

# The Bishop's School



## AP Information and Resource Guide

The Bishop's School faculty design innovative courses and classroom experiences that cultivate higher-order thinking, deep content exploration, and the mastery of advanced skills essential to success in college and beyond. We do not restrict our teaching to prepare students for standardized tests such as the ACT, SAT and Advanced Placement examinations. We believe that "teaching to the test" constrains a teacher's ability to explore deeper, interdisciplinary approaches and reduces opportunities for fostering high engagement and meaningful, student-centered learning. Instead, we aim for our academic program to reflect our mission and core values and to develop well-rounded individuals.

Colleges and universities are well-informed about the excellence of our honors and advanced honors courses at The Bishop's School and recognize them as our most advanced curriculum. By focusing on our Honors and Advanced Honors curriculum, we ensure students are well prepared for college and life, equipped with skills in analysis, collaboration and self-directed inquiry. This approach reinforces our commitment to offering an education that supports student well-being, intellectual growth and greater purpose.

When a particular Bishop's course may provide some foundation in the content of an Advanced Placement exam, any student in grades 9-12 who is enrolled in that course may opt to sit for that AP exam at Bishop's in May. **It is not required that students take the AP exams that overlap with their Bishop's coursework. Students should read the FAQs below, speak with their teacher and consult with their college counselor to determine whether sitting for an AP exam in a given subject makes sense for them.**

The Bishop's courses for the 2025-2026 school year whose content overlaps with an AP exam are listed below:

Department	The Bishop's School Course	Optional AP Exam
Computer Science	Software Development ( <i>and subsequent CS courses</i> )	*Computer Science A
English	Advanced Honors English	English Language and Composition
English	Honors English IV Writing	English Language and Composition
English	Honors English III American Literature	English Literature and Composition
History & Social Sciences	Honors Economics	Microeconomics
History & Social Sciences	Honors Economics	Macroeconomics
History & Social Sciences	Honors U.S. History	United States History
History & Social Sciences	Honors Western Thought and Culture	*European History
History & Social Sciences	Honors U.S. Government & Politics	United States Government and Politics
History & Social Sciences	Honors Comparative Government & Politics	Comparative Government and Politics
History & Social Sciences	Honors Psychology	Psychology
Mathematics	Honors Calculus AB	Calculus AB

Mathematics	Honors Calculus BC	Calculus BC
Mathematics	Honors Statistics	Statistics
Performing Arts	Honors Music Theory	Music Theory
Science	Honors Biology	Biology
Science	Honors Chemistry	*Chemistry
Science	Advanced Honors Chemistry	*Chemistry
Science	Honors Physics	Physics 1: Algebra-Based
Science	Advanced Honors Physics	Physics C: Mechanics
Science	Advanced Honors Physics	Physics C: Electricity and Magnetism
Visual Arts	Honors Art Portfolio	2-D Art & Design
Visual Arts	Honors Art Portfolio	3-D Art & Design
Visual Arts	Honors Art Portfolio	Drawing
Visual Arts	Honors Art History	Art History
World Languages	Honors Chinese IV	Chinese Language and Culture
World Languages	Honors French IV	French Language and Culture
World Languages	Honors Spanish IV	Spanish Language and Culture
World Languages	Honors Latin IV: Caesar & Virgil	*Latin

**\* This course is NOT closely aligned to test content and significant outside independent study will be required.**

Bishop's faculty are not expected to provide explicit AP exam preparation in their classes, and students should expect to do outside independent study to prepare well for each Advanced Placement examination. If a student is unsure about whether they should register for a particular Advanced Placement exam, they are encouraged to speak to their teacher or the appropriate department chair.

Below we have provided more detailed information and included information about registering for AP exams at Bishop's.

## Advanced Placement FAQs

### Q. What is AP (Advanced Placement)?

A. Advanced Placement (AP) is a program run by the [College Board](#) that seeks to offer high schools access to a college-equivalent curriculum as well as a means for high school students to take [examinations during the first two weeks of May](#) that may demonstrate proficiency in a variety of subjects. Students may submit their scores to colleges and universities during the admissions process.

Colleges and universities vary widely in how they use and value the scores on AP exams. Some may grant credit for general education requirements and some may modify placement to a more advanced level. Increasingly, colleges have been tightening their AP credit acceptance policies and choosing not to provide credit or consideration at all. As the AP

curriculum has spread to more and more high schools, critics have argued that courses and exams do not always match the rigor of actual college courses.

**Q. Why doesn't The Bishop's School offer AP classes?**

- A. As Bishop's has innovated its curriculum to reflect how students learn best, we have chosen to emphasize the kind of in-depth learning and authentic engagement we feel is required for success in college and beyond.

Between 2017-2022, Bishop's made curricular revisions across several departments and re-named all current AP courses as Honors courses. Renaming AP courses as Honors courses improved the overall academic experience for students and allowed our talented faculty the pedagogical freedom to reflect what the research says about how students learn best.

**Q. Does Bishop's offer AP exams to students on its campus? Are students required to take AP exams?**

- A. The Bishop's School offers AP exams in subjects that are similar to courses in the School's curriculum. Bishop's students who enroll in those courses are not required to take AP exams. Some courses have limited cross-over with an AP exam of the same name, and substantive preparation outside of what is done in class may be required. In those cases, taking the AP exam may not be recommended.

**Q. Can anyone sign up for an AP exam at Bishop's?**

- A. Any student in the world can register for an AP exam, but a challenge can be securing a testing location. Bishop's offers AP exams in a limited number of subjects, and only students who are enrolled in an aligned honors or advanced honors course are permitted to register for the aligned AP exam on our campus. Our priority is to serve students enrolled in Bishop's courses that are similar to AP courses. Students who are self-studying or taking prep courses outside of Bishop's should secure a seat at another testing location.

**Q. Why do I need to decide about AP testing in the fall? The school year just started!**

- A. In 2021, the College Board changed their registration timeline from the middle of the school year to the fall, requiring all schools and students to make decisions about registration early in the school year. If you would prefer to keep your options open, we recommend registering for any exams that you think you might want to take. You can cancel later in the year and you will receive a partial refund of your registration fees.

**Q. Is it true that if I take a lot of AP exams, I can graduate early from college?**

- A. Years ago, it was more common for colleges and universities to grant college credit for high AP exam scores. Over time, a high proportion of colleges and universities have changed their credit policies and practices toward APs. On occasion, colleges and universities may offer students who've done well on AP exams an opportunity to skip entry-level courses, but they don't permit AP passing scores to count toward fulfilling total graduation requirements. The colleges and universities that Bishop's students often attend do not give any kind of benefit to students who have passed AP exams. Instead, they expect students to study the

subject again, because they want to be sure that students have learned the subject in the way that they teach it.

**Q. Why do students take AP exams then? What's the benefit?**

- A. Since the benefits of AP exams have shifted over time, the value of AP exam scores has become more of a personal decision than before. Some colleges and universities have also shifted away from accepting any information about applicants' standardized test scores, including AP scores. Even if a student has multiple high AP exam scores to share, there may be no way to indicate this in the application process. If students know which schools they are applying to and those schools do not accept standardized test scores, they may choose not to take any AP exams. On the other hand, if a student is applying to schools that accept AP scores and a student thinks they can do well on the exams, it may be helpful. Students are advised to confer with their college counselor about which, if any, AP exams they should take.

**Q. Are there any downsides to taking an AP exam?**

- A. Paying registration fees and spending time and energy studying for the exam are the primary downsides to AP testing. Students may also miss substantial class time in early May when those courses are gearing up for their own final exams, projects and papers. Students are very rarely asked to report exam results, so a student can take an exam and determine, after receiving their exam scores, whether to report those results or not. We encourage students to talk to their teachers about whether they should take an AP exam in their subject.

**Q. Do Bishop's students take a lot of AP exams?**

- A. For all of the reasons noted above and primarily as a result of the changed ways that colleges and universities use AP scores in the application process and in terms of college graduation credit, Bishop's students are generally choosing to take fewer AP exams compared to the past. Individual decisions should be made independently of general trends, of course. Please be sure to consult with your college counselor for advice specific to your situation.

**Q. How do I sign up to take an AP exam?**

- A. Registering for AP exams is a two-step process:
1. Submit Exam Order and Pay Fees: During the initial October 1-30 registration window, visit our registration website [APTS](#) to order AP exams and complete the online payment form to submit fees. More information on registering is located on the registration website.
  2. Activate Exam: After the payment portal has closed, the AP Coordinator will email a JOIN code for each exam. Students must then enter that JOIN code on their personal College Board My AP account. The AP Coordinator will include instructions when emailing the JOIN codes.

**Q. What if I miss the AP exam registration window?**

- A. If you miss the initial registration window, late registration will be available Jan. 12 - 30 with an additional fee of \$40 per exam.

**Q. What if I want to cancel my AP exam registration?**

- A. Students can cancel exams through Apr. 1 with a partial refund of \$70 per exam. No cancellations are possible after Apr. 1. No-shows on exam days will not be eligible for rescheduling or a partial refund.

**Q. Can middle school students take AP exams at Bishop's?**

- A. Students must be at least 13 years of age to register an account with the College Board and Bishop's only permits upper school students (grades 9-12) to register to take AP exams on our campus. Scores are archived by the College Board after four years and any scores earned before ninth grade would not be on the College Board score report that is sent to colleges.

**Q. Can students miss school to prepare for AP exams in late April and early May?**

- A. We discourage students from missing any classes in order to prepare for standardized tests. Attendance and participation is a critical part of the learning process and absences to prepare for College Board tests that may have little to no impact on their post-graduate plans only puts additional pressures on students in the final weeks of the school year. Additionally, excessive absences in any particular course, in extreme circumstances, may result in loss of credit.

**Q. Can students skip classes in the morning before an AP exam or classes after an AP exam?**

- A. AP exams are scheduled from May 4 through May 15 and either take place in the morning or in the afternoon. If a student is registered to take an AP exam, they will be marked absent from the classes that conflict with the time when their AP exam is administered. If a student's AP exam is scheduled in the morning, they should plan to attend their afternoon classes. If a student's AP exam is scheduled in the afternoon, they have the option of attending their morning classes, but will be marked absent unless they sign in and contact the attendance office.

**Q. Are there options to take AP exams at other testing centers?**

- A. Yes, students may be able to arrange to take exams at a nearby high school or testing center that administers AP exams. Students may have success registering through their local school district. You can also use the College Board's AP Course Ledger to search for a comprehensive list of schools that have passed the AP Course Audit. Students can then contact the school(s) directly to inquire about registering.

**Q. Who do I contact with questions about AP exams at Bishop's?**

- A. If you have any questions about the AP exam administration at Bishop's, you are encouraged to contact the school's Registrar and Testing Coordinator Rachael Garcia at [rachael.garcia@bishops.com](mailto:rachael.garcia@bishops.com) or (858) 875-0787.

