

Educational Choices in High School



and



▶ Advanced Placement (AP)

Advanced Placement courses are taught in the high schools with college-level curriculum determined by The College Board. Students take a national exam at the conclusion of the course for the opportunity to earn college credit. Exams are scored on a 1 to 5 scale.

Colleges and universities determine their parameters for acceptance of AP scores for college credit. Howard Community College (HCC) awards college credit for scores of 3 or higher for most subjects. Physics and studio art require a score of at least 4. The University of Maryland requires a minimum score of 4 to earn college credit for most AP subjects.

Students earning an A, B, or C in an AP class receive one additional quality point per credit as part of their grade point average (GPA) at HCPSS.

▶ Honors

Based in the high schools, honors courses are designed for students who are capable of and interested in progressing through course material with more depth and rigor than a grade-level course.

Students earning a grade of an A, B, or C will receive 0.5 additional quality point per credit as part of their GPA at HCPSS.

▶ Gifted and Talented Courses at HCPSS

Gifted and talented courses are designed to provide advanced learners with accelerated and enriched learning experiences, including in-depth studies of advanced, conceptually challenging content applied in authentic contexts using inquiry and problem-solving approaches. Courses are available in English, science, mathematics, social studies, computer science, world language, art, and research.

Students who earn an A, B, or C will receive one additional quality point per credit as part of their GPA at HCPSS.

▶ JumpStart Dual Enrollment

JumpStart Dual Enrollment courses are offered at high schools by college-qualified HCPSS faculty. Students earn college credit and meet high school graduation requirements upon successful completion of their college coursework. Students must also complete the JumpStart registration process with HCPSS and HCC. Courses vary by high school and are weighted for the highest possible HCPSS equivalent course.

HCC campus-based Dual Enrollment courses are available for any high school student in Howard County, including private and homeschool students. During the junior and senior year, students may be able to enroll at HCC as a full-time student.

JumpStart Dual Enrollment courses are guaranteed college-credit courses that result in a college transcript.

Frequently Asked Questions



? Are JumpStart courses weighted?

Yes. Courses taken for graduation requirements, whether at your high school or at HCC's campus, are weighted as the highest HCPSS equivalent your high school offers. Some exemptions apply. Talk to your high school guidance counselor for course specific information.

? What is the difference between Advanced Placement (AP) credit and JumpStart credit?

JumpStart courses are guaranteed college-credit courses that result in a college transcript.

Advanced Placement courses require a standardized exam that is taken at the end of the school year to be eligible for college credit. College credit is determined by each college based on their required minimum scores.

? Why would a student consider JumpStart when Advanced Placement (AP) is an option?

When considering what works best, students should ask themselves whether they are comfortable with standardized tests or whether they would prefer having multiple grades within the academic year to determine the course outcome and college credit.

? How are JumpStart high school-based courses different than honors, AP, or gifted and talented courses in the high schools?

- High school-based (CC) courses are considered college-level courses, which will appear on an official college transcript from Howard Community College. They are taught by HCC-approved instructors on a year-long basis like other HCPSS courses.
- CC courses are high school courses that are infused with college-level content and assignment expectations are aligned with what is expected on HCC's campus. CC courses receive the weight of the highest course the high school offers. For example, if a student is taking a Principles of Business CC course and that course is offered in a Gifted and Talented format as their high schools highest level, the Principles of Business CC course will be weighted as a Gifted and Talented course.
- AP courses are an opportunity for students to earn college credit by taking the AP exam after the coursework is complete. Every college and university will determine their own parameters for acceptance of the AP score and awarding of college credit.

? How are HCC-based courses different than honors, AP or gifted and talented courses?

- HCC courses are college-level courses and receive college credits. Students taking college credits while still in high school are starting their official college transcript. These courses are taught on a semester basis (typically 15 weeks) as opposed to all year.
- AP courses are taught at college level with curriculum determined by The College Board. To receive college credit, students must take the College Board AP Exam. Students who score well on these tests may be awarded credit by colleges or universities.
- Gifted and talented courses are designed to provide advanced learners with accelerated and enriched learning experiences, including in-depth studies of advanced, conceptually challenging content applied in authentic contexts using inquiry and problem-solving approaches.
- Honors courses are designed for students who are capable of and interested in progressing through course material with more depth and rigor than on grade level course.