

Advanced Placement FAQ

Why doesn't JLA offer AP courses to Upper School students?

Following in the footsteps of many of the top high schools across the country, we made a very intentional pedagogical decision early on that we were not going to adopt the AP curriculum. AP courses tend to emphasize breadth over depth, they don't allow any flexibility for following student interest, and the level of the content is usually well below that of a typical freshman course at a selective university.

In addition to the lack of rigor, not all AP courses receive credit from selective colleges. For example, a student interested in pre-med could excel in AP biology, AP chemistry and AP physics, yet they will be required to take all three of these courses at a college level. Their AP scores will not guarantee them placement out of these core courses for pre-med college students. We therefore believe our students are better served by creating our own college level courses (we call them "advanced") that will both challenge them and engage them in ways the AP curriculum can't.

What other schools don't offer APs?

CA: [Nueva](#)

CT: [Choate Rosemary Hall](#)

DC: [Georgetown Day School](#) [Sidwell Friends](#)

MA: [Beaver Country Day School](#) , [Concord Academy](#) , [Phillips Academy Andover](#)

NJ: [The Lawrenceville School](#)

NY: [Berkeley Carroll School](#) , [The Dalton School](#) , [The Chapin School](#) , [Horace Mann School](#), [Packer Collegiate Institute](#) , [Riverdale Country School](#)

PA: [Agnes Irwin School](#) , [Baldwin](#) , [Germantown Friends](#)

RI: [St. George's School](#)

Can my student opt to take an AP exam even if they are not taking the class? How will JLA support my child if this is the route they choose?

We do not keep students from taking an AP exam should they want to. It is, however, the student's responsibility to register for the AP via CollegeBoard and find a school that will allow them to take the exam at their school. If a student wishes to register for an AP exam and needs assistance finding a testing center, they should reach out to Ms. Cerna, our director of college guidance.

Teachers are not required to teach their course as if it were an AP class, though they are able to guide a student to let them know what is/isn't covered in the class so that the student can prepare on their own for the AP exam.

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How will the lack of APs affect my child's college admission?

Many of the best high schools in the country no longer offer APs. College admission representatives have assured us that, much like other elite schools, our choice to not offer AP courses or exams will not affect your child's college admission process. Each student's transcript is evaluated in light of the School Profile document which we attach to every college application. JLA's School Profile clearly states that our "advanced" high school classes are taught on a college level and it emphasizes the overall rigor of our curriculum by noting the average standardized test scores of our student body, the credentials of our faculty, and the fact that we only teach at an honors level or above.

Why doesn't JLA offer dual enrollment courses?

Dual enrollment courses are another way in which some high schools afford their students the opportunity to graduate high school with college credits. These are courses developed by local colleges for high school students and whose successful completion results in the granting of credit at that college or university. That credit can later be transferred to other colleges and universities. JLA chooses not to participate in such programs because their courses tend not to be designed for high achieving students like ours. We believe that our students will be better challenged and better prepared for the universities they will be attending by taking college level courses designed by our faculty for our student body.

What about the financial benefits of APs and / or dual enrollment?

In the overwhelming majority of the universities and colleges that our students will attend, tuition is paid on a semester basis based on the student's status as a full-time student, not on a per credit basis. Therefore, to realize financial benefit from APs or dual enrollment, a student must take and receive a credit-bearing score (for APs: sometimes a 4, but often a 5) for a semester's worth of courses (generally four or five courses) and matriculate at a college or university that accepts such credit (and many of the selective schools do not).

While such savings can be significant when realized, we are fortunate to live in the state of Florida, where there are far more reliable and consistent alternatives for pursuing a high quality education at a very affordable price. Not only is Florida home to some of the best state universities in the country, but its [Bright Futures Scholarship Program](#) allows high achieving students to attend those universities at little to no cost at all. The Bright Futures Scholarship can also be applied to many of the best private universities in the state resulting in substantial savings on tuition throughout all four years of one's undergraduate career. Due to the availability of these options for our students, JLA believes that the educational benefits of teaching college level courses designed by our faculty for our student body, outweighs the potential financial benefits of offering AP or dual enrollment courses.