

What are AP courses? Why are they so important?

Advanced Placement (AP) courses can save you time and money. They can also give you an edge in the applicant pools of highly selective colleges and universities.

The national AP program is administered by The College Board. Participating high schools have been approved to teach AP courses based on the academic quality of their college-preparatory or, as it is commonly known today, honors curricula. Some high schools offer only a few APs; others can offer a dozen or more.

AP courses are college-level courses, taught with college textbooks and exams, that can give you college credit in the form of advanced standing when you enter your freshman year. There is an end-of-course AP final on which you have to score a 3, 4, or 5 (depending on the college to which you are applying) in order to get college credit. Some colleges will recognize a grade of 3 as qualifying for credit. Most, though, require a 4 or 5.

AP college credit is a good buy. At this writing, an AP course can be taken for the price of registering for the final exam, which is less than \$100. You'll find that price hard to beat when looking for a deal on college credit.

Another aspect provided by AP courses is a preview of college-level work. If you have any doubts about doing well in college, an AP course can confirm them or put your mind at ease. They're a lot of work and require much reading, writing, problem sets, and—for the science courses—lab time. They'll give you a real feeling of accomplishment, though, when you're done.

If you're taking AP courses specifically to reduce the amount of credits you'll have to take once in college, or to have specific classes "waived" during your freshman year, be aware that every college treats these classes differently. Taking AP English does not necessarily get you out of taking English 101 at a particular school. Not every college will promise an exact equivalency between the AP course you take and a specific class necessary to graduate—or even an elective, for that matter.

Two things to remember:

First, at most colleges the faculty (not the admissions office) decide how an AP course is treated in light of all credits needed to graduate. Ask the college department that seems the most likely to review the AP course (History, Math, etc.). Second, most colleges now have a common first-year experience, many with a predetermined set of core courses all freshmen must take. English 101 may not even exist anymore! How will your AP credits be recognized within the common curriculum? Call and find out before you assume that your credits will transfer over "one-for-one." A reasonable schedule might be to take one AP in the sophomore year, two in the junior year, and two or three in the senior year. Most students aspiring to the very best colleges and universities graduate with five or more AP courses on their transcripts. Remember, to college admissions people, a B in an AP course is worth more than an A in a lesser course.

There are many opportunities to earn College Credit in High School

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UW College in the High School

Through the UW in the High School (UWHS) program, high school students can complete University of Washington courses — and earn UW credit — in their own classrooms with their own teachers. Students and teachers use UW curriculum, activities, texts, tests, and grading scales. Students earn a final grade over time; a grade does not depend on one exam. Students receive recognition for their UW work at most public institutions and many private ones.

The program gives students a chance to test their readiness for higher education in a familiar environment. The program also can help strengthen upper-division high school offerings, establishing a collaborative relationship between the UW and high schools.



BC College in the High School

College in the High School Program

If you're a junior or senior in high school, you can earn both college and high school credits by taking college-level classes at your high school.

In Order to Qualify You Must

- Be enrolled in a participating high school
- Meet specific course requirements and prerequisites

Note: Check with your high school counselors and teachers about College in the High School classes.

Advantages of this Program

- The classes are college-level and provide a challenging educational experience
- You can earn college credit and high school credit simultaneously
- The credits you earn are transferable to Washington State community colleges and universities, as well as to most other universities
- The fees are hundreds of dollars less than college tuition for comparable credits
- In contrast to Running Start, this program allows you to earn college credit without leaving your high school campus
- In contrast to AP courses, you will be assured to earn college credit upon successful completion of the class instead of relying on test scores

Classes selected for this program are typically advanced classes taught in the high school by qualified high school faculty. Bellevue College faculty coordinators, in collaboration with the high school instructors, determine that the courses are comparable to the same courses at the college level, with equivalent content, college-level texts, course outcomes, and student assessments. High school faculty who teach the courses must meet college faculty hiring criteria.

Costs and Funding

The cost is \$140 per 5-credit class.

Costs for classes are considerably less than 2- and 4-year institutions. The school district bears the cost of instruction, textbooks, materials and faculty professional development.

Sign up

You can coordinate registration and payments through your high school faculty teaching College in the High School classes.

Faculty-to-Faculty Collaboration

The program's success is based on collaboration and ongoing communication between college and high school faculty. Once a course is selected for the program, college faculty coordinators and high school faculty meet regularly to discuss educational issues as well as logistical tasks like student registrations, fee payments and grade reporting.