**ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT FAQs**

* ***Q: Is The Winter Sports School a private, public, or charter school? What does that mean?***
	+ **A:**  **Charter School.**  WSS operated as a public charter school for the first time in 2014. The Winter Sports School first opened its doors in 1994 and operated for 20 years as a private school. As a Utah public charter school, we can admit students residing in any town in Utah, and we do not charge tuition. It also allows us extra flexibility when it comes to programming and school operations.
* ***Q: Is the Winter Sports School accredited?***
	+ **A:**  **Yes.**  We are fully accredited by COGNIA (formerly AdvancED).
* ***Q: How would you describe a mission-appropriate student for The Winter Sports School?***
	+ **A:** We are an ideal college preparatory option for dedicated winter athletes. There are tradeoffs students and families make selecting a narrow niche school such as WSS, including going to school all summer and tackling a rigorous academic program of study at an accelerated pace in a condensed calendar. Mission-appropriate students for our program should therefore have a passion and demonstrate a high-level of commitment for both their academic and athletic ambitions, and they should be ready to learn to do hard things in and out of the classroom.
* ***Q: Does my student already need to be a national or international champion in their sport in order to attend The Winter Sports School?***
	+ **A: No.** We want our students to show passion and drive, and a constant desire to learn and improve. Coming to us as a ready-made athletic champion is not the requirement. We give each student the time during the winter to improve and to achieve their athletic goals, and the requirement is that our students take full advantage of the opportunity.
* ***Q: Do you have coaches in each of the winter athletic disciplines?***
	+ **A**: We have no coaches at all. WSS is strictly an academic institution, and we are out of session during the winter months. Our students are therefore completely free to choose whichever coach or team will be the best fit for them, anywhere in the world. It also means that we are able to educate all students, practicing any winter sports discipline, as opposed to only a subset. At WSS, skiers and snowboarders rub shoulders with figure skaters and speed skaters, luge and skeleton athletes, and others who often cannot attend institutions which package academics with athletics.
* ***Q: What is The Winter Sports School’s academic calendar?***
	+ **A:** We run our classes from April through November each year to give our students time during the winter months to focus on athletic training and competition. We also take short breaks and vacations from school throughout our academic year. The upshot is that we complete a full college preparatory curriculum in approximately 7 months, as opposed to the 9 to 10 month calendar utilized at most secondary schools. Our compressed calendar is intense, but the benefits are significant for students who have made the necessary commitment to their academics and athletics. Our detailed calendar is posted online at: <http://www.wintersportsschool.org/academics/>
* ***Q: What is the nature of The Winter Sports School curriculum?***
	+ A7: We offer a college preparatory program that meets all Utah State Board of Education requirements for high school graduation. Credits issued by The Winter Sports School fall into one of the following departments: English, Mathematics, Social Studies, Physical Science, Language, Art, Career and Technical Education (CTE), General Financial Literacy, and Physical Education.
* ***Q: Do you offer electives?***
	+ **A:** Yes, but few. We stick to the “meat and potatoes” of a college preparatory curriculum due to the compressed nature of our calendar. Students do have some choice with respect to Art course selection, CTE course selection, and advanced Language and Math course selection.
* ***Q: What is the typical 4-year academic program for your students?***
	+ **A:** The following chart shows the regularly available courses in each grade. Required courses are in black font, and electives are in green font. Art and CTE courses are electives to the extent that students will have the opportunity to choose between the two, although one of the two must be taken at the appropriate point in each year’s course load.

|  | **9th Grade** | **10th Grade** | **11th Grade** | **12th Grade** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **English** | English 9 | English 10 | English 11 | English 12 |
| **Math** | Math 1 or Accelerated Math ½ (1) | Math 2 or Honors Math 3 (1) | Math 3 or Calculus (1) |  Pre-Calculus, Calculus, or Calculus 2 (1) |
| **Physical Science** | Biology | Environmental Earth Science | Chemistry | Physics |
| **Language** | Spanish 1 | Spanish 2 | Choose between Spanish 3 or Journalism (.5) & Anthropology (.5) | Choose between Spanish 4 or Journalism (.5) and Anthropology (.5) |
| **Social Studies** | Geography (..5) | World History (.5) | U.S. History (1) | U.S. Government & Citizenship (.5)  |
| **Financial Literacy** |  |  |  | General Financial Literacy (.5) |
| **Art** | General Art (.5) | Painting (.5) | Course offerings vary each year | Course offerings vary each year |
| **CTE** | Comprehensive Guidance (.5) & Digital Business Apps (.5) | Course offerings vary each year | Course offerings vary each year | Course offerings vary each year |
| **PE** | Varies by student | Varies by student | Varies by student | Varies by student |

* ***Q: Is it possible for my student to take Math 2 as a freshman, Math 3 as a sophomore, etc.?***
	+ **A:** Based on previous coursework completed, and Pre-Act assessment administered in April of 9th grade, qualifying students will be invited to enroll in our advanced math pathway that begins with an accelerated Math 1 and Math 2 combined course and allows those ambitious and capable students to study two years of Calculus by graduation. For the vast majority of students, however, the traditional pathway of Math 1, Mah 2, Math 3, and Precalculus or Calculus provides the right level of challenge and support to prepare for college Math study.
* ***Q: I’m not familiar with the Math Common Core. What gets covered in the various Math courses?***
	+ **A:**  Math 1 covers a combination of topics from Algebra 1 & Geometry, with some statistical concepts. Math 2 is a continuation of Geometry and an introduction to Algebra 2, with a bit more statistics. Math 3 is a continuation of Algebra 2, statistics, and an introduction to Trigonometry. In fact, the “Common Core” doesn’t mandate that each secondary school teach the exact same Math concepts, so, The Winter Sports School has structured its Math curriculum such that those courses cover all areas included in national standardized tests such as the SAT and ACT, as well as the subject areas required to be prepared for Calculus studies as a senior. Pre-Calculus is a deeper dive into Trigonometry with an introduction to Calculus. Our Calculus course covers the topics covered in Calculus AB courses at other secondary schools, while the Calculus 2 course covers the equivalent of Calculus BC.
* ***Q: My student is advanced in Spanish. Do we have to stick to the program map above?***
	+ **A:**  It is our policy that Winter Sports School 9th graders take Spanish 1, since our experience shows that middle-school instruction in Spanish 1, 2, etc. is not the equivalent of a rigorous high school Spanish 1, 2, 3, 4 program. Our Spanish curriculum becomes highly immersive after the introductory topics are completed, which is a wonderful way to develop fluency but can be terrifying for students who are unprepared. Students coming into The Winter Sports School as a 10th, 11th, or 12th grader may test into a higher level of Spanish than prescribed should their schedule allow it; Spanish level promotion is at the sole discretion of our Language Department.
	+ **Students who have completed a dual immersion program in Spanish through 8th grade are strongly encouraged to continue Spanish study at WSS in our Spanish 1-4 progression at the honors level**, as DLI study emphasizes fluency and many students still have much to learn and refine in the areas of grammar, reading, and writing in the target language. For those coming directly from a middle school DLI program may still elect to take an alternate foreign language online with our support. The potential issue is that NCAA athletic eligibility can sometimes be jeopardized by taking high school credits online, so the student and The Winter Sports School will have to evaluate such instances on a case-by-case basis. This potential issue exists only for students who intend to compete at the Division I level in collegiate sports regulated by the NCAA, which are currently Alpine Skiing and Nordic Skiing.

	**Please be advised** that many 4-year colleges and universities will require at least two years of secondary school credit in the same foreign language (that is, French 1 and 2 will be fine, but French 1 and German 1 will not) in order to consider an applicant for admission. As such, we advocate for all students to take at least two years of Spanish study at WSS, regardless of previous Foreign Language study in Spanish or other World Languages.
* ***Q: My student isn’t ready for the prescribed level of Spanish for their grade. Can they step down to a more appropriate level?***
	+ **A:** It is possible, if deemed necessary after an assessment by our Language Department, assessment of previous coursework, and if and only if the schedule allows it. Alternatively, we may offer the option to pursue the right-level Spanish course online.
* ***Q: My student has been studying a Language other than Spanish and would like to continue. Can that be accommodated?***
	+ **A:** Due to the small size of our school, we do not offer any instructor-led courses in foreign languages other than Spanish, but online courses in other languages can be taken. The potential issue is that NCAA athletic eligibility can sometimes be jeopardized by taking high school credits online, so the student and The Winter Sports School will have to evaluate such instances on a case-by-case basis. This potential issue exists only for students who intend to compete at the Division I level in collegiate sports regulated by the NCAA, which are currently Alpine Skiing and Nordic Skiing.

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* ***Q: In what subjects can a student complete honors level work?***
	+ **A:** English, Math, Science, Spanish, and Social Studies. Honors work in all core academic areas is especially rigorous; we encourage students to challenge themselves to take honors-level courses when appropriate, but don’t often recommend that students attempt honors level work in more than three classes simultaneously except in rare cases.
* ***Q: What Art courses do you offer?***
	+ **A:** It varies year to year. Recent Art course offerings have included General Art, Painting, and Printmaking, & Commercial Art.
* ***Q: What CTE courses do you offer?***
	+ **A:** It varies year to year. Recent CTE course offerings have included Digital Business Applications, Anatomy & Physiology, Business Communications, & Commercial Art.
* ***Q: How are PE credits issued?***
	+ **A:** As athletes, our students are in training through most of the summer months to ensure that they’re well prepared for the winter competitive season. As long as an authorized coach signs off on a student’s completion of sufficient athletic training and competition hours within an organized sport club affiliated with a national or international governing body of sport, The Winter Sports School will issue a PE credit in the student’s specific athletic discipline on a pass/fail basis.
* ***Q: Do you offer any AP classes?***
	+ **A:** We do not, simply because AP exams are administered in the spring, just as we are starting our academic year, which would create an untenable situation for our students. Our honors-level course options are fully recognized by colleges and universities, and *our students therefore suffer no negative impacts* with respect to college admissions. An added benefit is that our teachers are able to spend more time with our students developing problem solving skills, critical thinking, and analytical abilities.
* ***Q: I’m interested in other specialized classes, such as Computer Programming, Psychology, Statistics, etc. Will such classes be offered?***
	+ **A:**  We have no plans at this time to offer classes other than those listed above. We are a small school, and those are the courses that have proven necessary for college readiness and to suit the unique needs of our target demographic. As the school grows, we may consider new options, but we will always prioritize the course selection necessary to fulfill our mission and vision. Utah resident students may well be able to pursue additional elective courses though the State Online Education Program offered at no cost to UT students.
* ***Q: Is preparation for standardized tests such as the ACT part of your curriculum?***
	+ **A: Yes.** And because national standardized tests are administered at several points throughout the year, our students are able to benefit fully from that preparation despite our unorthodox annual schedule.
* ***Q: What are your academic graduation requirements?***
	+ **A:**  In order to graduate from The Winter Sports School in Park City, a student must:
		1. Complete a minimum of 24 credits in four years, including a minimum of:
			- 4 credits in English
			- 3 credits in Math
			- 3 credits in Science
			- 3 credits in Social Studies, including :
				* 0.5 credits in Geography
				* 0.5 credits in World Civilizations
				* 1 credit in U.S. History
				* 0.5 credits in U.S. Government & Citizenship
			- 0.5 credits in Financial Literacy
			- 2 credits in Physical Education, including 0.5 credits in Health Education
			- 1.5 credits in Career and Technical Education (CTE), including 0.5 credits in a Digital Studies area.
			- 1.5 credits in Fine Arts
			- 6 electives from the above categories and (or) in Foreign Language
1. Achieve a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0
2. Complete a minimum of 1,000 hours of training and competition in an athletic activity or activities which fall under the jurisdiction of a National Governing Body or International Governing Body, with said hours verified by a coach or athletic director serving with an organization which offers need-based grants to offset the costs of athletic development. We strongly recommend averaging a minimum of 250 annual hours each year instead of attempting to fulfill the 1,000 hour requirement in a shorter amount of time. Hours earned and properly verified from 9th grade onward, but prior to matriculation at The Winter Sports School, will count towards the required total.
3. Complete a minimum of 40 hours of community service, verified by an executive director or other authority at a non-profit or charitable organization. We strongly recommend averaging a minimum of 10 annual hours between the 9th and 12th grades instead of attempting to fulfill the 40 hour requirement during fewer years. Hours earned and properly verified from 9th grade onward, but prior to matriculation at The Winter Sports School, will count towards the required total.
* ***Q: Your academic year starts in April, but my student’s current academic year won’t end until June. How should we transition into your program?***
	+ **A:**  It depends on the student. We recommend that all students finish at least the first half of their prior academic year before joining our program, regardless of grade level. The logical breakpoint between “halves” of the year varies from district to district – for some it falls in December, for others in January – but the goal is to complete a minimum of 0.5 credits in each course at the student’s prior school. As of that point, a student may withdraw from their prior school if they and their parents or guardians believe the student to be ready for their studies at the next incremental grade level. This option allows students to gain time during the winter to focus on athletics as quickly as possible, and it gives the student an extended break from academics before starting our compressed (and intense) academic program the following April. Other students may opt to stay involved with their prior school for a longer time period, which may increase their readiness for the next grade but force them to juggle their academic and athletic responsibilities for another season, and will not allow for an extended break from academics before starting our program. A student choosing this option would essentially go from late August of year 1 all the way to November of year 2 without much of a break from school. That’s a long haul for anyone.

For some students and families, completing the current academic year and their current school may be the best option and, therefore, they may join their peer cohort at WSS in July after the Spring Semester at WSS is completed, but before the Summer and Fall semester core courses at WSS begin. In such cases, those transfer students may be required to fill in missing required credits they would have earned in that Spring Semester during the winter months in an online setting if we are unable to offer them a face-to-face course that meets that requirement in their remaining years of enrollment at WSS.

* ***Q: If a student leaves their prior school at the halfway point or any time prior to completion of their prior year before joining you in April, how do they make up their missed partial credits?***
	+ **A:**  Again, it depends. Former 8th graders entering our 9th grade don’t need to make up credits just for the sake of completeness, because 8th grade credits will not be evaluated by colleges or universities for admissions purposes. An incoming 9th grader’s sole concern is whether they are prepared for 9th grade level work.

For students coming into higher grades, certain partial credits will need to be made up, but not all. Students have the opportunity to earn 7 credits each year with us – for a total of 28 in four years – while only 24 are required for graduation. Students will need 4 full credits of English to graduate from our program, but students needing to make up a partial credit of English may do so by opting into other English elective courses including Business Communications, Journalism & Film & Literature, which may be counted as a core English credit. Independent studies and online course options may exist for some students as well. Non-English credits may or may not need to be made up, depending on NCAA eligibility considerations, potential college choices, etc. And, once again, there are a number of ways in which such credits may be earned. So, there may be individual considerations for each student, but The Winter Sports School has a long track record of handling these situations, and solutions are available that we determine on a case-by-case basis in partnership with each student and family.

* ***Q: If my student ends their prior year of school at the halfway point, how do I ensure my student’s preparedness for subjects in which concepts cumulatively build upon each other, as they do in Math?***
	+ **A:** Math and Spanish are the key subjects in which this issue needs to be considered, and our courses in those subjects begin with review units to ensure student success. Students are also enrolled in a Math Lab preparation course during our Advisory Homeroom Period on T/TH each Spring Semester before starting their next-level Math courses in July.
* ***Q: How about results? What is The Winter Sports School’s college placement record?***
	+ **A:** Our students have earned admission into a wide variety of post-secondary institutions, often standing out among the pool of applicants in part because of their unique high-school experience and commitment to extra-curricular activities such as their sports. Recent graduates in the past five years have gained admission to such institutions as Stanford, Williams, Dartmouth, Middlebury, Colby, Bard, Babson, Brandeis, Bates, Skidmore, Hartwick, Seton Hall, UCLA, Cal Poly, Colorado School of Mines, NYU, UC Berkeley, The University of Utah Honors College, and the list goes on. Even more importantly, the feedback we receive from these institutions indicates that our graduates don’t merely get admitted, but arrive exceptionally well prepared for their college studies.
* ***Q: Does freeing up the students’ winter months really make a difference?***
	+ **A:** The difference is huge. As a small school, we have a base of only ~500 alumni spanning our entire history. That small group has combined to win over 200 World Cup podiums, 70+ World Cup Titles, 10+ Overall World Cup Titles, 25+ World Championship Medals, 15 Olympic Medals, 10+ X-Games Medals. Those results are unparalleled by any other secondary school in the United States. And on a per capita basis, they’re staggering.
* ***Q: As a Utah State Charter School, are you part of the Park City School District?***
	+ **A:** No. We report directly to the Utah State Office of Education. We enjoy a very friendly and cooperative relationship with the Park City School District, but we are not a district school. Those of our students that live within the district bounds are eligible to participate in extra-curricular activities including PCHS sports teams.
* ***Q: As a Utah State Charter School, does The Winter Sports School receive funds from the Park City or Summit County property tax base, or from the Park City Education Foundation?***
	+ **A**: As a State Charter School, we are not a taxing authority, so we do not receive funds directly from Park City or Summit County property taxes. We do not receive any funds from the Park City Education Foundation.
* ***Q: Does your transition to Charter status mean that non-Utah Resident students are no longer able to attend The Winter Sports School?***
	+ **A:** It does not. Non-Utah Resident students are still welcome to apply and attend on a tuition-paying basis.
* ***Q: What will tuition be for non-Utah Resident students?***
	+ **A:**  Non-Utah Resident Tuition & Fees are predicted to be $17,850 in 2023
* ***Q: Do you have boarding facilities for non-Utah Resident Students?***
	+ **A:** The Winter Sports School does not have a boarding facility. Non-Utah Resident students are responsible for securing their own living arrangements and can often arrange homestays with other student-athlete families through their sport clubs.
* ***Q: How do I apply to The Winter Sports School as a Utah Resident student?***
	+ **A:** During our open enrollment sessions which begin in mid-August each year and end in April, applicants should visit <http://www.wintersportsschool.org/admissions/> and fill out the online form in full. Your submission must be entered during an open enrollment period to be considered or kept. After your properly-timed submission is received, you will be issued a unique ID number. Shortly after the conclusion of the enrollment period in which your application is received (within a few business days), the admissions results for that enrollment period will be posted to the same web page. A result will be posted next to your student’s number, whether admitted or waitlisted. If admitted, you will receive enrollment instructions via email.
* ***Q: How do I apply to The Winter Sports School as a non-Utah Resident student?***
	+ **A:**  Please visit <http://www.wintersportsschool.org/admissions/> and click on the link to the Non-Utah Resident Application. WSS will contact you to confirm that your application has been received. Non-Utah Resident student admissions are done on a rolling basis until all available spots are gone. Applicants will be notified of their status as quickly as possible.
* ***Q: As a Utah State Charter School with an open admissions process for Utah residents, how do you ensure a mission-appropriate student body?***
	+ **A:** While our in-state admissions process is open in compliance with federal and state law, our graduation requirements are strictly enforced to ensure that our students represent mission-appropriate goals, ambitions, and behavior. Our admissions team has extensive discussions with those offered enrollment to ensure all are well aware of our graduation requirement expectations and to determine whether we are a good fit for their students. Our graduation requirements are detailed above.
* ***Q: As a Utah State Charter School, do you have to administer Utah standardized tests? Aren’t those administered in the spring at the beginning of your academic year?***
	+ **A:** We do indeed have to administer Utah standardized tests as a State Charter School, but the Utah State Office of Education has granted us permission to do so in the fall, at the appropriate point in our curriculum. Our students are not negatively impacted in any way. The test for the current school year is the ACT for 11th grade and the Utah Aspire Plus for Grades 9&10.
* ***Q: Will you be able to accommodate student absences for training camps and other athletic activities during your school year?***
	+ **A: Yes,** for students in good academic standing. We have protocols in place for pre-arranged absences for mission-appropriate activities. Absences for activities which have nothing to do with our mission (such as family vacations, etc.) are discouraged, but remain the prerogative of the family and place an additional burden on students missing instruction during a condensed school year. Students must earn a 93% attendance record in a grading period to earn credit for a course. Those who do not must make up in-school time and complete all major work of the course to earn credit. Excess unexcused absences may result in failed classes, suspension, or expulsion. We have several breaks scheduled throughout the school year to allow for family vacations. Our detailed calendar is posted online at [www.wintersportsschool.org/academics](http://www.wintersportsschool.org/academics),
* ***Q: What are the school’s daily hours?***
	+ **A:**  Classes are held from 8am to 2:56pm. The office is open from 7:45am to 3:30pm.