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# Interpretive Guide

For Summary of AP<sup>®</sup> Examination Scores  
Reported to Institutions

Institutional Edition

# 2019

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# Introduction

The *Summary of AP® Examination Scores Reported* is an annual report of students' AP Exam participation and performance, customized to present the scores sent by high school seniors graduating in 2019 to your institution. Charts and graphs provide at-a-glance information, and additional trend data show changes over a period of time.

The summary will provide you with information to support evidence-centered AP credit and placement policy decisions as well as data for managing enrollment and advancing student success. Strong, evidence-based AP credit and placement policies aid enrollment efficiency at institutions of higher education. These policies also clarify course articulation for first-time, first-year freshman students and transfer students.

You can help freshman students on your campus who do not send their qualifying AP Exam scores by emphasizing the value of sending AP scores on-time. Remember to direct students to [apstudents.collegeboard.org](http://apstudents.collegeboard.org) to send their scores, and tell your entering freshmen to add your institution's CEEB code to their answer sheets when they take their AP Exams.

## Who is represented in this report?

The report includes students attending both public and nonpublic high schools in the U.S. and abroad who indicated 2019 as their graduation year and who sent AP scores to your institution between March 1, 2019, and October 31, 2019, of their graduating year. The report includes all AP Exams taken by this population during high school.

Students may have selected your institution as a score recipient during their AP Exam registration, or they may have requested that a transcript be sent to your institution at a later date. For your institutional data to be as complete as possible, it is important for students to be encouraged to report their AP Exam scores to your institution. Providing students with your campus's College Board score reporting code upon admission allows them to submit their AP scores before they arrive on campus. This can help increase the volume of data available for your institution's annual *Summary of AP Examination Scores* report. It can also help provide your academic planning divisions with important information for assigning students credit and placement into first-year courses.

## Why did we include only these students?

An analysis of AP score-send data and National Student Clearinghouse data indicated that exam takers who send scores to an institution between March 1 and October 31 of their graduating year of high school have more than a 90% likelihood of matriculating at that institution. In order to align the data as closely as possible with students who are actually enrolled at your institution, exam takers who sent scores to your institution outside this period of time were not included.

### **What is the source for the data?**

The data were compiled from information provided by students during the exam registration process and from the official exam score results kept on file by the AP Program. The following characteristics are student-reported:

- Exam taker origin (in-state, out-of-state, non-U.S.)
- Gender
- Race/Ethnicity
- Parent education level

# Overview of Exam Taker Scores Reported

## Institution and Total Cohort Results

This page shows a demographic overview of the AP Exam takers and scores sent to your institution or system and all exam takers (total cohort).

The number and percent of exam takers and scores reported is included for each characteristic. Listed below each number is the percent change from last year's data, either negative or positive.

An AP Exam score of 3 is the minimum score for which the American Council on Education (ACE) and the College Board recommend granting credit and/or placement. For more information about credit recommendations, please visit: <https://aphighered.collegeboard.org/setting-credit-placement-policy/credit-granting-recommendations>

Total cohort includes all public and non-public high school students in the U.S. and abroad who indicated 2019 as their high school graduation year and who took an AP Exam at any point during high school.

Institution				Total Cohort			
# of Exam Takers Reported	% of Total Exam Takers Reported	# of Exam Scores Reported	# of Exam Takers Reported Scoring 3 or Higher	# of Exam Takers	% of Total Exam Takers	# of Exam Scores	# of Exam Takers Scoring 3 or Higher

The "In-State," "Out-of-State," and "Non-US" designations are based upon where a student tested in relation to your institution(s).

Hispanic: Includes all students who self-identified as Cuban; Mexican; Puerto Rican; or Another Hispanic, Latino, or Latin American on the ethnicity portion of the race/ethnicity questionnaire.

"Low-income" exam takers received a College Board fee reduction for at least one AP Exam taken at any point during high school.

All	Total
	Change from last year
Exam Taker Or gln*	In-State
	Change from last year
	Out-of-State
Gender	Non-US
	Change from last year
	Female
Race/Ethnicity*	Change from last year
	Male
	Change from last year
	American Indian
	Change from last year
	Asian
	Change from last year
	Black
	Change from last year
	Hispanic or Latino <sup>6</sup>
Change from last year	
SES	Pacific Islander
	Change from last year
	White
	Change from last year
	Two or more races
	Change from last year
	Other
Change from last year	
No Response	
Change from last year	
Low-income <sup>7</sup>	
Change from last year	

# Overview of Exam Taker Scores Reported

## Institution and Total Cohort Results

### Questions and Strategies

1. How might the academic strength of AP student enrollment data help validate recruitment effectiveness and institutional academic development? Have you used or considered using the AP Search tool?  
<https://collegeboardsearch.collegeboard.org/pastudentsrch/login.action>
2. How does the overall number of freshmen sending AP Exam scores compare with the number of entering freshmen in total and by major?
3. Does any demographic group display an unexpected number of AP Exam takers reporting exams?
4. How do this year's data compare to prior years in terms of AP performance and participation?
5. Have you studied persistence rates for students who earned AP Exam scores of 3, 4, or 5?
6. How do the low-income AP students compare to the total freshman enrollment? Are there trends over time?
7. Has the introduction of AP Computer Science Principles had an impact on the volume and diversity of students submitting AP Computer Science Exam scores to your institution?
8. Are students who send AP Capstone™ Seminar and Research exam scores to your campus candidates for your institution's honors college or program? Does your institution plan to follow their progress throughout their undergraduate experience?
9. AP Capstone: Seminar and Research—For more information about these courses and examinations, please visit <https://lp.collegeboard.org/ap-capstone>.
10. AP U.S. History, AP science courses, and AP world languages and culture courses have been redesigned to better align with teaching and learning at the college level. We invite faculty in these subject areas to review Advances in AP.  
<https://advancesinap.collegeboard.org/>

# Overview of Exam Taker Scores Reported

## Three-Year Trend

This page provides a three-year trend of the data that appear in the previous Overview of Exam Taker Scores Reported. In addition to the numbers for each year, the tables also provide a percent change from the previous year.

1,120 students who graduated in 2019 sent scores to this institution. This was a 4.4% increase from 2018.

1,073 students who graduated in 2018 sent scores to this institution. This was a decrease of 8.8% from 2017.

2019				2018				2017			
# of Exam Takers Reported	% of Total Exam Takers Reported	# of Exam Scores Reported	# of Exam Takers Reported Scoring 3 or Higher	# of Exam Takers Reported	% of Total Exam Takers Reported	# of Exam Scores Reported	# of Exam Takers Reported Scoring 3 or Higher	# of Exam Takers Reported	% of Total Exam Takers Reported	# of Exam Scores Reported	# of Exam Takers Reported Scoring 3 or Higher
1,120	100.0%	6,400	1,061	1,073	100.0%	6,309	1,022	1,176	100.0%	6,899	1,131
+4.4%		+1.4%	+3.8%	-8.8%		-8.6%	-9.6%	-10.5%		-11.8%	-10.8%

### Questions and Strategies

1. Have the number and percentage of students sending scores of 3, 4, or 5 changed over time?
2. How do the volume and percentage of scores sent by in-state students compare to those from out-of-state students? Does anything stand out?
3. Have there been fluctuations in the number and percentage of students by low-income status? Are there trends in the 2019 ethnicity figures? In what ways might these trends reflect outreach and recruitment efforts to diversify student enrollment?
4. Have there been significant changes in score report volume over time that can be explained by changes in your institution's AP credit policies or practices?

# Overview of Exam Taker Scores Reported

## Three-Year Trend: Exam Takers Reporting Scores of 3 or Higher

This page provides a three-year trend of reported scores of 3 or higher, segmented by the demographics that appear in the previous Overview of Exam Taker Scores Reported.

1,893 scores of 3 were sent to this institution by students who graduated in 2019. This is 29.6% of the 2019 high school graduates' scores sent to this institution.

1,805 scores of 3 were sent to this institution by students who graduated in 2018. This is 28.6% of the 2018 high school graduates' scores sent to this institution.

2019 # of Exam Scores Reported			2018 # of Exam Scores Reported			2017 # of Exam Scores Reported		
Scores of 3	Scores of 4	Scores of 5	Scores of 3	Scores of 4	Scores of 5	Scores of 3	Scores of 4	Scores of 5
1,893	1,927	1,326	1,805	1,980	1,318	1,909	2,161	1,625
29.6%	30.1%	20.7%	28.6%	31.4%	20.9%	27.7%	31.3%	23.6%

### Questions and Strategies

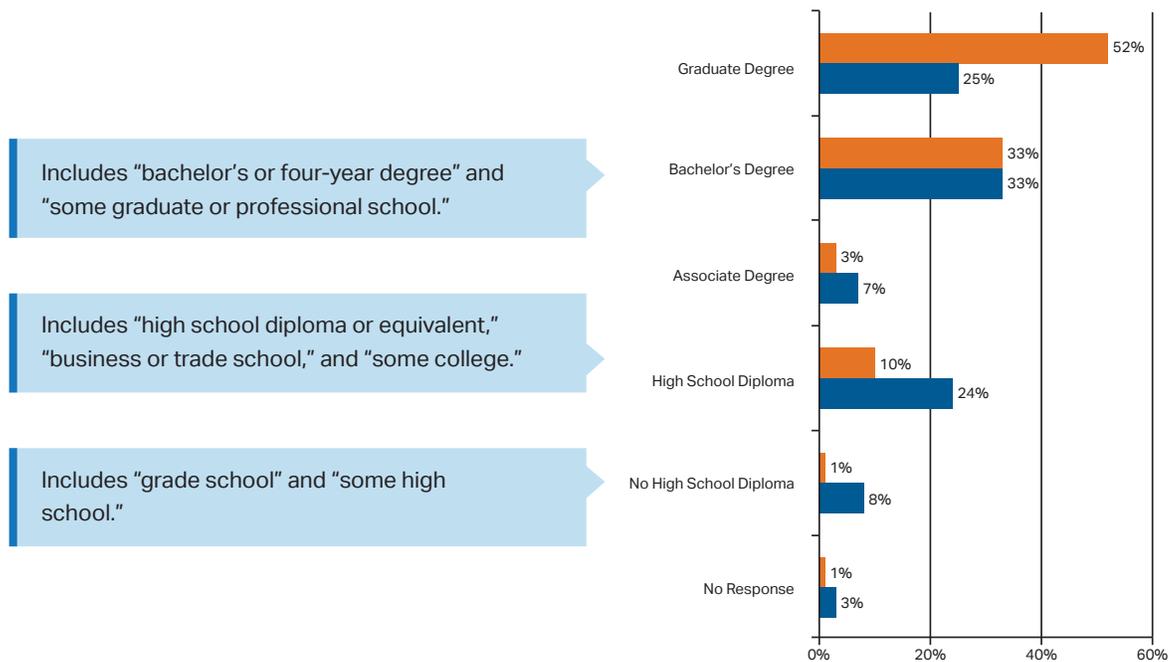
1. Have the number and percentage of scores of 3, 4, or 5 changed over time?
2. How do the volume and percentage of scores of 3, 4, or 5 sent by in-state students compare to those from out-of-state students? Does anything stand out?
3. Have there been fluctuations in the number and percentage of scores by low-income status? Are there trends in the 2019 ethnicity figures? In what ways might these trends reflect outreach and recruitment efforts to diversify student enrollment?
4. Have there been significant changes in score report volume over time that can be explained by changes in your institution's AP credit policies or practices?

# Overview of Exam Taker Scores Reported

## Parent Education Level and Low-Income Trends

This page shows percentages of exam takers by parent education level and low-income classification—two indicators of socioeconomic status. Institution, system/consortium, and total cohort data are compared (where applicable). See page 5 for definitions of “low-income” and “total cohort.”

“Parent Education Level” represents the highest education level reported by exam takers for either parent.

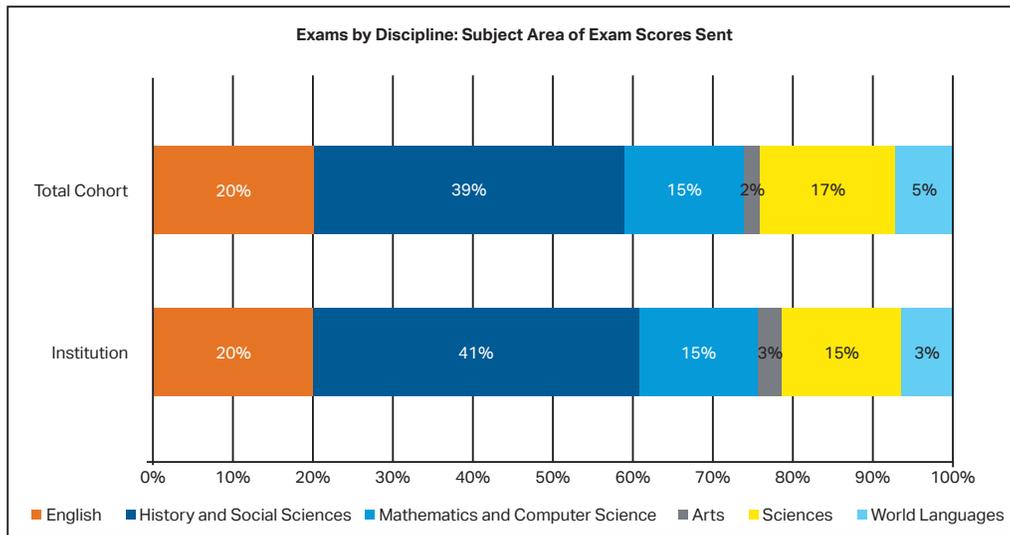


### Questions and Strategies

1. Do the data align with recruitment and enrollment goals for low-income and first-generation students?
2. Does the number of low-income and first-generation AP students align with appropriate support services available?
3. Can these data be used to advance access and enrollment equity for low-income and first-generation students?
4. Do the persistence rates and time to degree of these AP students compare with other student populations at your institution?

# Exams by Discipline

This page shows the percentage of scores in each discipline received by your institution or system compared to all exam takers (total cohort). The percentages represent exams rather than students.



## AP Exams are categorized as follows:

**Arts:** Art History, Music Theory, Studio Art: 2-D Design, 3-D Design, Drawing

**AP Capstone:** Research, Seminar

**English:** English Language and Composition, English Literature and Composition

**History and Social Sciences:** Comparative Government and Politics, European History, Human Geography, Macroeconomics, Microeconomics, Psychology, U.S. Government and Politics, U.S. History, World History

**Mathematics and Computer Science:** Calculus AB, Calculus BC, Computer Science A, Computer Science Principles, Statistics

**Sciences:** Biology, Chemistry, Environmental Science, Physics 1, Physics 2, Physics C: Electricity and Magnetism, Physics C: Mechanics

**World Languages and Cultures:** Chinese Language and Culture, French Language and Culture, German Language and Culture, Italian Language and Culture, Japanese Language and Culture, Latin, Spanish Language and Culture, Spanish Literature and Culture.

# Exams by Discipline

## Questions and Strategies

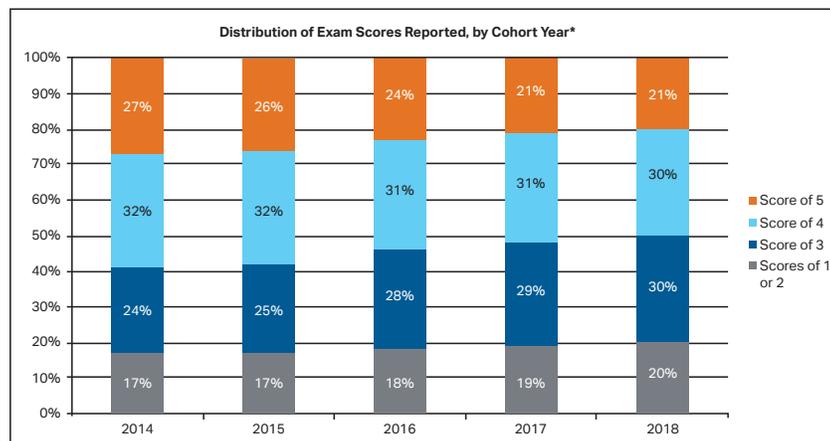
1. Do these percentages align with the proportions of students enrolled in each discipline or major at your institution(s)?
2. Are there opportunities for department-level recruiting? For example, mathematics and computer science departments may want to identify high-achieving AP students in those disciplines.
3. Is there a significant difference between the score-send volumes by discipline? If so, what might account for that difference? (For example, are there initiatives focused on liberal arts, STEM, fine arts, etc.?)
4. Do efforts focused on enrolling more students into the STEM fields align with outreach to AP students with scores of 3 or higher in exams related to the STEM areas?
5. How do the persistence rates of AP students in these disciplinary areas compare with the persistence rates of students without qualifying AP Exam performance?
6. Has your institution established credit policies for the AP Capstone Seminar and Research examinations?

# Distribution of Exam Scores Reported

## By Cohort Year, Five-Year Trend

This chart looks at public and nonpublic high school exam takers who were seniors in 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019, and reported scores to your institution. For each of these groups, or cohorts, the chart reports the percentage of exams taken throughout their high school that resulted in scores of 3, 4, or 5.

The American Council on Education (ACE) and the College Board recommend granting credit, placement, or both for scores of 3, 4, or 5. Research also correlates these scores to academic success in sequential courses: Students earning a 3 or higher on an AP Exam tend to earn higher GPAs and to graduate within 4-5 years at a higher rate than non-AP students.



### Questions and Strategies

1. Has a change in your AP volume affected the percentages of AP Exam scores of 3, 4, or 5?
2. Do the performance results exceed or fall short of expectations?
3. Do your policies for credit and advanced placement align with these trends? Are qualified AP students, as evidenced by achieving scores of 3, 4, or 5, recognized for their performance?
4. Has your institution or system conducted recent validity studies on students receiving credit by examination and/or advanced standing through performance on AP Exams?

<https://aces.collegeboard.org/aces-studies/ap-placement-validity-study>

For guidance on how to conduct an AP ACES™ study on your campus, please contact your regional College Board representative.

# Exam Participation & Performance

## Exam Scores, Gender, and Exam Taker Origin

These pages show exam taker data by exam, including:

- Number and percentage of exam takers earning a 3, 4, or 5 for each exam
- Number and percentage of male and female exam takers
- Number and percentage of in-state, out-of-state, and non-U.S. exam takers
- Number and percentage of in-state public school exam takers

Exam Name	# of Exam Takers Reported
Art History	47
% of exam takers reported	

A total of 47 exam takers reported AP Art History scores of 1–5 to this institution.

# of Exam Scores Reported			Exam Taker Gender		Exam Taker Origin			
3	4	5	Male	Female	In-State Exam Takers	Out-of-State Exam Takers	Non-U.S. Exam Takers	In-State Public School Exam Takers
19	11	8	11	36	24	20	3	18
40%	23%	17%	23%	77%	51%	43%	6%	38%

19 of the Art History exam takers reported a score of 3, representing 40% of the total number of Art History exams reported.

36 Art History exam takers (77% of total Art History exam takers) were females.

24 Art History exam takers (51% of total Art History exam takers) tested in the same state as the institution; 20 (43%) tested in a different state; 3 (6%) tested in a non-U.S. location.

18 Art History exam takers (38% of total Art History exam takers) tested at a public high school in the same state as the institution.

### Note about the “Totals” row appearing on page 15:

In the “Totals” row for the “# of Exam Scores Reported” columns, the percentages represent the number of exam scores of 3, 4, or 5 reported compared to the total number of exam scores of 1–5 reported. The total number of students who reported exam scores of 1–5 appears in the “# of Exam Takers Reported” column.

# Exam Participation & Performance

## Exam Scores, Gender, and Exam Taker Origin

### Questions About Your Credit/Placement Policy

1. Do your institutional AP credit/placement policies recognize all or most AP Exams?
2. What is the campus protocol for reviewing AP course/exam content and how often is it revised? Who is responsible for updating policy?
3. For exams in which credit/placement policies might require higher scores for academic credit, have research studies recently been conducted on the subsequent course performance of students earning AP scores of 3, 4, or 5? Visit [aphighered.org](http://aphighered.org) to find out more about conducting an AP research study on your campus, through sharing data with the College Board or by using the Admitted Class Evaluation Service™ (ACES) a free, confidential placement validity study (<https://aces.collegeboard.org/aces-studies/ap-placement-validity-study>).
4. If your AP credit/placement policy does not recognize some AP Exams for credit, how are those AP Exam scores considered? (For example, do some scores count as elective credit or introductory course exemption?)

### Exam Participation, Performance & Interpretation

AP Exam scores are a weighted combination of student scores on the multiple-choice and free-response sections.

The final score is on a five-point scale:

AP Exam Score	Recommendation	College Course Grade Equivalent
5	Extremely well qualified	A+ or A
4	Very well qualified	A-, B+, or B
3	Qualified	B-, C+, or C
2	Possibly qualified	
1	No recommendation	

Definitions of the knowledge and skills required to earn scores of 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on an AP Exam are derived from standard settings and college comparability studies. These processes ensure that AP Exam outcomes align with college faculty expectations. Committees of college faculty who teach the comparable college course develop detailed descriptions of the performance required to earn each score—these are called achievement-level descriptors (ALDs).

For more information, please reference the following exam scoring resource:

<https://aphighered.collegeboard.org/exams/scoring>

# Exam Participation & Performance

## Ethnicity and Low-Income Demographics

These pages show exam taker data by exam, including:

- Number and percentage of exam takers by race/ethnicity
- Number and percentage of low-income exam takers

Exam Name	# of Exam Takers Reported	
Art History	47	
% of exam takers reported		

Ethnicity/Race									
American Indian	Asian	Black	Hispanic or Latino	Pacific Islander	White	Two or More Races	Other	No Response	Low-Income
1	3	2	11	0	28	2	0	0	4
2%	6%	4%	23%	0%	60%	4%	0%	0%	9%

A total of 47 exam takers reported AP Art History scores of 1–5 to this institution.

11 of the exam takers who reported Art History scores were Hispanic or Latino, representing 23% of the total number of Art History exam takers.

4 Art History exam takers (9% of total Art History exam takers) were low income.

### Questions and Strategies

1. Are particular examinations associated with particular ethnicity distributions?
2. Do the higher volume exams taken correspond to a particular program at your institution? (For example, STEM, humanities, general education)
3. Are there significant differences between the score-send volumes by discipline within the gender and low-income categories?
4. How do efforts to recruit more students into the STEM fields align with outreach to diverse AP students who have earned scores of 3 and higher in related exams?

# High Schools with the Highest Volumes of Scores Reported

In-State, Out-of-State, and Non-U.S.

This table provides information about AP Exam takers from your top score-sending high schools. These high schools are organized into three groups: in-state, out-of-state, and non-U.S.

Students earning a score of 3+ on 3 or more exams have demonstrated high achievement.

“STEM” refers to the disciplines of science, technology, engineering and math. AP STEM exams include: Calculus AB, Calculus BC, Computer Science A, Computer Science Principles, Statistics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics 1, Physics 2, Physics C, and Environmental Science.

# of Exam Takers Reported	# of Exam Takers Reported: Change from last year	# of Exam Scores Reported	# of Exam Scores Reported: Change from last year	Mean Score	# of Exam Takers Reported Earning a Score of 3+ on 3 or More Exams	# of STEM Subject Exam Scores Reported	# of Traditionally Underrepresented Exam Takers Reported
13	+1	105	+4	3.65	12	27	11

13 students at this high school sent scores to the institution.

Those 13 students sent a total of 105 exam scores.

The “Traditionally Underrepresented” population consists of exam takers that meet either of the following qualifications:

1. Exam takers who indicated one of the following as their race/ethnicity during their exam registration:
  - a. Black or African American
  - b. American Indian or Alaska Native
  - c. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
2. Exam takers who indicated one or more of the following as their ethnicity during exam registration:
  - a. Cuban
  - b. Mexican or Mexican American
  - c. Puerto Rican
  - d. Other Hispanic, Latino, or Latin American
3. Exam takers who received a College Board fee reduction for exams taken at any point during high school.

Note: The column for “# of Traditionally Underrepresented Exam Takers Reported” is not included on the page showing non-U.S. high schools.

# High Schools with the Highest Volumes of Scores Reported

In-State, Out-of-State, and Non-U.S.

## **Questions and Strategies: In-State High Schools with the Highest Volumes of Scores Reported**

1. How many of the schools listed on this page are targeted in your recruiting efforts? Are there any unanticipated schools listed?
2. To what extent have you focused outreach activities on these schools to foster college readiness? (For example, college fairs, parent info events, faculty connections.)
3. How does your AP credit/placement policy communicate AP student recognition and value? (For example, offering AP students opportunities for enrollment in honors programs, learner communities, or qualification for scholarships.)

## **Questions and Strategies: Out-of-State High Schools with the Highest Volumes of Scores Reported**

1. Which of the schools listed on this page are targeted in your recruiting efforts? Are there any unanticipated schools listed?
2. How do the data on AP students submitting scores from out-of-state high schools compare to the data for students submitting scores from in-state high schools?
3. Are you using the AP Course Ledger ([collegeboard.org/apcourseledger](https://collegeboard.org/apcourseledger)) to validate the AP curriculum approved for these schools?

## **Questions and Strategies: Non-U.S. High Schools with the Highest Volumes of Scores Reported**

1. Which of the schools listed on this page are targeted in your recruiting efforts? Are there any unanticipated schools listed?
2. How do the data on AP students submitting scores from non-U.S. high schools compare to the data on students submitting scores from in-state high schools?

# Research Exploration & Participation

## Next Steps

Using the information gathered above, create an action plan for making meaningful use of the AP data to support evidence-centered AP credit/placement policies and effective enrollment management. Enlist the participation of campus colleagues and departments and take advantage of the resources and support provided by the AP Program.

### Resources

Visit [aphighered.org](http://aphighered.org) to access materials and information.

1. Review course and exam descriptions to determine alignment with your corresponding courses.
2. Order additional copies of your institution or system Summary of AP Scores Reported.
3. Review recent research on the performance of AP students in college:  
<http://research.collegeboard.org/programs/ap>
4. Get faculty more involved in AP by participating in AP Exam scoring events:  
<https://aphighered.collegeboard.org/get-involved-in-ap/ap-reader>
5. Find out more about conducting AP research studies on your campus:  
<https://aces.collegeboard.org/aces-studies/ap-placement-validity-study>

Please contact your regional College Board representative for more information and guidance.