

IOAPA: Challenging Courses for Academically Talented Iowa Students

The Belin Blank Center's Iowa Online AP® Academy (IOAPA) provides qualifying Iowa students free access to advanced coursework. For high school students, these courses are a part of the College Board's Advanced Placement® (AP) program, which allows high school students to complete college-level coursework. Moreover, AP credit is accepted or recognized by the three public universities in Iowa, as well as many colleges and universities throughout the country. This gives students the opportunity to earn college credit at a greatly reduced cost while still in high school. Additionally, taking at least 1 or 2 AP exams predicted higher grades in college and the completion of a 4-year degree, even when controlling for other factors (Beard et al., 2023). However, despite these benefits, rural schools can run into more barriers than urban and suburban schools when trying to expand their course offerings.

Offering advanced courses requires additional resources such as teachers, space, and training. Therefore, sometimes it is simply not possible to offer such advanced coursework to only a few students. IOAPA aims to reduce this burden by providing free access to nearly 30 online advanced courses for Iowa students who would not otherwise have access to these courses in their schools. In addition to Advanced Placement® courses for high school students, high school-level courses are also made available to eligible middle school students. Unlike courses offered by community colleges, IOAPA's AP courses introduce college-level material in a way that is approachable for a high school student. IOAPA also offers AP exam scholarships to IOAPA high school students, with preference given to students from rural schools. So cost is no longer a barrier to taking an AP exam and reaping the associated benefits.

More information about this program is on [our website](https://belinblank.org/ioapa) (belinblank.org/ioapa). There you can find our [course catalog](#), information about [registration](#), and [support materials](#). Additionally, if you need materials about IOAPA to share with other school staff, parents, and students, feel free to contact us directly at the email below. Registration for Fall 2024 has already begun and can also be completed from [our website](#). If you have any questions about your Iowa school's eligibility for IOAPA courses, email us at ioapa@belinblank.org.

Reference

Beard, J. J., Hsu, J., Ewing, M., & Godfrey, K. E. (2019). Studying the Relationships Between the Number of APs, AP Performance, and College Outcomes. *Educational Measurement, Issues and Practice*, 38(4), 42–54. <https://doi.org/10.1111/emip.12295>