

## College Spotlight: University of Portland

Before I talk about UP, I want to give a brief COVID-19 update about standardized testing. Both the SAT and ACT have had to make major adjustments to their testing schedules as a result of the Pandemic. As a result, many schools are going to “test optional” admissions for the 2021-22 school year. It is important to note that “test optional” does not necessarily mean the same things at all schools, and if you are attempting to gain admission to some of the more selective colleges, you will still want to make your best effort to study for and take one of the exams at your first possible opportunity. While a school may not REQUIRE tests for admission, it may still review them if submitted, and require them for scholarship consideration. Make sure you are paying attention to the requirements of each school where you choose to apply, and the updated schedules for testing.

Now, on to the University of Portland! UP, as it is familiarly known, is located on a bluff on the outskirts of Portland, Oregon. It overlooks the Willamette River, and onto downtown Portland. It is a quick bus ride into the downtown area, and about 20 minutes to the Portland International Airport where one can hop on a non-stop flight to Maui most days of the week (in non-Pandemic times). UP has just under 4000 undergraduate students across a fairly wide range of majors, with particularly strong programs in their Nursing and Engineering schools. UP is a beautiful campus that has a very “east coast” feel to it, with mostly brick buildings centered around a main quad area that has a mix of both old and new structures. UP is a Catholic school, however, it does not require church attendance or courses in Catholicism. Like most Catholic schools, courses in religious education (any religion) are required as part of the core curriculum.

UP offers 40 different majors across 5 different schools. When applying, one applies to the school of choice. Changing schools after admittance requires academic approval, and certain requirements may need to be met, but overall, it is not a difficult process. The Nursing school is more selective than some other programs, and may require additional standards be met as it is a 4-year program.

One of the more unique programs that UP offers is an intensive study abroad program for one year in Salzburg, Austria. UP owns their own facility there, and it houses and educates 32 lucky sophomores each year. Since the program is offered to sophomores, they spend the year working on their core requirements, and have the opportunity to study and learn German from the locals. Students interested in this should know that the application process begins shortly after arrival as Freshmen, so look into it early.

The UP Pilots are part of the WCC, a Division One conference of the NCAA. They currently field 6 men’s teams and 8 women’s teams (including Beach Volleyball!). Women’s soccer has been particularly powerful over the years, with famous alum’s Megan Rapinoe, Sophie Schmidt, and Christine Sinclair all participating in both the 2012 and 2016 Olympics. The current head coach of the Miami Heat, Erik Spoelstra, is also an alum and former player.

Admissions to UP is considered “somewhat selective” with 61% of applicants admitted. This can be a little bit misleading though, since 96% of applicants are in the top half of their graduating classes. With most having over a 3.25 GPA. What is great for Hawaii applicants to know is that the year I visited, of the 1100 students in the freshman class, 100 of them were from Hawaii! The school has an official “Aloha Club” for those students lucky enough to come from our islands.

Give UP a “virtual” look, it will be worth your time. And make sure to get started on your college essays now; this will be your biggest chance to tell the schools where you want to apply all about you and what makes you special!

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