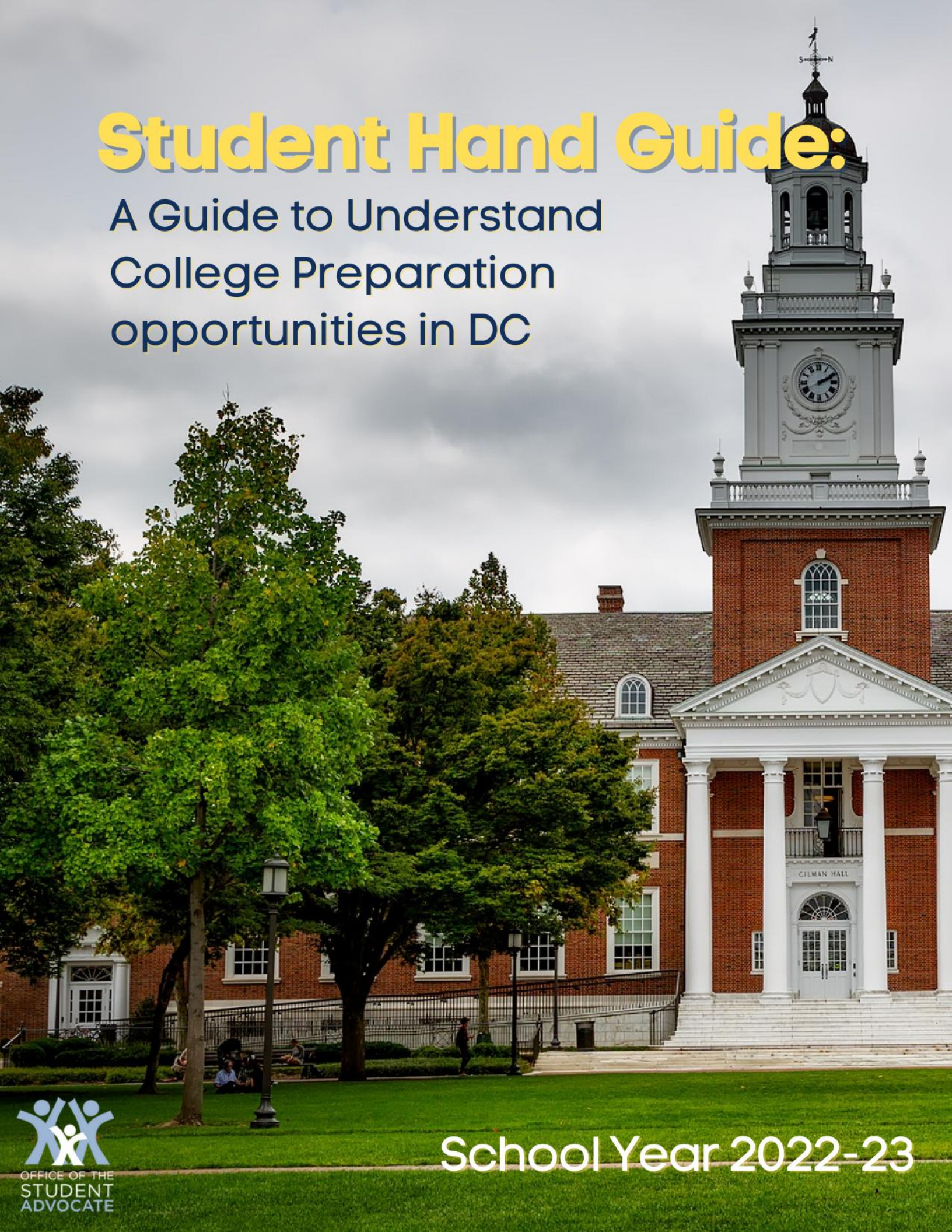


# Student Hand Guide:

A Guide to Understand  
College Preparation  
opportunities in DC



School Year 2022-23

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# Why do challenging classes matter ?

## INTRO

**Taking harder classes increases your chances of future success, whether in your education and career.**

Early in your education, students do not often have many options on what classes can be taken. As you progress through school, your ability to choose from a variety of courses increases. There is an expansive amount of courses available to you as a student here in DC and as you progress academically, you will have more options to pursue what you are most passionate about. From Advanced Placement (AP) classes to Career and Technical Education (CTE) programming, there is an extensive list of options for you to study.

### Did you know?

Colleges rank the **difficulty of your classes** as the 3rd most important factor in the admissions process.



### Fun Fact:

Having a Bachelor's Degree can **increase** your lifetime **income** on average by:

**68.5%**

High School Diploma



Bachelor's Degree

Source: Social Security Administration

Many courses are available to prepare you for college and your career. If you want to best position yourself for college acceptance, honors, AP, International Baccalaureate (IB) and Dual Enrollment courses are all available for you. These courses focus on introducing you to college level courses while introducing you to diverse fields of study.

**If you feel like these classes aren't for you, you are not alone. These classes are made for high school students to succeed. YOU are capable of succeeding in those classes!**

You can take these courses by request, even if you haven't taken courses like them before. This guide will help your learning be exactly where you want it to be.

# How do I find the right course?



## Fun Fact:

You can take an AP test without taking the class during the school year. This means you can self study for tests your school doesn't offer or tests you feel you can complete on your own!

Find Exam dates here:  
<https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/exam-administration-ordering-scores/exam-dates>

KNOW  
YOUR  
OPTIONS  
STEP 1:

**DCPS & Charter high schools offer a variety of courses. Before you can make an informed choice, it is important to know what courses are available to you.**

Finding the perfect class to take can be a difficult task, especially when there are so many to choose from! On the next page (p.4) is a course selection wheel to help you understand your options. This wheel is organized by subject area and is designed to help you find what interests you. Start with broad subjects and narrow those down based on what interests you the most.

**The Course Selection Wheel**



p. 3

Once you find a course that interests you, you can reach out to your school's guidance counselor to learn more. Some course descriptions may even be on your school's website. Detailed descriptions of AP and IB classes are available online.

## What if I am not sure what course I want to take?

High school students should use their time in high school to explore new subject areas and potential professions. The more you explore now, the more guided you will be after graduating.

### Best Case Scenario:

You select a new course / career field that you learn to love. You can now start to plan for your future after receiving your diploma.

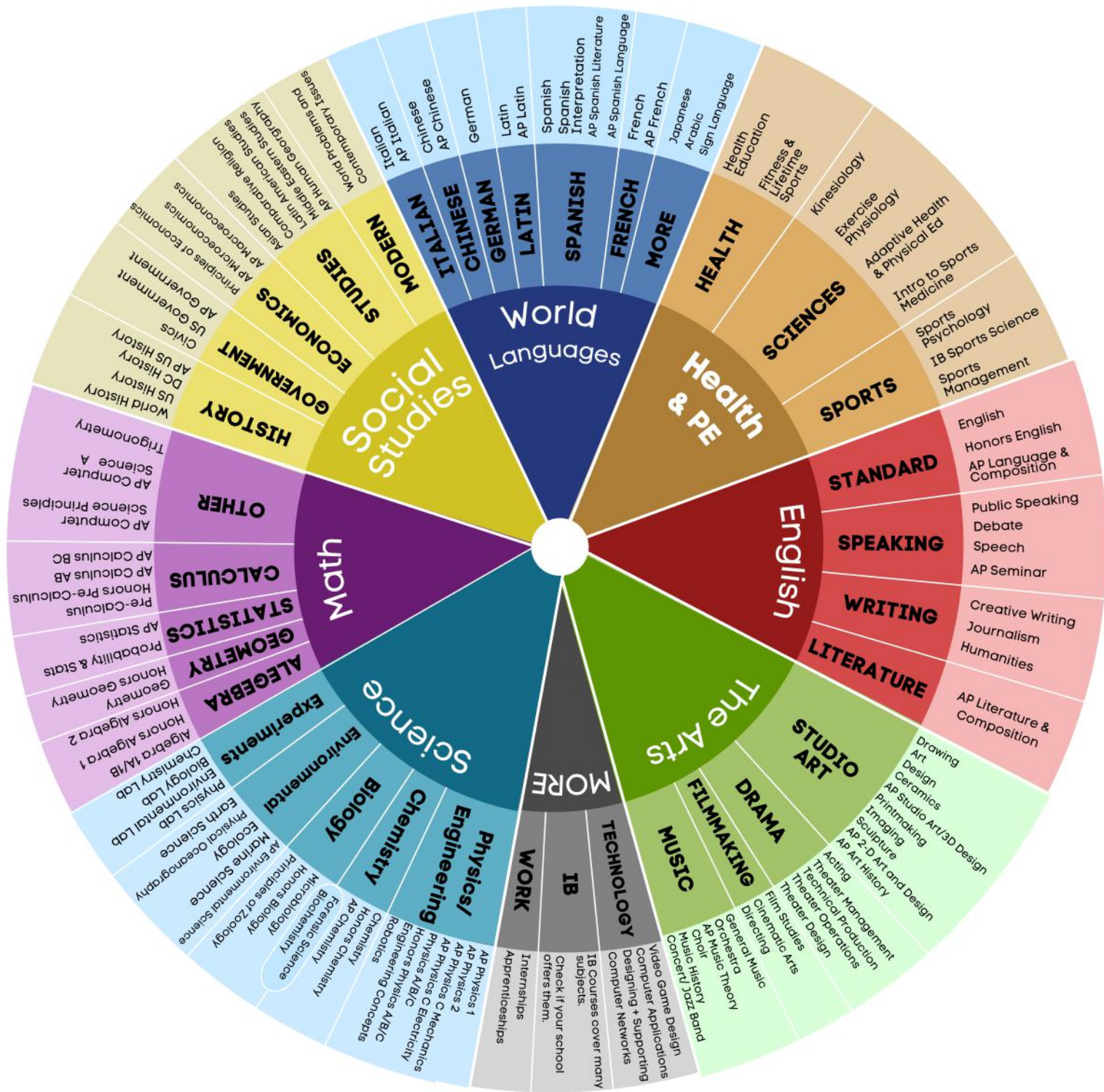
- You know what you want to study in college.
- You know what career field you want to prepare for.

### Worst Case Scenario:

You learn that a particular class, subject, or career field is not for you.

- You know what courses/majors to avoid in college.
- You know what career programs to avoid.

# Course Selection Wheel



## Beyond the Wheel

### What if your school does not have the class you want?

There are city wide programs that allow you to explore classes and career fields. The following pages will highlight the many of the programs available to all DC public and charter school students.

# Where can these courses take me in the future?

Whether you've figured out what you want to take, or you need a little more evidence that it's worth it, we're going to be talking about the outcomes of your education.



## KNOW YOUR OPTIONS

### STEP 1:

**Not sure what to study? You are not alone! It is understandable if you are unsure what you want to study or what job you want to pursue.**

Your time in high school should be used to explore areas of study you are passionate about. High school should be your opportunity to learn what you like and what you do not like.

Overall, the course selection wheel on the previous page contains an incredible amount of skills and those skills can translate to a great educational opportunity or career.

If you find any of these careers interesting, check the course wheel to see what classes you can take to help develop the skills you need!

## Fun Fact:

College Admissions offices ranked grades in all courses & grades in college prep courses as the #1 and #2 most important factors in admissions.



## What should I do?

When looking for what to do now or in the future, you can use what you know to find the rest!



### What interests you?

What subjects or topics most interest you? More than likely, there are courses that align with what you have interest in.



### What classes do you love?

look at what majors you can study that connect with your interests. Keep studying what you love.

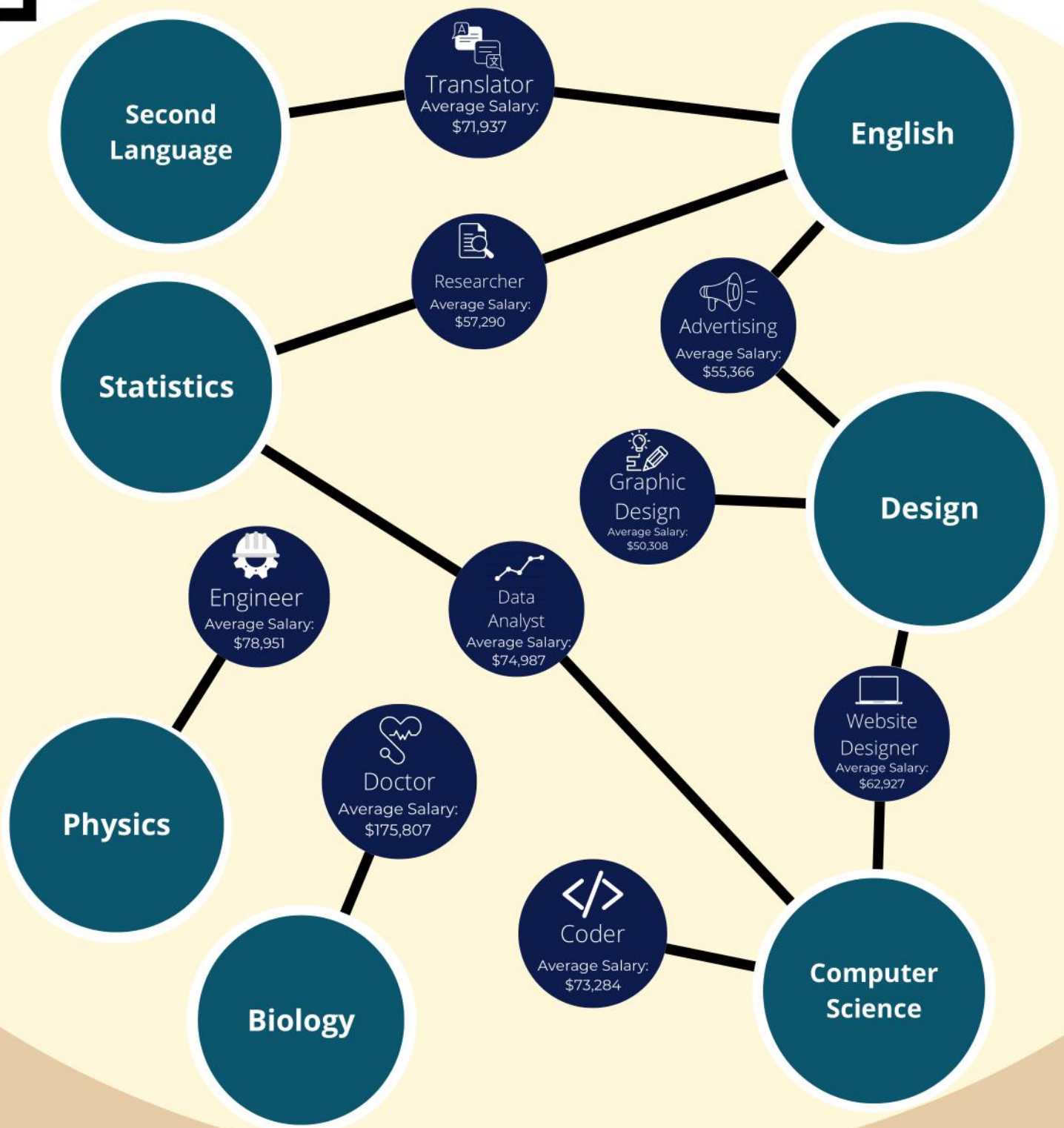


### Are there careers you want to learn more about?

See what skills that career requires and you can work backward from there!

# Career Mapping

Many jobs relate directly to the classes you can take now. Take a look below to see what skills you need to get ahead in a career!



# What are AP, IB and Dual Enrollment Courses?

If you more challenging classes that will make you more competitive for college admissions, then consider taking **Advanced Placement (AP)**, **International Baccalaureate (IB)**, or **Dual Enrollment** programs.



**KNOW YOUR OPTIONS**  
**STEP 1:**

## Benefits

There are benefits to completing more challenging classes. In addition to earning credit towards graduation, completing **AP**, **IB** and **Dual Enrollment** classes will get you college credit too.

Taking **Dual Enrollment** classes also allows you to take classes on college campuses.

Completing **AP classes** can boost your GPA beyond a 4.0. Grading in AP classes follow a 5.0 scale. This makes your application look much more favorable!

Unlike AP classes, your **IB classes** can work toward an **IB degree** that grants you 30 college credits.

	AP Courses	IB Courses	Dual Enrollment
College Credit	Pass the AP Test	Pass the IB Tests	Pass the Course
Location	Your School	Your School	At a College or Online
Test Based?	Credit determined by test score	Credit determined by test score	Credit based on Grade
Who runs it?	CollegeBoard	International Baccalaureate	DCPS and Local Colleges
Extra Information	Colleges accept different scores for credit. Check in advance uses the AP website.	All tests are taken for an IB Degree that counts for one year worth of college credit.	Dual Enrollment is free and gives access to college experience and resources.



# Why take Advanced Placement classes?



## Your AP Journey

Here are the steps you should follow when registering and completing AP classes at your school:



Learn more by clicking the links below or find here:

<https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/what-is-ap>

KNOW  
YOUR  
OPTIONS  
STEP 1:

## Advanced Placement (AP):

### What are AP classes and where are they available?

Advanced placement (AP) courses provide students with college-level classes to high school students. All AP students are required to take an exam. Students may earn college credits after passing the AP exam.

Research shows that students who complete AP courses are more prepared for college than students who don't take AP, regardless of their exam score. AP students are more likely to enroll and stay in college, do well in their classes, and graduate in four years.

### Taking AP classes can help:

1. Discover Your Passion
2. Develop College Skills
3. Discover Your Passion
4. Boost Your GPA

## Sign Up for the Class

1

See what courses is available at your school, choose the course you're interested in, and talk to your teacher or school counselor about signing up.

## Take the Course

2

Join your class in the College Board's online system. Work hard in your class. Practice for the exam with free online resources:

## Take the AP Exam

3

Register for your exam by the fall deadline. Exams are administered in May. When you take the test, you'll have a chance to choose a college or scholarship program to send your scores to.

## Send your Scores

4

Check your scores when they are released in early July. You can send additional scores—or send scores for the first time if you haven't sent any yet.

# What is the International Baccalaureate program?



KNOW  
YOUR  
OPTIONS  
STEP 1:

## International Baccalaureate (IB):

### What is the IB Program & where is it available?

IB school networks provide students with an education resulting in an internationally recognized diploma in addition to their local school diploma. The IB program is now connected to more than 3,700 schools in 145 countries.

IB programming is centered around creating a more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

3,700+ Schools



145+ Countries

Once you find a course that interests you, you can reach out to your school's guidance counselor to learn more. Some course descriptions may even be on your school's website. Detailed descriptions of AP and IB classes are available online.

## What schools have an IB program?

IB programming is available starting from elementary ages to high school students at DCPS and public charter schools.

Below is a list of schools with IB Programs:

### DC Public Schools (DCPS)

Learn more about the schools [here](#).

#### Elementary Schools:

- Shepherd Elementary School
- Turner Elementary School
- Thomson Elementary School

#### Middle Schools:

- Deal Middle School
- Eliot-Hine Middle School

#### High Schools:

- Benjamin Banneker High School
- Eastern High School

### Public Charter Schools (PCS)

Learn more about the schools [here](#).

#### Elementary Schools:

- Washington Yu Ying PCS
- Mary McLeod Bethune Day Academy PCS
- Friendship PCS - Woodridge (Elementary)

#### Middle Schools:

- Mary McLeod Bethune Day Academy PCS
- Friendship PCS - Woodridge (Middle)
- District of Columbia International (Middle)

#### High Schools:

- District of Columbia International High School

# Why take Dual Enrollment classes?



KNOW  
YOUR  
OPTIONS  
STEP 1:

## Dual Enrollment:

### What is Dual Enrollment and why should I sign up?

Eligible high school students have the opportunity to take **college level** classes typically on a college campus. Students who complete Dual Enrollment courses earn both **high school & college credits**.

### Benefits of Dual Enrollment:

- Introduce students to the college experience;
- Offer students classes not available at their home schools;
- Allows students to earn college credits for free;
- Students can explore various careers and majors before enrolling in college full time.
- Students may be able to transfer credits earned to a two-year or four-year institution;



## Fun Fact:

The average **total cost per credit hour** at a public or private 4-year university can range from **\$1,099/credit hour** to **\$2,195/ credit hour**.

**Dual Enrollment** courses are **FREE!**

Source: [Education Data Initiative](#)

## Available Programs:

Each university sets their own admissions criteria and selection process for dual enrollment students. You can click the links below to learn more:

1. [DCPS Private University Dual Enrollment](#)
  - Open to **DCPS students**
  - **University partners include:** American University, Catholic University, Georgetown University, George Washington University and Howard University
2. [OSSE Consortium Dual Enrollment](#)
  - a. Open to **DCPS & Charter school students**
  - b. **University partners include:** American University, Bard College, Bay Atlantic University, Catholic University, Marymount University, Montgomery College, Northern Virginia Community College, Trinity Washington University, University of DC.
3. [UDC - CARE Dual Enrollment](#)
  - Open to **DCPS & Charter school students**

# How do I ask to take this course?



SELF  
ADVOCACY  
STEP 2:


You know what class you want, now let's ask for it.

How to get started:

## Email Your Counselor

Start by emailing your assigned guidance counselor.

If you are able to schedule your classes in advance, go for that and you likely won't need to do much more work. But if your year has already begun or class registration is closed, then you'll have to reach out to let the school know what you want.

Sending an email to a your counselor or dean is always a good start. To the right is a template you can use to send: 



## Not sure who to ask?

Ask a teacher or advisor to connect you with your assigned counselor.

# How do I get support when things get difficult?



## BRING YOUR FRIENDS!

If you plan to take a difficult class, ask your friends if they would take it too! Having someone you can rely on in times of need can increase your success in hard classes. If no one is up for it, that's okay too. It's easy to make new connections when you're taking a class with people that share your interests!

While students are expected to master difficult material, we are not often taught how to deal with the stress that mastery causes. Where to get help when we need it. It is important to who and what resources are available to support your needs.

### It's always okay to ask for help!

**Remember:** There are adults that want you to succeed. If you feel overwhelmed, reach out to your teacher for support. If necessary, ask if tutoring supports or study groups are available for your class. Ask if there are videos, websites, or other resources that can help you practice challenging skills.

Counselors and Advisors are a great resource. In some situations, they can help make arrangements with your teachers to make up missing work. If reaching out feels intimidating, use the template on the right to get the conversation started! →



## Did you know?

Numerous research based theories show that a student's ability to establish and maintain **positive relationships with peers** can play an important role in predicting **academic success**.

# Resources by Section

## Why do challenging classes matter?

- **Social Security Administration:** <https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/research-summaries/education-earnings.html>

## How do I find the right course?

- **AP Exam Dates:** <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/exam-administration-ordering-scores/exam-dates>
- **Zip-recruiter Salary Data Source :** <https://www.ziprecruiter.com/Salaries/JULY-Salary>

## What are AP, IB and Dual Enrollment Courses?

### Advanced Placement (AP):

- **College Board: What is AP?:** <https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/what-is-ap>
- **Sign Up for the Class:** <https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/how-to-sign-up-ap-course>
- **Take the Course:** <https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/course-index-page>
- **Take the AP Exam:** <https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/ap-exams-overview>
- **Send your Scores:** <https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/getting-credit-placement>

### International Baccalaureate (IB):

- **(DCPS) IB Programs:** <https://dcps.dc.gov/ib>
- **(Charter) IB Programs:** [https://dcpcsb.org/school-profiles?name=&field\\_school\\_characteristics%5B%5D=102&pmf\\_asc=&pmf\\_des=&pmf=2&items\\_per\\_page=24](https://dcpcsb.org/school-profiles?name=&field_school_characteristics%5B%5D=102&pmf_asc=&pmf_des=&pmf=2&items_per_page=24)

### Dual Enrollment:

- **Cost of College Class/Credit:** <https://educationdata.org/cost-of-a-college-class-or-credit-hour#:~:text=The%20average%20total%20cost%20per%20credit%20hour%20at%20a%20public,in%20tuition%20per%20credit%20hour.>
- **OSSE Dual Enrollment Opportunities:** <https://osse.dc.gov/page/osse-dual-enrollment-opportunities>
- **UDC College Access & Readiness for Everyone (CARE) Program:** <https://www.udc.edu/cc/cc/care/>

## Self Advocacy

- **Altermatt, E. R. (2016). Academic support from peers as a predictor of academic self-efficacy among college students. Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice, 21(1), 21–37.** <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1521025116686588>

## Contact Us:

For additional information, or for any questions related to your course options, please contact us using any form of communication listed below:

- ☎ **Phone:** (202)741-4692
- ✉ **Email:** [student.advocate@dc.gov](mailto:student.advocate@dc.gov)
- 🌐 **Website:** <https://studentadvocate.dc.gov/>



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