

THE SLOHS COUNSELING DEPT.

MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS...

1. What is the role of a counselor at SLOHS?

All students are assigned a counselor who will work with them over the course of their four years at San Luis Obispo High School. Counselors meet with students to plan courses, discuss college and career plans, support students through the college application process, refer students for support services when needed, and help students with personal & social problems. Counselors also give classroom presentations and plan events throughout the year to educate students and families on post-high school options. Counselors get to know their students very well and serve as a support person on campus when help is needed.

2. When can a student see his counselor?

The SLOHS Counseling Office is open from 7:30am to 4pm. Students can drop in to see their counselor before & after school, during passing periods & during the lunch hour. For issues that require a longer meeting, students can make an appointment to see their counselor by contacting the Counseling Secretary: Mrs. Avila (805- 596-4040 x2900), signing up in person or by email. Every student should see their counselor annually to discuss academic progress, courses for the following year & post-high school planning.

3. How do I get up-to-date Counseling Dept. information?

The Counseling Department attempts to reach as many students and parents as possible by providing information in a variety of places. Many Counseling documents, handouts, and presentations are available for download in the Counseling section of the SLOHS website...we are working to improve this each and every year. Whenever possible grade-level specific mailings will provide families with pertinent information concerning; events, deadlines, etc. All announcements are made in the school Daily Bulletin, Tiger Pause and all students & families are encouraged to read the Daily Bulletin everyday for the most up to date information.

We are also excited to announce the addition of Naviance: Family Connection for the 2015/16 school year. We hope to make all Counseling Dept info immediately available to all of our students & their families. <http://connection.naviance.com/slohs>

4. How can a student or parent schedule a counseling appointment?

Students and parents can schedule a counseling appointment by contacting our Counseling Secretary, Mrs. Avila (805-596-4040 x2900), in person, or by email. Students may also come to Counseling Office before school, during passing periods, at lunch and after school and complete a Request to See My Counselor Form.

5. *My student is struggling in one or more courses. What can I do to help?*

Grades, assignments, and attendance can be monitored online by accessing PowerSchool. This is the best way to be informed of a student's progress throughout the school year. If a student is struggling, discuss the issue directly with him/her. What does the student think is the problem? Identifying areas for improvement (homework completion or test preparation) can help tremendously to improve grades and comprehension of the course material.

If the student needs help in specific areas or cannot identify specific difficulties in the class, it is important to contact the teacher directly. We encourage students to try this on their own first, in order to build skills of self advocacy and independence. If this does not improve the situation, parents can contact teachers by email or voicemail. Teachers may be reached by email through PowerSchool or on the Staff Directory page of the school website. Teachers are the most valuable resource in helping students achieve growth and success in their subject matter. If these steps have not helped the student to be more successful, please contact the student's counselor to discuss other suggestions for options & support.

6. *What's the difference between college-prep, Honors, and AP courses?*

College-prep courses are high school level courses that meet admission requirements for college and prepare students for college level work. Honors courses are still high school level but move through material at an accelerated pace, have more homework, and require a higher level of independence and self-advocacy. AP courses are college level, requiring an even greater amount of work and commitment. All AP courses have a corresponding AP exam given in May, which enrolled students are expected to take. High scores on AP exams may allow students to enter college with college credit. We encourage all students to challenge themselves with rigorous coursework, though it is important to plan a balanced course load that allows for extracurricular activities, family time, social life, and sufficient sleep. Counselors help students decide which courses are appropriate. The CollegeBoard website <http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/Controller.jspf> is an excellent place to explore in order to gain a better understanding of the AP program.

7. *When do courses need to be repeated? What are the options?*

If a student earns an F in a course required to graduate, the course must be repeated (or a different course that fulfills the same requirement must be taken if available). A grade of D- is considered passing for graduation, but colleges generally do not accept D's for admission. Students who plan to apply to four-year colleges should repeat D&F grades in courses that will be evaluated by colleges for admission. Students can make up certain courses in summer school or through SLCUSD Adult Education. When a student earns a D or an F grade, that original grade will always remain on the transcript. However, if the student repeats the course within the district, the credits from the original low grade will be "zeroed out" on the transcript, which removes the value of the low grade from the GPA.

The grade and credits from the repeated course will then be factored into the GPA in place of the original. In some cases students can make up courses outside of the district, but the original credits will not be zeroed out. Students should see their counselor for more specific information.

8. *What do the different GPAs on the SLOHS transcript mean?*

SLOHS calculates GPA in a variety of ways, which are used for different purposes:

- **Weighted GPA(cumulative):** Includes every single credit earned by the student in grades 9-12 & is calculated using the weighted value of Honors and AP courses (ie: A=5, B=4, etc). Some colleges use this GPA in the admissions process and class rankings are based on this GPA.

- **Unweighted GPA(cumulative):** Includes every single credit earned by the student in grades 9-12 & is calculated using the standard value of all grades on a 4.0 GPA scale, regardless of Honors or AP designation.

- **Academic 9-12 GPA:** Includes all coursework in grades 9-12 except PE, athletics, T.A., and a few other nonacademic courses. This GPA is used by many colleges in the admissions process.

- **Academic 10-12:** Includes all coursework in grades 10-12 except PE, athletics, T.A., and a few other nonacademic courses. This GPA is used by UC, CSU, and other colleges in the admissions process. (UC/CSU only includes 'a-g' approved coursework.)

***Counselors also conduct classroom presentations & parent nights to help students understand how to calculate their GPAs.*

9. *What are 'a-g' approved courses and why are they important?*

Courses designated as 'a-g approved' are those that count toward fulfilling the 'a-g' subject requirements for the University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) systems. They are denoted on the SLOHS transcript with a 'p', an 'h' or an 'AP' next to the course title. All students are encouraged to attempt completion of the 'a-g' requirements in order to have as many college options as possible when they graduate. Completing this set of coursework will make students eligible to apply to most colleges and universities, including out-of-state schools.

<https://doorways.ucop.edu/list/app/home;jsessionid=600A19ADD0B82A6EDB3806F3603169A9?execution=el sl>

10. *Do 9th grade classes and grades count for college?*

Grades and coursework from 9th grade are always important for college. Many colleges factor 9th grade courses into the GPA that they use to evaluate applicants for admission and scholarships. However, even if a school does not use 9th grade in the GPA (such as UC and CSU-with the exception of our very own Cal Poly, SLO...who does consider 9th grade

grades), they will still take into account the difficulty of the curriculum and the student's performance in those courses, just as they will for grades 10-12.

11. *Can I take classes at a community college or institution other than SLOHS?*

Yes, SLOHS students in good academic standing may enroll at local community colleges. To register, students must complete an online application for the semester they wish to attend and a Permit to Enroll Form available on the college's website:

<http://www.cuesta.edu/student/getstarted/concurrent/> and bring this form along with proof of application to their counselor.

For coursework at other institutions outside of the SLOHS district, students must speak with their counselor. Students should speak with their counselor regarding all off-campus coursework to make sure that the desired course is appropriate for that student and that credits will be transferred to SLOHS. Students are responsible for sending an official transcript to SLOHS immediately upon completion of any outside coursework.

12. *What is the difference between SAT and ACT?*

The SAT and ACT are two different standardized tests used in the college admission process, typically taken in 11th and/or 12th grade. Students must take one of them for admission to most colleges, though generally colleges do not have a preference, unless specifically stated. Students may choose to take one or try both; some students find that they do better on one test than on the other, while others find that they score about the same on both. The tests differ in their "philosophical" approach, scoring system, number and type of sections, and content covered. Numerous books and test preparation courses are available to help students prepare. Visit the College & Career Center or the College Board/SAT <http://www.collegeboard.com> & ACT www.act.org websites for more information.

13. *What are SAT Subject Tests? Which colleges require them?*

The SAT Subject Tests are subject-specific standardized tests required by some colleges for admission. UCs no longer require them, though they are still generally recommended and may help students gain admission to competitive campuses or majors. CSUs do not require them. Many private colleges do require them, and out-of state university requirements vary. The Subject Tests are offered in English, math, sciences, history, and languages, and students can choose the ones on which they are likely to score well or are most closely related to their current coursework/planned college major. More information is available on the CollegeBoard website <http://www.collegeboard.org>