



UNIVERSITY LABORATORY HIGH SCHOOL



ADMISSIONS - FAQs

▶ How can I get more information about Uni High admissions?

There are several ways to find out more about Uni High admissions. This document is intended to provide basic information. The Uni website, www.uni.uiuc.edu, has information under the “Prospective Students” link. If you would like to speak to someone directly, we encourage you to contact Sue Kovacs, Assistant Principal and Director of Admissions. Ms. Kovacs oversees the admissions process and will be able to answer all of your questions. You can contact Ms. Kovacs by calling the school number, (217) 333-2870, or by e-mail at skovacs@uni.uiuc.edu.

▶ What is considered a complete application?

Only complete application packets, received prior to the appropriate deadline, are reviewed and considered for admission to Uni. A complete packet includes the following:

- Application
- SSAT scores from one date; if you take multiple tests please leave a note with the application as to the month and year test to use. No one sees the other tests.
- Transcripts and school records sent by the student’s school.
- Teacher Recommendations (2); one from the previous year and one from the current year or two from the current year. *Recommendations must be from academic teachers: social studies, English, mathematics, foreign language (meets daily) or science.*

▶ What information is included on the application?

On the application, the student provides some basic information (gender, grade, age, etc.), lists recent primary activities, and answers a few essay questions. This information helps to provide a more complete picture of the student. Racial/Ethnic designation is optional on the application form. If this is not identified, the committee will not be able to determine race/ethnicity.

▶ What is the SSAT and when do the SSAT tests take place?

- The SSAT provides a common tool for comparing one student’s level of achievement against another and is a test used by many independent or private junior high and high schools throughout the country.
- Dates and locations are set by SSAT. Subfreshman applicants may take the SSAT test on any of the following dates: October 11, 2008, November 8, 2008, December 13, 2008, January 10, 2009, February 7, 2009. High school applicants (grades 9-12) may take the upper level SSAT test on any of the previously listed dates and March 7, 2009 and April 18, 2009.
 - There are 5 locations in Illinois. Uni High is one of these. Barb Gerdes, SSAT Site Administrator, administers the tests at Hilton Garden Inn.
 - There is a test in June but it is after the May deadline for high school admission consideration. **DO NOT sign up for the June test! It will NOT be accepted.**
 - Deadline for test registration is 3 weeks before the test date. An additional fee is assessed for late registration.

- There is a \$105 fee to take the SSAT. SSAT awards fee waivers to individuals who need one; please see Barb Gerdes, SSAT Site Administrator, for more information. Waivers are good only for the tests given at Uni. Fees for late test registration may NOT be waived.
- An applicant may take the SSAT as many times as they desire. The last test score reported to Uni will be used for review unless a written request directs otherwise. Multiple test attempts are noted on the test report.
- Subfreshman applicants take a lower level test; high school applicants must take the upper level SSAT.

▶ **Are there special accommodations available to take the SSAT?**

There are special accommodations available for students taking the SSAT. The SSAT Student Registration Guide provides instructions on how to request those accommodations. This information is also available on the SSAT website: www.ssat.org. If you have any questions, you are welcome to contact Barb Gerdes, SSAT Site Administrator, for more information at (217)333-2870.

▶ **What SSAT score is needed to be admitted to Uni?**

There is no set standard or minimum score that must be achieved on the SSAT to be considered for admittance to Uni. The SSAT score is just one component of the entire application package that is reviewed.

▶ **Why are transcripts sent from my old school?**

Each applicant is responsible for having their previous year's grades and current fall semester's grades sent to Uni. The records sent from the school give the Admissions Committee a picture of the academics of the applicant as well as attendance and tardies. These are all factors which will contribute information about the applicant. Once the transcript form is signed by the parent or guardian and given to the school, the school will send all materials on file. This could include records of discipline, absences and tardies, awards, ISAT scores, other test scores, etc.

▶ **What are teacher recommendations and why are they important?**

Two teacher recommendations are required for each applicant. The teacher rates the student on 15 characteristics and answers a few short questions regarding the student's strengths, weaknesses and character. The teacher then has the opportunity to: highly recommend, recommend, recommend with reservation, or not recommend the student to Uni High. This information usually has a significant impact on the committee's assessment of the student. The applicant should select a teacher that he/she feels will provide a strong recommendation.

Teacher recommendations are important because they give a picture of the applicant in the academic setting. The applicant should make sure to ask a teacher who teaches in the academic areas (social studies, English, mathematics, foreign language (meets daily) or science). Each applicant should ask the teacher if he/she is willing to give a strong recommendation. The applicant can waive or not waive his/her right to see the recommendation. If the applicant waives the right, the recommendation tends to be more candid and open. If the applicant does not waive the right, the teacher may not be as forthcoming.

▶ **How are the applications processed?**

Uni High receives the required information and builds a file for each applicant. We notify the applicant (if we have contact information) if components of the application package are missing. *Again, only application packets that include all required information will be reviewed by the Admissions Committee. Please do not include anything extra, it will not be considered.*

After the application deadline, the application, SSAT scores, transcripts, and teacher recommendations are copied. All identifying information is obscured, and a second copy is made from these altered sheets. The file is assigned a number and is then available to the Admissions Committee for review. This is called a “blind” admissions process.

▶ **What is the subfreshman evaluation process of the Admissions Committee?**

After the subfreshman application deadline, each Committee member reads and takes individual notes on every application. The members of the Committee are not only looking for students who are academic achievers, but those who also consistently demonstrate a high degree of task commitment and/or motivation, giftedness, creativity, and leadership. Uni seeks to increase the number of qualified students from minority groups who are traditionally underrepresented in programs for the academically talented and gifted.

By late March, each Committee member has reviewed and evaluated every application file for the subfreshman level. A time is set to meet for one full day to discuss each application and determine which candidates will be recommended for admission.

▶ **What happens at the time when subfreshman admission offers are made?**

The Admissions Committee recommends approximately sixty students for regular admission. The Admissions Committee will develop three lists: students offered admission, students declined admission, and students placed on a waitlist.

Throughout the entire process an effort is made to equally balance the number of boys and girls. For the subfreshman class, this means 30 girls and 30 boys. In cases where all else appears equal, students in seventh grade may be given priority over those in sixth grade. The sixth grade applicants have the opportunity to re-apply the following year.

The Committee Chair takes notes throughout the entire process. These lists and notes will be passed on to the Director for final determination. The Director finalizes the list and, by mid April, letters are mailed to the applicants. The letters will indicate whether the student is offered admission, declined admission, or placed on a waitlist.

Student acceptance decisions must be returned to Uni by early May.

The Committee and Director’s decisions are final and there is no appeal process.

▶ **What is the high school admissions process?**

In early May, a deadline is established for students entering grades 9-12 to submit applications for admission. Applications for admission to grades 9-12 are considered only on a space-available basis. Students who qualify for admission when there are no spaces available will be placed on a waitlist to be contacted only if a space becomes available in the appropriate class.

Each Admissions Committee member reads all the high school application files and, in late April, another meeting is held. A waitlist is generated with students in rank-order for each class. At the high school level, the acceptance is by rank-order, not gender.

These high school recommendations are then passed on to the Director. Final decisions are made and letters are mailed to the applicants. Student acceptance decisions must be returned to Uni High by early June.

The Committee and Director’s decisions are final, and there is no appeal process.

▶ **What happens to those students who remain on the waitlist?**

Over the summer break, if a space becomes available, a student on the waitlist will be offered a spot.

No additional communication is sent out over the course of the summer, other than offers of admission. The probability of being offered admission ends after the first week of school has passed. Students not admitted from the waitlist by the 5th day of school should understand that they will not be admitted. All waitlisted students and students not offered admission are invited to reapply the following year.

University Laboratory High School is a rigorous academic five year high school. If a student accepts an offer to attend Uni High, it is important to remember that this is a five year commitment to a very challenging academic program.

▶ **What kind of special education services and accommodations are available at Uni?**

Uni has a dedicated special needs coordinator who works with parents and students to design an individualized plan for students who qualify for special education services or special accommodations. Uni follows the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 rules of the American with Disabilities Act as required by the federal government. Any student admitted to Uni who currently has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan will work with the special needs coordinator in the Student Services Office to review and adjust the plan for their continued educational success at Uni.

▶ **What is the MPAG and what is its role at Uni?**

The Multi-cultural Parent Advisory Group (MPAG) was created in 2006, and consists of parents of current Uni students and Uni staff. The role of the group is to increase awareness of cultural and equity issues in education. Parent liaisons from MPAG invite you to contact them with questions about life at Uni and for support with the admissions process. These Uni parents sincerely welcome your call and want to provide whatever support and help you need in considering Uni as an option for your child. If you would like to be contacted by an MPAG "parent liaison", please call Sam Smith, Outreach Coordinator, at (217) 333-2870 or e-mail Mr. Smith at smsmith3@illinois.edu.

Please keep in mind that you should contact Ms. Kovacs if you have specific admissions questions or questions the "parent liaison" is unable to answer. Ms. Kovacs is the Director of Admissions and can field any questions about the admissions process.