



DURHAM ACADEMY

COLLEGE PROFILE

2025-2026

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 to Grade 12 Enrollment 1,267 students	Educational Model independent, all genders, nonsectarian	
Upper School Students 460 <i>114 in Class of 2026</i>	Pre-K to 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
\$5.1 Million+ Total Tuition Assistance Awarded		Average Upper School Faculty Tenure 10 Years	Upper School Faculty with Advanced Degrees 80%
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.

59 Cavaliers Currently Competing at DI, DII & DIII Schools	6 National Championships in Speech & Debate over the last 5 years <i>2024 NSDA Public Forum, 2023 TOC Individual, 2023 TOC Team, 2023 NCFL Lincoln-Douglas, 2022 NCFL Public Forum, 2021 NDCA Public Forum</i>	Character Development UNIQUE TO DURHAM ACADEMY ▪ Cavalier Kickoff (Grades 9-11) ▪ Senior Challenge (Grade 12) ▪ Special Olympics Buddies ▪ 4-year Advisory Programming
38 Conference Championships over the last 5 years	58 Finalists National Merit Scholarship Competition over the last 5 years	

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ACADEMIC PROGRAM

MOST CHALLENGING COURSES

All courses labeled 400 or higher meet or exceed the level of rigor of an introductory college course. Juniors and Seniors may enroll in **no more than four 400-level or higher courses per semester**. In rare circumstances, they may request permission to take five.

CS 400	Computer Science
CS 450	Data Structures
CS 500	Machine Learning and AI
ENG 450	English 11: American Literature & Rhetoric
ENG 400	English 12*
ENG 450	English 12*
FA 400	Auditioned Music Ensemble: In The Pocket
HIST 450	Historical Approaches to Women and Gender
HIST 450	History of Durham
HIST 450	Imagined Communities: Nations and Nationalism
HIST 450	Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia: The Cold War and Its Legacy in East and Southeast Asia
HIST 450	Modern Middle East
HIST 450	Moral Philosophy
HIST 450	Religion and Revolution in the Americas
HIST 450	U.S. Black History
HIST 450	Ancient Technologies
HIST 450	Art History: Aesthetics and Theory
HIST 450	Between War and Peace
HIST 450	Constitutional Law
HIST 450	Enchanted: Modern Religion
HIST 450	Philosophy: Knowledge, Doubt and Inquiry
HIST 450	Revolutions
INT 400	Peer Educators: Self & Community
INT 400	Teaching Literacy Skills (Literacy Tutoring with Children's Literacy Project)
INT 450	Community-Based Research
INT 450	Psychology
INT 450	Research
INT 450	Sustainability: Taking Action
INT 500	Pathway Scholars
INT 500	Thesis
MATH 400	Differential Calculus
MATH 400	Integral Calculus
MATH 400	Statistics and Data Science
MATH 450	Differential Calculus
MATH 450	Integral Calculus
MATH 450	Mathematical Modeling
MATH 450	Special Topics in Mathematics
MATH 450	Statistics and Data Science 1
MATH 450	Statistics and Data Science 2
MATH 500	Multivariable Calculus 1
MATH 500	Multivariable Calculus 2

SCI 400	Environmental Science
SCI 450	Biology
SCI 450	Biotechnology
SCI 450	Chemistry
SCI 450	Medicine and Malady
SCI 450	Physics: Electricity and Magnetism
SCI 450	Physics: Mechanics
WL 400	Intermediate High Chinese
WL 400	Chinese Heritage: Diversity and Us in Literacy
WL 400	Chinese Heritage: Diversity and Us in Community
WL 450	Chinese: Advanced Studies 1
WL 500	Chinese: Advanced Studies 2
WL 400	Intermediate Mid French
WL 425	Cultural Themes in French
WL 450	French Language: Francophone News and Stories
WL 500	Francophone Literature: Literary Anxieties
WL 400	Intermediate Mid Latin
WL 450	Latin: Cultural Themes in Classical Latin
WL 450	Latin: Cultural Themes in Post-Classical Latin
WL 400	Intermediate High Spanish
WL 400	Spanish for Heritage Speakers
WL 425	Cultural Themes in Spanish: Central America
WL 425	Cultural Themes in Spanish: Mexico
WL 450	Spanish Language 1: Reshaping Communities
WL 450	Spanish Language 1: Global Challenges
WL 500	Spanish Literature: The Golden Age
WL 500	Spanish Literature: The Latin American Boom
WL 500	Spanish Language 2: From Lyrics to Language
WL 500	Spanish Language 2: Echoes of Empires

bolded titles represent yearlong courses

* English 12 Literature offers students the opportunity to select from various thematic courses while ensuring consistent academic rigor across all sections. All sections are taught at a college level to prepare students for post-secondary academic success, regardless of which thematic focus captures their interest.



Find the complete list of Upper School course offerings at url.da.org/uscurriculum2526

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: 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.

Pathway 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 2025 catalog at url.da.org/capstones25

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.

Student Government Committees: Student Organization and Leadership Development Committee, Student Life Advisory Board, Sustainability Committee, Spirit Committee, Social Events Committee, Raising Awareness of Inclusion and Social Equity (RAISE) Committee and Student Academic Committee.

Performing Arts Management: The stage manager, assistant stage manager, assistant director, and assistant technical director all manage teams of fellow 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 more than 40 years of collective experience in college and university admissions. As the 114 members of the Class of 2026 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 54 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)