

Advanced Placement Program[®]

French
Baccalauréat
International
Option



Liberté • Égalité • Fraternité
RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

What is the Advanced Placement Program®?

The Advanced Placement Program®

(AP®) is a challenging academic program designed to provide motivated high school students with college-level academic courses. Established in 1955 by the College Board, the AP Program is a cooperative educational endeavor between secondary schools and colleges and universities. High school students who complete AP courses demonstrate their mastery of subject material by earning qualifying grades on AP Examinations.

AP is considered a standard for academic excellence in the United States, where nearly 60 percent of secondary schools participate in the program. AP courses with qualifying exam grades are accepted for credit, advanced placement, or both, by most American colleges and universities. In addition, AP courses and exam grades are used in the admissions process in nearly 300 universities outside the United States.

What is the French Baccalauréat?

The French *Baccalauréat* is a three-year college preparatory program culminating in a rigorous examination that marks the end of secondary school studies and determines university eligibility. To succeed on this exam, students must demonstrate thorough knowledge in a wide variety of compulsory academic disciplines as well as in-depth understanding of their chosen field of specialization. In the United States, French schools prepare students for the *Baccalauréat* with academic concentrations in three areas, or *série*, corresponding to their scholastic aptitudes or future college plans:

Languages and Literature (L),
Economics & Social Sciences (ES),
Mathematics & Experimental Sciences (S).

In order to correctly appreciate the academic rigor of the *Baccalauréat*, it should be noted that students typically take 8 to 12 yearlong courses, and the total number of hours of in-class instruction easily reaches 32 and sometimes 40 hours per week.

What is the AP® International Diploma?

The AP International Diploma (APID) was designed to accommodate American and international students at secondary schools in the U.S. and abroad who are applying to universities outside the United States. To qualify for the APID, students must earn AP grades of 3 or higher on four AP Exams in three of the five subject areas listed below. Students must take two exams in two different languages (Area I), either a science or mathematics exam (Areas II and III), and one or more exams from a subject area not already selected.

- Area I: Languages
- Area II: Sciences
- Area III: Mathematics
- Area IV: History and Social Sciences
- Area V: Electives

Students do not formally apply for the AP International Diploma. It is automatically awarded to any AP student who resides outside the United States and who successfully meets the diploma criteria. U.S. residents who meet the APID criteria and request that their AP Examination results be sent to a university overseas will also be awarded an APID certificate. The APID is not designed for use by colleges and universities within the United States.

What is the OIB?

France is the only country in the world to have officially incorporated an optional international component into its established secondary school curriculum: the OIB. The *Option Internationale du Baccalauréat* is not a separate diploma but rather a specialization within the framework of the French *Baccalauréat* consisting of in-depth study of four subjects: language, literature, history and geography. These subjects are taught in the language of a given nation. The ultimate goal of the OIB is to further the international dimensions of education by exposing bilingual and bicultural students to international cultural, scientific, and commercial perspectives.

French schools in the United States, as well as in American Sections in France, offer the American Option. Classes are taught by certified American teachers and are open to selected students who demonstrate thorough competence in English, regardless of national origin. Hence, the OIB offers the possibility of reconciling North American secondary school requirements with those of France, thereby increasing students' accessibility to higher education.

Students prepare for the American Option during the last three (or at least two) years of *lycée* (classes of *Seconde*, *Première* and *Terminale*), and the final examinations cover the curriculum taught during the last two years.

OIB English is a rigorous literature and writing program taught entirely in English in seminar-style classes which meet five hours a week. The OIB history and geography programs also include extra classroom time and meet four hours a week. Both OIB English and OIB history/geography culminate in written and oral exams in English, and they replace the usual *Baccalauréat* foreign language and history/geography examinations.

Who creates the AP Examinations, and how are the exams graded?

AP Examinations are created by a committee of experienced AP secondary school teachers and university professors specializing in each of the disciplines for which an examination is offered. The multiple-choice portion of AP Exams is scored by computer. The free-response sections of AP Exams are scored by AP teachers and university professors in a weeklong June scoring session. Detailed scoring rubrics are established for each examination by Chief Faculty Consultants for each discipline who oversee the scoring of the free-response questions. Great care is taken by the Chief Faculty Consultants to ensure accuracy and consistency in scoring to result in a fair assessment of student free-response performances. Total composite scores for the combined multiple-choice and free-response portions of the exams are converted into AP grades of 1 (no recommendation) to 5 (extremely well qualified), which are released in mid-July to the students and the colleges and universities of their choice.

Who creates the French Baccalauréat (OIB) examinations, and how is the OIB graded?

Following the academic curriculum established by the French Ministry of Education, and deployed on an international scale, the *Baccalauréat* has been in existence since the creation of French national public education. The OIB American Option was created with the facilitation of the Franco-American (Fulbright) Commission and the Advanced Placement Division of the College Board. The development and oversight of the OIB curricula, examinations, and awarding of diplomas is assured by

the *Inspecteur Général Délégué* under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and the College Board.

The *Baccalauréat* examination consists of a set of tests (one in each of the subjects that comprise the *série* that the student has followed). Students are required to compose essays that demonstrate not only depth of comprehension and analytical ability, but also extrapolation from acquired knowledge to new situations.

The written parts of the exam last a week and, depending on the students' *série*, encompass 17 to 23 hours of testing. The OIB students take a 4-hour written exam and a 1-hour oral exam in both language-literature and history-geography. According to the *Série of Baccalauréat*, each subject exam has a different level of difficulty and consequently is accorded different weight or *coefficient*.

Students, whose overall exam performance surpasses the norm, are recognized by attribution of "*mention*" (*Mention Assez Bien* = Cum Laude; *Mention Bien* = Magna Cum Laude; *Mention Très Bien* = Summa Cum Laude).

How do colleges and universities recognize AP courses and the AP International Diploma?

Approximately 3,000 North American universities recognize AP courses and examinations. Students presenting qualifying grades on AP Exams may earn anywhere from 3 to 6 credits (for a single course) to one year of college credit, and on occasion, two years of credit, thereby earning second-year and sometimes third-year standing. As universities in the United States and abroad differ regarding the exact nature of their acceptance policies, AP students are advised to inquire directly at the universities

concerning their respective policies for specific AP Examinations.

AP courses and qualifying grades are also used as acceptance and admissions criteria by an increasing number of universities in identifying high-performing and highly motivated students. By taking AP courses, students demonstrate their mastery of a subject and their ability to work at the academic level required in higher education.

Students who have earned the AP International Diploma fulfill university qualification requirements for numerous selective universities in Australia, Austria, Canada, Ecuador, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United Kingdom.

How do colleges and universities recognize the French Baccalauréat courses and the OIB?

For more than a century, in France and throughout the French-speaking world, the *Baccalauréat* has been recognized as the credential for university admissions. Within the European Union, agreements between member countries' ministries of education guarantee mutual recognition of the *Baccalauréat* as a valid means of earning entry to higher education.

In the United States, experienced college admissions officers increasingly recognize the *Baccalauréat*, and particularly the OIB, as a strong indicator of academic promise and achievement. Successful OIB students have demonstrated the ability to attain academic goals above and beyond the already-rigorous college preparatory program. In addition, *Baccalauréat* (OIB) courses and exams are frequently recognized for the purpose of advanced credit and/or placement at many North American colleges and universities.

What similarities exist between the AP and Baccalauréat (OIB) programs?

1. Both are rigorous programs devoted to educational excellence; each program sets high performance standards for students and faculty.
2. Both programs involve dedicated and creative teachers committed to their students, their disciplines, and their profession.
3. Both programs attract highly motivated students who wish to excel academically and attend the most selective colleges and universities.
4. Both programs provide for articulation with middle-school curricula, the French *Baccalauréat* through its complete Pre-K–12 program, and AP through its Pre-AP[®] program and its K–12 initiative.
5. Both programs have attracted the attention of international educators, educational policymakers, and the general public as ways to improve the quality of education around the world.
6. In support of the academic programs, both AP and the *Baccalauréat* offer extensive professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators worldwide.

Why do students choose AP?

Extensive Recognition

AP is recognized by approximately 3,000 American colleges and universities, which grant credit, advanced placement, or both for AP courses and exam grades. More than 400 additional universities in 27 countries also recognize AP courses and exam grades in the admissions process. Colleges and universities recognize the value of AP for preparing students to succeed in rigorous university courses.

Affordability and Flexibility

AP is affordable, the only fee being the \$82 per examination, \$22 of which may be waived in cases of economic need. AP offers flexibility for schools, which can offer one or many AP courses, and different AP courses from year to year. AP also offers flexibility for teachers, who have latitude to determine their own curricula.

Access and Equity

AP promotes open access to students who may excel in only one or two academic disciplines. The AP Program is designed to give all students an opportunity to challenge themselves with a rigorous academic experience.

Exam Reliability and University Standards

AP emphasizes statistical exam reliability to ensure fairness in scoring, along with results that can be trusted by students, schools, and universities. Through regular surveys and comparability studies, the AP Program ensures that courses and examinations reflect actual university-level standards.

Why do students choose the Baccalauréat (OIB)?

A High Level of Recognition

Universities in France, Canada, the United States, as well as throughout Europe and the French-speaking world welcome students with *Baccalauréat* (OIB) diplomas. Individual student accomplishment in *Baccalauréat* courses is frequently recognized for advanced placement, and credit purposes. OIB courses signify not only a student's rigorous academic preparation, but also academic achievement above and beyond secondary school expectations.

Fair and Balanced Assessment Using International Standards

Assessment in the OIB program is varied in scope and breadth, occurring several times over the usual two-year duration of OIB courses. In order to provide exam reliability and validity OIB students' exam performances are assessed, for those subjects taught in English, by American examiners identified by the College Board and, for those subjects taught in French, chosen by the Ministry of Education for demonstrated expertise in their discipline.

A Curriculum Demonstrating Unique Balance:

- between 2 languages—The *Baccalauréat* /OIB curricula and examination is bilingual.
- between 2 cultures—The *Baccalauréat* /OIB, which respects both American and French traditions of teaching and assessment, is bicultural.
- between 2 priorities—The wide scope of compulsory subjects provided by the *Baccalauréat* gives students general knowledge, so indispensable in the era of globalization. Optional subjects provide thorough specialization in the humanities, economic and social sciences, and the natural and experimental sciences.

Commitment to Authorized Schools

The French Ministry of Education accredits over 400 schools worldwide, of which 35 are in the United States. These schools must annually renew their accreditation by meeting both U.S. and French requirements. Regularly inspected, schools are expected to actively participate in professional development organized by the Ministry through its various *Inspecteurs*.

The French Baccalauréat is recognized by universities worldwide.

Countries that offer the International Option of the French Baccalauréat:

Algeria
Denmark
Germany
Great Britain
Italy
Japan
Morocco
Norway
Netherlands
Poland
Portugal
Spain
Sweden
Tunisia
United States

Countries with universities that recognize AP Exam results:

Australia
Austria
Belgium
Bolivia
Canada
China
Columbia
Cyprus
Denmark
Ecuador
Egypt
England
France
Germany
Ireland
Israel
Lebanon
Mexico
Netherlands
Pakistan
Poland
Scotland
South Africa
Switzerland
Taiwan
Wales

The 1997 Lisbon Convention states that the diplomas giving students of one European Union country admission to the universities of that country must be recognized by the other member countries for admission to their own universities.



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Mission Statement

The College Board's mission is to connect students to college success and opportunity. We are a not-for-profit membership organization committed to excellence and equity in education.

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