

Science Course Selection Advice

Course selection for next school year is coming soon. This document gives some guidance on science course selection.

1. Plan ahead - many upper level courses (especially APs) have prerequisites. If you want to take a class by graduation, make sure you have carved out a spot in your schedule for its prerequisites!
2. Don't take just the minimum graduation requirements. A well-rounded background in all core subjects (English, math, science, and social studies) is good planning especially if you have no idea what you may want to pursue beyond high school. Take four years of English, math, science, and social studies in high schools. Colleges, technical institutions, and even employers will be looking for it.
3. Consider doubling up in science as a sophomore or beyond. All current freshman Science 9 students must take biology as a sophomore.
 - What is doubling up? You take two science classes in the same school year. For example, you can take biology and chemistry or biology and physics. The advantage of doing this is that it opens up more opportunities for taking AP courses as a junior and senior. PLEASE NOTE: You must have completed geometry PRIOR to taking chemistry or physics.
 - Why should you want to take AP courses? AP courses are college level courses that provide various amounts of college credits across the country depending on a test score. Taking these courses in high school not only saves you money and time in college but also gives you the advantage of small class sizes - these courses at the college level frequently have 200+ students. Arrowhead currently offers AP Biology, AP Chemistry, and AP Physics 1, AP Physics 2, and AP Physics C.

Please take time to discuss all options with other students, parents, and teachers by the time registration comes around. Ask questions.

Accelerated/AP Information

Q: Which introductory science courses offer an accelerated option?

A: Biology and Chemistry both offer an accelerated option. Physics offers AP Physics 1.

Q: Do I have to complete an application or take a placement tests for accelerated?

A: No. The process has been changed to informed choice self-select. Each of the accelerated courses will be on the course selection sheet.

Q: Can anyone just sign up for an accelerated course or are there requirements?

A: There are requirements and recommendations for enrolling in most Accelerated courses. First, there may be a minimum level of math class that you must be enrolled in to take the course (for Accelerated Chemistry it is Advanced Algebra, and for AP Physics 1 it is Functions). Students who sign up for these courses without the requisite math class will be contacted and switched to another course. Second, you should ensure that you have been successful in previous science courses and have performed at an advanced level on standardized tests, especially in the math and science portions.

Q: Is it fine to sign up for accelerated even though I do not meet these recommendations?

A: Not really. All students will be cross-checked through the Arrowhead database. If they do not qualify they will be contacted and possibly removed from the course. Ultimately, however, the "informed choice" model means that students and their parents get to decide, even if that might not be in the best interests of the student.

Q: The most important reason I should sign up for accelerated is that my friends are signing up for the course, right?

A: No. Students who sign up for accelerated must meet the criteria and understand that it will be a challenge. Accelerated courses will have higher expectations, different activities and enhanced critical thinking and mathematical emphasis. Students should have an interest in science and be ready to rise to the challenge.

Q: If I do not take an accelerated science course, can I take the AP course in that content area?

A: Yes. Students may take AP science courses at a future date as long as they meet the AP requirements stated in the curriculum guide.

Q: How do I know if I am a good candidate for accelerated or AP science?

A: Discuss signing up for accelerated or AP science courses with your present science teacher.