

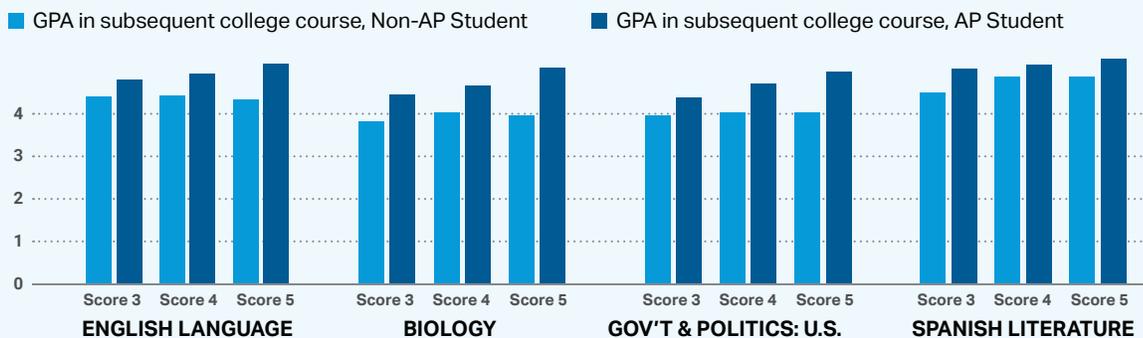
The Value of AP in Placement

Granting credit for AP[®] Exam scores of 3 or higher allows students to be placed in appropriately challenging coursework in college, increasing student satisfaction and retention.

Key Finding

For all AP subjects studied, students who took an AP Exam performed as well as or better than non-AP students in the subsequent college course related to their AP Exam—even after controlling for prior academic achievement and demographic variables.

Performance of Students With and Without AP Exam Participation



Source: Wyatt, J., Jagesic, S., and Godfrey, K. (2018). *Postsecondary Course Performance of AP[®] Exam Takers in Subsequent Coursework*. New York: College Board. Jagesic, S., and Wyatt, J. (2018). *Postsecondary Course Performance of AP[®] Exam Takers in Subsequent Coursework: Biology, Languages, and Studio Art*. New York: College Board.

Supporting Research

- Students who earn AP credit and place out of the introductory college course perform as well as or better in sequent courses, compared to non-AP students.¹
- AP students perform at least as well as similar non-AP students in introductory courses.²
- AP students who earned a 3 or higher on one or more AP science exams perform as well as, if not better than, students who took the regular, honors, or dual enrollment counterpart course on both first year GPA and science GPA—even after controlling for prior academic achievement, demographic variables, and school-level variables.³
- AP students take more, not fewer, credit hours in the discipline related to their AP Exam, compared with non-AP students.⁴

1. Godfrey, K. and Beard, J. (2016). *Advanced Placement Validity Research at Four University System of Georgia Institutions: Placement Validity Student Results*. New York: College Board.

2. Sadler, P., Sonnert, G., Tai, R., and Klopfenstein, K. (2010). *AP: A Critical Examination of the Advanced Placement Program*. Cambridge: Harvard Education Press.

3. Kaliski, P. and Godfrey, K. (2014). *Does the Level of Rigor of a High School Science Course Matter? An Investigation of the Relationship between Science Courses and First-year College Outcomes*. New York: College Board.

4. Murphy, D. and Dodd, B. (2009). *A Comparison of College Performance of Matched AP and Non-AP Student Groups*. New York: College Board.

Planning Guide for Using AP in Placement

WHY USE AP IN COURSE PLACEMENT?

AP students are well prepared for work in subsequent courses. Additional points to consider when using AP in placement decisions:

- Students who are undermatched in coursework can become bored and may therefore be a retention risk.
- Placing students with qualifying AP scores into sequent courses can reduce demand for overly subscribed introductory courses.
- Students with AP experience may be inclined to pursue additional courses of study or second majors.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Are your completion rates where you need them to be?
- Would your institution benefit from less crowded introductory courses?
- Do students cite redundancy in course content on engagement surveys? Are you gathering this information regularly, or only if students leave the institution?
- Have you explored using AP Exam scores in lieu of placement exams?
- Are your placement policies rooted in data or anecdote?
- Are your academic advisers trained on changes in AP courses and exams?

ACTION ITEMS

College Board offers a range of tools to help enrollment professionals leverage AP when placing students in appropriately challenging coursework on campus.

- Examine first-year completion rates in core courses.
- Examine first- to second-year retention for AP and non-AP students.
- Get familiar with your on-campus placement exams. How often are students being double tested unnecessarily? How familiar with AP are the departments relying on local placement exams?

- Speak with academics on your campus—faculty may be unaware that AP students take more, not fewer, credit hours in the discipline related to their AP Exams, compared with non-AP students.
- Consider conducting a free ACES™ study to better understand AP versus non-AP student performance in sequent courses.

YOUR AP CREDIT POLICY IS IMPORTANT

Research shows that students who earn a 3 or higher on AP Exams perform as well or better than non-AP students of similar ability. You can support student engagement and success at your institution by offering fair AP credit policies that fulfill graduation requirements and place students into courses that will challenge and excite them. Such policies can give your students the flexibility to double major, minor, study abroad, or explore several paths without putting on-time degree attainment at risk. Given research showing the recognition of AP scores factor into students' college choices, these policies can improve your institution's position in a competitive landscape.

SPOTLIGHT ON ACES

Admitted Class Evaluation Service™ (ACES) is a free online service from College Board for colleges and universities. It helps you answer important questions about College Board assessments you use to admit, place, and advise students at your institution. ACES provides expert analysis of data you supply so you can validate your admissions and placement policies—or help you refine them. It can also shed light on how your AP credit policy is impacting your progress toward meeting key institutional goals. Visit aces.collegeboard.org to learn more.

WE'RE HERE TO HELP

College Board is available to assist you in developing a stronger pipeline of prospective students by leveraging the AP Program. Our Higher Ed Services team and AP Higher Ed team can help you take advantage of resources offered by College Board as you plan for successful recruitment and can also provide support as you talk to campus stakeholders about the value of AP in reaching key enrollment goals.

Visit aphighered.collegeboard.org for more information.