

AP (Advanced Placement) vs PSEO (Post Secondary Enrollment Options)

AP Courses

✓ PROS

- **Standardized & predictable**
AP courses follow a national curriculum with a single exam with clear expectations
- **High school environment**
You stay on your high school campus with familiar teachers, peers, and schedule
- **Weighted GPA boost**
AP classes are weighted one point higher than a non-AP course
- **College credit potential**
Many colleges award credit or placement for strong AP exam scores
- **Preparation for college rigor**
Emphasizes critical thinking, timed exams, and academic writing
- **Logistics**
No commuting or managing a college calendar

AP Courses

✗ CONS

- **College credit depends on exam score**
A full year of work may yield no college credit if the exam score isn't high enough
- **Not universally accepted**
Some colleges limit or deny AP credit, especially selective schools
- **Less authentic college experience**
Still structured like a high school class
- **Exam fees**
AP exams typically cost money (though fee waivers may be available)



AP is often better if you:
Want structure and teacher support and are aiming for selective colleges.

PSEO Courses

✓ PROS

- **Guaranteed college credit**
Passing the course earns actual college credit (not exam-dependent)
- **Free or low cost**
Tuition, books, and fees are often covered by the state/school
- **Real college experience**
Learn how college classes, syllabi, and expectations actually work
- **Broader course options**
Access to classes not offered in high school (e.g., niche sciences, advanced math)
- **Potentially faster degree completion**
Can reduce time and cost in college after HS
- **Flexible rigor**
Some students find college pacing more manageable than AP's test-heavy structure

PSEO Courses

✗ CONS

- **Permanent college transcript**
Grades follow you; poor performance can affect future college admissions
- **More independence required**
Less hand-holding, fewer reminders, and higher expectations for self-management. Parents and HS staff cannot access progress
- **Different teachers/websites/rules**
Colleges will use different email/websites/learning platforms
- **Schedule & transportation challenges**
College calendars don't align with high school breaks
- **Variable credit transfer**
Some colleges may not accept PSEO credits
- **Less GPA boost for high school**
Not weighted in high school GPA calculations
- **Social disconnect**
Less time with HS peers and activities



PSEO is often better if you:
Are ready for independence and responsibility, have exhausted AP courses at your high school, want/need to save money on college.

What to think about when considering PSEO

Academic Readiness

- Time management & independence – College professors won't remind you about assignments
- Workload expectations – Fewer classes, but more reading, writing, and studying per class
- Subject strength – Start with courses you're confident in (e.g., English, math, gen eds)
- Grading scale – College grading may be stricter than high school
- Learning style – Do you do well without daily structure and frequent check-ins?
- **Homework/Testing - Most college classes will not accept late work or allow test retakes**
- **Curriculum- Have you exhausted all of the upper level (AP/Honors) courses at my high school?**

GPA & Transcripts

- Impact on high school GPA – PSEO grades will be added to your HS transcript and affect GPA
- Risk tolerance – Are you okay with a lower grade appearing on a college record?
- Withdrawal deadlines – Missing them can result in a failing grade
- **Weighted vs Unweighted - PSEO grades are not weighted on your HS GPA**
- **Permanent college transcript – Every grade follows you into future college applications**

College Credit & Transferability

- Check how likely your target colleges are to accept transfer credits
- General education vs. major-specific – Gen eds usually transfer more smoothly
- Credit limits – Some colleges cap how many credits they'll accept
- Quarter vs. semester system – Conversion can affect how credits count later

Scheduling & Logistics

- Students must apply, manage paperwork and course registration on their own
- Calendar mismatch – College schedules don't align with high school breaks
- Transportation – Commute time, parking, or online reliability matters
- Class timing – Early mornings, long lectures, or evening classes may affect balance
- High school requirements – Make sure you still meet graduation requirements

Social & Extracurricular Impact

- Reduced time on campus – May miss out on clubs, sports, or social time
- Peer differences – You'll be in classes with adults, not just teens
- Support system – College professors and advisors are less hands-on

Financial & Policy Considerations

- Tuition/books/fees are often covered, but you need confirm details with the college
- You may have to repay costs if you fail or withdraw from a course
- State and school rules – Eligibility, credit limits, and course approvals vary
- Technology requirements – Laptop, software, or online platforms may be needed

Long-Term Goals

- College selectivity – **Many selective colleges prefer AP** or limit PSEO credit.
- Major plans – STEM majors may want certain courses taken at their future college.
- Career exploration – PSEO can help confirm (or rule out) interests early.
- Burnout risk – Taking on college-level pressure too early can backfire.

Questions to Ask Before Enrolling in PSEO

- **Have I exhausted all of my AP/Honors options at my high school?**
- Have I handled AP or honors classes well?
- Can I advocate for myself with professors?
- What happens if I struggle mid-semester?
- Will this help or hurt my college applications?
- Which credits are most likely to transfer?