

DURHAM ACADEMY

COLLEGE PROFILE 2024–2025

The purpose of a Durham Academy education is to prepare each student to live a **MORAL**, **HAPPY** and **PRODUCTIVE** life.



FOUNDED IN 1933	PRE-K–GRADE 12 ENROLLMENT 1,253 students	EDUCATIONAL MODEL independent, all genders, nonsectarian	
UPPER SCHOOL STUDENTS 458 <i>115 in Class of 2025</i>	PRE-K–GRADE 12 STUDENTS OF COLOR 49% <i>49% in Upper School</i>	14 AVERAGE UPPER SCHOOL CLASS SIZE	7:1 RATIO OF STUDENTS TO FACULTY IN UPPER SCHOOL
\$4.8 Million+ TOTAL TUITION ASSISTANCE AWARDED	AVERAGE UPPER SCHOOL FACULTY TENURE 11 Years	UPPER SCHOOL FACULTY WITH ADVANCED DEGREES 86%	

STRATEGIC VISION

Prepare our students for life; meet the needs of our students; and innovate more boldly — with a foundation of broadening and deepening our work with diversity, equity and engagement.

56 STUDENT-ATHLETES PLAYING IN COLLEGE <i>over the last 5 years</i>	National Champions NATIONAL SPEECH & DEBATE ASSOCIATION PUBLIC FORUM DEBATE <i>2024</i>	Character Development UNIQUE TO DURHAM ACADEMY
37 CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIPS <i>in the last 5 years</i>	Top-20 finishes NATIONAL SPEECH & DEBATE ASSOCIATION NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP <i>12 consecutive years (2013–2024)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cavalier Kickoff (Grades 9-11) • Senior Challenge/Service Challenge • Special Olympics Buddies • 4-year Advisory Programming



Michael Ulku-Steiner
Head of School

Kristen Klein
Associate Head of School

Lanis Wilson
Upper School Director

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Senior Dean of College Counseling

Christopher Briggs
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Katie McEnroe
Dean of College Counseling

Lori Reade
Assistant Dean of College Counseling
Career Development Counselor

Nancy Swain
College Counseling Assistant

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

In the interest of offering our students the most relevant and enriching education possible, Durham Academy has moved beyond the Advanced Placement program in favor of our own rigorous Advanced (ADV) and College Level (CL) courses, better aligning our academic program with our strategic vision of preparing students for life. Beginning in the 2024-2025 school year, DA's most rigorous courses are designated Advanced (ADV), and College Level (CL). Members of the Class of 2025 may have AP, CL, and ADV courses on their transcripts.

ADV courses cultivate skills that extend well beyond those set by the College Board by emphasizing depth over breadth, student inquiry, and authentic demonstrations of learning. CL courses include former AP courses that meet or exceed the rigor of an introductory-level college course.

While DA no longer offers AP courses, the school will continue to offer exams and work with students whose college experience would benefit from taking those exams.

OUR MOST CHALLENGING COURSES

ADV COURSES

- ADV Ancient Technologies*
- ADV Art History: Aesthetics and Theory
- ADV Biology**
- ADV Biotechnology
- ADV Calculus: Differential
- ADV Calculus: Integral
- ADV Calculus: Multivariable 1
- ADV Calculus: Multivariable 2
- ADV Chemistry**
- ADV Chinese: Advanced Studies I
- ADV Chinese: Advanced Studies II
- ADV Community-Based Research
- ADV Constitutional Law
- ADV CS II: Data Structures and Algorithms**
- ADV CS III: Advanced Data Structures
- ADV CS III: Machine Learning and AI
- ADV Data Science
- ADV English Lang: American Literature and Rhetoric
- ADV English Lit: Contemporary Global Issues in Fiction
- ADV English Lit: Love & Money
- ADV English Lit: Medieval Literatures
- ADV English Lit: Postmodernism
- ADV English Lit: Race and Identity in America
- ADV English Lit: Shakespeare
- ADV English Lit: Women's Literature
- ADV Francophone Literatures: Social Discontent**
- ADV French Language: Francophone News and Stories**
- ADV Geometries
- ADV Historical Approaches to Women and Gender*
- ADV History of Durham
- ADV Imagined Communities: Nations and Nationalism
- ADV Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia:
 - The Cold War and its Legacy in East Asia
- ADV Latin: Cultural Themes in Classical Latin

- ADV Latin: Cultural Themes in Post-Classical Latin
- ADV Mathematical Modeling
- ADV Medicine and Malady
- ADV Pathway Scholars
- ADV Physics: Electricity and Magnetism
- ADV Physics: Mechanics
- ADV Psychology**
- ADV Research
- ADV Revolutions
- ADV Spanish Language 1: Global Challenges
- ADV Spanish Language 1: Reshaping Communities
- ADV Spanish Language 2: Echoes of Empires
- ADV Spanish Language 2: From Lyrics to Language
- ADV Spanish Literature: The Golden Age
- ADV Spanish Literature: The Latin American Boom
- ADV Sustainability: Taking Action
- ADV Thesis**
- ADV U.S. History since 1865
- ADV U.S. History to 1865

CL COURSES

- CL Calculus 1
- CL Calculus 2
- CL English Lit: Banned Books
- CL English Lit: Contemporary Fiction & Nonfiction
- CL English Lit: Escapist Literature
- CL English Lit: Ghost Stories
- CL English Lit: Issues in Modern America
- CL English Lit: Outlaw Ocean
- CL English Lit: Sci-Fi and Dystopian Fiction
- CL Environmental Science**
- CL Statistics 1
- CL Statistics 2

** not offered in 2024-2025; offered again in 2025-2026*
bolded titles represent yearlong courses



Find the complete list of Upper School course offerings at url.da.org/curriculum-guide-2425

GRADING SCALE

Grades are based on a 100-point scale. GPAs are **unweighted** and based on a 4.33 scale. Cumulative GPAs are based on final grades earned in Durham Academy courses.

A+	97–100	4.33	B+	87–89	3.33	C+	77–79	2.33	D+	67–69	1.33	F	<60	0.0
A	93–96	4.0	B	83–86	3.0	C	73–76	2.0	D	63–66	1.0			
A-	90–92	3.67	B-	80–82	2.67	C-	70–72	1.67	D-	60–62	0.67			

UNIQUE PROGRAMS

INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

Students pursue interests that fall outside of traditional academic disciplines. Coursework often includes meaningful engagement with the local community and emphasizes authentic demonstrations of learning.

Examples include:

Problem-Solving for Real Businesses: A semester course in which students identify and solve strategic marketing, technological or operational problems presented by local and global business partners. During three problem-solving cycles, students collaborate in small teams to identify root causes and pitch potential solutions.

Teaching Literacy Skills (Augustine Tutoring): A year-long course in which students travel to a neighboring elementary school for four class periods within their seven-day rotation to tutor students identified as reading below grade level.

Pathways Scholars: Students imagine, design, and implement community-based research projects related to either sustainability, entrepreneurship, or global citizenship. They receive training in the nuances of community engagement and share their findings with the broader community.

Thesis Scholars: Students familiarize themselves with discipline-specific literature, identify gaps in professional knowledge, conduct relevant research, and ultimately produce papers of original scholarship.

Independent Study: Students have the opportunity to pursue a longstanding personal interest, delve deeply into a topic, or develop a skill by designing a semester course for themselves. They work 5–7 hours per week under the supervision of a faculty member in a relevant academic field to produce a culminating project or presentation that they share with the community.

CAVALIER CAPSTONES

Ninth, 10th and 11th graders participate in a week of culminating learning opportunities that deepen and broaden their learning, and that complement and enhance the Upper School curriculum. Choices include outdoor education, hands-on projects, global exploration, interdisciplinary and community-based mini-courses, service and leadership opportunities, and career exploration.



View the 2024 catalog at url.da.org/capstones2024

STUDENT LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Students at Durham Academy Upper School have a wide range of leadership opportunities. The following are some of the most selective leadership roles. Examples include:

Peer Educators: Eight seniors are selected from over three dozen applicants to co-teach a Life Skills course to ninth graders. Peer Educators sign a contract agreeing to serve as role models for their younger Upper School peers, both on and off campus, throughout the school year.

Student Government Committees: Student Organization and Leadership Development Committee, Student Life Advisory Board, Sustainability Committee, Spirit Committee, Social Events Committee, and Student Academic Committee.

Performing Arts Management: The stage manager, assistant stage manager, assistant director, and assistant technical director all manage teams of other students in high-profile productions.

Student Ambassador Leadership Council (SALC): Comprising 12 selected members who help train over 100 Durham Academy student ambassadors on how to give campus tours, serve on admission event panels, and serve as student shadow day hosts.

Student-Athlete Leadership Team: A group of about 15–20 sophomores and juniors who have been nominated and selected by their coaches as either current leaders or future leaders of their athletic programs. They engage in a leadership curriculum that is intended to improve their mental strength, guide them in discovering their own unique leadership style, and learn how to use their leadership strengths as part of a group in order to effectively lead their programs.

Honor Council: A body consisting only of nine peer-elected students (two representatives per grade and a president) that adjudicates all instances of alleged academic cheating.

Special Olympics Committee: A group of select students with demonstrated interest in advocating for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. These students assist with the planning and implementation of the county-wide Special Olympics Spring Games. In the months prior to the Games, students provide peer training around the tenets of inclusion, acceptance and sensitivity.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND ENGAGEMENT AT DA

Throughout its history, Durham Academy has recognized that diversity, equity and engagement (DEE) enrich and enliven the intellectual and social environment of an academic community. Co-ed since its founding in 1933 and one of the first schools to integrate in Durham, DA has committed itself at every level — from the boardroom to the classroom — to the dual pursuit of excellence and diversity. Students grow fastest toward their best selves as happy, successful learners when they feel welcomed, empowered, responsible and safe. As an essential element of the school's identity, DEE is the foundation of DA's Strategic Vision, and the school has expanded our DEE work to ensure that all of our students feel a deep sense of belonging and heightened sense of empathy and understanding. DEE at DA is not ancillary but rather core to our mission and relevant to all our work, including training for faculty and staff, affinity groups for teachers, parents and students, the expansion of recruitment and support of underrepresented students and employees, increased focus on the school's culture and character, a review of our policies, programs and practices, and inspiring cultural competency and critical thinking through our curriculum.

COLLEGE COUNSELING PHILOSOPHY

Durham Academy's college counseling team represents 50 years of collective experience in college and university admissions. As the 115 members of the Class of 2025 prepare to apply to colleges and universities as unique as the students themselves, DA's individualized approach focuses on finding each student's ideal fit by emphasizing the development of key life skills throughout the process: self-awareness, self-confidence, tolerance for uncertainty and navigating complexity. A career development counselor rounds out the team to introduce students to a range of real-life opportunities including professional work experiences, potential career paths and college and career networking with DA parents, alumni and Durham community members.



Learn more at url.da.org/right-college-fit



View our five-year matriculation list at url.da.org/colleges-attended

THE DA GRADUATE: A MISSION-DRIVEN LIFE

Moral. Happy. Productive. Those words are at the heart of Durham Academy's mission statement — and have been for 53 years — because at DA, character matters. More than homework or grades or test scores, character is what endures. Our mission to prepare students for moral, happy, productive lives means DA is as committed to developing our students' moral compass as we are to developing their intellect. The 15 character traits of the Durham Academy Graduate represent the values of a mission-driven life, which we hope to infuse in all of our students.

MORAL

EMPATHY
KINDNESS
INTEGRITY
RESPONSIBILITY
COURAGE

HAPPY

CURIOSITY
ENGAGEMENT
AUTHENTICITY
JOY
BALANCE

PRODUCTIVE

CREATIVITY
DRIVE
RESILIENCE
GENEROSITY
WISDOM

ACCREDITATION/MEMBER SCHOOL

Southern Association for College Admission Counseling (SACAC), Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS),
National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), Southern Association of Independent Schools (SAIS)