

## **What is the Advanced Placement Program®?**

The Advanced Placement Program® (AP®) is a challenging academic program designed to provide motivated high school students with college-level academic courses. Established in 1955 by the College Board, the AP Program is a cooperative educational endeavor between secondary schools and colleges and universities. High school students who complete AP courses demonstrate their mastery of subject material by earning qualifying grades on AP Examinations. AP is considered a standard for academic excellence in the United States, where nearly 60 percent of secondary schools participate in the program.

AP courses with qualifying exam grades are accepted for credit, advanced placement, or both, by most American colleges and universities. In addition, AP courses and exam grades are used in the admissions process in more than 500 universities outside the United States.

## **Who creates the AP Examinations, and how are the exams graded?**

AP Examinations are created by a committee of experienced AP secondary school teachers and university professors specializing in each of the disciplines for which an examination is offered. The multiple-choice portion of AP Exams is scored by computer. The free-response sections of AP Exams are scored by AP teachers and university professors in a weeklong June scoring session. Detailed scoring rubrics are established for each examination by Chief Faculty Consultants for each discipline, who oversee the scoring of the free-response questions. Great care is taken by the Chief Faculty Consultants to ensure accuracy and consistency in scoring to result in a fair assessment of student free-response performances. Total composite scores for the combined multiple-choice and free-response portions of the exams are converted into AP grades of 1 (no recommendation) to 5 (extremely well qualified), which are released in mid-July to the students and the colleges and universities of their choice.

## **How do colleges and universities recognize AP courses and the AP International Diploma?**

Approximately 3,400 North American universities recognize AP courses and examinations. Students presenting qualifying grades on AP Exams may earn anywhere from 3 to 6 credits (for a single course) to one year of college credit and, on occasion, two years of credit, thereby earning second-year and sometimes third-year standing. As universities in the United States and abroad differ regarding the exact nature of their acceptance policies, AP students are advised to inquire directly at the universities concerning their respective policies for specific AP Examinations.

AP courses and qualifying grades are also used as acceptance and admissions criteria by an increasing number of universities in identifying high-performing and highly motivated students. By taking AP courses, students demonstrate their mastery of a subject and their ability to work at the academic level required in higher education.

## **What is the International Baccalaureate® Diploma Programme?**

The International Baccalaureate® Diploma Programme (IB®) is a rigorous preuniversity program leading to assessments in six subject areas. Established in 1968, the IB offers a challenging curriculum noted for its depth and its international perspective. The two-year IB Diploma Programme provides a coherent and demanding educational experience across the full curriculum. Beyond completing college-level courses and examinations, IB students are also required to engage in community service, individual research, and an inquiry into the nature of knowledge.

As of November 2004, the IB Diploma is accepted as an admissions credential at universities in 102 countries. In addition, high scores on IB exams often entitle students to credit or placement at university. IB courses and exams are offered at 1,215 schools in 117 countries.

## **Who creates the International Baccalaureate examinations, and how are the exams graded?**

Generally speaking, the final IB grade of 1–7 consists of two major elements. Between 20 and 50 percent of the grade is based on internal assessment, classroom work done during the IB course and graded by IB teachers against specific published criteria. The remaining 50–80 percent of the grade is based on external assessments, which are developed by an international board of chief examiners, with input from IB teachers from around the world.

These criterion-based assessments are graded by an international body of 4,400 trained IB examiners, consisting of university professors and master secondary school teachers. The work of the examiners is moderated by an examining board that is also responsible for ensuring that scoring is consistent across subjects and across the world. A final award meeting takes place in each subject at IB's Curriculum and Assessment centre in Wales, and results are issued each year in early July.

## **How do colleges and universities recognize International Baccalaureate courses and the IB Diploma?**

IB has largely succeeded in its goal to be a universally recognized admissions credential. Specific agreements are in place with ministries of education and universities in 102 countries that recognize the IB Diploma as a valid means of earning entry to postsecondary study. The IB Diploma is increasingly being viewed as a strong indicator of academic promise and achievement. IB students often have an advantage in the admissions process at selective universities. In addition, IB courses and exams are recognized for the purpose of advanced credit and/or placement at over 1,000 North American colleges and universities. In fact, nearly 120 postsecondary institutions now grant a full year of credit or its equivalent to students who have earned the IB Diploma.

### What similarities exist between the AP and IB programs?

1. Both are rigorous programs devoted to educational excellence; each program sets high performance standards for students and faculty.
2. Both programs involve dedicated and creative teachers committed to their students, their disciplines, and their profession.
3. Both programs attract highly motivated students who wish to excel academically and attend the most selective colleges and universities.
4. Both programs provide for articulation with middle-school curricula, IB through its Middle Years and Primary Years Programmes, and AP through its Pre-AP® program and its SpringBoard™ initiative.
5. Both programs have attracted the attention of international educators, educational policy-makers, and the general public as ways to improve the quality of education around the world.
6. Both programs value students doing independent research, thinking, and writing. IB students are expected to produce a 4,000-word Extended Essay as a formal requirement of the IB Diploma. AP teachers and IB teachers typically require students in AP and IB courses to write extended research essays, papers, and reports that involve the use of both primary and secondary sources, and that also require independent thinking, analysis, and interpretation.
7. In support of the academic programs, both AP and IB offer extensive professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators worldwide.

### Why do AP?

#### ***Extensive Recognition***

AP is recognized by approximately 3,400 American colleges and universities, which grant credit, advanced placement, or both for AP courses and exam grades. More than 500 additional universities in more than 30 countries also recognize AP courses and exam grades in the admissions process. Colleges and universities recognize the value of AP for preparing students to succeed in rigorous university courses.

#### ***Affordability and Flexibility***

AP is affordable, the only fee being the \$82 per examination, \$22 of which may be waived in cases of economic need. AP offers flexibility for schools, which can offer one or many AP courses, and different AP courses from year to year. AP also offers flexibility for teachers, who have latitude to determine their own curricula.

#### ***Access and Equity***

AP promotes open access to students who may excel in only one or two academic disciplines. The AP Program is designed to give all students an opportunity to challenge themselves with a rigorous academic experience.

#### ***Exam Reliability and University Standards***

AP emphasizes statistical exam reliability to ensure fairness in scoring, along with results that can be trusted by students, schools, and universities. Through regular surveys and comparability studies, the AP Program ensures that courses and examinations reflect actual university-level standards.

# ADVANCED PLACEMENT & INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE

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What's  
the  
Difference?