

Information Guide For Students Contemplating Taking Honors/Advanced Placement/Dual Enrollment Courses

"People cannot discover new lands until they have the courage to lose sight of the shore." – Andre Gide

At Pelham Memorial High School, we encourage students to engage in academic challenges. Advanced coursework offers an opportunity to rise to this challenge and to experience academic and personal growth. We also understand the importance of providing our students with clear expectations so they know exactly what it takes to be successful in these courses. Please take the time to read this guide that provides descriptions, information on grade weighting, characteristics of successful students, and guidelines for selecting honors/Advanced Placement(AP)/Dual Enrollment courses

Description and Grade Weighting

Honors courses cover the grade-level state mandated curriculum with greater depth and complexity. For grading purposes, all honors level courses will receive a weight of 1.05. For example, a student who earns a final grade of 80 in an honors course will receive a weighted final grade of 84. Advanced Placement (AP) courses provide college-level studies for high school students who are ready to do college level work. AP courses are taught using college-level materials and strategies that will prepare students to take the required College Board Advanced Placement Examinations in May. Pelham Memorial High School currently offers our students 17 AP courses. Taking AP courses demonstrates to college admission officers that students have sought out the most rigorous coursework available to them. Dual enrollment courses (Syracuse University Project Advance -SUPA, State University of New York - SUNY, and Adelphi University) allow students to take an intermediate college level course in an area of special interest. These rigorous courses prepare students to transition from high school to college and to earn college credit. These courses are not open access as they adhere to the expectations and requirements set forth by the individual universities. For grading purposes, all Advanced Placement courses and Dual Enrollment courses will receive a weight of 1.10. For example, a student who earns a final grade of 80 in an AP or Dual Enrollment course will receive a weighted final grade of 88.

Characteristics of Successful Honors/AP/Dual Enrollment Students:

As you read through this list, place a check in the box of each characteristic that you feel confident you currently possess or that you feel you are close to mastering. Students who have checked the majority of the boxes will have an easier time thriving in an Honors/Advanced Placement/Dual Enrollment course. If you do not have many boxes checked, but still have a great desire to take one of these courses, speak with your school counselor or a teacher to develop an action plan to work towards acquiring the missing characteristic(s).

- **Have a genuine interest in the material:** Successful students are very often those who have a true love of or interest in the course subject and topics. These students seek out opportunities to learn more and advance their knowledge and understanding through additional exploration. These students are excited to arrive in class each day because the material is fascinating.
- **Self-motivated:** Self-motivated students are driven to do their best and don't have to be told to get work done, study, participate and engage. They stay on top of their work and don't fall behind in their classes. They often seek out their teachers for extra help and advice.
- **Organized:** Organized students have a clear path to success because they: know exactly what is due; know where to find all of their materials; can study from notes that are complete and accessible; and can budget their time well. Organized students don't often miss deadlines and don't come to class unprepared.
- **Hard-working:** Hard-working students don't mind rising up to a challenge and understand that they will have nightly homework that takes time and focus. They don't see homework and assessments as a chore or as an annoying burden; rather, they see them as opportunities for learning, growth, and showcasing their knowledge. These students must also be willing to accept and act on constructive criticism, and always strive to move from good to great.
- **Efficient:** Efficient students are able to manage all of their various classes, activities, and responsibilities. These students budget their time well and often set up schedules and to do lists that get completed. These students ask questions of their teachers when they are confused so as to avoid heading on the wrong track and wasting time. They should be on time for class and attend regularly. When they miss class, they are good at finding out what they missed and catching up in a timely manner.

Recommended Guidelines for Selecting Honors/AP/ Dual Enrollment Classes

These recommendations and guidelines are meant to aid students in making appropriate choices in the course selection process. We would counsel all students to have conversations with their classroom teachers and school counselor before and during the process. They will be valuable resources in the decision-making process because they know you well as a student and can speak with authority about the expectations and rigor of the course. While these courses are open to any student wishing to enroll (with the exception of the Dual Enrollment courses), parents and students should carefully consider the profile of students who typically experience success in Honors/AP/Dual Enrollment courses. Historically, successful students have a:

- Completion of prerequisite coursework (if applicable).
- Recommendation from the current classroom teacher in the specific subject area.

- Current cumulative average of 80% or higher in same-subject course or prerequisite course:
- Understanding of the demands of extracurricular activities, employment, community service, athletics and homework.
- Understanding that summer assignments are required to be thoroughly completed in many of the Advanced Placement courses.

We all hope that you continue to challenge yourself appropriately and avail yourself of all the resources available here at the high school to help you be successful.