

Admission into Honors & AP Courses

Introduction: Loyola High School offers a wide range of college-level courses including 30 Advanced Placement (AP) and 15 Honors courses in six different academic departments. These courses are designed to challenge students who've shown an aptitude and a strong desire to work harder and accomplish more in particular subjects. Students should expect a workload at least double that of regular courses and should also understand that they will be held to much higher standards of performance. Teachers are more demanding and have higher expectations of honors and AP students.

Loyola grades these courses on a 5.0 GPA scale. However, not all of these courses are given such a boost by all universities, so families should contact higher institutions directly to learn their policies.

Every Loyola student is eligible to compete for spots in honors and AP courses. Loyola attempts to offer as many sections as necessary to accommodate all qualified candidates. The admissions process for most of these classes is highly competitive and only those students who've demonstrated the highest aptitude, the most consistent performance, and a heartfelt desire to excel will be admitted. It's also important to note that Loyola does not "track" any of its students in any of its departments. Students in honors math, for example, must still compete for slots in honors math the following year. Entry is never guaranteed. Likewise, students in regular classes have opportunities to move into honors and AP courses each year if their performance and attitude merit.

The process for admission into these courses is highly structured and deliberate. Students and parents should regularly view the school's online calendar as well as the daily announcements to remain abreast of meetings, deadlines, and notices. They should also carefully read the course descriptions on the school's website.

Who decides: Usually, three teachers are involved in deciding which students are admitted into each honors and AP course – the student's current teacher in a particular subject area, the gaining teacher, and the department chairperson. When necessary, the counselor may also be consulted. The school's administration does not interfere with, nor intercede, in this process and is not involved with approving or denying candidates.

Informational Meetings: The process for admission begins in February and March when students meet with their counselors and teachers from all academic departments. In these meetings, students learn what courses are open to them, what the course expectations are, what the minimum requirements are to get in, and what they must do to be considered for admission. Additionally, certain courses hold their informational meetings to provide much more specific and detailed instructions. These meetings are usually held during lunch or recess and are advertised in the daily announcements. Many of these meetings are mandatory.

Pre-registration: Students pre-register in early March online through Naviance. The purpose of pre-registration is to survey students to discover which courses they're interested in and would like to compete for. Pre-registration for honors and AP courses is

unlimited – students may ask to be considered for as many honors and AP courses as they wish. While pre-registering, students often also need to rank their requests in order of preference. This last step is of paramount importance as receiving teachers look very closely at students who've indicated the highest level of interest in their class(es). Students who fail to complete pre-registration place themselves at an extreme disadvantage, and may not get into honors and AP courses the following year.

Data Gathering: After pre-registration, the departments gather data on all students who've indicated an interest. These data may include both objective and subjective factors such as student grades both within and outside particular departments, mid-term grades, cumulative GPAs, placement test scores, writing samples, entrance essays, HSPT and PSAT scores, and teacher recommendations. Since different departments have different requirements, students need to be aware of what's required. This period of data-gathering usually lasts four to six weeks.

Acceptance and Registration: In April, the school notifies students of acceptances for honors and AP courses via Canvas. Students may then formally register for courses online through PowerSchool. ***Students may only register for those restricted courses into which they are formally accepted.*** Being on a waiting list does not permit a student to register for a course. Students who fail to register on time may lose their spots in honors and AP courses.

Waiting & Not Accepted Lists: Not all students will be admitted into the honors and AP courses for which they request. If not initially accepted, students will be notified via Canvas if they have been placed on a *Waiting List*, or if they are *Not Accepted*. Being placed on the *Waiting List* signifies that a student may still be admitted into the course if a seat becomes available. If a seat opens, students queued from the *Waiting List* will be contacted to confirm their desire to still be admitted into the course. Students on the *Waiting List* must be patient as it takes time (sometimes months) to determine who may be added to the course rosters. Although it is rare for a seat to open after school begins, *Waiting Lists* will remain active until mid-September when academic schedules are locked for fall semester.

Students who are fully vetted through the pre-registration process and deemed not qualified to take a requested honors or AP course will be placed on the *Not Accepted* list and will not be considered for enrollment.

Conflicts and Changes: At times, students may not be able to take the restricted course(s) into which they've been accepted. This may be due to schedule conflicts, graduation requirements, or other unforeseen factors. In these instances, the student meets with the Assistant Principal for Academics to decide how best to proceed. Students "locked out" of a class through no fault of their own are automatically reconsidered for an equivalent course if available.