

AP vs. Dual Enrollment: The Pros & Cons of Each Program in 2024

by [Imed Bouchrika, PhD](#)

Co-Founder and Chief Data Scientist

Hardworking students who want to get started on their college work early are often stuck in a choice. Which is better between advanced placement (AP) and dual enrollment (DE)? Both options are popular college acceleration programs that offers college-level coursework and exams to high school students.

Though these programs have a similar purposes, there are some differences that students must seriously consider as they make their choice. This article explores these differences as well as the benefits each program can provide. Questions will be addressed, such as, "Do colleges prefer AP or dual enrollment?" Hopefully, the information on dual enrollment vs AP can help students make the best decision for their needs.

AP vs. Dual Enrollment Table of Contents

1. [AP vs. Dual Enrollment: The Main Differences](#)
2. [What are AP classes?](#)
3. [What is dual enrollment?](#)
4. [AP or dual enrollment: Which is better?](#)
5. [Can you take both AP and dual enrollment classes?](#)

AP vs. Dual Enrollment: The Main Differences

The Advanced Placement (AP) and dual enrollment programs are types of college accelerator programs that allow secondary students to get a head start on their college careers. Although they both offer college-level courses to high school students, the mechanics are very different. The main factor for this difference is the organizations that offer them.

Who's behind?

The main difference between AP and dual enrollment programs is that they are being offered by different parties. The Advanced Placement (AP) program is being run by the College Board, a non-profit organization, since 1955. The deployment of the program is standardized across member institutions and across all states. On the other hand, dual enrollment (DE) programs are usually offered by independently cooperating secondary and [tertiary educational institutions](#). Thus, deployment usually depends on their particular agreements. Also, because of this, there exist many different types of dual enrollment meaning and setups.

Mechanics may also differ from state to state. This is unlike the AP program, which is uniform all over. In defining what is dual credit, it is important to keep these differences in mind.

The Goal

The AP program starts with AP classes and ends with AP exams. In fact, the program is very exam-centric. Arguably, the main goal of taking an AP class is to score high on the AP exams. This is because colleges and universities award credits or advanced placements to those that have high scores. On the other hand, DE classes are treated as regular college classes. You do not have to score high to earn credits. You only have to pass. Also, as it is not exam-centric, students and instructors, in general, get to cover topics they are interested in. Meaning, instruction can be tailored for the class. Unlike in AP classes, DE classes do not stick to a highly standardized curriculum.

The Scope of Recognition

Another difference is the scope of recognition. The College Board has 6,000 member institutions that recognize the AP program. Colleges and universities that are members of these institutions may choose to give college credits or advanced placement. The latter means you can skip to more advanced classes in line with your completed AP courses. This, however, differs from institution to institution. There are universities that only use AP exam scores as references for admission without awarding credits or advanced placements. Thus, it is best to check your target schools whether they give credit or advanced placement for AP classes.

On the other hand, as dual enrollment (DE) classes are being run by partner secondary- and tertiary-level institutions, students enrolled only get to earn credits and advanced placements in these institutions. Usually, college-level classes under these programs are not recognized by other colleges or universities outside the one that offered them. This practice, however, also varies from state to state and institution to institution. Hence, it is best to check whether that is the case for your target DE courses in your locality. What is sure, and unlike in AP courses, is when you pass a college-level DE class, you get college credits for it at the tertiary-level institution you enrolled in.

What are AP classes?

AP classes are college-level classes offered in participating high schools. These courses are audited by the College Board before they could earn the AP designation. Aside from the AP program, the College Board also creates and administers other standardized tests like the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) and the SAT. Currently, there are 38 AP courses and exams. Most courses are filed under the following categories: arts, English, history and social sciences, math and computer science, sciences, and AP world languages and cultures (College Board, 2021).

Category	Program/Course	Description
Arts	AP Art and Design Program	Includes three different courses: AP 2-D Art and Design, AP 3-D Art and

Design, and AP
Drawing

AP Art History

Explore the history of art across the globe from prehistory to the present. You'll analyze works of art through observation, discussion, reading, and research.

AP Music Theory

Learn to recognize, understand, and describe the basic materials and processes of music. You'll develop skills by listening to, reading, writing, and performing a wide variety of music.

English

AP English Language
and Composition

Learn about the elements of argument and composition as you develop your critical-reading and writing skills. You'll read and analyze nonfiction works from various periods and write essays with different aims: for example, to explain an idea, argue a point, or persuade your reader of something.

AP English Literature
and Composition

Learn how to understand and evaluate works of fiction, poetry, and drama from various periods and cultures. You'll read literary works and write essays to explain and

support your analysis of them.

History and Social Sciences

AP Comparative Government and Politics

Examine the political institutions and processes of six different countries—China, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia, and the United Kingdom—and compare the ways they address problems. You'll analyze data and readings to draw conclusions about political systems.

AP European History

Study the cultural, economic, political, and social developments that have shaped Europe from c. 1450 to the present. You'll analyze texts, visual sources, and other historical evidence and write essays expressing historical arguments.

AP Human Geography

Explore how humans have understood, used, and changed the surface of Earth. You'll use the tools and thinking processes of geographers to examine patterns of human population, migration, and land use.

AP Macroeconomics

Explore the principles of economics that apply to an economic system as a whole.

You'll use graphs, charts, and data to analyze, describe, and explain economic concepts.

AP Microeconomics

Study the principles of economics that apply to the behavior of individuals within an economic system. You'll use graphs, charts, and data to analyze, describe, and explain economic concepts.

AP Psychology

Explore the ideas, theories, and methods of the scientific study of behavior and mental processes. You'll examine the concepts of psychology through reading and discussion and you'll analyze data from psychological research studies.

AP United States Government and Politics

Study the key concepts and institutions of the political system and culture of the United States. You'll read, analyze, and discuss the U.S. Constitution and other documents as well as complete a research or applied civics project.

AP United States History

Study the cultural, economic, political, and social developments that

have shaped the United States from c. 1491 to the present. You'll analyze texts, visual sources, and other historical evidence and write essays expressing historical arguments.

AP World History:
Modern

Study the cultural, economic, political, and social developments that have shaped the world from c. 1200 CE to the present. You'll analyze texts, visual sources, and other historical evidence and write essays expressing historical arguments.

Math and Computer
Science

AP Calculus AB

Explore the concepts, methods, and applications of differential and integral calculus. You'll work to understand the theoretical basis and solve problems by applying your knowledge and skills.

AP Calculus BC

Explore the concepts, methods, and applications of differential and integral calculus, including topics such as parametric, polar, and vector functions, and series. You'll perform experiments and investigations and solve problems

by applying your knowledge and skills.

AP Computer Science A

Get familiar with the concepts and tools of computer science as you learn a subset of the Java programming language. You'll do hands-on work to design, write, and test computer programs that solve problems or accomplish tasks.

AP Computer Science Principles

Learn the principles that underlie the science of computing and develop the thinking skills that computer scientists use. You'll work on your own and as part of a team to creatively address real-world issues using the tools and processes of computation.

AP Statistics

Learn about the major concepts and tools used for collecting, analyzing, and drawing conclusions from data. You'll explore statistics through discussion and activities, and you'll design surveys and experiments.

Sciences

AP Biology

Study the core scientific principles, theories, and processes that govern living organisms and biological systems. You'll do hands-on

laboratory work to investigate natural phenomena.

AP Chemistry

Learn about the fundamental concepts of chemistry including structure and states of matter, intermolecular forces, and reactions. You'll do hands-on lab investigations and use chemical calculations to solve problems.

AP Environmental Science

Explore and investigate the interrelationships of the natural world and analyze environmental problems, both natural and human-made. You'll take part in laboratory investigations and field work.

AP Physics 1: Algebra-Based

Learn about the foundational principles of physics as you explore Newtonian mechanics; work, energy, and power; mechanical waves and sound; and introductory, simple circuits. You'll do hands-on laboratory work to investigate phenomena.

AB Physics 2: Algebra-Based

Expand your understanding of physics as you explore topics such as fluids;

thermodynamics; electric force, field, and potential; electric circuits; magnetism and electromagnetic induction; geometric and physical optics; and quantum, atomic, and nuclear physics. You'll do hands-on and inquiry-based in-class activities and laboratory work to investigate phenomena.

AB Physics 3:
Electricity and
Magnetism

Explore concepts such as electrostatics, conductors, capacitors and dielectrics, electric circuits, magnetic fields, and electromagnetism. You'll do hands-on laboratory work and in-class activities to investigate phenomena and use calculus to solve problems.

AP Physics C:
Mechanics

Explore concepts such as kinematics; Newton's laws of motion, work, energy, and power; systems of particles and linear momentum; rotation; oscillations; and gravitation. You'll do hands-on laboratory work and in-class activities to investigate phenomena and use calculus to solve problems.

AP World Languages
and Cultures

AP Chinese
Language and
Culture

Develop your
Mandarin Chinese
language skills and
learn about Chinese
culture. You'll practice
communicating in
Chinese and you'll
engage with real-life
materials such as
newspaper articles,
films, music, and
books.

AP French Language
and Culture

Develop your French
language skills and
learn about the
cultures in French-
speaking parts of the
world. You'll practice
communicating in
French and study real-
life materials such as
newspaper articles,
films, music, and
books.

AP German
Language and
Culture

Develop your German
language skills and
learn about the
cultures in German-
speaking parts of the
world. You'll practice
communicating in
German and study
real-life materials
such as newspaper
articles, films, music,
and books.

AP Italian Language
and Culture

Develop your Italian
language skills and
learn about the
cultures in Italian-
speaking parts of the
world. You'll practice
communicating in
Italian and study real-

life materials such as newspaper articles, films, music, and books.

AP Japanese Language and Culture

Develop your Japanese language skills and learn about Japanese culture. You'll practice communicating in Japanese and you'll engage with real-life materials such as newspaper articles, films, music, and books.

AP Latin

Learn to read and analyze Latin literature as you explore ancient Roman history and culture. You'll translate passages from the writings of Vergil and Caesar and examine them through class discussions, debates, and presentations.

AP Spanish Language and Culture

Develop your Spanish language skills and learn about the cultures in Spanish-speaking parts of the world. You'll practice communicating in Spanish and study real-life materials such as newspaper articles, films, music, and books.

AP Spanish Literature and Culture

Build your language skills and cultural knowledge by

exploring works of literature written in Spanish. Using Spanish to communicate, you'll read, analyze, discuss, and write about works by Spanish, Latin-American, and U.S. Hispanic authors of different periods.

AP Score Table

Each AP course is a year-long course that reflects a semester-long college class. At the end of the course, students are encouraged to take the standardized exam. It is graded using the following scale:

AP Exam Score	Recommendation	College Course Grade Equivalent
5	Extremely well qualified	A+ or A
4	Very well qualified	A- , B+, or B
3	Qualified	B- , C+ , or C
2	Possibly qualified	---
1	No recommendation	---

There is also an AP Capstone Diploma Program. This is a two-year program based on two AP courses—AP Seminar and AP Research. This provides students with the exposure to do college-level research work, which involves collaboration and communication. The program allows students to earn academic awards that are recognized by institutions of higher learning around the world.

There are colleges that award credit to students with scores of 4 or 5; and others with 3 or above. This, again, depends on the institution and the AP courses you took. You can easily check for the credit policy of your target college or university through the [AP Credit Policy Search](#).

AP exams have fees. Today, they range from \$96 to \$144. Some high schools and districts, however, provide resources, allowing students to take these exams for free or at a lower price.

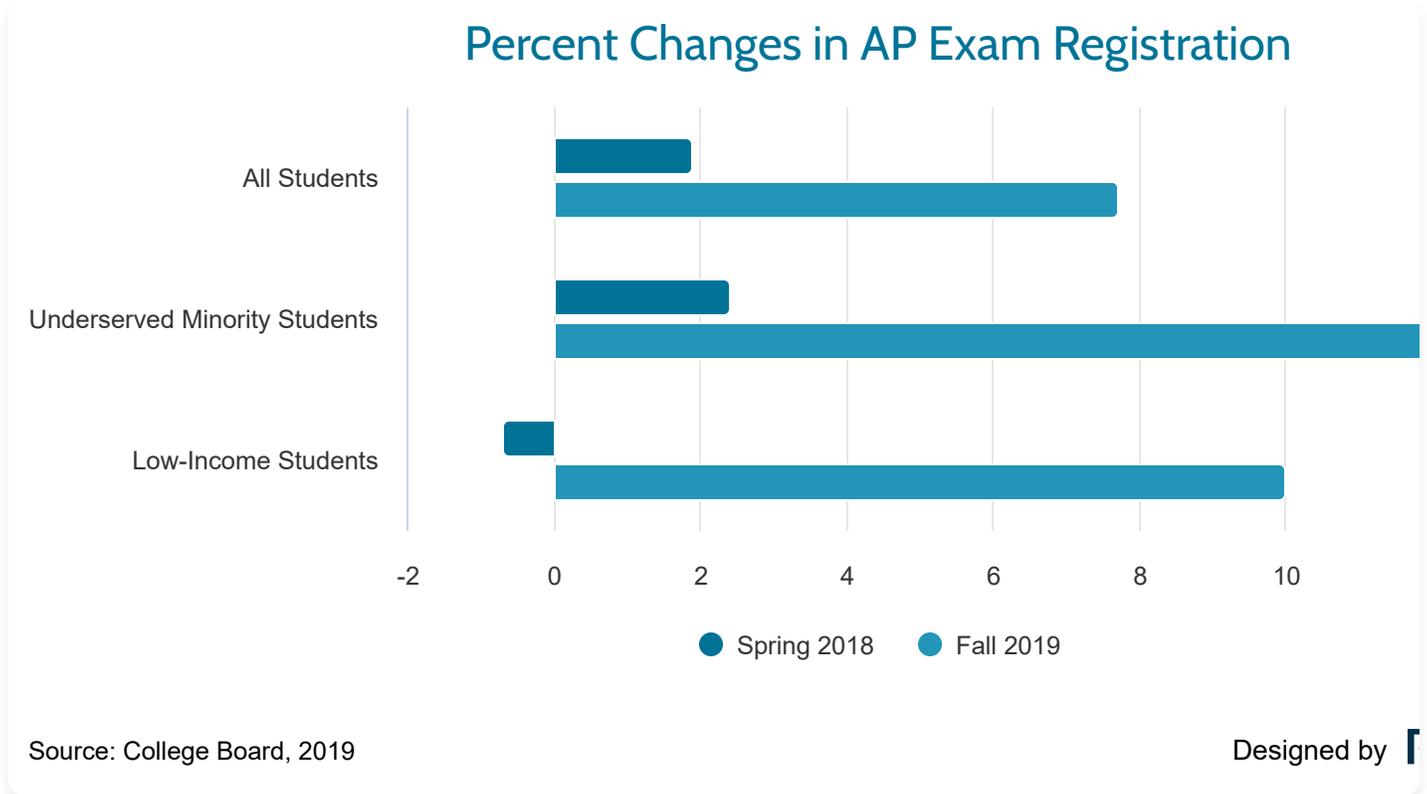
Reasons to Take AP Classes

Since 2008, more and more students are taking AP classes (College Board, 2019). In 2018, 1.24 million high school graduates took a total of 4.22 million AP exams. This is an increase of 65% over the number of students that participated in 2008. Moreover, more students from low-income families are also participating, taking a 30.18% share of all participants. This has doubled since 2008. This is because many feel that AP classes are a great way to give them a leg up on their college education.

AP courses are not only a great way to get yourself acquainted with college-level work, but scoring high on its exams will also give you the chance to earn credits and advanced placement opportunities.

Again, this depends on a particular institution. For instance, Augsburg University and Harvard University only accept AP Biology scores of 5 to earn credit or placement. On the other hand, Framingham State University in Massachusetts and South Carolina State University has a minimum score of 3.

It is generally accepted that when it comes to having more rigorous curricula, AP programs win the AP classes vs dual enrollment battle. AP programs are also more widely accepted. Moreover, it is more convenient to take AP courses over dual enrollment. This is due to the fact that in the latter, there are setups where you would take the class on a college campus. Taking an AP class on your high school campus would save you time and resources. But that there are DE setups where students take classes at their high school or online.



Caveats to Consider Before Taking AP Classes

Since its inception in the 1950s, the AP program has grown by leaps and bounds, with the number of students taking AP classes and exams skyrocketing, especially in the last decades. However, there are some caveats or things that you must keep in mind before and while taking them.

It may not be like college at all

If you are just going for a college-level experience, then taking an AP class at your high school can get you some of that experience. However, as John Tierney (2012), a former professor of American Government at Boston College, pointed out, "AP courses are not, in fact, remotely equivalent to the college-level courses they are said to approximate." He added that students "don't receive college credit for high scores on AP courses; they simply are allowed to opt out of the introductory sequence in a major. And more and more students say that's a bad idea, and that they're better off taking their department's courses." These might be just anecdotal but these are just some of the repeating [criticisms that the AP program](#) has received throughout the years.

Given the program's breadth and popularity, it may have sacrificed a lot in depth. Tierney added, in strong words, that AP classes are "a kind of mindless genuflection to a prescribed plan of study that squelches creativity and free inquiry. The courses cover too much material and do so too quickly and superficially. In short, AP courses are a forced march through a preordained subject, leaving no time for a high-school teacher to take her or his students down some path of mutual interest. The AP classroom is where intellectual curiosity goes to die."

Of course, this is not true for all AP classes across the country. It is best to believe that there are still many excellent teachers and schools that can offer college-level education in their AP courses offered. But you would be advised to consider these criticisms if only to temper those high expectations you might be harboring.

Expect more stress

High school life can be very stressful as it is. Enrolling in advanced programs like AP classes and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs can make it more so. As pointed out by Suldo and colleagues (2018) in "Predictors of success among high school students in Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Programs" published in *Gifted Child Quarterly*, students in AP classes and IB programs "experience higher levels of stress compared to students in general education classes." They added that elevated stress can "serve as a risk factor for students' academic and mental health problems." This can affect a young person's life satisfaction, psychopathology, school burnout, GPA, and AP/IB exam scores. Success in high school and these programs seem to entail higher levels of affective engagement and lower levels of parent-child conflict, among others.

Knowing this, it would be prudent for you to make the necessary mental, emotional, and social preparation before you take AP classes or enroll in IB programs. More likely than not, you will undergo [college-level stress](#) even if you're only in high school.

Mind the cost

If you are gunning for advanced placement (skipping college classes) and college credits, then scoring high on the exam is a must. Exams, though, can cost a lot per AP course. Again, depending on your school and district, this can be subsidized to a point of being free.

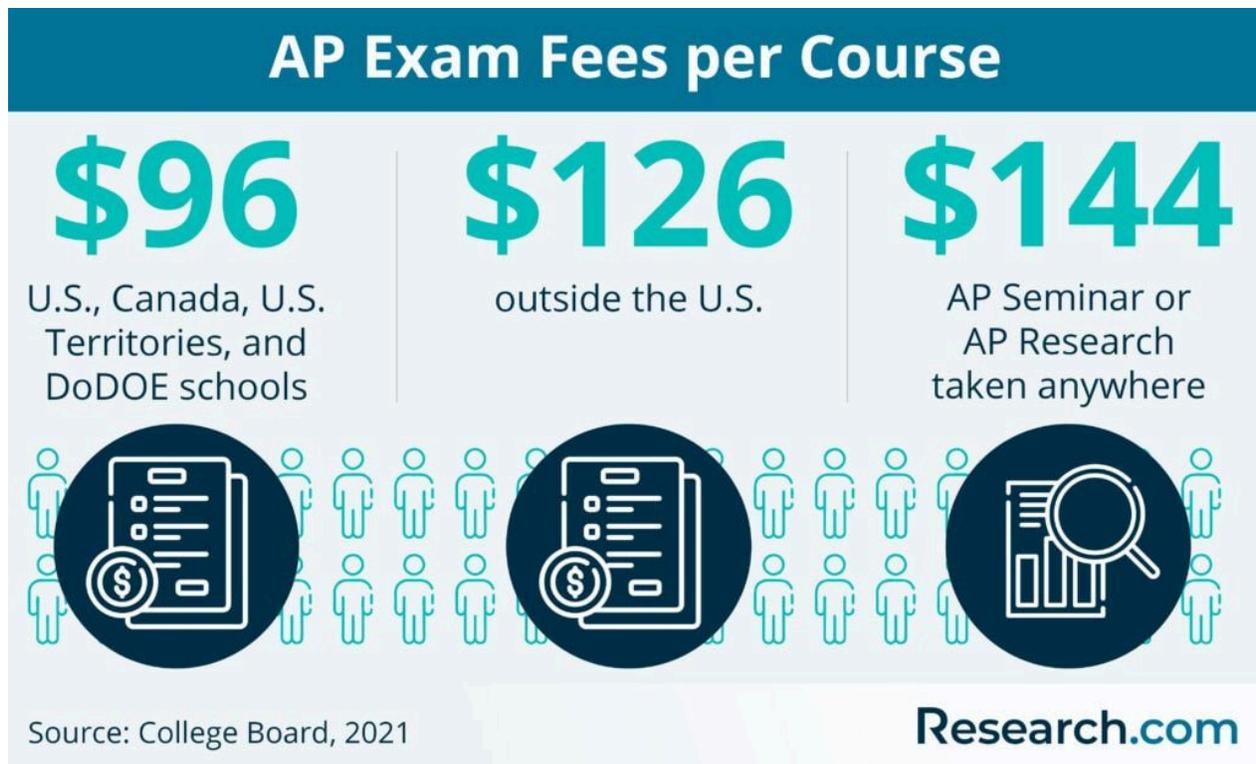
Today, each course exam, except AP Seminar and AP Research, costs \$96 when taken inside the U.S., the U.S. territories, Canada, or any Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) schools around the world. For those taking an AP exam outside the U.S., it costs \$126 per course. The AP Seminar and AP Research Exams cost \$144 regardless of where they are taken. Late orders will cost you \$40 in addition to the regular fee, and

canceled or unused exams cost \$40. So, taking a whole lot of AP classes can be free, but taking their exams can cost a ton. This, plus other factors, may have contributed to the fact that only around 2/3 of students enrolled in an AP class have taken an exam for it (College Board, 2019).

Aptitude is not the same as interest or passion

Today, it seems that getting more individuals to work in [STEM](#) is a national priority. This is why many STEM-related courses are being promoted to students by counselors. Having good aptitude in these types of subjects can make you a candidate in enrolling for AP STEM classes. However, if you do not have much interest in pursuing further studies and a career in STEM, then nudging you into them by advising you to enroll in related AP classes could be a waste of their time and yours.

A study by Warne, Sonnert, and Sadler (2019), also showed that taking STEM-related AP courses will not likely impact "a student's decisions to study or work in STEM." In "The relationship between Advanced Placement mathematics courses and students' STEM career interest" published in *Educational Researcher*, they cautioned readers that "policymakers who expect that enrolling large numbers of students into AP mathematics courses would increase the numbers of future engineers, scientists, or mathematicians will likely be disappointed." Thus, it is prudent to align your high school educational experience to your specific interests and not with the expectation of others.



What is dual enrollment?

Edwards, Hughes, and Weisberg (2011), in their "Different approaches to dual enrollment," published by the Community College Research Center (CCRC) defined dual enrollment (DE) as a program that allows "high school students to take college courses and potentially earn college credit." As the researchers pointed out,

DE programs were originally conceived to target high-achieving high school students. This is much like the AP program.

However, as the authors added, DE programs are also “emerging as part of a promising college preparation strategy for a broad range of students.” These include those who are struggling in high school, especially by offering courses with a deep career focus. This is one point of departure from the College Board’s AP. Is dual enrollment harder than AP? AP programs are academic in nature. Thus, many find that DE is a great alternative.

In this regard, researchers point out that advocates for this approach “contend that a thoughtful sequencing of dual enrollment courses, combined with appropriate student supports, could have a strong positive influence on students who are disengaged from high school and lacking the confidence needed to plan for college. A career focus in dual enrollment may be an important element for such students, because it may engage them through applied learning and help them see pathways through college to future employment.”

This, they stated, can be attained by providing (a) authenticity of experience and (b) integrated student supports. The former aims for DE programs to be perceived by students “as an authentic college experience where they can ‘try on’ the college student role and view themselves as capable of doing college work.” The latter, on the other hand, seeks to build learning support “into class time, more so than through limited, independent interventions, such as one-on-one tutoring.” The implementation, however, is not uniform.

This is because many states show “less interest in promoting a specific model of dual enrollment,” leaving programmatic decisions to institutions themselves.

Dual enrollment setups can be rolled out in different ways incorporating considerations of these features (Edwards et al., 2011):

- **Location of classes.** Classes could be located on a college campus that lends high authenticity to the experience. However, if logistics do not permit it, many high schools locate their DE classes on their own campuses. Some partnerships have classes on both campuses.
- **Type of instructor.** There are programs that have college faculty only for instruction. Others only have college-credentialed high school teachers for their programs. There are those that have a mix of both.
- **Course offerings.** There are partnerships that only offer academic or career technical education (CTE) courses. Others offer both.
- **Mix of students.** When high school students are in mixed classes with regular students, they will likely display more maturity and have a more authentic college experience.
- **Type of credit.** Most DE setups only allow students to earn college credits towards. However, the opportunity to earn credits for both college and high school can be a great incentive for students to enroll. This can also help student save money on [college costs](#).
- **Timing of courses.** When DE classes are held during the regular high school day, it broadens the accessibility as transportation challenges and other scheduling conflicts can be eliminated. However, this can lessen authenticity and can be very difficult for schools and students with tight course schedules to pull off.

DE programs, in these features, can vary from partnership to partnership. For instance, in a partnership between Sacramento City College and Arthur A. Benjamin Health Professions High School, classes are held on both campuses with both college faculty and high school teachers while only offering academic course

options. The partnership between the Long Beach Unified School District and the Long Beach City College and California State University Long Beach offers both academic and career technical education (CTE) course options that are only for college credit and with only college faculty supervising education and training. The former holds DE classes during and after school while the latter only have them during school. So, as you can see, different partnerships offer different setups.

Institution

Location

Instructor Type

Course Options

Student Mix

Number of Students

Credits Earned

Time of Day

Arthur A. Benjamin Health Professions High School, Sacramento

Both

Both

Academic

Mixed

56

Dual Credit

Before and During School

City College of San Francisco, San Francisco

Only college

College

Academic and CTE

Mixed

209

Dual Credit

During and After School

Long Beach Unified School District, Long Beach

Both

College

Academic and CTE

Mixed

44

College Credit

During School

Los Angeles City College, Los Angeles

Only high school

College

CTE

High School

95

Dual Credit

After School

Shasta Union High School District, Shasta

Only college

Both

CTE

High School

67

Dual Credit

During School

Tulare Joint Union High School District, Tulare

Only high school

College

Academic

Mixed

54

Dual Credit

After School

Reasons to Take Dual Enrollment Classes

Is dual enrollment worth it? For high-achieving students, taking dual enrollment classes can allow them to earn college credits while in high school. This does not only gives them an authentic college experience but also a chance to earn a [degree](#) faster by using their college credits for advanced placement. Unlike College Board's AP program, you do not need to get a high score or have a high grade to earn college credit. All you have to do is pass the college-level course and you instantly get credit for it in participating institutions.

Moreover, as Edwards and colleagues (2011) pointed out, "In addition to learning the advanced academic or technical content, they can potentially learn the norms and behaviors associated with success in college." So, a college head start is not only limited when it comes to academics.

Also, for students who are not academically high-achievers, and even those struggling in school, forward-thinking career-focused DE programs can give them a ton of benefits. Firstly, they get to 'try on' the role of a college student and 'experience a shift in self-concept' and, thus, allow them to "begin to view themselves as capable of engaging successfully in college-level work (Edwards et al., 2011)." In a recent study by CCRC in Rio Salado College (2021), 88% of DE students who took courses from [community colleges](#) in high school continued their college education. Also, most achieved a degree or a transfer in six years.

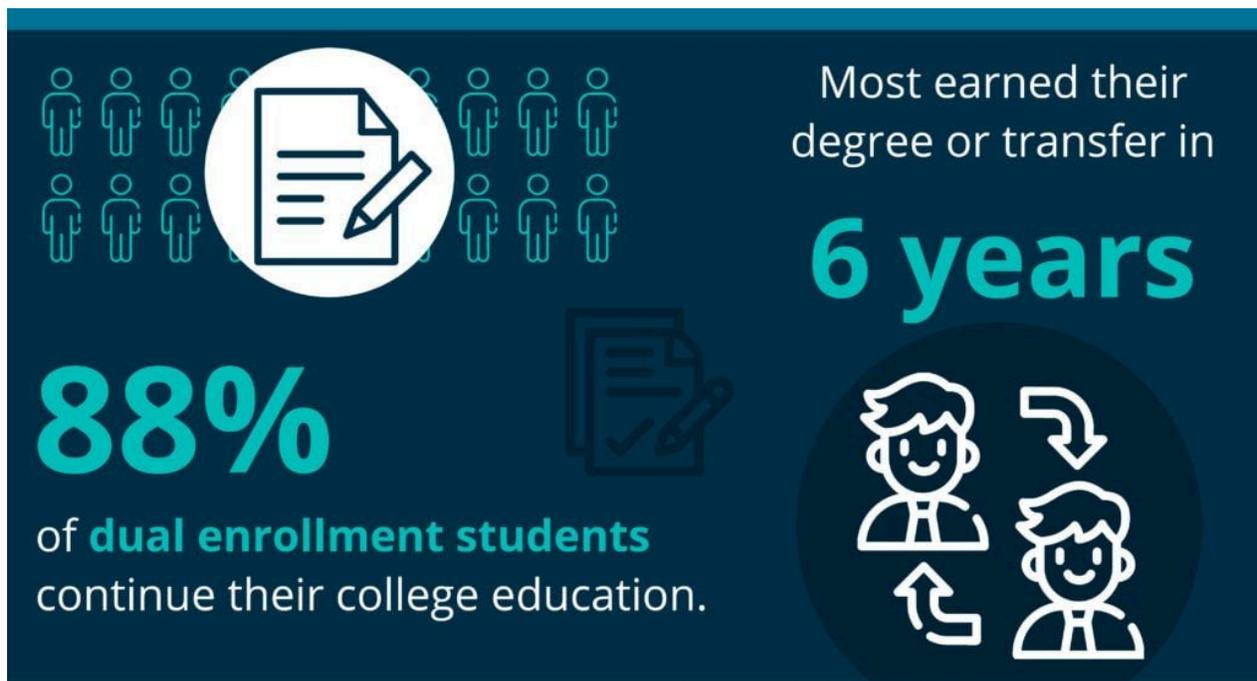
Another great reason to participate in DE classes is that they are generally cost-effective. DE students typically enjoy low community college tuition rates (Rio Salado College, 2021). Moreover, students can also get tuition assistance depending on their needs. Some programs are also free depending on the institution. When it comes to inclusion and the opportunity for a career-focus education, DE wins the dual credit vs AP classes battle.

Caveats to Consider Before Taking DE Classes

Again, when it comes to quality, in asking is dual enrollment better than AP courses, it is generally accepted that AP classes have more academically rigorous standards. This is also quite apt, in general, as many DE programs are there to broaden inclusivity to struggling high schoolers, especially by offering CTE courses and with lower grade requirements. College Board's AP program, on the other hand, is, in principle, grounded on exclusivity targeting only high academic achievers. If you take a look at the courses available, they are all academic in nature. So, if you are enrolled in a DE program, it's best not to hold your breath for a high-quality college course. This is unless you have enrolled in a good quality university or college known for programs related to the course you are enrolled in.

Secondly, unlike AP classes, DE classes can be harder to attend. While there are those that offer these programs on their high school campuses and within regular school days, many programs offer a mixed situation where a class could have different locations depending on the day. It may even fall on hours after school or on a weekend. Even though there are financial aid and other resources allocated to these programs, it is almost sure that you have to spend on them yourself.

Moreover, and maybe most important, is that many DE programs only allow students to earn college credits. Combine this with logistics and other resources-related difficulties, taking a DE class can hinder your high school educational experience. Just like taking AP or IB classes, it can be quite stressful especially when there is not much student support from your school or district. So, it is best that you prepare yourself mentally, emotionally, and socially for the challenges ahead.



Source: CCRC in Rio Salado College, 2021

Research.com

AP or dual enrollment: Which is better?

So, which is better: AP or dual enrollment? It totally depends on your situation, your goals, and the availability in your school and district. Speaking generally, however, we can infer a few rules of thumb.

Academic Route: Go for AP

When going for an academically more rigorous college-level experience, the AP program is better. Coming from the makers of the dreaded SAT, the AP curriculum is much more standardized, structured, and more widely accepted. Having been around for more than 70 years, it has been the yardstick for college qualification. So, if you are gunning for acceptance in a prestigious college or university, then the AP route is what you should take.

Of course, remember the caveats discussed. There are AP classes out there that cannot 'hold a candle' to their college counterparts, to borrow a term from Tierney (2012). But for college acceptance, credits, and advanced placement (skipping classes), the AP program has fulfilled its purpose, just like SAT scores, for many college hopefuls for decades. Surely, testing does completely capture or reflect college qualification, but they help you get your foot in the door.

Getting into College: Go for DE

While DE classes, in general, are not as rigorous as AP classes, they, however, get you in the door faster. Again, unlike AP courses, you do not need to have a high score on your exam or grade to earn college credit, you just need to pass. When you do, you can use this college credit for further studies and even skip to more advanced classes. Getting sure college credits through a DE program will also allow you to earn your degree faster after graduating. So, it has the potential to save on future college expenses.

Also, a DE program is the best way for people who are not really into the academic route. As mentioned, many DE partnerships offer CTE course options and are, thus, perfect for more career-focused students. Of course, getting to choose depends on the availability of both types of DE courses in your area.

Moreover, as most DE programs are conducted on college campuses, you can also gain a head start on your overall college experience as opposed to the typical AP classes held on your high school campus. This will allow you to acclimate better and give you a better all-around authentic college experience.

Can you take both AP and dual enrollment classes?

Yes, you can. Although this depends on the availability and support for these programs, many schools offer both of them. Participating in both will allow students to explore different college and career paths. This is especially so when taking academic AP classes and vocational DE classes. Also, it is best to remember that AP courses are tailored for the test. DE classes, on the other hand, allow both students and instructors more wiggle room in exploring topics and other subject matters related to the course. If given the chance, and if you are up for it, it might be good to try out which one is or if both are right for you.

Again, both are college acceleration programs, and they do give you a good experience on what to expect. Also, succeeding in either one (and especially both of them) will look good on you. Colleges and universities will see students who succeed in both programs as people who can perform in highly competitive environments and are ready for the college-level work ahead. Thus, both earn you more chances of getting accepted to more prestigious institutions not just in the United States but around the world.

Consult Your Counselors

If your heart and mind are set on taking college accelerator programs such as AP and DE, it is best to have a talk with your school counselors. They will have the information you need not only about the courses you are allowed to take but also the available support services and other aids that you can avail. If you work with them for a while, they can help guide your decisions and how you can fit them into your schedule.

Keep in mind, however, that there is the whole high school experience right in front of you. Putting too much pressure on yourself by taking on too much may not only put more stress on you but will cause you to miss out on many high school experiences. Of course, this is not just to discourage you from taking AP or dual enrollment high school classes, but also to remind you that you would have to make concessions and sacrifices to fit them into your work-life schedule. Taking them can be a serious commitment. Hence, it would be in your best interest to acquire a counselor's help when making your decision. This should let you prepare well for your AP or dual enrollment classes.

You could also ask your counselors for advice about [what degree to take](#) when you graduate. Better still, they may even help you [set up your career goals](#). Counselors are a very essential part of the school system. Students should take advantage of their services.

References:

- College Board. (2019, February 11). *Student participation and performance in advanced placement rise in tandem*. [PR Newswire](#).
- College Board. (2021). *AP courses and exams*. [College Board](#).
- College Board. (2021). *Dual enrollment benefits*. [Rio Salado College](#).
- Suldo, S. M., Shaunessy-Dedrick, E., Ferron, J., & Dedrick, R. F. (2018). Predictors of success among high school students in advanced placement and international baccalaureate programs. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 62(4), 350-373. [SAGE](#).
- Tierney, J. (2012, October 13). AP classes are a scam. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved September 29, 2021, from [The Atlantic](#).
- Warne, R. T., Sonnert, G., & Sadler, P. M. (2019). The relationship between advanced placement mathematics courses and students' STEM career interest. *Educational Researcher*, 48(2), 101-111. [SAGE](#).