



ST. ANN'S ACADEMY

POST-SECONDARY UPDATE

Information for HS Students and Parents



GRADE 12 STUDENTS AND PARENTS: Admissions and Scholarship Deadlines are Looming

For Grade 12 students planning to go on to post-secondary studies, this is the time to be getting both your Applications for Admission as well as scholarship applications done.

Depending on the university or college that students are considering, the deadline may be even earlier than in previous years, as they respond to increasing demand from students by moving their deadlines up.

For example, UBC now has an application deadline of January 15, and the online process involved is one that requires some time. While TRU has an early deadline of March 1st for Arts, Science and Business, other programs like Nursing also have a January 15 deadline.

SCHOLARSHIPS: For information on scholarships at the major universities, as well as the many different scholarships, bursaries and awards that are open to St. Ann's students, go to the Scholarships page on the school website; you will find it under the STUDENTS link at the top. We continue to add new scholarship information to our listings for students, including a number of new opportunities that have been identified this fall.

GRADE 10 & 11 STUDENTS AND PARENTS: HS course choices impact university admissions options

Admission to first-year university in BC is not a straightforward or simple process at most institutions. For a variety of reasons, each university has different requirements, not to mention the fact that many university degree programs have additional requirements, over and above the basic admission to the university.

This is also true for admission to many two-year diploma programs at both universities and colleges across the province. In fact, these programs can be far more difficult to gain admission to than first-year university, because they require specific high school courses.

Why is it important for students and their parents to understand this, and be aware of these differences?

Depending on what course choices high school students make for their Grade 11 and 12 years, they can find themselves 'inadmissible' to first year study in many university and college programs when they discover they don't have all of the required courses.

The problem is they too often discover this at some point during their Grade 12 year, by which time it's too late, because a disturbing trend among high students today is to do as little as possible in meeting 'minimum requirements' for high school graduation.

Under the current BC graduation program, students are 'required' to complete a language arts course – normally English – to the Grade 12 level. Communications 12 also meets this requirement, but very few universities or college diploma programs will accept this course in their admission requirements.

What you might be surprised to learn is that English is the only Grade 12 level course that students are actually required to complete in order to graduate from high school. Required courses in social studies, sciences, math, and fine arts/applied arts only have to be completed to the Grade 11 level, and there is no requirement for any second language.

As a result, there is nothing that compels students to continue with courses in any of these subjects at the Grade 12 level, as the additional seven required courses are electives that can be other Grade 10 and 11 level courses and locally developed courses approved for the school.

Compare this to the admission requirements for a *Bachelor of Arts* degree program, the most common first-year choice of students today, at seven public universities in BC today, and you will get a clear picture of the barrier that this can create.

The following admissions information is straight from Viewbooks published by each university and handed out to students across the province during the fall recruitment season.

TRADITIONAL UNIVERSITIES

UBC: High school graduation, and a minimum of four [4] approved Grade 12 courses, including English 12/First Peoples 12. Admission to UBC in Vancouver also requires a 70% minimum in English 12, along with Grade 11 courses in Math, Science, Social Studies and a Language.

SFU: High school graduation, with English 12 and a minimum of three [3] other approved Grade 12 courses, as well as a minimum 60% in an academic Grade 11 Math, along with science and Language 11 courses.

UVIC: High school graduation, with English 12 and a minimum of three [3] other approved Grade 12 courses, as well as academic Math 11, and science and social studies 11.

UNBC: High school graduation, with English 12 and four [4] other approved Grade 12 courses, including one approved elective Grade 12 course that can be a locally-developed course.

[NOTE: The admissions web pages at all of these institutions clearly list which Grade 12 courses are “approved” by them for admission, and they are not be the same at each one.]

NEW COMPREHENSIVE UNIVERSITIES

UNIVERSITY OF THE FRASER VALLEY: High school graduation with English 12 [B average] and two [2] other approved Grade 12 courses.

VANCOUVER ISLAND UNIVERSITY: High school graduation with English 12 [minimum C grade].

THOMPSON RIVERS UNIVERSITY: High school graduation with English 12 [minimum B / 73%]

It becomes immediately apparent that without at least three Grade 12 courses, in addition to English 12, students are simply not admissible to any of the four 'traditional' provincial universities.

Even with the required number of Grade 12 courses, students are then subject to a calculation of their average marks in those courses, which in the competitive admissions process could still leave them out of consideration. The minimum average changes each year, but even UNBC, the most open of the four traditional universities, requires a minimum 65% average from their five required Grade 12 courses.

The three newer comprehensive universities, which have all grown from their roots as community colleges, are much more open, although UFV in the Fraser Valley region is faced with such heavy admissions demand in their own region that they too have implemented an advanced requirement of two additional Grade 12 courses.

That leaves TRU in Kamloops and VIU in Nanaimo as the best, and only real options for students who find themselves without the high school courses, and/or marks they need to enter university studies.

The basic philosophy of the "open" admissions process that sets TRU and VIU apart is that students who sincerely want to go on to university, can do so. As part of that opportunity, they can also upgrade skills in subjects like math and sciences, if needed, in order to achieve their ultimate educational and career objectives.

This is in contrast to the traditional universities, and now at least one of the new universities, whose requirements are based in large part on the fact that they face demand for access that is far greater than the space they have available.

Add to this the desire of the larger, traditional universities to attract the 'best and brightest' high school graduates each year from across Canada, not just in this province, and you come to understand that graduating students in BC are not just competing with each other, they are also up against other top students from across the country.

The bottom line, as unrealistic as it might be for students in Grade 10, is that the course choices they make for their Grade 11 and 12 years, and the level of success they achieve in those courses, will open or close the door to many options in post-secondary.

Students choosing the path of least resistance to meeting high school graduation requirements will eventually discover they have far fewer options, and will need to upgrade one or more high school subjects.

If you are a student living in Kamloops, the good news is that the door to university is still open, because this institution allows students to upgrade, and as it's in your own backyard, it makes it not only possible but also much more affordable to go to university.

Ultimately, success in post-secondary study is about finding "the right program, in the right place, for the right reasons" and that, more than anything, is the challenge that Grade 10 students and their parents must face when they are thinking about the options they will have to choose from after high school.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE - JANUARY 2017: Seven financial mistakes to avoid at university.

POST-SECONDARY ADVISING SUPPORT

Students and parents in high school at St. Ann's are invited and encouraged to take advantage of the post-secondary advising support available to them. Josh Keller, formerly of TRU, brings 28 years of post-secondary experience to us, and is available on Tuesdays each week, any time between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm. To make an appointment just contact the front office.