

ACCELERATED OPTIONS: ACCELERATING SUCCESS FOR OREGON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Overview

Accelerated Options enable high school students to participate in college-level coursework and earn college credit. All seven Oregon University System (OUS) institutions offer these opportunities to high school students across the state, and **44% of all newly admitted OUS freshman brought in some form of early college credit in 2011-12**. Accelerated Options **increase rates of college entry, academic success in college, and college retention rates**, and have the potential to keep Oregon's top performing high school graduates in state. As part of ongoing efforts to improve college preparation, and support students moving through the system to graduation, system and policy leaders see Accelerated Options programs as one of the **important and effective strategies necessary to reach the state's 40-40-20 goals for educational attainment and economic prosperity**. The OUS Chancellor's Office works on behalf of students to expand access to Accelerated Options, ensure that credits earned are consistently applied toward degrees from OUS campuses, and research the effectiveness of these programs on college success.

Accelerated Options Lower Tuition Costs, Prepare Students for College

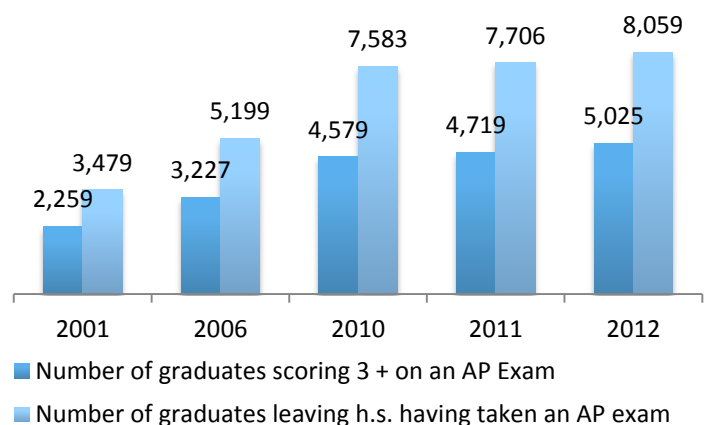
Oregon secondary and postsecondary institutions jointly share responsibility for the success of Accelerated Options provided in high schools. Accelerated Options are part of Oregon's agenda to increase the rigor of the Oregon Diploma and align standards with postsecondary academic requirements. Many options offer some form of tuition assistance and allow students to affordably start taking college credits. A combination of school districts, students, universities, and grants helps provide financial assistance for Accelerated Options for students. As a lower-cost way of getting credits, Accelerated Options programs bring **tuition savings** in college as students can move ahead well into their freshman year, or in some cases, even skip freshman year, saving thousands of dollars in tuition, and potentially on student loans as well.

The Oregon University System has researched the effectiveness of Dual Credit programs on college participation, retention, and student success for Oregonians. A 2010 OUS study showed **that students who participate in Dual Credit programs are more successful in college**. They:

- Have higher college participation rates of 81.4% compared to 72.6% of students who did not participate;
- Continue on to their second year of college at higher rates, 87% for those who took Dual Credit versus 79.9% for those who did not;
- Earn a higher GPA in their freshman year of college of 3.13 versus 2.97 for those who did not participate; and
- Accumulate more college credit by the second year in college of 61.3 credits on average versus 49.8 credits for those who did not participate in Dual Credit.

The study also verified that **Dual Credit instruction prepares students for subsequent college coursework just as effectively as college-situated instruction**, and is a model for such studies nationwide.

Figure A: Growth in AP participation and success, Oregon public high school students



Source: AP Report to the Nation, College Board, 2013

A 2013 College Board report shows encouraging news of increases in AP participation in Oregon. Between 2006 and 2012, the number Oregon public high school graduates who took an AP exam, including low-income and minority students, increased by almost 55%. The number of students who achieved grades of 3, 4, and 5 (5 is the top grade) increased by 56% in that same period (see Figure A). Proportionally more graduates who took AP exams are from low-income backgrounds or are students of color: 21% of the students who took the exam in 2012

were low-income, compared with 11% in 2006, and Hispanic/Latino students grew from 4.7% to 10.1% of those who took exams in this 6-year period.

Aligned Course Standards Help Students Earn Credits

OUS and Oregon community colleges have worked to ensure that students receive consistent treatment of their Dual Credit, Advanced Placement (AP), and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses across higher education institutions in the state. These programs have specific, statewide standards that are established by national or international academic organizations that define the programs' instructor qualifications and curriculum. These **standards ensure the rigor of the courses**, which is reinforced for AP and IB courses by the external assessment provided by the exams. For Dual Credit programs, 4 OUS institutions and 17 community colleges agreed to adopt the national standards and program approval process; and for both AP and IB, all OUS institutions and community colleges award students the same number of courses for a given score on an AP or IB exam. In addition to the formal Dual Credit, AP, and IB programs, Accelerated Options programs include the Oregon-specific Expanded Options program.

Programs Delivered Statewide at OUS Campuses

A variety of OUS programs allow high school students to take college coursework, along with college students, via distance learning or on an OUS campus. OUS dual credit programs also offer students college-level courses taught in high schools by qualified college- or university-approved high school teachers. Most of these programs offer concurrent high school and college credits, reduced tuition rates, and support services such as advising. Examples include:

- **Eastern Oregon University:** The Eastern Promise is an innovative regional collaboration between Blue Mountain Community College, EOU, Treasure Valley Community College, the InterMountain Education Service District and school districts in Eastern Oregon. It is significantly expanding the opportunities for rural students to participate in college-level courses and earn credits or certificates while in high school.
- **Portland State University:** The Challenge Program is a concurrent enrollment program that teaches PSU courses at high school sites in 7 school districts to nearly 1,000 high school seniors, providing them an opportunity to earn college credit. The program emphasizes close interaction between faculty and high school instructors, including training, orientation, site visits, and professional development workshops.
- **Oregon Institute of Technology:** The Oregon High School Transition Program allows high school students to get a head start by taking appropriate 100 and 200 level courses on campus, while the Advance Credit Program partners with local high school instructors to teach Oregon Tech coursework in high school.
- **Oregon State University:** College for High School Students provides opportunities for high school juniors and seniors to take classes on-line with other OSU students through OSU Extended Campus. Students can choose from over 40 college classes in a wide range of subjects.
- **Southern Oregon University:** Advanced Southern Credit Program offers university courses taught in the high schools by high school faculty; and the Early Entry Program, offers concurrent high school and college coursework on the SOU campus.
- **University of Oregon:** The Pre-baccalaureate Program allows talented and motivated high school students from any geographic region to enroll in regular UO classes; and Duck Link allows select high school students living in Lane County to enroll in up to 8 credits per quarter at a reduced fee rate.
- **Western Oregon University:** the High School Dual Credit option is offered to schools in the campus region.