

Comparing Concurrent Enrollment and Advanced Placement (AP)

What is Important for Academically Talented Students to Know?

	Concurrent Enrollment	Advanced Placement
1. Level of academic challenge	More challenging than typical high school courses, but not as challenging as AP.	More challenging than typical high school courses. Often more challenging than high school honors courses.
2. Opportunity to take courses with intellectual peers	High school students are likely to be placed in introductory college courses; these can be filled with other students at a variety of skill levels.	Typically, high ability students in high school take AP courses. Students enjoy the higher level of critical thinking, academic writing, and novel information.
3. Preparation for college	No standardization of content; some courses may be extremely challenging, while others are not.	AP courses and exams are carefully developed and standardized to meet rigorous criteria.
4. Save time in college and money on tuition <i>*Students should check with the financial aid and admissions departments at their potential college. Decisions differ by institution.</i>	Students may receive elective credit but still be required to take introductory-level courses, which means the credits may not count toward graduation requirements. Because some courses are required in a set sequence, students may not be able to finish the course sequence early, even though they have additional credits. Concurrent courses are not standardized and vary widely across the state.	Students earning a score of 3 or higher on the AP exam may receive credit for the course, even at selective colleges. They may be excused from taking that course and placed in a higher-level course during their first semester in college. This is because AP courses and exams are standardized. This webpage offers a good starting point for gathering information about AP: https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/getting-credit-placement/search-policies/college
5. Availability in rural areas	May or may not be available, depending on how far away the closest college is.	Because of IOAPA, even students in Iowa's very small, rural schools have opportunities to take AP courses.
6. Consider the goals of the course	If the course is a general education requirement with no potential impact on a future career, concurrent courses can fulfill these requirements.	If the course is in a field of study related to a future career, AP courses provide a solid foundation for future courses in that field.