IOWA ONLINE AP™ ACADEMY

Site Coordinator and Mentor Handbook
2018-2019

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IOWA ONLINE AP ACADEMY

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Welcome to the Iowa Online AP Academy

It is our pleasure to welcome you to the Iowa Online AP Academy. This academy was started with a federal grant in 2001, with the goal of extending College Board, Advanced Placement course-taking opportunities to students in Iowa schools without such course offerings. Now, the program is generously funded with support from the state of Iowa, and we have expanded to include AP-preparatory courses for eligible middle school students.

Since the beginning of the program, one of the greatest strengths has been the personnel in the student's home school district—that is, the administrators, site coordinators and mentors who go out of their way to make sure these above-level course offerings are available to their students and those who support students through this challenging academic endeavor.

I hope you find the contents of this handbook useful and encouraging as you continue to work to support your students in the Iowa Online AP Academy. If at any time we can help with the implementation of this program in your school, please do not hesitate to contact us with questions, comments, or concerns.

Thank you again for working with us to give your students this great opportunity!

Sincerely,

Kristin Flanary, M.A.
Iowa Online AP Academy Administrator
Belin-Blank Center
The University of Iowa

Ann Lupkowski-Shoplik, Ph.D.
Iowa Online AP Academy Administrator
Belin-Blank Center
The University of Iowa

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Getting Started with the Iowa Online AP Academy

Visit the [Getting Started](#) page of our website (www.belinblank.org/ioapa), especially if you or your school are new to the Iowa Online AP Academy.

Policies and Requirements

A full list of the Iowa Online AP Academy's policies and requirements is available our website (see [Requirements](#)). Please be sure that all Iowa Online AP Academy students and school personnel are familiar with all policies, including eligibility, enrollment, and drop policies.

Eligibility

Schools are eligible to register for an Iowa Online AP Academy course if the course is not currently offered within the school district (or, in the case of middle school students, if the course is not offered at the student's grade level). Please see our website for a full list of school eligibility requirements.

In order for **high school students** to be successful in IOAPA courses, they should be able to handle the academic rigor of a college-level course, as well as the self-discipline and motivation necessary for an online course. Additionally, students should not be over-committed in their curricular and/or extracurricular activities. Review suggested prerequisites listed in the [Course Catalog](#) and use pre-tests for AP Calculus AB, AP Chemistry, AP Physics B, and AP Statistics.

Above-level testing can help determine which middle school students are ready for an IOAPA course. Middle school students should score at the 95th percentile or above on a grade-level test (e.g., Iowa Assessments) AND at the 50th percentile or above on an above-level test (e.g., I-Excel for 6th-graders, ACT for 7th- and 8th-graders). Above-level testing can be arranged through the Belin-Blank Center, and funding may be available; go to www.belinblank.org/inschooltesting or contact the testing team (assessment@belinblank.org). Please see our website for a full list of middle school student eligibility guidelines.

Consider using the [Student Readiness Checklist (Appendix D)](#) to help inform areas in which each student may need individual attention.

Mentors for AP Computer Science A courses should plan to devote more time to this course than is required for some other IOAPA courses. A computer science background is helpful but not required.

Mentors for AP Computer Science Principles courses should have some prior computer science knowledge and/or experience. Mentors lead/teach the majority of this class offline. Edhesive provides curriculum, support, and resources, but the IOAPA mentor delivers the instruction and grades assignments. Mentors should be qualified to do so; a computer science background is recommended. This course requires significantly more time than other IOAPA courses, and mentors should schedule this class into their teaching load. Mentors will also need to be sure to submit the Edhesive syllabus as their own to be audited by the College Board through the AP Course Audit website. Please see http://www.collegeboard.com/html/apcourseaudit/ for more information.

Registration and Student Enrollment Process

The entire registration process must be completed before students can enroll in Iowa Online AP Academy courses for the 2018-2019 school year. Schools must re-register each year.

Registration is a 3-step process:

1. **Register your school and assign a site coordinator and mentor.**
   The first step is for principals to register their schools on our website (www.belinblank.org/ioapa; click on Register). As part of this step, schools agree to program requirements (see [Requirements](#)) and assign a site coordinator and a mentor. Be sure to fill out and send in the **Mentor Designation Form** for the 2018-2019

school year (see Appendix A; also available on our website). This form is what enables mentors to receive a stipend.
   a. Note: Schools may skip step 1 if they have already registered for the current academic year (i.e., when enrolling for spring semester courses if the school registered students for fall). Instead, start by clicking Register on our website. You will then be redirected to step 2 (student nomination).
2. **Nominate the student(s) taking IOAPA course(s).**
   Completing the school registration page sends the principal an automated email with a link in it to nominate the student. The principal either needs to complete the nomination or forward the link to the site coordinator or mentor to complete.
3. **Confirm that student has self-enrolled in the course.**
   Once the student has been nominated, an email will be automatically sent to the student to enroll himself/herself in the actual course. Be sure to have students check their junk mail folders, as the automated emails sometimes get filtered there. Students should complete this step and be sure to click submit when they're done.

After registering, be sure to complete any College Board requirements for offering AP courses:
1. Register your school with the College Board.
2. Complete the AP Course Audit process for offering Online/Distance Learning courses by **January 31** in order to be able to label courses as "AP" on students' transcripts.
3. Encourage high school students to take the AP exam, and order all AP exams by **April 15**.

Setting Up Supports for Iowa Online AP Academy Mentors and Students
1. Note that we post useful information, resources, and contact information on the Support Materials and Help sections of our website (www.belinblank.org/ioapa) and on our social media platforms (see Appendix B).
2. For help using IOAPA courses provided through Apex Learning, access Apex's FAQ and Help pages (available at: http://www.apexlearning.com/documents/ALVS_Resources.pdf). Iowa Online AP Academy students and mentors should complete the Apex Learning certification before moving forward.
3. Bookmark the College Board's calendar of important AP dates for the 2018-2019 school year if your students are enrolled in AP courses.
4. Mentors and high school students should review AP Course Descriptions on the College Board's website.
5. High school students can find support for AP courses and exams, including sample questions, on the AP Students website.
6. Use social media to help support your students and teachers in the Iowa Online AP Academy. A list of social media supports for you and your students are listed in Appendix B.
7. If you are a veteran mentor or site coordinator, sign up to help new mentors and site coordinators as needed. Indicate your interest in this program by selecting this option on your Mentor Designation Form to be sent to the Belin-Blank Center.

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Informing Students and Parents about AP and the Iowa Online AP Academy

Host an Iowa Online AP Academy Information Night

Consider hosting an Iowa Online AP Academy Information Night! Invite parents and students who might be interested in enrolling in the Iowa Online AP Academy to find out more about the program. Great times to host an information session are (1) in the middle of the fall semester, right before the spring course registration period begins, and/or (2) before the end of the school year, so that parents and students can consider signing up for full-year courses in time to meet the following fall semester's enrollment deadline.

Some of our mentors have examples of Iowa Online AP Academy calendars available for students and parents to become more familiar with the expectations of academy work. If possible, provide sample textbooks and AP exams so students and parents can become familiar with the type of work they will be doing as part of the Iowa Online AP Academy. Provide students and parents with the course descriptions from College Board for the Iowa Online AP Academy courses your school will be offering. Show students and parents the Apex Learning and/or Edhesive websites. Invite past Iowa Online AP Academy participants and mentors to come to the information night to provide a first-hand account of their experiences. Also, be sure to include the benefits of enrolling in AP coursework while still in high school. A PowerPoint template about the Iowa Online AP Academy is available from the Belin-Blank Center Iowa Online AP Academy website for you to use at an Iowa Online AP Academy Information Night (available on the Support Materials section of our website).

> *From an IOAPA Mentor: "I meet with all the students planning to take IOAPA courses in spring before they are enrolled. They are given a chance to review the textbooks for the course and sample materials. Prospective students (and their parents) are given material explaining the level of commitment required to be successful in AP courses and information about the benefits of AP."*

Setting Students Up for Success in the Iowa Online AP Academy

In order to set students up for success in the Iowa Online AP Academy, be sure to review all of the prerequisite requirements for AP courses offered through Apex Learning (see Appendix C).

Appendix D may be useful when trying to identify students who might be good candidates for upper level coursework in an online environment. It is important to note that even if students have the ability to complete the high level coursework, some students struggle with the independence of an online environment. Using this checklist may be helpful in identifying potential problems for the students so that supports can be put in place.

Students should schedule their Iowa Online AP Academy course as part of their regular school day. Also, schools must provide each student with access to a computer, the course textbook, and all other course materials needed before the start of the course.

Helping Students Once They are Enrolled in the Iowa Online AP Academy

One of the biggest barriers for online students to overcome is the feeling of isolation from their instructor and from their peers also enrolled in online coursework. Through experiences with students in the Iowa Online AP Academy and an analysis of research related to high school students and online coursework, we identify four main concerns

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related to work in the Iowa Online AP Academy as well as possible solutions for those areas of concern. Apex Learning also offers a document titled "Best Practices for Helping Struggling Students Succeed." This document can be accessed at: http://www.apexlearning.com/documents/BP_Helping_Stuggling_Students_Succeed.pdf.

Reaching Out to Classmates/Online Instructors Virtually

Although students enrolled in the Iowa Online AP Academy may not have another student in his/her school enrolled in the course, there are most certainly Iowa students enrolled in the course through the Iowa Online AP Academy, as well as students enrolled through Apex Learning from around the country. Apex Learning provides students with message boards to connect with other students enrolled in the same course. Encourage your students to make use of these boards as well as encouraging them to connect with other Iowa Online AP Academy students enrolled in the same course.

Similarly, mentors in the Iowa Online AP Academy should reach out to other mentors in the program. In the fall semester, we pair new mentors with veteran mentors who have volunteered to serve in a mentorship role for teachers as well. Mentors are also strongly encouraged to connect with the Apex Learning online course instructors. Apex Learning and the Belin-Blank Center will post a virtual introduction to Apex Learning instructors before the beginning of the course. This video is posted on the Support Materials page of the Iowa Online AP Academy website.

> *From an IOAPA Mentor: "I frequently communicate with the IOAPA course instructors, sometimes to ask for help when a student is struggling but scared to ask, sometimes to explain site issues (late labs due to lack of school days due to weather issues, late arrival of required texts, etc.) I feel the better my relationship is with the instructors, the more I can help students navigate the sometimes challenging nuances of distance learning."*

Struggling with Content/Course Grades

When a student is struggling with course content, it is natural that the first person they might ask for assistance is the mentor in his/her school. While it is completely appropriate for the mentor to help answer questions if they are able, this is certainly not a requirement of the mentors in the Iowa Online AP Academy. The primary role of the mentor in the academy is to help support the student in their online learning environment, not to serve as an additional content expert. Iowa Online AP Academy mentors should help the student craft an email or phone conversation with his/her online instructor to address their question or point of confusion. The mentor should help facilitate this question/answer interaction between the instructor and the student; however, the mentor is not responsible for being knowledgeable about the subject the student is currently taking.

Interacting with the Online Instructor

While there are many advantages to having access to coursework online, one of the things students struggle with the most is establishing a relationship with their online course instructors. Many times, students are uncomfortable letting the instructor know of scheduling conflicts, asking questions about grades, or asking questions about course content. Mentors are asked to help students craft those emails and to help them pursue further questions, if necessary. If students do not understand an answer on a homework assignment, grade on a test, or grade on a paper, students are encouraged to contact their online instructor (or TA, when applicable) for further assistance. It is the expectation of the Iowa Online AP Academy and Apex Learning that student questions will be addressed by the instructor in a timely manner. Apex instructors have posted virtual office hours; however, if the office hours do

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not work in the student or mentor's schedule, please contact the online instructor to set up another time to address questions/concerns.

Time Management

Schools and students are expected to schedule Iowa Online AP Academy courses into their regular school day—the academy courses are not meant to be "add-on" courses to a student's already full schedule. In addition to scheduling Iowa Online AP Academy courses into the student's regular school day, mentors are strongly encouraged to access student data to ensure that students are logging on and completing course assignments daily. The expectation for students enrolled in Iowa Online AP Academy courses is 5 – 6 hours per week outside of his/her scheduled course time for homework, readings, and preparing for tests and quizzes. Students enrolled in Iowa Online AP Academy lab courses will be expected to spend additional time in the lab.

The Belin-Blank Center will contact course mentors if a student has not logged on to his/her Iowa Online AP Academy course in more than 7 days. However, it is very difficult for a student to catch up on AP coursework once he/she falls more than 3 or 4 class periods behind. Mentors are strongly encouraged to follow up with both students and parents when a student starts to fall behind in his/her Iowa Online AP Academy coursework.

From an IOAPA Mentor: "I see my mentees every day and speak with them on a regular basis about their coursework. I also regularly check their progress and send the progress reports to them, their parents, and their counselors."

From an IOAPA Mentor: "I watch the overdue activities section closely and contact both the student and the parent if that becomes a problem. My students are very busy, so I try to get them to look at the big picture and plan their IOAPA work around all their activities—just to keep them on schedule."

Students Wanting to Drop Iowa Online AP Academy Courses

Over the last 10 years, the Iowa Online AP Academy has had student retention rates of 80% or higher. We know that this is largely due to the work of mentors with students in the school. Your expertise as both a licensed teacher in the state of Iowa and your personal relationships with students are a large part of the success of the Iowa Online AP Academy. If a situation arises in which a student requests to drop the course, we trust that the Iowa Online AP Academy mentor will do his/her best to make the most appropriate decision for that particular student. We strongly encourage students who might be experiencing difficulty with the course content or experience fear of a lower-than-expected grade to try to work through these issues with the help of their mentor(s) and course instructor(s). However, if a student decides to drop the course, the site mentor should contact the Belin-Blank Center to let the Center know about the change in enrollment status. Please **do not** attempt to drop the student yourself within the course platform.

It is important for students, parents, and school officials to understand that if a high school student chooses to drop an Iowa Online AP Academy course more than 14 school days after the start of course, the school will be assessed a $350 cancellation fee for each course he/she drops. Additionally, if a student is not active on his/her course for 21 consecutive school days, he/she will be dropped from the course and the school will be assessed the same $350 cancellation fee.

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This policy currently applies only to high school students and does not apply to middle school students.

More to Iowa Online AP Academy

Every spring, the Iowa Online AP Academy provides AP students with access to the online AP Exam Review through Apex Learning, in preparation for the AP exams administered each May. Watch the Iowa Online AP Academy website for more information about this opportunity in spring 2019.

The Belin-Blank Center also hosts AP training each summer for AP teachers on the University of Iowa campus. More information about AP teacher training can be found at http://belinblank.org/aptti.

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Where to Go With Concerns or for Additional Help

If you have questions about enrolling students for Iowa Online AP Academy courses, accessing exams, or course deadlines, or need additional support, please contact IOAPA staff at the Belin-Blank Center (ioapa@belinblank.org).

Iowa Online AP Academy
ioapa@belinblank.org
(319) 335-6148

Apex Learning Courses
support@apexlearning.com

Course Materials, Help, and Resources: http://cdn.apexlearning.com/documents/ALVS_Resources.pdf

If you have questions or concerns about an Apex Learning instructor, please contact Apex Learning directly at ALVS Services by either using the email address ALVS.support@apexlearning.com, or by calling 855-550-2547. ALVS Services will create a case, investigate the problem, document, and follow up with everyone involved. They will also escalate the complaint to appropriate management, if that's what's needed.

Edhesive Courses
info@edhesive.com

AP Computer Science Technical Requirements

Introduction to Computer Science Technical Requirements

Please note that our AP Computer Science courses require more of mentors than other IOAPA courses. See the Eligibility section of this handbook for more information.

College Board
apexams@info.collegeboard.org
(877) 274-6474

AP Coordinators	AP Students
Ordering AP Exams	AP Teacher Community
AP Exam Dates	AP Coordinator Community
AP Central	Cultivating AP in Small Rural Schools

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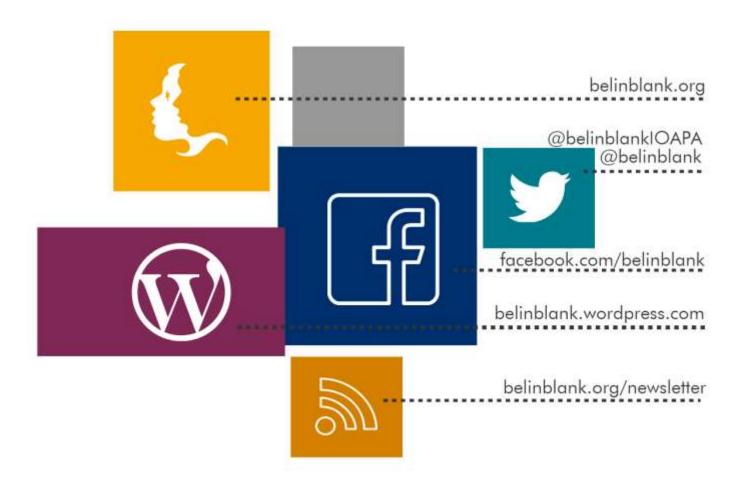# Appendix A: 2018-2019 Mentor Designation Form

Mentors must complete this enrollment form in order to be designated as the mentor to receive the stipend at their schools. Only one designated mentor will receive an Iowa Online AP Academy stipend. The site coordinator can add other school-supported mentors, if needed. Site coordinators are responsible for adding the mentors to the "Staff" tab in the Apex dashboard. Fax or email this form to Lori Hudson (fax: 319-335-5151; ioapa@belinblank.org).

Mentor information:

Mentor Name: _____

Folder Number: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Email Address: _____

School information:

School Name: _____

School District: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Please list the courses for which you are mentoring students: _____

Agreement of Commitment:

Please initial next to each line.

_____I certify that I am currently a licensed teacher in an accredited public or private middle school or high school in Iowa that is registered through the Iowa Online AP Academy.

_____As our school's assigned mentor, I agree to the roles and tasks to actively support our students participating in the Iowa Online AP Academy courses. These tasks include proctoring all quizzes and tests.

_____I am the designated Iowa Online AP Academy Mentor and I understand I will receive a stipend for each semester for which I am the designated, active mentor for 2018-2019.

I would like to (mark one): ☐ serve as a mentor for new IOAPA mentors
☐ be mentored by a veteran IOAPA mentor
☐ none of the above

Mentor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Site Coordinator Signature: _____ Date: _____

Principal Signature: _____ Date: _____

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Appendix B: Online and Social Media Resources

Follow your AP instructor or other IOAPA mentors via Twitter, if they have an account! You can also follow @APforStudents and @AP_Trevor for AP updates.

Connect With Us

belinblank.org

@belinblankIOAPA
@belinblank

facebook.com/belinblank

belinblank.wordpress.com

belinblank.org/newsletter

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Appendix C: Iowa Online AP Academy Courses and Prerequisites

Course descriptions, syllabi, and suggested prerequisites can be accessed through the [Course Catalog](#) page of our website ([www.belinblank.org/ioapa](#)). Find the class you are interested in, and click Learn More.

Courses include AP courses for high school students and high school-level courses for eligible middle school students. Middle school courses are not AP courses; rather, they are AP-preparatory, intended to equip students with sufficient skills and background knowledge to be prepared for future AP courses in high school. For help solving middle school course implementation issues, the links [here](#) will be useful.

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Appendix D: Iowa Online AP Academy Student Readiness Checklist
(Adapted from the Project Excel Teacher Recommendation Form developed by Hoffman Estates High School)

Prospective IOAPA students and mentors should fill this out together.

Please indicate your perspective on the following information below:
1 – Weakness   2 – Average   3 – Strength

School Work Habits/Independent Functioning
____Homework Completion
____Self-Advocacy Skills
____Organizational Skills
____Note-Taking Skills
____Willingness to Access Resources (i.e. tutoring, teacher assistance, etc.)
____Class Preparedness
____Class Participation

Classroom Function Behaviors/Motivation
____Ability to Stay Focused
____Ability to Stay on Task
____Desire to Do Well
____Attempts All Tasks Assigned
____Takes Responsibility for Own Learning

Each person has relative strengths and weaknesses. In addition to having taken the appropriate prerequisite courses, the above characteristics may be important for a successful experience in the Iowa Online AP Academy. Please discuss the areas that you or your mentor have identified as areas of weakness. How will you address these areas, as they relate to your participation in the Iowa Online AP Academy?

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Appendix E: Applying AP™ Exam Scores at Area Colleges & Universities

Enrollment in AP™ coursework can be applied to many college and university graduation requirements. The table below shows the AP™ exam scores required to earn college credit and/or advanced standing at selected colleges and universities in the Midwest. Qualifying scores may transfer as elective credit hours, or they may replace an introductory level course in the content area, depending on the score, the institution, and the department.

This information was compiled April 5, 2018, from Office of Admissions websites. Check with the Office of Admissions at your institution of interest to be sure this information is accurate and to determine how credit will be applied, especially for the AP Computer Science courses.

	Bio	Calc AB	Chem	Comp Sci A	Comp Sci P	Eng Lang	Eng Lit	Env Sci	Macro Econ	Micro Econ	Psych	Spanish Lang	Stats	US Govt	US Hist
U of Iowa	4-5 Except ENG, NURS, PH	4-5 Except PH	4-5 Except ENG, NURS	4-5 Except PH	5	4-5 Except ENG	4-5	4-5	4-5 Except BUS	4-5 Except BUS	4-5	4-5	4-5 Except ENG	4-5	4-5
ISU	4-5	4-5	4-5	4-5	4-5	3-5	4-5	3-5	3-5	3-5	4-5	3-5	3-5	3-5	4-5
UNI	4-5	3-5	4-5	4-5	[No policy]	3-5	3-5	3-5 (inc. lab credit)	3-5	3-5	3-5	3-5	3-5	3-5	3-5
Drake	4	4	4	4	[No policy]	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Luther	4-5	4-5	4-5	4-5	[No policy]	4-5	4-5	4-5	4-5	4-5	4-5	4-5	4-5	4-5	4-5
St. Ambrose	3	3	3	3	[No policy]	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
DMACC	3-5 No lab credit	3-5	3-5 No lab credit	3-5	[No policy]	3-5	3-5	3-5 No lab credit	4-5	4-5	4-5	4-5	3-5	3-5	3-5
Kirkwood CC	3 Lab credit	4	3 Lab credit for score 4-5	4	[No policy]	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
EICC	3	3	3	[No policy]	[No policy]	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Creighton	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4
UN - Lincoln	4-5	3-5	3-5	3-5	3-5	4-5	4-5	4-5	3-5	3-5	3-5	3-5	3	4-5	4-5