

What's the difference between College in the High School (CHS) and Advanced Placement (AP)?

College in High School (CHS) and Advanced Placement (AP) are dual-credit programs which allow students to earn high school and college credit simultaneously. Both are excellent options for students to complete rigorous coursework in preparation for their post-high school studies.

Students enrolled in courses which offer both an Advanced Placement and a College in High School option must choose one of the two options for their course of study. While similar in content, the options differ somewhat from one another as described below. It is important that students choose the option that best fits their particular interests and goals.

College in the High School (CHS) classes are college-level courses which are taught at the high school by high school teachers using college curriculum with oversight from college faculty and staff. Students earn college credit by passing the course and paying reduced tuition for the credits. Grades are recorded on a permanent college transcript. Students remain at their high school while completing college coursework and fulfilling high school graduation requirements at the same time.

CHS students are assured of earning college credit as long as they are successful in meeting the course requirements and paying the reduced tuition fee. Additionally, if a CHS course is following an AP curriculum, CHS students can choose to take the AP Exam even though they are not officially enrolled in an AP course.

On their high school transcript, CHS students will have their course title and designation as College in High School (CHS). A College in High School class cannot also have an Advanced Placement (AP) designation on the high school transcript or in the course title.

Advanced Placement (AP) classes are college-level courses taught at the high school by high school teachers using a nationally recognized curriculum approved by the CollegeBoard. Upon completion of the course, students take a standardized AP Exam. Scores from these exams are considered by colleges for varying degrees of college credit. Students do not pay tuition for college credits but do pay fees (approximately \$91/test) for the AP Exams.

AP students do not earn college credit by successfully completing the AP course. College credit is determined by the student's scores on the AP Exam and how individual colleges treat these scores. Each college or university determines the number of credit hours awarded for each AP Exam and which scores qualify for college credit. Some colleges use AP Exam scores for only placement purposes and not college credit. All colleges & universities will have policies related to AP Exams posted on their websites.

On their high school transcript, AP students will have their course titled and designated as Advanced Placement (AP). An Advanced Placement course cannot also have a College in High School (CHS) designation on the high school transcript or in the course title.

How do colleges view College in the High School (CHS) and Advanced Placement (AP)?

It is extremely important that students check with the colleges they are applying to regarding that institution's admissions policy concerning Advanced Placement and College in the High School. Each college and university treats these options somewhat differently.

For example, the University of Washington does not weigh Advanced Placement (AP) over College in the High School (CHS), Running Start (RS), International Baccalaureate (IB) or other accelerated options. They use a holistic review process with no points or scores. The programs are viewed equally as rigorous college or college-level courses. For admission, there is no advantage of a student choosing one program over another.

In comparison, while the University of Puget Sound (UPS) may grant lower division credit for AP exam scores, they take a much more restricted practice as it relates to College in High School credit. For the university, only college credits earned in regularly scheduled classes taught on a college campus are transferable and accepted - transfer credit is not awarded for College in High School courses. Many private, particularly the more selective, institutions believe that for a college course to be a college course, no more than one-third of the students should be high school students.

The critical point as it relates to transferability and acceptance of AP scores and CHS credit is that students must check with specific colleges to which they plan to apply. Often this information can be obtained through the college/university's website or by contact their Admissions Office. State requirements, rules and policies are for the benefit of the students continuing in the state system. The private sector and out of state public universities have no obligation to follow the state rules.

For more information about dual-credit program comparisons, see the Washington Student Achievement Council website "Earn College Credit in High School"
www.wsac.wa.gov/college-credit-high-school.