

AP[®] and the Cost of College

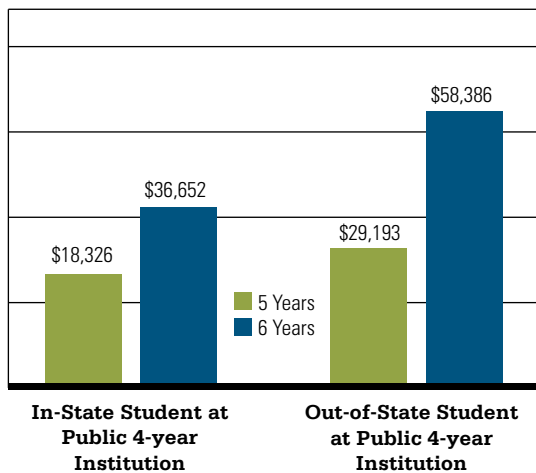
Increasing Academic Rigor and Reducing College Costs with the AP Program

Students who participate in AP[®] and earn college credit save money for themselves, their parents, and the colleges and universities they attend. By investing in the rigor and quality of America's high schools, together we can address the rising costs of college for families as well as for the nation as a whole.

Recent Research Tells Us That

- AP students are more likely to graduate from college in 4 years, which only 26.5% of U.S. public college students achieve.¹ With the price of college at a 4-year public institution costing typically \$18,000 for every additional year a student takes to finish, finishing in 4 years is more important than ever before.

Additional cost of college for students graduating in 5 or 6 years



- AP students are more likely to graduate from college in 4 years. (see reverse)
- AP helps students qualify for precious college scholarship dollars. 31% of colleges and universities use AP as a criterion when determining scholarship recipients.²
- Colleges use AP to place students in the appropriate level courses. This allows them to reduce costs associated with introductory classes covering material many students will have already mastered in high school.

I took AP throughout high school because it was the most interesting and well-taught program offered. When I reached college, I realized that I had accumulated a year's worth of credits. I graduated from Michigan's undergraduate business program a full year early, saving \$30,000 and a year's time.

—Nikki Baker, student, University of Michigan

AP[®] Helps Students Graduate on Time

AP students are much more likely to earn a bachelor's degree in 4 years than their peers. There seem to be three primary reasons for this:

1. College faculty consistently report that **AP students enter college having already learned how to engage in college-level studies**, and hence adapt much more readily to the college environment.
2. The **college credit earned by AP students frees up time within a student's college years to explore academic pathways**, earn a minor, double major or study abroad without putting at risk graduation in 4 years.
3. **Students who take AP often represent the kind of student who is willing to take on the challenge of college-level coursework**, deliberately choosing AP over easier classes, and demonstrating a significant degree of motivation. This characteristic, which is not really the result of AP but is certainly a characteristic of many AP students, might partially, alongside the academic skills and content knowledge they develop in their AP experience, contribute to these students' higher rates of 4-year degree completion.

As a freshman, I was able to skip general ed requirements and head straight into the higher-level classes I wanted to take. Taking AP Exams literally saved me semesters of time.

— Brent Wiese, student, University of Iowa

¹ IPEDS database, 2008. Of the remaining 73% of students, approximately 25% earn a bachelor's degree in 5 or 6 years, approximately 25% drop out or take more than 6 years to earn a bachelor's degree, and approximately 23% transfer to another college or university, with typically lower graduation rates than students who do not transfer.

² Unpublished institutional research, Crux Research, Inc. March 2007.

Texas Studies Show That AP® Students Complete Bachelor's Degrees at Much Higher Rates

A new study by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board indicates that when compared to their peers who didn't take AP® (but who have the same SAT® rank and same family income levels), AP students completed their bachelor's degree at much higher rates.³

In this 2008 study, researchers from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the University of Texas at Austin followed all Texas students who entered the state's public colleges and universities in fall 2001 and attempted to identify the sort of high school course work that most strongly corresponded to 4-year bachelor's degree completion.

The results of the Texas study show that AP students were completing their bachelor's degree at much higher rates when compared to their non-AP peers who came from the same SAT rank and same family income level.

Having the AP Exam grade can make the difference when it comes down to awarding precious scholarship dollars.

—Edwina Harris Hambly, Dean of Admission, Fisk University

NOTE: In any such study, it is important to control for pre-existing differences in ability/college readiness and family income status, so SAT rank and Free and Reduced-Price Lunch status were used to compare "matched" groups of students, better isolating the impact of AP participation.

Students who took the AP course and exam instead of another non-AP high school course in...	Displayed 4-year graduation rates that were higher by...
English Language	67%
English Literature	62%
Spanish Language	43%
Biology	36%
U.S. History	34%
AP Calculus AB	30%
AP Chemistry	13%

At the University of Georgia, we believe our AP credit and placement policies help our institution in two important ways: first, AP scores enable us to place academically qualified students into higher-level college courses so that they can maximize their time at the university, and second, we have been able to focus our academic departments' resources on upper-division courses rather than expanding our budgets to teach many additional sections of undergraduate classes for students who already learned at a college level while still in high school.

Nancy G. McDuff
Associate Vice President for
Admissions and Enrollment
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We often observe a discernible difference between students without any AP experience, who typically only devote a few hours to homework each week, and AP students, who have had to develop the time management skills and the discipline to do the type of time-consuming intellectual work that is required to be successful in college.

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³ Linda Hargrove, Donn Godin, and Barbara Dodd, "College Outcomes Comparisons by AP and Non-AP High School Experiences." The College Board, 2008.