EDUBUS · Irvine, California

# Four-Year College Timeline for Irvine High Schools

2026–27 school year edition

What to do each month from grade 9 through grade 12, one grade per page, with checkboxes, ready to print and keep at the student's desk.

- A four-year overview: the year in which course selection, testing, activities, and applications each begin
- Month-by-month checklists for grades 9, 10, 11, and 12, with test dates and deadlines for the 2026–27 school year
- The period the UC GPA covers and the cap on honors points
- Sources and the date checked

Grade 9
Put A–G courses on track and find a core activity

Grade 10
The UC GPA starts counting; choose grade 11 AP courses

Grade 11
Grades, testing, and the college list

Grade 12
From submitting applications to committing to a college

**www.edub.us/en/college**
Checked November 11, 2026

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# Four-year overview

The priorities for each grade. The four pages that follow give a month-by-month checklist, one grade per page, so each can be printed on its own.

Grade 9

**Put A-G courses on track and find a core activity**

Keep A-G courses on track · Draft a four-year plan · Find one or two core activities · Learn the high school's grading rules

Grade 10

**The UC GPA starts counting; choose grade 11 AP courses**

Treat every semester grade as application material · Use the 4 honors points available in grade 10 · Settle the grade 11 AP courses · Add depth to activities

Grade 11

**Grades, testing, and the college list**

Protect this year's grades · Take the first SAT or ACT in the spring · Choose a substantial grade 12 schedule · Start the college list and essay material

Grade 12

**From submitting applications to committing to a college**

Work backward from the deadlines · Enter courses and grades from the transcript, one by one · Keep grade 12 courses and grades steady · Prepare financial aid alongside the application

## Key facts

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 9 | UC GPA<br>Not counted | A-G courses<br>Count toward the 15 required | In-school testing<br>PSAT 8/9 in October | Focus this year<br>Course pathways and activity direction |
| Grade 10 | UC GPA<br>Starts counting | Honors points<br>At most 4 in grade 10 | In-school testing<br>PreACT or PSAT | Focus this year<br>Grades and grade 11 courses |
| Grade 11 | UC GPA<br>Last full year counted | PSAT/NMSQT<br>October, at school | Spring SAT dates<br>Mar 6, May 1, Jun 5 | AP Exams<br>May 3 to 14 |
| Grade 12 | UC submission period<br>Oct 1 to Nov 30 | Financial aid deadline<br>March 2 | UC decisions<br>March 1 to 31 | Commitment deadline<br>May 1 |

UC GPA

### When the UC GPA counts and how honors points work

Every semester grade in grade 10 counts toward the UC GPA. UC converts A, B, C, and D to 4, 3, 2, and 1 points and ignores pluses and minuses; UC-recognized honors courses earn 1 extra point per semester, up to 4 points in grade 10. The weighted GPA on a school transcript usually follows rules different from UC's, and the two numbers cannot stand in for each other.

### Before high school (grade 8)

EDUBUS recommends that grade 8 families concentrate on two things: confirming the math pathway, and understanding the grade 9 course selection sheet of the intended high school. Once these are settled, the four years of high school courses have a clear direction. EDUBUS does not recommend scheduling an intensive load of competitions and activities for college applications as early as grade 8.

**How to use it:** Print the page for the student's grade and check off each item when it is done. Dated items are officially published test dates and deadlines; undated items are tasks suited to that month and can be moved earlier or later.

MONTH-BY-MONTH CHECKLIST · 2026-27 SCHOOL YEAR

# Grade 9 College Roadmap: The First Year of High School in Irvine

Grade 9 grades do not count toward the University of California (UC) GPA, but the A-G courses taken this year count toward the 15 courses UC requires and must be passed with a grade of C or better. The work of grade 9 is to place mathematics, world language, and science on suitable pathways and to find one or two activities worth a long-term commitment.

## Aug 2026

- [ ] After school starts, check the schedule: confirm that English, mathematics, science, and world language are all A-G courses and that the levels match the course requests.
- [ ] Note the school's deadlines for adding and dropping courses; schedule changes must be requested before them.

## Sep 2026

- [ ] Attend club recruitment and try two or three clubs for a semester.
- [ ] Attend the school's grade 9 parent night to learn how graduation requirements line up with UC A-G.

## Oct 2026

- [ ] Oct 1–30 In-school testing window for the PSAT 8/9. The school sets the exact date, and families do not register separately.
- [ ] After the first progress report, talk with the teacher promptly about any subject below a B.

## Nov 2026

- [ ] First-quarter grades are released. UC requires a grade of C or better in A-G courses; a course with a lower grade must be repeated to count.
- [ ] Confirm the math and world language pathways in the four-year plan with the school counselor.

## Dec 2026

- [ ] Prepare for first-semester finals; semester grades go on the official transcript.
- [ ] Browse summer programs. Many programs for grade 9 students open applications in winter.

## Jan 2027

- [ ] The second semester begins. Use first-semester grades to decide which subjects need support outside class.
- [ ] Submit summer program applications by their deadlines; each program's deadline is in the summer program deadline calendar.

## Feb 2027

- [ ] Prepare for grade 10 course selection. UC begins counting GPA in grade 10; honors courses earn 1 extra point per semester, and at most 4 points can be used in grade 10.
- [ ] Find out which AP and honors courses the school opens to grade 10 students, and the prerequisites of each.

## Mar 2027

- [ ] Irvine high schools schedule grade 10 course selection between February and April; the dates appear under the school dates for the student's high school.
- [ ] During course selection, ask the current teachers for recommended levels, then confirm with the school counselor.

## Apr 2027

- [ ] Confirm the grade 10 courses, and note the school's deadline for changing course requests.
- [ ] Review this year's activities and decide which one or two to continue in grade 10.

## May 2027

- [ ] May 3–14 2027 AP Exams. Grade 9 students enrolled in an AP course take the exam during these two weeks.
- [ ] Prepare for finals; second-semester grades also go on the transcript.

## Jun 2027

- [ ] A-G courses taken in the summer after grade 9 count toward the UC GPA as grade 10 courses. Before enrolling, confirm that the course is on an A-G course list.
- [ ] Plan one summer commitment that lasts at least two weeks: a summer program, volunteer service, or a personal project.

## Jul 2027

- [ ] Keep reading and writing. The writing load in grade 10 English and history courses rises noticeably.
- [ ] Review mathematics before school starts to prepare for the grade 10 course.

**EDUBUS recommendation**

EDUBUS recommends keeping grade 9 course rigor within the range where the student can reliably earn A or B grades. Although grade 9 grades do not count toward the UC GPA, they determine whether the student can enter honors and AP courses in grade 10, and they are the first year of grades that private universities see. In activities, commitment comes first and titles second.

Sources for dated items are on the last page. For school-specific dates, follow the school's notices.

MONTH-BY-MONTH CHECKLIST · 2026-27 SCHOOL YEAR

# Grade 10 College Roadmap: The Year the UC GPA Starts Counting

The University of California (UC) GPA begins in grade 10: it counts only A-G courses taken between the summer after grade 9 and the summer after grade 11. Honors courses earn 1 extra point per semester, and at most 4 points can be used in grade 10. Grade 10 is also the year to settle the grade 11 AP courses and to add depth to one or two activities.

## Aug 2026

- [ ] School starts. From this school year on, every semester grade in an A-G course counts toward the UC GPA.
- [ ] Check whether the honors and AP courses on the schedule carry an honors designation on the school's UC A-G course list.

## Sep 2026

- [ ] Seek a specific responsibility in a core activity, such as leading a project or an event.
- [ ] Attend the school's grade 10 parent night; the dates appear under the school dates for the student's high school.

## Oct 2026

- [ ] Take the in-school PreACT or PSAT. Which test grade 10 students take, and on which day, is set by the school.
- [ ] Students who need to register for AP Exams should do so within the in-school window the school announces.

## Nov 2026

- [ ] First-quarter grades are released. Compare each subject with the target grade, and arrange support early for any subject below a B.
- [ ] Book the school's grade 10 planning conference. Several Irvine high schools hold a planning conference in grade 10 that students and parents attend together.

## Dec 2026

- [ ] Prepare for first-semester finals. This is the first semester grade that counts toward the UC GPA.
- [ ] Screen summer and research programs, and note each application opening date and deadline.

## Jan 2027

- [ ] Submit summer program applications. Selective programs require essays and recommendation letters, so allow at least four weeks to prepare.
- [ ] The second semester begins. Adjust the study plan in light of first-semester grades.

## Feb 2027

- [ ] Draft the grade 11 courses: settle the levels of mathematics and science first, then the number of AP courses.
- [ ] Calculate the current UC GPA to see how many honors points remain available for grade 11.

## Mar 2027

- [ ] Irvine high schools select grade 11 courses between February and April. For courses that need a teacher recommendation, talk with the current teacher in advance.
- [ ] Keep the intended major in view when selecting courses: for engineering and computer science, protect progress in mathematics and physics first.

## Apr 2027

- [ ] Confirm the grade 11 courses, and note the school's deadline for changing course requests.
- [ ] Start learning how the SAT and ACT differ, and take one full practice test in the summer before deciding which test to take.

## May 2027

- [ ] May 3–14 2027 AP Exams, administered at school over two weeks.
- [ ] Prepare for finals; second-semester grades count toward the UC GPA.

## Jun 2027

- [ ] A-G courses taken in the summer after grade 10 still count toward the UC GPA as grade 10 courses, and their honors points fall within the 4-point limit for grade 10.
- [ ] Begin structured SAT or ACT preparation in the summer, aiming for a first sitting in the spring of grade 11.

## Jul 2027

- [ ] Take part in a summer program, research, or an internship, and keep a record of what was done and learned; it becomes material for application essays.
- [ ] Preview the grade 11 AP courses before school starts.

**EDUBUS recommendation**

EDUBUS recommends that grade 10 students secure grades first and add rigor second. Only 4 honors points are available in grade 10, and two year-long honors or AP courses use them all; additional courses that pull grades down are a net loss for the UC GPA. The grade 11 AP courses are settled in the spring of this year, so calculate the current UC GPA with the calculator before selecting courses.

Sources for dated items are on the last page. For school-specific dates, follow the school's notices.

MONTH-BY-MONTH CHECKLIST · 2026-27 SCHOOL YEAR

# Grade 11 College Roadmap: Grades, Testing, and the College List

Grade 11 is the year in which grades and standardized testing are most concentrated. The University of California (UC) GPA counts courses through the summer after grade 11. The PSAT/NMSQT in October is the qualifying test for the National Merit Scholarship Program. The SAT has three dates in spring 2027: March 6, May 1, and June 5. In the second semester of grade 11, students also begin drafting a college list and gathering essay material.

## Aug 2026

- [ ] School starts. This is the last full school year that counts toward the UC GPA, and every semester grade matters.
- [ ] Check the AP and honors courses on the schedule, and confirm how the 8 honors points across grades 10 and 11 are being used.

## Sep 2026

- [ ] Attend the school's grade 11 parent night to learn about the school's recommendation letter process and its application counseling.
- [ ] Choose between the SAT and ACT, and set the date of the first sitting.

## Oct 2026

- [ ] **Oct 1–30** In-school testing window for the PSAT/NMSQT; the school sets the exact date. Grade 11 scores are used for National Merit selection.
- [ ] Register for AP Exams within the in-school window the school announces.

## Nov 2026

- [ ] First-quarter grades are released. Compare the current standing with the GPA ranges of target colleges.
- [ ] Start attending online college information sessions and college representative visits at school, and note the colleges and majors of interest.

## Dec 2026

- [ ] After PSAT/NMSQT scores are released, use them to set an SAT or ACT preparation plan.
- [ ] Prepare for first-semester finals, and screen summer and research programs.

## Jan 2027

- [ ] Submit applications for summer and research programs. The summer after grade 11 is the last full summer before applications.
- [ ] Attend the school's information session for grade 11 families; the dates appear under the school dates for the student's high school.

## Feb 2027

- [ ] **Feb 19** Registration deadline for the March 6 SAT.
- [ ] **Feb 27** ACT test date.

## Mar 2027

- [ ] **Mar 6** SAT test date, the first of spring 2027.
- [ ] Select grade 12 courses. UC looks at the type and number of grade 12 courses, so a clear reduction in academic courses in grade 12 is not advisable.

## Apr 2027

- [ ] **Apr 10** ACT test date.
- [ ] Use spring break to visit colleges, and begin a first version of the college list.

## May 2027

- [ ] **May 1** SAT test date. It falls next to the first week of AP Exams, so review needs to be planned ahead.
- [ ] **May 3–14** 2027 AP Exams, administered at school over two weeks.
- [ ] Students applying to private universities should ask teachers for recommendation letters before the semester ends.

## Jun 2027

- [ ] **Jun 5** SAT test date, the last before summer.
- [ ] **Jun 12** ACT test date.
- [ ] A-G courses taken in the summer after grade 11 still count toward the UC GPA. This is the last opportunity to raise the UC GPA.

## Jul 2027

- [ ] **Jul 10** ACT test date, the summer administration.
- [ ] Write first drafts of the UC personal insight questions and of the main essay for private universities. The UC application opens for drafting on August 1 each year.
- [ ] Organize the list of activities and awards, and finalize the college list.

**EDUBUS recommendation**

EDUBUS recommends that grade 11 families fix the timing of three things before December: the date of the first SAT or ACT sitting, the application deadlines of summer programs, and grade 12 course selection. A common problem this year is scheduling testing, AP, and activities all in the spring, which leads to a drop in grades in May. Taking the first SAT in March keeps it clear of the AP Exams in May.

Sources for dated items are on the last page. For school-specific dates, follow the school's notices.

MONTH-BY-MONTH CHECKLIST · 2026-27 SCHOOL YEAR

# Grade 12 College Roadmap: From Application to Commitment

The first semester of grade 12 is application season. The University of California (UC) application for fall 2027 admission is submitted from October 1 to November 30, 2026, decisions are released in March 2027, and admitted first-year students must commit by May 1. Grade 12 grades do not count toward the UC GPA, but offers of admission are conditional: dropping a course or earning a grade below C can lead to an offer being withdrawn.

## Aug 2026

- [ ] **Aug 1** The UC application opens for drafting, and the Common App opens its 2026-27 application season the same day.
- [ ] Get out the transcript and check it: the UC application asks for every course and grade from grades 9 through 11.
- [ ] Finalize the college list across three tiers: reach, match, and safety.

## Sep 2026

- [ ] Ask the school counselor and teachers for recommendation letters. In-school deadlines differ among Irvine high schools; they appear under the school dates for the student's high school.
- [ ] Finish first drafts of the UC personal insight questions: four responses out of eight questions, with a maximum of 350 words each.
- [ ] **Sep 12** SAT test date.

## Oct 2026

- [ ] **Oct 1** UC and CSU begin accepting submissions; the FAFSA, the CADAA, and the Cal Grant GPA Verification Form open the same day.
- [ ] **Oct 3** SAT test date.
- [ ] Finish the main essay and supplemental essays for early application colleges, and ask the school counselor to confirm that recommendation letters and transcripts have been sent.

## Nov 2026

- [ ] **Nov 1 and 15** Early application deadlines at many private universities; the date each college publishes governs.
- [ ] **Nov 7** SAT test date.
- [ ] **Nov 30** UC application deadline; the CSU priority application period ends the same day. Submitting at least three days early is recommended.

## Dec 2026

- [ ] **Dec 5** SAT test date, the last before regular decision deadlines.
- [ ] After submitting the UC application, log in to check the information. A change of school, an added or dropped course, or a grade below C must be reported as each campus requires.
- [ ] Finish the supplemental essays for regular decision applications; regular decision deadlines at many private universities fall in early January.

## Jan 2027

- [ ] Submit regular decision and Early Decision II (ED II) applications.
- [ ] After the first semester ends, ask the school to send midyear grade reports as private universities require.

## Feb 2027

- [ ] Families applying for financial aid: complete the FAFSA or the CADAA, and confirm with the school that the Cal Grant GPA Verification Form has been submitted.
- [ ] Watch for notices in each campus applicant portal; some UC campuses release decisions before March.

## Mar 2027

- [ ] **Mar 2** Deadline for the FAFSA, the CADAA, and the GPA Verification Form.
- [ ] **Mar 1–31** UC campuses release decisions for fall 2027 admission.

## Apr 2027

- [ ] Compare the admission and financial aid offers from each college, and attend admitted student days.
- [ ] For colleges that offer a place on the waitlist, reply as instructed on whether to remain on it.

## May 2027

- [ ] **May 1** Deadline for admitted UC first-year students to submit the Statement of Intent to Register (SIR).
- [ ] **May 3–14** 2027 AP Exams. AP scores affect credit and course placement after enrollment.

## Jun 2027

- [ ] Before graduation, ask the school to send the final transcript.
- [ ] Complete the housing application, new student orientation, and placement test registration at the college the student will attend.

## Jul 2027

- [ ] **Jul 1** Deadline for the final transcript to reach the campus the student will attend.
- [ ] **Jul 15** Deadline for official AP and IB results to arrive.

**EDUBUS recommendation**

EDUBUS recommends that grade 12 students set a UC submission date before November 23. The system is heavily used in the last week of November, and courses and grades cannot be changed once submitted, so a week should be left for checking. After the application is submitted, the most important thing is to keep grade 12 courses and grades unchanged.

Sources for dated items are on the last page. For school-specific dates, follow the school's notices.

SOURCES

# Sources

Checked November 11, 2026. Dates and figures in this document come from the official websites listed and reflect official information as of the date checked. Official information may change, so confirm on the official website before applying.


1. UC Admissions: GPA requirement
   https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/admission-requirements/first-year-requirements/gpa-requirement.html
2. UC Admissions: First-year requirements
   https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/admission-requirements/first-year-requirements/
3. UC Admissions: How applications are reviewed
   https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/how-to-apply/applying-as-a-first-year/how-applications-are-reviewed.html
4. UC Admissions: Filling out the application
   https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/how-to-apply/applying-as-a-first-year/filling-out-the-application.html
5. College Board: SAT Dates and Deadlines (includes the in-school PSAT testing windows)
   https://satsuite.collegeboard.org/sat/dates-deadlines
6. College Board: 2027 AP Exam Dates
   https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/exam-dates
7. National Merit Scholarship Corporation: Entry Requirements
   https://www.nationalmerit.org/s/1758/interior.aspx?sid=1758&gid=2&pgid=1876
8. UC Admissions: First-year applicants
   https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/how-to-apply/applying-as-a-first-year/
9. UC Admissions: Personal insight questions
   https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/how-to-apply/applying-as-a-first-year/personal-insight-questions.html
10. ACT: National Test Dates 2026-2027
    https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/registration/test-dates.html
11. UC Admissions: Dates & deadlines (first-year applicants)
    https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/how-to-apply/applying-as-a-first-year/dates-and-deadlines.html
12. UC Admissions: After you apply
    https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/how-to-apply/applying-as-a-first-year/after-you-apply/
13. UC Admissions: Statewide guarantee
    https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/admission-requirements/first-year-requirements/california-residents/statewide-guarantee/
14. California State University: Application Dates & Deadlines
    https://www.calstate.edu/apply/Pages/application-dates-deadlines.aspx
15. Common App: Common App opens application to launch 2026-27 season
    https://www.commonapp.org/blog/common-app-opens-application-launch-2026-27-season/
16. Common App: 2026-27 First-year deadlines, fees and requirements
    https://content.commonapp.org/Files/ReqGrid.pdf



EDUBUS

## A counselor can walk through this for the student

The EDUBUS initial assessment takes 30 minutes and is free, in person at the Irvine Ivy Center (730 Roosevelt, Irvine) or online. It ends with a first set of recommendations.

Phone **(949) 383-4877**

Web version **www.edub.us/en/college**

Scan to reach a counselor on WeChat