

How to Set an AP Policy

The College Board encourages higher education institutions to base their AP policy decisions on data and research, and recognizes that different institutions and departments will set different policies, based upon factors unique to their institution, student body, and academic discipline. The best way for colleges and universities to determine their AP credit and placement policies is to conduct their own research on the performance of AP and non-AP students at their own institution and in their own department.

Research on AP Chemistry Student Performance

Research studies show that students who do well on an AP Exam are academically prepared to place out of a corresponding college course and move on to the next higher-level course in the discipline. See Table 1 for data from a research study comparing AP and non-AP student performance in second- and third-level college chemistry courses.

Table 1: Student Performance in Second- and Third-Level Chemistry Courses
AP Chemistry Students Versus Non-AP Students

	AP EXAM GRADE	SECOND-LEVEL COURSES		THIRD-LEVEL COURSES	
		GPA	PERCENT OF STUDENTS SCORING AN A OR B	GPA	PERCENT OF STUDENTS SCORING AN A OR B
AP Students Who Place Out of Intro. Course	AP 5	3.38	86	3.43	88
	AP 4	3.29	84	3.05	76
	AP 3	3.10	82	3.02	74
Students Who Complete Intro. Course	Non-AP	2.71	60	2.76	65

Taking the AP course and exam stimulates further interest in the subject area and encourages deeper disciplinary knowledge.

Research studies show that students who take the AP Chemistry Exam are significantly more likely to take further course work in chemistry than students who do not take the AP Exam. See Table 2 for data from this research study.

Table 2: Additional College Chemistry Course Work
AP Chemistry Students Versus Non-AP Students

	AP EXAM GRADE	PERCENT TAKING ADDITIONAL CHEMISTRY COURSES	AVERAGE NUMBER OF COLLEGE CHEMISTRY COURSES TAKEN
AP Chemistry Students	AP 5	63	3.7
	AP 4	63	3.2
	AP 3	71	3.3
	AP 2	74	3.0
	AP 1	68	2.4
Non-AP Students	Non-AP	46	1.5

PDF copies of these and other research studies can be found at apcentral.collegeboard.com/colleges/research.

In addition to research studies on AP student performance, the College Board conducts college comparability studies to measure the degree to which the AP courses and exams are equivalent in content and difficulty to corresponding college courses. The AP Exam scoring rubric is established so that the lowest composite score that earns an AP grade of 5 is equivalent to the average score earned by college students who received grades of A in a comparable course. The lowest score that earns an AP grade of 4 is equivalent to the average B, and the lowest score that earns an AP grade of 3 is equivalent to the average C.

The research that the College Board conducts is intended to help institutions and academic departments as they establish appropriate AP policies. AP Central® (apcentral.collegeboard.com), the College Board's online home for AP professionals, contains other resources that may assist in this process, including the Course Description, released exam questions, and sample student responses at different levels of ability.

For more information go to:
apcentral.collegeboard.com/chemistry/exam

AP Credit Policy Info on the Web

Information about AP credit and placement policies at more than 1,000 colleges and universities is available on the College Board's Web site at www.collegeboard.com/ap/creditpolicy.