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# Interpretive Guide

For Summary of AP<sup>®</sup> Examination Scores  
Reported to Systems/Consortiums

System/Consortium Edition

# 2017

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# Introduction

The Summary of AP® Examination Scores Reported is an annual report of students' AP Exam participation and performance, customized to present the scores sent to institutions within your system or consortium. Charts and graphs provide at-a-glance information, and additional trend data show changes over a period of time.

The Summary of AP Scores Reported will provide you with information to support evidence-centered AP credit and placement policy decisions as well as data for managing enrollment and advancing student success. Strong, evidence-based AP credit and placement policies aid enrollment efficiency at institutions of higher education. These policies also clarify course articulation for first-time, first-year freshman students and transfer students.

## **Who is represented in this report?**

The report includes students attending both public and non-public high schools in the US and abroad who indicated 2017 as their graduation year and who sent AP scores to the institutions within your system or consortium between March 1, 2017 and October 31, 2017 of their graduating year. The report includes all AP Exams taken by this population during high school.

Students may have selected your institution(s) as a score recipient during their AP Exam registration, or they may have requested that a transcript be sent to your institution(s) at a later date. To support complete system and consortium data, it is important to encourage students to report their AP examination scores to your institutions. Providing students with your campuses' College Board score reporting codes upon admission allows them to submit their AP scores before they arrive on campus. This can help increase the volume of data available for your institutions' annual Summary of AP Examination Scores reports. It can also help provide your academic planning divisions with important information for assigning students credit and placement into first-year courses.

## **Why did we include only these students?**

An analysis of AP score send data and National Student Clearinghouse data indicated that exam takers who send scores to an institution between March 1 and October 31 of their graduating year of high school have more than a 90% likelihood of matriculating at that institution. In order to align the data as closely as possible with students who are actually enrolled at your institution(s), exam takers who sent scores to your institution(s) outside this period of time were not included.

## **Sharing System and Consortium Reports with Member Institutions**

It is advisable to forward copies of the system and consortium reports to both the chief enrollment officer and chief academic officer at each of your member institutions, as these representatives also receive their campuses' respective AP institutional score send summary reports.

### **What is the source for the data?**

The data was compiled from information provided by students during the exam registration process and from the official exam score results kept on file by the AP Program. The following characteristics are student-reported:

- Exam taker origin (in-state, out-of-state, non-US)
- Gender
- Ethnicity/race
- Parent education level

# Overview of Exam Taker Scores Reported

## System/Consortium and Total Cohort Results

This page shows a demographic overview of the AP Exam takers and scores sent to your system or consortium and all exam takers (total cohort).

The number and percent of exam takers and scores reported is included for each characteristic. Listed below each number is the percent change from last year's data, either negative or positive.

An AP Exam score of 3 is the minimum score for which the American Council on Education (ACE) and the College Board recommend granting credit and/or placement.

Total cohort includes all public and non-public high school students in the US and abroad who indicated 2017 as their high school graduation year and who took an AP Exam at any point during high school.

System/Consortium				Total Cohort <sup>2</sup>			
# of Exam Takers Reported <sup>1</sup>	% of Total Exam Takers Reported	# of Exam Scores Reported	# of Exam Takers Reported Scoring 3 or Higher <sup>4</sup>	# of Exam Takers	% of Total Exam Takers	# of Exam Scores	# of Exam Takers Scoring 3 or Higher <sup>4</sup>

The "In-State," "Out-of-State," and "Non-US" designations are based upon where a student tested in relation to your institution(s).

Beginning with the 2015–16 school year, the collection and reporting of race/ethnicity was updated to reflect US Department of Education guidelines. Due to these changes, the percentage change from last year is not provided. For additional details, please refer to the Race and Ethnicity note on page 19 of the system report.

Hispanic: Includes all students who self-identified as Cuban; Mexican; Puerto Rican; or Another Hispanic, Latino, or Latin American on the ethnicity portion of the race/ethnicity questionnaire.

"Low-income" exam takers received a College Board fee reduction for at least one AP Exam taken at any point during high school.

All	Total
	Change from last year
Exam Taker Origin <sup>3</sup>	In-State
	Change from last year
	Out-of-State
	Change from last year
Non-US	Non-US
	Change from last year
Gender	Female
	Change from last year
Male	Male
	Change from last year
Race/Ethnicity <sup>5</sup>	American Indian
	Change from last year
	Asian
	Change from last year
	Black
	Change from last year
	Hispanic or Latino <sup>6</sup>
	Change from last year
	Pacific Islander
	Change from last year
	White
	Change from last year
Two or more races	
Change from last year	
Other	
Change from last year	
No Response	
Change from last year	
SES	Low-income <sup>7</sup>
	Change from last year

# Overview of Exam Taker Scores Reported

## System/Consortium and Total Cohort Results

### Questions and Strategies

1. How might the academic strength of AP student enrollment data help validate recruitment effectiveness and system/consortium-wide academic development? Have you used or considered using the AP Search tool?  
<https://collegeboardsearch.collegeboard.org/pastudentsrch/login.action>
2. How does the overall number of freshmen sending AP Exam scores compare with the number of entering freshmen in total and by major?
3. Does any demographic group display an unexpected number of AP Exam takers reporting exams?
4. How does this year's data compare to prior years in terms of AP performance and participation?
5. Have you studied system/consortium-wide persistence rates for students who earned AP Exam scores of 3, 4, or 5?
6. How do the low income AP students compare to the total freshman enrollment? Are there trends over time?
7. Has the introduction of AP Computer Science Principles had an impact on the volume and diversity of students submitting AP Computer Science exam scores to your institutions?
8. Are students who send AP Capstone Seminar and Research exam scores to your campus candidates for your institutions' honors colleges or programs? Do your institutions plan to follow their progress throughout their undergraduate experience?
9. Physics B retired after the 2014 exam administration and was replaced by two new year-long algebra-based physics courses and exams: AP Physics 1 and 2. For more information, visit [www.collegeboard.org/apphysics](http://www.collegeboard.org/apphysics).
10. The AP Capstone: Seminar exam launched in 2015. For more information about these courses and examinations, please visit <https://lp.collegeboard.org/ap-capstone>.
11. AP US History, AP Sciences, and AP World Languages have been redesigned to better align with teaching and learning at the college level. We invite faculty in these subject areas to review Advances in AP.  
<https://advancesinap.collegeboard.org/>

# Overview of Exam Taker Scores Reported

## Three-Year Trend

This page provides a three-year trend of the data that appears in the previous Overview of Exam Taker Scores Reported. In addition to the numbers for each year, the tables also provide a percent change from the previous year.

10,297 students who graduated in 2017 sent scores to this system or consortium. This was a 13.0% increase from 2016.

9,116 students who graduated in 2016 sent scores to this system or consortium. This was an increase of 2.4% from 2015.

2017				2016				2015			
# of Exam Takers Reported <sup>1</sup>	% of Total Exam Takers Reported	# of Exam Scores Reported	# of Exam Takers Reported Scoring 3 or Higher <sup>4</sup>	# of Exam Takers Reported <sup>1</sup>	% of Total Exam Takers Reported	# of Exam Scores Reported	# of Exam Takers Reported Scoring 3 or Higher <sup>4</sup>	# of Exam Takers Reported <sup>1</sup>	% of Total Exam Takers Reported	# of Exam Scores Reported	# of Exam Takers Reported Scoring 3 or Higher <sup>4</sup>
10,297	100.0%	55,714	7,839	9,116	100.0%	48,642	6,982	8,905	100.0%	44,106	6,689
+13.0%		+14.5%	+12.3%	+2.4%		+10.3%	+4.4%	+4.4%		+3.6%	+3.0%

### Questions and Strategies

1. Have the number and percentage of students sending scores of 3, 4, or 5 changed over time?
2. How do the volume and percent of scores sent by in-state students compare to those from out-of-state students? Does anything stand out?
3. Have there been fluctuations in the number and percent of students by low income status? Are there trends in the 2017 ethnicity figures? In what ways might this data reflect outreach and recruitment efforts to diversify student enrollment?
4. Have there been significant changes in score report volume over time that can be explained by changes in your system's or consortium's AP credit policy?

# Overview of Exam Taker Scores Reported

## Three-Year Trend: Exam Takers Reporting Scores of 3 or Higher

This page provides a three-year trend of reported scores of 3 or higher, segmented by the demographics that appear in the previous Overview of Exam Taker Scores Reported.

15,726 scores of 3 were sent to this system or consortium in 2017. This is 28.2% of the 2017 high school graduates' scores sent to this system or consortium.

13,193 scores of 3 were sent to this system or consortium in 2016. This is 27.1% of the 2016 high school graduates' scores sent to this system or consortium.

2017 # of Exam Scores Reported			2016 # of Exam Scores Reported			2015 # of Exam Scores Reported		
Scores of 3	Scores of 4	Scores of 5	Scores of 3	Scores of 4	Scores of 5	Scores of 3	Scores of 4	Scores of 5
15,726	10,999	5,860	13,193	9,848	5,218	11,942	8,948	4,710
28.2%	19.7%	10.5%	27.1%	20.2%	10.7%	27.1%	20.3%	10.7%

### Questions and Strategies

1. Have the number and percentage of scores of 3, 4, or 5 changed over time?
2. How do the volume and percent of scores of 3, 4, or 5 sent by in-state students compare to those from out-of-state students? Does anything stand out?
3. Have there been fluctuations in the number and percent of scores by low income status? Are there trends in the 2017 ethnicity figures? In what ways might this data reflect outreach and recruitment efforts to diversify student enrollment?
4. Have there been significant changes in score report volume over time that can be explained by changes in your system's or consortium's AP credit policy?

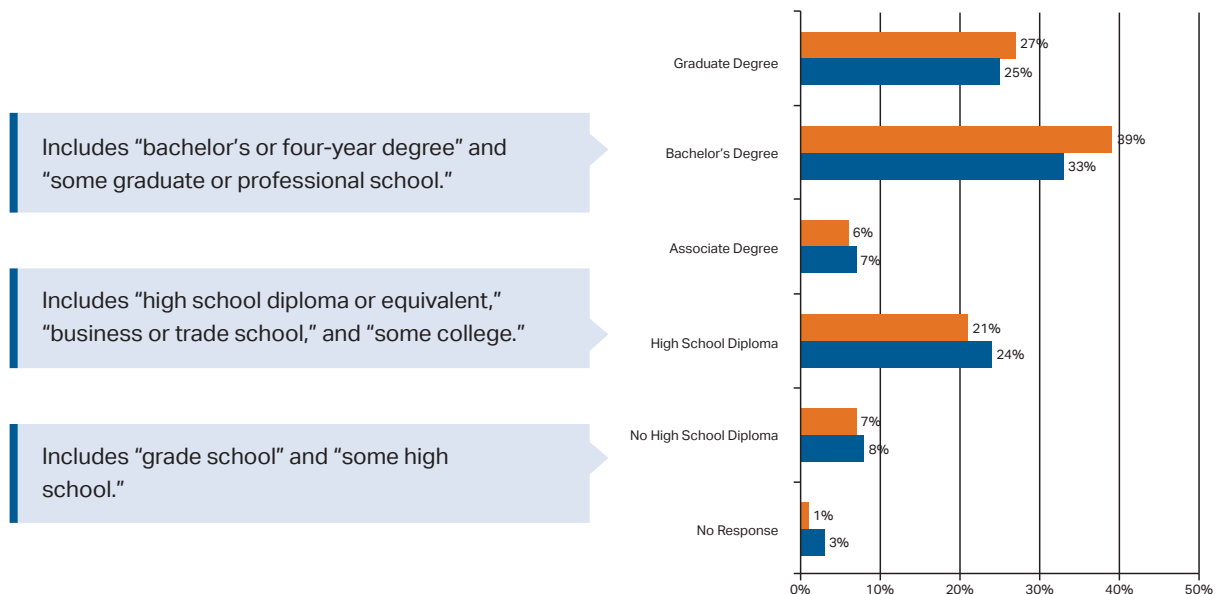


# Overview of Exam Taker Scores Reported

## Parent Education Level and Low-Income Trends

This page shows percentages of exam takers by parent education level and low-income classification—two indicators of socioeconomic status. System/consortium and total cohort data are compared. See page 4 for definitions of “low-income” and “total cohort.”

“Parent Education Level” represents the highest education level reported by exam takers for either parent.

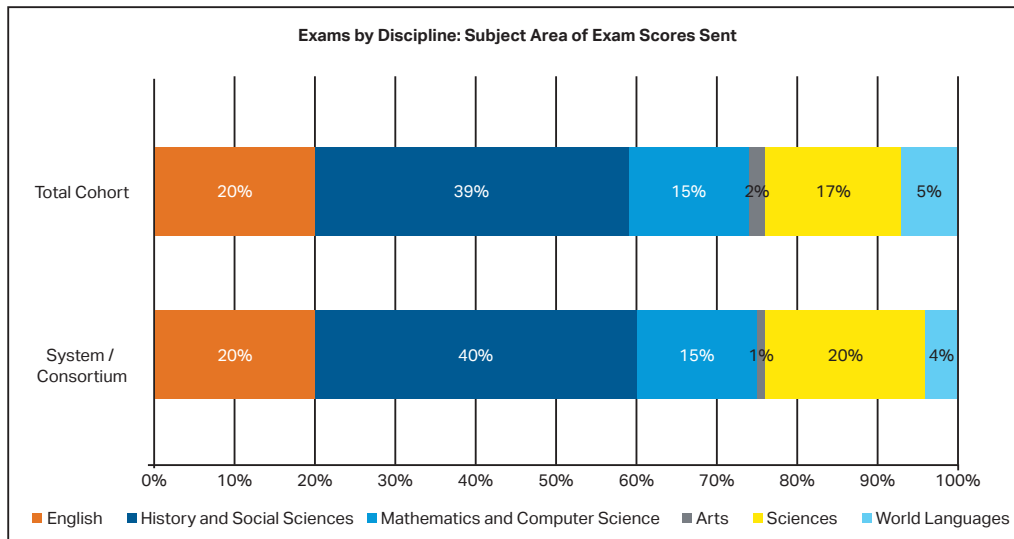


### Questions and Strategies

1. Does the data align with recruitment and enrollment goals for low-income and first-generation students?
2. Does the number of low income and first generation AP students align with appropriate support services available?
3. Can this data be used to increase access and enrollment equity for low-income and first-generation students?
4. Do the persistence rates of these AP students compare with other student populations within your system/consortium?

# Exams by Discipline

This page shows the percentage of scores in each discipline received by your system or consortium compared to all exam takers (total cohort). The percentages represent exams rather than students.



## AP Exams are categorized as follows:

Arts: Art History, Music Theory, Studio Art

Capstone: Research, Seminar

English: English Language and Composition, English Literature and Composition

History and Social Science: Comparative Government and Politics, European History, Human Geography, Macroeconomics, Microeconomics, Psychology, US Government and Politics, US History, World History

Mathematics and Computer Science: Calculus AB, Calculus BC, Computer Science A, Computer Science Principles, Statistics

Sciences: Biology, Chemistry, Environmental Science, Physics 1, Physics 2, Physics C

World Languages: Chinese Language and Culture, French Language and Culture, German Language and Culture, Italian Language and Culture, Japanese Language and Culture, Latin, Spanish Language and Culture, Spanish Literature and Culture.

# Exams by Discipline

## Questions and Strategies

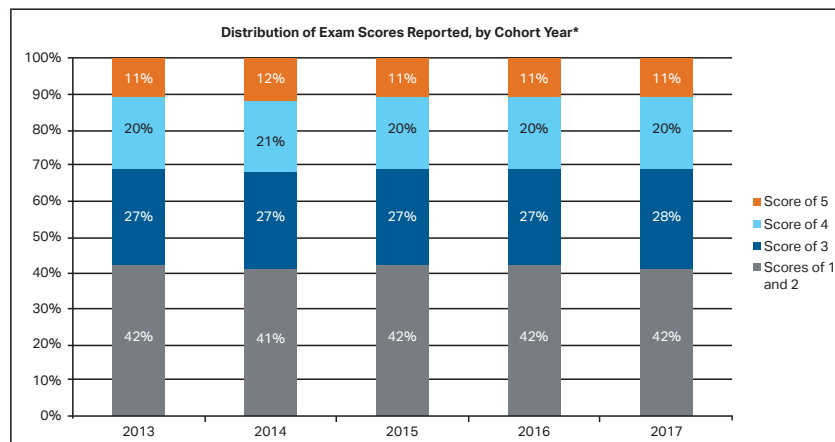
1. Do these percentages align with the proportions of students enrolled in each discipline or major within your system/consortium?
2. Are there opportunities for department-level recruiting? For example, mathematics and computer science departments may want to identify high-achieving AP students in those disciplines.
3. Is there a significant difference between the score send volumes by discipline? If so, what might account for that difference? (For example, are there initiatives focused on liberal arts, STEM, fine arts, etc.)
4. Do efforts focused on enrolling more students into the STEM fields align with outreach to AP students with scores of 3 and higher in exams related to the STEM areas?
5. Do the persistence rates of AP students in these disciplinary areas compare with the persistence rates of students without qualifying AP exam performance?

# Distribution of Exam Scores Reported

## By Cohort Year, Five-Year Trend

This chart looks at public- and non-public-high school exam takers who were seniors in 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017, and reported scores to your system or consortium. For each of these groups, or cohorts, the chart reports the percentage of exams taken throughout their high school which resulted in scores of 3, 4, and 5.

The American Council on Education (ACE) and the College Board recommend granting credit and/or placement for scores of 3, 4, and 5. Research also correlates these scores to academic success in sequential courses: Students earning a 3 or higher on an AP Exam tend to earn higher GPAs and to graduate within 4-5 years at a higher rate than non-AP students.



### Questions and Strategies

1. Has a change in your AP volume affected the percentages of AP Exam scores of 3, 4, and 5?
2. Do the performance results exceed or fall short of expectations?
3. Do your policies for credit and advanced placement align with this data? Are qualified AP students, as evidenced by achieving scores of 3, 4, and 5, recognized for their performance?
4. Has your institution or system conducted recent validity studies on students receiving credit by examination and/or advanced standing through performance on AP Examinations?

<http://research.collegeboard.org/services/aces/placement-validity-study>

For guidance on how to conduct an AP ACES study on your campus, please contact your regional College Board representative.

# Exam Participation & Performance

## Exam Scores, Gender, and Exam Taker Origin

These pages show exam-taker data by exam, including:

- Number and percent of exam takers earning a 3, 4, or 5 for each exam
- Number and percent of male and female exam takers
- Number and percent of in-state, out-of-state, and non-US exam takers
- Number and percent of in-state public school exam takers

Exam Name	# of Exam Takers Reported <sup>1</sup>
Art History	259
% of exam takers reported	

A total of 259 exam takers reported AP Art History scores of 1–5 to this institution.

# of Exam Scores Reported			Exam Taker Gender		Exam Taker Origin <sup>5</sup>			
3	4	5	Male	Female	In-State Exam Takers	Out-of-State Exam Takers	Non-US Exam Takers	In-State Public School Exam Takers
88	65	24	120	139	249	9	1	248
34%	25%	9%	46%	54%	96%	3%	0%	96%

88 of the Art History exam takers reported a score of 3, representing 34% of the total number of Art History exams reported.

139 Art History exam takers (54% of total Art History exam takers) were females.

249 Art History exam takers (96% of total Art History exam takers) tested in the same state as the institution; 9 (3%) tested in a different state; 1 (0%) tested in a non-US location.

248 Art History exam takers (96% of total Art History exam takers) tested at a public high school in the same state as the institution.

### Note about the “Totals” row appearing on page 13:

In the “Totals” row for the “# of Exam Scores Reported” columns, the percentages represent the number of exam scores of 3, 4, and 5 reported compared to the total number of exam scores of 1–5 reported. The total number of students who reported exam scores of 1–5 appears in the “# of Exam Takers Reported” column.

# Exam Participation & Performance

## Exam Scores and Exam Taker Origin

### Questions about Your Credit/Placement Policy

1. Do your system's or institutions' AP credit/placement policies recognize all or most AP Exams?
2. What are the protocols within your system or consortium for reviewing AP course/exam content, and how often is it revised? Who is responsible for updating policy?
3. For exams in which credit/placement policies might require higher scores for academic credit, have research studies recently been conducted on the subsequent course performance of students earning AP scores of 3, 4, or 5? Visit [www.aphighered.org](http://aphighered.org) to find out more about conducting an AP research study on your campus, through sharing data with the College Board or by using the Admitted Class Evaluation Service (ACES), a free, confidential placement validity study (<http://research.collegeboard.org/services/aces/placement-validity-study>).
4. If your AP credit/placement policies do not recognize some AP Exams for credit, how are those AP Exam scores considered? (For example, do some scores count as elective credit or introductory course exemption?)

### Exam Participation, Performance & Interpretation

AP Exam scores are a weighted combination of student scores on the multiple-choice and free-response sections.

The final score is on a five-point scale:

AP Exam Score	Recommendation	College Course Grade Equivalent
5	Extremely well qualified	A+ or A
4	Very well qualified	A-, B+ or B
3	Qualified	B-, C+ or C
2	Possibly qualified	
1	No recommendation	

Definitions of the knowledge and skills required to earn scores of 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 on an AP Exam are derived from standard settings and college comparability studies. These processes ensure that AP Exam outcomes align with college faculty expectations. Committees of college faculty who teach the comparable college course develop detailed descriptions of the performance required to earn each score—these are called achievement-level descriptors (ALDs).

For more information, please reference the following exam scoring resource:

<https://aphighered.collegeboard.org/exams/scoring>

# Exam Participation & Performance

## Ethnicity and Low-Income Demographics

These pages show exam-taker data by exam, including:

- Number and percent of exam takers by ethnicity/race
- Number and percent of low-income exam takers

Exam Name	# of Exam Takers Reported <sup>1</sup>	
Art History	259	
% of exam takers reported		

A total of 259 exam takers reported AP Art History scores of 1–5 to this institution.

Ethnicity/Race									
American Indian	Asian	Black	Hispanic or Latino <sup>6</sup>	Pacific Islander	White	Two or More Races	Other	No Response	Low-Income <sup>7</sup>
0	52	5	51	1	140	8	0	2	99
0%	20%	2%	20%	0%	54%	3%	0%	1%	38%

51 of the exam takers who reported Art History scores were Hispanic or Latino, representing 20% of the total number of Art History exam takers.

99 Art History exam takers (38% of total Art History exam takers) were low income.

### Questions and Strategies

1. Are particular examinations associated with particular ethnicity distributions?
2. Do the higher volume exams taken correspond to particular programs in your system or consortium? (For example, STEM, Humanities, General Education)
3. Are there significant differences between the score send volumes by discipline within the gender and low income categories?
4. How do efforts to recruit more students into the STEM fields align with outreach to diverse AP students who have earned scores of 3 and higher in related exams?

# Institutions Included in this Report for Current Year Calculations

This table provides information about AP Exam takers from your top score-sending high schools. These high schools are organized into three groups: in-state, out-of-state, and non-US.



Institution	Institution Code (DI Code)	City	State	# of Students	# of Exam Takers Scoring 3 or Higher <sup>4</sup>
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Name of institutions included in the report. Institutions with more students represented in the report appear further toward the top of the list.

Number of students represented by each institution in the system/consortium report.



# Research Exploration

## Next Steps

Using the information gathered above, create an action plan for making meaningful use of the AP data to support evidence-centered AP credit/placement policies and effective enrollment management. Enlist the participation of campus colleagues and departments and take advantage of the resources and support provided by the AP Program.

### Resources

Visit [www.aphighered.org](http://www.aphighered.org) to access materials and information.

1. Review course and exam descriptions to determine alignment with your corresponding courses.
2. Order additional copies of your institution or system Summary of AP Scores Reported.
3. Review recent research on the performance of AP students in college:  
<http://research.collegeboard.org/programs/ap>
4. Get more involved in AP by serving on committees or participating in AP Exam scoring events:  
<https://aphighered.collegeboard.org/get-involved-in-ap/ap-reader>
5. Find out more about conducting AP research studies on your campus:  
<http://research.collegeboard.org/services/aces/placement-validity-study>

Please contact your regional College Board representative for more information and guidance.