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South Carolina College Preparatory Course Prerequisite Policy

Effective Date: Fall 2026 (for students entering high school)

Full Implementation: Fall 2030 (for college and university freshmen)

Review Cycle: Every five years or as needed to align with state and national college readiness standards.

Statute: The South Carolina code § 59-103-45(2) directs the Commission on Higher Education to coordinate with the State Department of Education in determining minimum college entrance requirements, which underpin the College Preparatory Course Prerequisite Requirements for admission to the state's four-year public institutions.

Purpose

This policy establishes the minimum high school course prerequisites for admission to South Carolina's senior public institutions, as determined by a task force with representation from the Commission on Higher Education, the South Carolina Department of Education, the Education Oversight Committee, college English and mathematics faculty, and high school English and mathematics teachers.



Minimum recommended requirements for admission into a South Carolina senior public university (20 units)

College Preparatory Course Prerequisite Requirements

English	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies	Language	Arts	Physical Education	Advanced Electives
4 units	4 units	3 units (Laboratory)	3 units	2 units (Same foreign language)	1 unit	1 unit	2 units
English 1 English 2 English 3 English 4 AP, IB and Cambridge courses	Geometry with Statistics Algebra 1 Algebra 2 with Probability Pre-calculus Statistical Modeling Discrete Math Calculus AP, IB and Cambridge courses	Biology 1 and any course for which Biology 1 is a prerequisite Chemistry 1 and any course for which Chemistry 1 is a prerequisite Physics and any course for which Physics is a prerequisite Earth Science and any course for which Earth Science is a prerequisite AP, IB and Cambridge courses	U.S. History and Constitution Economics U.S. Government World Geography Western Civilization Psychology Sociology AP, IB and Cambridge courses	Spanish French German American Sign Language Chinese Japanese Russian Latin Greek Hebrew (Other foreign languages not listed can also count)	Art Chorus Music Dance Theater AP, IB and Cambridge courses	Physical Education JROTC	College preparatory courses in English; visual and performing arts; foreign languages; social science; humanities; computer science; mathematics; physical education; and laboratory science.

South Carolina College Preparatory Course Prerequisite Requirements
For Entering College Freshmen

Please refer to the South Carolina Department of Education website for detailed information on high school graduation requirements:

<https://ed.sc.gov/districts-schools/state-accountability/high-school-courses-and-requirements/>

FOUR UNITS OF ENGLISH: All four units must incorporate robust reading (covering both fiction and non-fiction), speaking, writing and research components. It is strongly recommended that students complete two literature-based units, such as American, British, or World Literature.

FOUR UNITS OF MATHEMATICS:

These units must include Geometry with Statistics, Algebra 1, and Algebra 2 with Probability. A fourth higher-level mathematics course should be taken before or during the senior year. A higher-level mathematics course is defined as any course that requires Algebra 2 with Probability as a prerequisite. AP Statistics does not meet this definition and will not be considered a higher-level mathematics course for the purposes of this requirement. Pre-Calculus and Calculus are strongly recommended. College-bound students should consider taking four years of algebra-based mathematics (e.g., Algebra 1, Algebra 2, Pre-Calculus, Calculus).

THREE UNITS OF LABORATORY SCIENCE:

Students must complete three units of laboratory science. Two units must be in two different fields selected from biology, chemistry, physics, or earth science. The third unit may be from any of these fields or from another laboratory science course that requires biology, chemistry, physics, or earth science as a prerequisite.

Introductory survey courses, including physical science, general science, integrated science, or similar courses, do not meet this requirement. Students planning to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics are strongly encouraged to take one course in each of the four fields: biology, chemistry, physics, and earth science.

TWO UNITS OF THE SAME WORLD LANGUAGE: This course consists of two units that place a strong emphasis on language acquisition.

THREE UNITS OF SOCIAL SCIENCE:

One unit of U.S. History, half a unit of Economics, and half a unit of Government are required. It is strongly recommended to take World History or Geography.

ONE UNIT OF ARTS: One unit in the appreciation, history, or performance of one of the visual and performing arts. This unit may be chosen from media and digital arts, design and media arts, dance, music, theater, or visual and spatial arts.

ONE UNIT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION OR JROTC: One unit of physical education must include one semester of personal fitness and one semester of lifetime fitness. Marching Band, along with Physical Education can also be used. Exemptions are granted to students enrolled in Junior ROTC or those excused due to physical disability or religious reasons.

TWO UNITS OF ELECTIVES: Two units of acceptable electives may include college preparatory courses in English, visual and performing arts, foreign languages, social sciences, humanities, computer science, mathematics, physical education, or laboratory science.

Notes and Additional Guidance

1. General Applicability:

These prerequisites establish the minimum criteria for admission to senior public institutions in South Carolina. Individual universities may establish additional admissions requirements and grant exceptions for students who do not meet all prerequisites, but only in cases where the failure to meet one or more requirements results from circumstances beyond the student's reasonable control.

2. Enhancing College Readiness:

In addition to the prerequisites, students planning to attend a four-year college are strongly encouraged to:

- Complete four years of algebra-based mathematics, including Algebra 1, Algebra 2, Pre-Calculus, and Calculus.
- Develop multimodal communication skills and to practice rhetorical analysis to support success in first-year college English courses.
- Take one high school course in all four fields of science (e.g. biology, chemistry, physics and earth science) if they are interested in pursuing careers in science, technology, engineering or mathematics.
- Enroll in rigorous courses such as Honors, Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Cambridge, and dual-enrollment classes.

3. Resources:

- a. South Carolina High School Course and Graduation Requirements:
<https://ed.sc.gov/districts-schools/state-accountability/high-school-courses-and-requirements/>
- b. College and Career Ready Mathematics standards:
<https://ed.sc.gov/instruction/standards/mathematics/standards/>
- c. College Preparation and Financial Aid:
<https://www.che.sc.gov/students-families-and-military/preparing-college>

Approved by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education: September 3, 2026