Advice for Future Students”

Should I take all honors & AP courses?

It is not necessary to take all honors or AP courses in order to be admitted to a four-year university; however highly selective universities do expect rigorous coursework. SMHS recommends that students take more advanced courses in subject areas in which they have an aptitude or passion. Ideally, a student finds a healthy balance between academics, extracurricular activities, social time and relaxation. Students should take into account their academic strengths and outside activities that will affect their study time. Colleges make the same recommendation.

I heard that we can’t drop AP & honors courses once school starts. Is that true?

Administration creates a teaching and course schedule based on the choices students make during spring course selection. Once school starts, courses and teachers are set and staffed. SMHS courses are year-long and therefore students will be expected to remain in a course for the full academic year. Course change requests can be made up until May 31, 2019.

What must I do if I plan to play sports in college?

You should notify your coach, the athletic director (Mr. Meyer in room 667) and your counselor who can help you plan the required coursework to be NCAA eligible. Register for the NCAA at www.eligibilitycenter.org. This is how our registrar provides your transcript to the NCAA. During course selection, notify your counselor so he/she can go through NCAA eligibility and help you plan your courses. SMHS also holds an annual NCAA night for parents, so be sure to attend that each fall with a parent/guardian.

What resources do we have at SMHS to help me figure out my interests, career options, major options, colleges, etc.?

Our most comprehensive resource is our College and Career Center (C3) with Mrs. Liu. She can walk you through interest inventories to help you find careers that match your interests. She can show you websites, such as www.californiacolleges.edu, where you can discover interests, careers, research colleges, take a skills assessment, make a resume and create a four-year plan of study. She has scholarship resources for juniors and seniors as well as information about the SAT and ACT. The C3 also provides information on internships, summer programs, financial aid, work permits and the military. Go visit- it is open every day until 3:30 pm.

Should I take the SAT and/or ACT? When? How should I prepare?

Students who plan on attending a community college after high school do not need to take the SAT or ACT. Students who plan on applying to a four-year university directly from high school should try both exams in the spring of junior year. Many seniors repeat one or both exams early fall of senior year. Please see the counselor classroom presentation (posted on the website) for more details. If you receive free/reduced lunch, there are fee waivers available with the counseling secretary. If you would like more information on test prep, please see Mrs. Liu in the C3 for free on-campus classes after school and other opportunities in the community and online. One of the best free online resources is: <https://www.khanacademy.org>. Be sure to utilize the resources in your College Board account to help you in your SAT test preparation.

If I have any Ds or Fs, how can I get into SMUSD summer school?

SMUSD will be offering summer school for remediation only (not advancement) for incoming 11th and 12th graders. There will be two sessions (June 24- July 3 and July 8 – July 25). Students may take one course each session for a maximum of two classes/10 credits. Priority registration will be granted to students who sign up with their counselor during course selection in February. Students on the priority list will pick up schedules and make any necessary adjustments on Thursday, June 13 (day after school gets out). Students who would like a summer school class and are not pre-registered, will come to SMHS on Friday, June 14 and be registered in a class if spaces are available. Likely summer course offerings include World History, English 9-11, Spanish 2 (2nd semester only), Chemistry, Biology, Algebra 1, Geometry and Algebra 2.

What if I want to take a summer course through another school?

Students may earn elective credits through outside charter/online schools, however the course must be pre-approved by Principal Dawson. Elective credits are any classes above the minimum SMUSD graduation requirements. Please be sure the course is NCAA (if you want to compete athletically at the college level) and/or UC/CSU-approved. Please see your counselor for the "Request for Outside Credit" form, which has more information.

If you're interested in taking a community college course (Palomar or Mira Costa College) you are advised to consult your counselor, however no pre-approval form is necessary. Community college courses are tuition-free to high school students, so ask your counselor for the K-12 form. Steps for signing up for a community college class are detailed in the K-12 packet.

Incoming senior-specific questions & information

What are the chances that I will get a 0 period course? What about a popular elective course?

Spaces are limited in 0 period courses and popular elective courses. There is no guarantee of placement, even as a senior. 0 period Gov't. and 0 period English are popular with seniors who want to get out earlier in the day. The computer will randomly select which seniors get a spot and your chances depend on how many sections we can offer, which is based on how many teachers can teach that early in the day. We will have around 800 seniors in 2018/19 so there are limited spaces in each elective and course offering. Even seniors should list three (3) alternate elective choices on the course selection sheet.

What is the minimum number of courses I have to take senior year?

SMUSD requires a student to be on campus for a minimum of four periods. Students who choose to only take four courses senior year must be ahead in credits. Please check the bottom right corner box on your transcript to determine how many credits you need for graduation.

How many courses should I take senior year if I am applying to UC or a selective university?

The UC system recommends five college prep courses senior year (minimum). UC evaluates your application using 14 comprehensive review factors. One of them states, "Quality of your senior-year program as measured by the type and number of academic courses in progress or planned." (The same goes for selective private/independent universities).

Is there help for me when I apply to college next fall?

YES! The counselors will do a fall presentation to seniors. At this time, you will be able to sign up for our college application workshops where we will walk you through the actual application while you sit at a computer! We will have workshops for the University of California (UC), the California State University (CSU), the Common Application (for most independent and private universities) as well as a workshop for Palomar College. We will also hold workshops for FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and DREAM Act. Your senior English teachers are helpful with the essays and UC's Personal Insight Questions (PIQs). Be sure to take advantage of our fall workshops so you don't make app. errors.

What is Math Prep 1/ Palomar Math 50/60? Who should take it?

This is a course for seniors who plan to attend Palomar College. It covers Algebra 1 and 2 material. Students who earn a C or better both semesters are eligible for placement into college-level math, which are courses that transfer to a four-year university. This saves students time and money in college.

Spring 2019

January 29 – CTE (Career Technical Education) Fair

April 10 – College Knowledge Night at SMHS (details to follow in Remind 101, in newsletter and on website)

April 23- SMUSD Future Fair (details to follow)

Fall 2019

October 1 – FAFSA and DREAM Act applications open online

October (date TBD) – Student Financial Aid workshops

October (date TBD) – Parent financial aid night

October (date TBD) – College Application workshops at SMHS for seniors

September/October (date TBD) – Senior parent night with the counselors

November 30 – UC and CSU applications due

