

Why Do Colleges and Universities Value AP?

AP Policies Attract Motivated Students

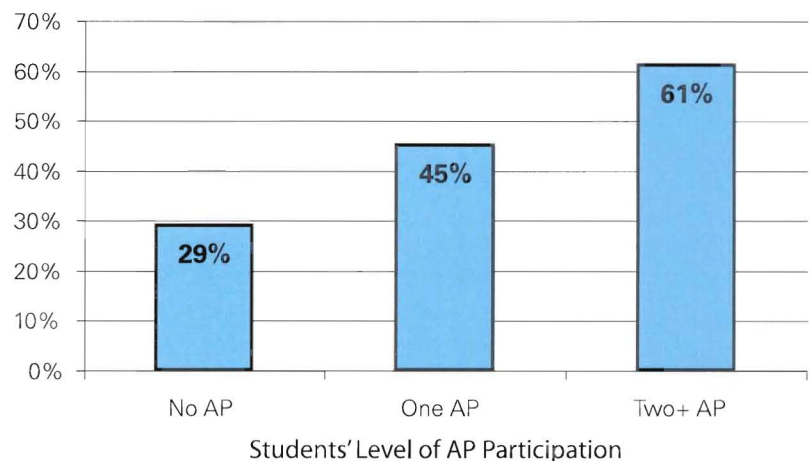
Having a clear and equitable AP policy enables colleges and universities to attract a diverse group of motivated high school students. AP courses teach students important skills that can lead to college success: how to read texts critically, how to solve problems analytically, and how to write clearly. One of the most important criteria college admissions officials use to evaluate applicants for an incoming class is the quality and intensity of their high school course work. The presence of AP courses in students' transcripts often indicates that they have availed themselves of the opportunity to take the most rigorous courses available.

“ I have always found students with AP backgrounds easy to identify in a college classroom. They usually have a better understanding of historical evidence and how to evaluate various types to form organized, coherent arguments. They have had good experience working with document types and have a sense of historical interpretations, as well as how to read critically.”

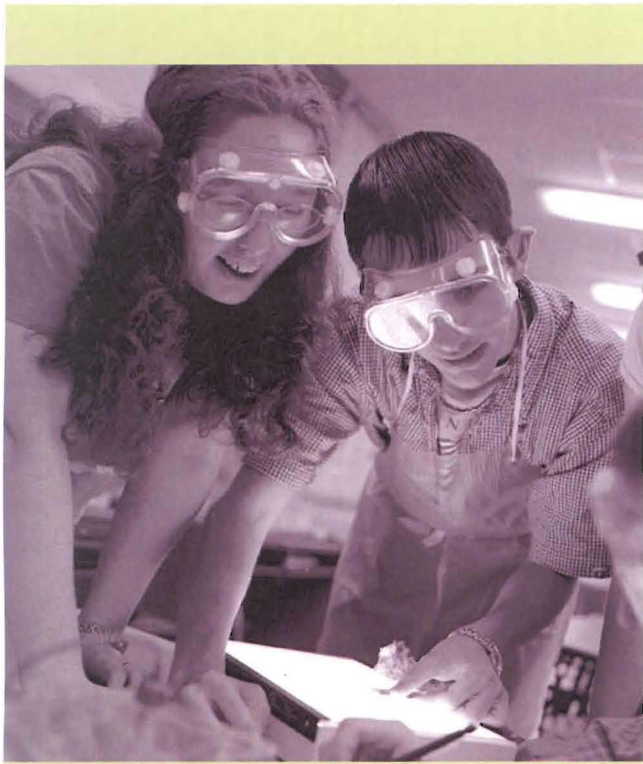
Michael Galgano, Chair, AP European History Development Committee
Professor of History
James Madison University

Additionally, students who take AP courses and exams are much more likely than their peers to complete a bachelor's degree in four years or less. (See Figure 1.)³

Figure 1. Percentage of Students Earning a Bachelor's Degree in Four Years or Less



3. Wayne Camara, "College Persistence, Graduation, and Remediation," *College Board Research Notes RN-19* (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 2003).



Reasons Students Participate in AP

A recent survey of 2,598 high school seniors who had received a 3 or better on select AP Exams asked questions about the students' reasons for taking AP courses, and the intended uses of the AP Exam grades in college.* Here are some of their responses:

- 83 percent of the students reported that they took AP courses to improve their chances of getting into the college they wanted
- Over two-thirds reported that they took AP courses in order to get into advanced classes earlier
- Over half took AP courses in order to make time to take more electives in college
- Less than a third indicated that they hoped to use credit from AP Exams to graduate from college sooner

* Karen Christman Morgan, *The Use of AP Examination Grades by Students in College* (New York: RoperASW, 2002).

“ At Colgate University we have found that AP Computer Science students are very well prepared and do well in the courses that follow our introductory sequence. Often they are among our best students.”

Chris Nevison, Chief Reader, AP Computer Science Development Committee
Professor of Computer Science
Colgate University

AP Students Pursue Disciplinary Interests Cultivated in AP

Students who receive advanced placement or college credit typically continue to take more, not fewer, courses in the discipline for which they've received AP credit.

A 2000 research study found:⁴

- Students who took the AP Exam (for all but three exams) were more likely to take a course in the same discipline than students who did not take the AP Exam.
- Many students completed their college degree in the subject area of the AP Exam.
- Those students who took AP Biology, Physics, Calculus, Studio Art, and Spanish Literature were most likely to major or minor in those disciplines or a closely related discipline.

The study showed, for example, that AP Biology students took, on average, 3.3 courses in that discipline in college, whereas non-AP Biology students took, on average, 1.9 courses. For more specialized subject disciplines, such as Music Theory, Studio Art, Physics, or French or Spanish Literature, the differences between numbers of courses taken for the AP and non-AP groups were even greater.

The study also found that the majority of students who took AP Exams graduated in at least four years and had a grade point average above 3.0.

“ At Davidson College, the students who have succeeded well in AP courses while in high school form the core of our highly selective student body. Their AP success serves as an effective placement tool here at Davidson that rarely disappoints us. In economics, students with high AP scores seem to move seamlessly into more advanced courses.”

Clark Ross, Chief Reader, AP Economics Development Committee
Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty
Johnston Professor of Economics
Davidson College

4. Rick Morgan and Behroz Maneckshana, *AP Students in College: An Investigation of Their Course-Taking Patterns and College Majors* (Princeton, N.J.: Educational Testing Service, 2000).

Why Choose Advanced Placement?

What is AP?

“The Advanced Placement Program is a cooperative educational endeavor between secondary schools and colleges and universities. It allows high school students to undertake college-level academic learning in AP courses and gives them the opportunity to show that they have mastered the advanced material by taking AP Exams.” (College Board)

What are the Benefits of AP?

Study a subject in greater depth...

If you are interested in a particular subject and want to learn more about it with classmates who are just as enthusiastic, your best bet is to take an AP course.

Find out what you can really do...

If you challenge yourself, you'll know what you're capable of achieving. If you take an AP course and work hard during the year, taking the exam completes the picture. Taking the AP exam is an expectation. Work to master college-level material and discover the satisfaction of reaching your goal.

Prepare for college work...

AP courses and exams represent the beginning of the journey through college-level academic challenges. Once you're used to being challenged you're more likely to continue with advanced studies (AP students are twice as likely to go into Ph.D. programs). AP is not just a test; it's an experience. AP courses motivate you to work hard, and you can improve the quality of all your courses based on the skills you gain in one AP course.

The work you do in an AP course will help you develop skills and study habits that will be vital in college. For example, you will learn how to analyze problems effectively, improve your writing skills, and prepare for exams. These are tools that will serve you well throughout your college career.



Improve your chances of getting into a competitive college...

Students who take AP courses and exams are more knowledgeable about the demands of college work. Colleges and universities recognize that applicants with AP experience are much better prepared for the demands of college courses. Admissions officers are well aware of the difficulty of AP courses and exams, and sending them your AP Exam grades can only be a positive step toward potential admission into competitive colleges.

Make a good investment...

As we all know, money doesn't grow on trees, and it is important to think ahead. By taking an AP Exam, you will be investing in yourself and your future. If you receive a qualifying grade on an AP Exam, your exam fee investment can translate into major savings. Depending on how many qualifying scores the university chooses to accept, determines your savings.

Get a head start...

Every year, hundreds of students achieve sophomore standing by earning enough qualifying AP grades: more than 1,400 institutions in the United States alone grant a full year's credit to students who present satisfactory grades on enough AP Exams. Write to the colleges you are interested in attending to get the most up-to-date information about their AP policies.



Increase your options...

Earning AP credit has allowed thousands of students to take a double major in college, move into upper-level courses in their field of interest, or complete their undergraduate degrees in less than four years.

Improve your sense of competence...

By taking an AP course and exam, you will know in advance that you have the ability to succeed in college. Students who have this confidence are less likely to go for the easy options at college, and are more likely to specialize in majors with tougher grading standards. They are also more likely to take a greater course load and complete a greater number of higher-level courses.

For more information, go to the College Board's AP website.

www.collegeboard.com/ap/students/index.html
