

# THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



## SENATE POLICY: J-53

UBC SENATES  
[senate.ubc.ca](http://senate.ubc.ca)

### Number & Title

J-53: *Course-specific Minima for Secondary School Applicants*

### Effective Date:

For admission to the 2014 Winter Session and thereafter.

### Approval Date:

Approved by the Okanagan Senate on February 27, 2013 and by the *Vancouver Senate* on February 13, 2013.

### Review Date:

This policy shall be reviewed three years (3) years after approval and thereafter as deemed necessary by the *Responsible Committees*.

### Responsible Committees:

*Admissions and Awards Committee of the Okanagan Senate and Admissions Committee of the Vancouver Senate.*

### Authority:

*University Act, S. 37(1)*

*“The academic governance of the university is vested in the senate and it has the following powers:*

*(b) to establish committees it considers necessary and, by 2/3 vote of its members present, to delegate to one or more committees those of its powers as it may determine;”*

*(c) to determine all questions relating to the academic and other qualifications required of applicants for admission as students to the university or any faculty, and to determine which faculty the students pursuing a course of study must register.”*

**Purpose and Goals:**

This policy is designed to provide faculties with a mechanism to impose competitive thresholds of performance in prerequisite courses used in the calculation of an admission average for *secondary school applicants to direct-entry undergraduate programs*.

**Applicability:**

This policy is applicable to all *secondary school applicants* applying to *direct-entry undergraduate programs* at the University.

**Exclusions:**

This policy does not apply to applicants who have another basis of admission.

**Definitions:**

For the purposes of this policy:

*Admission average* shall mean the *final admission average* or the *interim admission average*, as appropriate, used to determine an applicant's relative academic competitiveness for admission to the University or to a *direct-entry undergraduate program*.

*Direct-entry undergraduate program* shall mean a course of study offered by the University leading to a degree where applicants may be admitted upon either their secondary school academic performance or transfer from a comparable program at another post-secondary institution.

*Final admission average* shall mean an *admission average* that is comprised solely of final grades in *Grade 12 courses (or equivalents)*, used to make an offer of admission or to confirm an initial offer of admission based on an applicant's *interim admission average*.

*Grade 12 course (or equivalent)* shall mean a course that is a) academic in nature; and b) approved for consideration in calculating an *admission average*.  
Equivalents are determined based upon the curriculum presented by the applicant.

*Grade 12 course grade (or equivalent)* shall mean the *Grade 12 course grade* used in the calculation of an *admission average*. Equivalents are determined based upon a) the curriculum presented by the applicant; and b) the point in the admission cycle when an evaluation is being conducted.

*Interim admission average* shall mean an *admission average* that includes one or more *interim course grades* for *Grade 12 courses (or equivalents)*. The *interim admission average* is used to make an initial offer of admission to a *secondary school applicant* who is still working towards completion of their secondary school credential.

*Interim course grade* shall mean the grade issued for a course that is still in progress at the time of UBC's academic assessment, provided that such a grade is issued after at least 50% of the course material is complete and evaluated.

*Prerequisite Grade 12 course* shall mean a *Grade 12 course (or equivalent)* that is specified for inclusion in the calculation of the *admission average* for a particular *direct-entry undergraduate program*.

*Secondary school applicant* shall mean an applicant following a recognized secondary school curriculum whose graduates are eligible for consideration for entry into a *direct-entry undergraduate program* at the University. This includes applicants from secondary schools following sub-national, national, and international curricula.

**Policy:**

1. The *admission average* is normally determined by the mean grade achieved over *Grade 12 courses (or equivalents)* required for admission, calculated by the University, including *prerequisite Grade 12 courses*, to determine relative academic competitiveness. For some international curricula, the University shall consider the assessment of the applicant's entire credential as the *admission average* used to determine relative academic competitiveness.
2. In addition to considering the *admission average*, the University may also consider the grades in individual *prerequisite Grade 12 courses* as specified by the admission requirements of – and thresholds set by – the particular faculty to determine an applicant's relative academic competitiveness. Applicants with *prerequisite Grade 12 course grades* that fall below the faculty-set thresholds may not be deemed competitive for admission.
3. Conditions required to retain an offer of admission will be determined by individual faculties on a year-to-year basis and may include thresholds for the applicant's *final admission average* and/or their final grades on *prerequisite Grade 12 courses*.
4. Students admitted based upon an *interim admission average* who fail to meet the faculty-set competitive thresholds for either the *final admission average* or the final *prerequisite Grade 12 course grades* will be reviewed by the admitting faculty on a case-by-case basis and may have their offer of admission revoked.

## **Academic Calendar Statements:**

### **Okanagan URLs:**

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/okanagan/proof/edit/index.cfm?tree=2,22,63,0>

[Homepage \(draft\) Admissions Applicants Following the BC/Yukon High School Curriculum](#) Admission Requirements

## **Admission Requirements**

Academic averages for the purpose of admission to the UBC Okanagan campus are primarily based on Grade 12 final or in-progress course grades available in the spring; however, an applicant's full academic history (including grades for completed Grade 11 courses) may be considered, particularly where sufficient Grade 12 grade information is not yet available.

[...]

The admission average will be calculated on English 12 or English 12 First Peoples and the three additional UBC Okanagan campus-approved Grade 12 courses from the table below, or the equivalents. Certain programs may require a competitive minimum grade in individual prerequisite courses used in the calculation of the admission average. Should final or in-progress Grade 12 grades not be available at the time of evaluation, final Grade 11 grades may be used as appropriate.

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/okanagan/proof/edit/index.cfm?tree=2,23,70,0>

[Homepage \(draft\) Admissions Applicants Following Secondary School Curricula in Canada, Outside of BC/Yukon](#) Determining Admissibility

## **Determining Admissibility**

Academic criteria are the primary basis for determining admissibility to the UBC Okanagan campus; however, many programs consider non-academic information as well. See [youbc Okanagan](#) for further information on non-academic admission criteria.

Academic averages for the purpose of admission to the UBC Okanagan campus are primarily based on Grade 12 final or in-progress course grades available in the spring; however, an applicant's full academic history may be considered, particularly where sufficient Grade 12 grade information is not yet available. Certain programs may require a competitive minimum grade in individual prerequisite courses used in the calculation of the admission average.

[...]

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/okanagan/proof/edit/index.cfm?tree=2,327,0,0>

[Homepage \(draft\) Admissions](#) Applicants Following the American Secondary School Curriculum

## **Applicants Following the American Secondary School Curriculum**

Applicants following the American secondary school curriculum must present the following minimum criteria to be considered for admission:

- graduation from an academic or college preparation program at a US regionally-accredited school;
- English to the senior level (not ESL);
- at least three other senior academic subjects and prerequisites appropriate for the intended program of study;
- three years of mathematics to the junior level; and
- either (a) SAT I or (b) ACT plus Writing.

Certain programs may require a competitive minimum grade in individual prerequisite courses.

In countries where the SAT and ACT are unavailable, exemptions may be granted.

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/okanagan/proof/edit/index.cfm?tree=2,327,0,0>

[Homepage \(draft\) Admissions](#) Applicants Following Other International Secondary School Curricula

## **Applicants Following Other International Secondary School Curricula**

The following list outlines the minimum standing for admission in terms of educational credentials. All students must present prerequisites appropriate for their intended program of study.

[...]

Certain programs may require a competitive minimum grade in individual prerequisite courses.

Because of the differences in world educational systems, satisfactory completion of secondary school is not necessarily an acceptable basis for admission to first year. UBC reserves the right to determine whether or not a student is eligible for admission and to determine what transfer credit, if any, may be granted.

[...]

#### **Vancouver URLs:**

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/okanagan/proof/edit/index.cfm?tree=2,22,63,0>

[Homepage \(draft\) Admissions Applicants Following the BC/Yukon Secondary School Curriculum](#) Admission Requirements

## **Admission Requirements**

Academic criteria are the primary basis for determining admissibility to UBC's Vancouver campus; however, many programs consider non-academic information as well. Academic averages for the purpose of admission to UBC's Vancouver campus are primarily based on Grade 12 final or in-progress course grades available in the spring; however, an applicant's full academic history (including grades for completed Grade 11 courses) may be considered, particularly where sufficient Grade 12 information is not yet available.

[...]

The admission average will be calculated on English 12, or English 12 First Peoples, and the three additional approved Grade 12 courses. Certain programs may require a competitive minimum grade in individual prerequisite courses used in the calculation of the admission average. Should final or in-progress Grade 12 grades not be available at the time of evaluation, final Grade 11 grades may be used as appropriate.

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/proof/edit/index.cfm?tree=2,23,70,0>

[Homepage \(draft\) Admissions Applicants Following Secondary School Curricula in Canada, outside of BC/Yukon](#) Determining Admissibility

## **Determining Admissibility**

Academic criteria are the primary basis for determining admissibility to UBC; however, many programs consider non-academic information as well. See [Personal Profile](#) for further information on non-academic admission criteria.

Academic averages for the purpose of admission to UBC are primarily based on grade 12 final or in-progress course grades; however, an applicant's full academic history may be considered, particularly where sufficient Grade 12 grade information is not yet available. Certain programs may require a competitive minimum grade in individual prerequisite courses used in the calculation of the admission average.

[...]

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/proof/edit/index.cfm?tree=2,293,0,0>

[Homepage \(draft\) Admissions](#) Applicants Following American Secondary School Curriculum

## **Applicants Following American Secondary School Curriculum**

Applicants following the American secondary school curriculum must present the following minimum criteria to be considered for admission:

- graduation from an academic or college preparation program at a US regionally-accredited school;
- English to the senior level (not ESL);
- at least three other senior academic subjects and prerequisites appropriate for the intended program of study;
- three years of mathematics to the junior level;
- a minimum final grade of 70% (or equivalent) in either junior or senior year English; and
- either (a) SAT 1, or ACT, plus Writing (in countries where the SAT and ACT are unavailable, exemptions may be granted)

Certain programs may require a competitive minimum grade in individual prerequisite courses.

## **Applicants Following Other International Secondary School Curricula**

All applicants applying to UBC from a secondary school offering English-medium instruction must present a minimum final grade of 70% (or equivalent) in either junior (Grade 11) or senior year (Grade 12) English. Final grades include both the school grade and mandatory standardized examination results.

The following list outlines the minimum standing for admission in terms of educational credentials. All students must present prerequisites appropriate for their intended program of study.

[...]

Because of the differences in world educational systems, satisfactory completion of secondary school is not necessarily an acceptable basis for admission to first year. The University reserves the right to determine whether or not a student is eligible for admission and to determine what transfer credit, if any, may be granted.

Certain programs may require a competitive minimum grade in individual prerequisite courses.

## **Consultations:**

Extensive consultation was undertaken outside of UBC: over 300 secondary school counselors from secondary schools on Vancouver Island, in the Lower Mainland, and in the Okanagan; and within UBC: Enrolment Services, Undergraduate Admissions, and UBC Okanagan and Vancouver Deans.

## **History:**

Historically, the University has determined a *secondary school applicant's* a) achievement of the minimum admission requirements (as identified in the UBC calendar) and b) relative academic competitiveness (as determined by Faculty on a year-to-year basis) by calculating an *admission average*. In some cases, the University also uses individual course grades to determine admissibility, but only as it pertains to the published university minima for admission. An example would be the Vancouver campus' requirement of a final grade of 70% in either English 11 or English 12 (or equivalent); another would be the requirement of a minimum score of 67% in Pre-Calculus 12 (or equivalent) for admission to the Bachelor of Science program at either campus. But these are viewed as minimum admission requirements, not competitive requirements. In other words, an applicant with a grade of 90% in Pre-Calculus 12 cannot be considered "more competitive" for admission than another with a 75% in the same course; an assessment of relative academic competitiveness can only be made on the overall *admission average*.

Faculties have indicated that this approach does not allow the undergraduate admission process to select applicants who will be the most successful in first year. An applicant can mitigate a weak score in a key prerequisite subject (such as English 12 or Pre-Calculus 12, for example) with a strong score in an elective subject, gaining admission to UBC if their overall admission average is strong. But such a student is likely to struggle in their first year of study if their program requires 100-level coursework in English or Mathematics. Conversely, an applicant with a slightly lower admission average but stronger grades in prerequisite courses is seen as less competitive than the aforementioned student, even though they are more likely to perform better in required first-year coursework.

## **Related Policies:**

J-51: *Admission Based on Interim Grades for Applicants following Canadian Extra-Provincial Curricula*

J-52.1: *Admission for Secondary School Applicants following the BC/Yukon Curriculum*

## **Appendix:**

N/A