

## *Techniques for Effective Exam Registration*

These tips are the accumulation of ten years of experience registering students for over 2.5 Million AP exams at 888 schools worldwide. Using these techniques will greatly simplify your registration process while increasing the accuracy of your exam order.

**We can also help . . .**

**Total Registration's web based exam registration service uses all these techniques - providing the simplest, most accurate exam registration.**

Here's a quick overview of Total Registration's Exam Registration Service:

- Students register themselves online via our website – [NO DATA ENTRY FOR SCHOOLS](#)
- Data is instantly recorded in a database – [DATA IS AVAILABLE IMMEDIATELY](#)
- Coordinator runs reports at the click of a button – [NO WRESTLING WITH SPREADSHEETS](#)
- Families can pay their exam fees online – [NO MORE COLLECTING CHECKS AND CHASING DOWN PAYMENTS](#)

Coordinators can learn more about streamlining the exam registration process by contacting Total Registration.

**Total Registration, LLC**  
**[www.TotalRegistration.net](http://www.TotalRegistration.net)**  
**800-974-2187**  
**[info@TotalRegistration.net](mailto:info@TotalRegistration.net)**

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## Create an Organized Registration Form

An organized exam registration begins with the registration form. Spending time getting organized up front can save you a significant amount of time later.

A well designed registration form can minimize common mistakes that students might make.

We are making the assumption that schools are using a registration form. If you allow students to choose whether they are taking an exam and/or students need to pay any amount for the exams, you should have a registration form.

### Give students a list of exams – not fill in the blank

- Limit students to exams you are willing to offer
  - Reduces errors (English Lit vs. English Lang)
  - Include a note for students to come see you if they desire to take an exam not listed

A common mistake schools make is to ask students to list exams (fill in the blank) that they wish to take. This presents a couple of problems.

1. Some exams have very similar names and students may not write the correct exam (English Lit vs. English Lang, Spanish Lang vs. Spanish Lit, and Calculus AB vs. Calculus BC). If students are just listing them they might put something like English, not knowing that there are different exams.
2. You may not want to offer all exams at your school

### List the names of the teachers with AP courses they teach

- Include all possible teachers for each exam
- Include “Independent Study” where appropriate

Listing teachers with the exams accomplishes two things:

<input type="checkbox"/> Studio Art 2D (portfolios due) - Fri - May 8, 2009 p.m.	<input type="radio"/> Ms. Van Gough
<input type="checkbox"/> United States History - Fri - May 8, 2009 a.m.	<input type="radio"/> Mr. Del Caro
	<input type="radio"/> Mr. Navarro
	<input type="radio"/> Mrs. Roberts
	<input type="radio"/> Independent Study
<input type="checkbox"/> World History - Thu - May 14, 2009 a.m.	<input type="radio"/> Mr. Munro

1. It reduces the likelihood of students selecting the wrong exam (i.e. English Literature vs. English Language).
2. It allows you to include teacher names on the exam rosters, making it easier for teachers to verify that all their students are registered.

### Collect student and parent emails

- Allows you to easily contact students and parents with problems or updates
- Bypasses the classroom teacher

Collecting email addresses of both the students and the parents allows you to easily send reminders, give status updates, clarify things, etc. This may become especially handy when dealing with students who have not paid their exam fees.

This ensures that information is being given in a timely manner, instead of relying on the classroom teachers to pass on information.

## Provide pre-admin session choices

- Makes it clear that students must attend a pre-admin session
- Assists in organizing rooms and help
- Allows you to take attendance

If you offer more than 5 exams, you should consider offering pre-admin sessions. During these sessions, students pre-fill their answer sheets. This saves a tremendous amount of time during exam administration and is one more check to make sure students are taking the exams you think they are.

Providing a menu of pre-admin sessions can make life much easier. Students can always change their choice or come to another session if needed.

Having students “register” for a pre-admin makes it an event that they can put into their calendar. It also makes it much easier to plan for help if you have any large pre-admin sessions.

## Collect ethnicity/gender information

- Allows you to run reports about who is taking what exams
- Helps provide information regarding meeting school goals

Many schools have school improvement goals that are oriented towards gender and racial equity. Collecting this information up front makes it much easier to run reports later to see if the school is meeting these goals.

Some states have financial incentives related to this information. Having this information at your fingertips makes it much easier to provide this info to the district or state.

## Include transportation permission slips for off-campus testing

- Students turn in paperwork only once

Some schools must test “off campus” due to space limitations. This usually involves permission slips, either for transportation or for students to drive themselves. Including these permission slips with the registration form means that you only collect paperwork once.

## Publicize your refund policy

- Eliminate confusion about what happens if students cancel exams
- Include refund amounts and any applicable dates
- Do not forget the fee to return exams that have not been administered

There always seems to be students that opt to cancel an exam after they have registered. Including your refund policy decreases confusion and frustration on the part of parents/students.

Be sure to include any applicable dates regarding refunds. Remember, you will need to pay the College Board for any un-administered exams that you send back, so be sure to account for this in your refund policy. Many schools have multi-tiered refund policies, i.e. if requesting a refund before some date they receive a full refund, after the date they receive a partial refund, if they do not show for the exam there is no refund.

## ***Create an AP Program section on the school's website***

- Contact Information for AP coordinator(s)
- All Dates:
  - Date Registration begins/ends
  - Late fee dates
  - Due date for payment
  - Pre-administration dates and locations
  - Exam dates and locations
- Refund policy for cancelled exams
- Downloadable registration form or a form that can be submitted online

Many schools have websites. This is a great place to disseminate information about the AP exams. Providing information on the school website can greatly reduce questions you need to answer as students/parents can find the answers themselves.

Be sure to include a downloadable registration form (a pdf is best). This way, students will not be asking you for one if they lost their first one. Even better, make a form that can be filled out and submitted online.

You might also want to include information about what is permitted and forbidden during exams; calculators, phones, iPods, cameras, phones, etc.

### ***Collecting Registration Forms***

An organized collection and recording process can prevent headaches.

### ***Students return registration and payment to only one person***

This person should be easily accessible during the school day

- A counselor or clerical staff is usually best
- Clearly indicate this person on the registration form

From experience, we find having multiple collectors of the registration forms greatly increases the number of “lost” forms. It also allows the students to claim that they gave it to someone else. Having a central place for students to turn in forms and payment greatly increases the accuracy of your registration. We suggest that you have students turn in both their form and payment at the same time.

The worst thing to do is have the students turn in their registrations to “any AP teacher”.

### ***Record registrations as soon as they are collected***

- Record registrations daily
- Allows easy access to information

Keeping current with the data entry allows you to give people updates frequently. It is a pain to do, but a little bit every day is usually much easier than doing them all at one time.

## Record Payments and Fee Waivers

- It is hard to know who to order exams for if this is not done
- Allows you to easily keep track of the status

Keeping track of payments is very important. Schools that keep track of payments are much more likely to keep their AP program in the “black”. Schools that do not keep track often find themselves losing money on the AP exams.

## Give teachers frequent updates on who is registered

- Print exam rosters and give them to teachers often, at least a couple of times during registration.
- Ask teachers to review, note any issues and return with their initials
- Inform teachers who has not paid

Classroom teachers see the students often and are best equipped at encouraging the students to register on time. Providing the teachers with current information greatly facilitates this process and also helps catch any registration errors.

## Collect a late fee for registrations returned beyond some date

- This “encourages” students to register early
- Allows some leniency instead of extending deadline
- Generates some revenue to cover fee waivers

Through years of training, students have learned that school deadlines are not always set in stone. Late fees, however, are a great motivator. We have found that schools who charge late fees have students rush to register before it takes effect, alleviating problems when registration ends. If students choose to register late, you have generated some revenue to help offset any fee waivers that you may give.

## Set a deadline for registering

- Be very clear about when registration ends

It is very important to set a deadline for registering and stick to it. Publicize all the deadlines every chance you get; send school-wide emails, have teachers remind students, put it on the registration form, publish in any newsletters, put it in school announcements, and note it on the school website.

**NOTE:** Set a deadline that is at least a week before you want to order exams. This will allow you time to do any verification and take care of any problems.

## Send school wide reminder emails

- Keep students and parents up to date on the registration process
- Send emails when registration begins, prior to late fees and prior to registration ending
- Send to all-school list as this might identify any “independent study” students

Using school email lists is a great way to remind the school community about the AP exams. Often times there are students who take exams who were not enrolled in a class. These students will usually fall through the cracks if your only communication channel is through the classroom teacher.

Keeping people informed tends to reduce questions and increase accuracy.

## After the Registration Period

There are many things you can do to ensure an accurate order **before** placing your order

### Have teachers review and initial exam rosters before ordering

- Identifies any questionable registrations or students registered for the incorrect exam
- Keeps teachers involved in the process

Before ordering, it is critical that teachers review the exam rosters, note any problems and initial the rosters. Skipping this step greatly increases the likelihood of having an incorrect exam order. Remember, most errors in your exam order will have financial repercussions.

There will be errors in the registration; *the important thing is to catch them before ordering*. We suggest allocating at least a week for this process.

### Keep a record of who needs testing accommodations and who is approved

- Most accommodations require additional rooms and proctors
- Some accommodations require special materials

Testing accommodations create many issues. It is important to know who needs and is qualified for accommodations before test day for the following reasons.

- Students must apply for SSD (Services for Students with Disabilities) long before the exams
- Many accommodations require a second testing environment and proctor
- Some accommodations may require special materials or equipment

### Contact students who have not paid and give them a deadline to pay

- Be very clear about when money is due
- **Do not** order exams for students who have **not paid** or obtained a fee waiver

The greatest way to lose money on the AP exams is to order exams for students who have not paid. It is very important that all exams that are ordered are paid for or have waivers. If you inform students that exams will not be ordered unless they are paid for, students will quickly pay their fees (here's where those email addresses come in handy).

### Be careful when choosing alternate exams due to conflicts

- Some exams are easier to administer/proctor
- Avoid administering difficult exams as alternates when possible
- You choose the alternate exam, not the student

If students have two exams scheduled at the same time, one, of them will have to be administered as an alternate. Do not allow the student to choose which one. You should make this choice. Some exams, such as foreign languages and Music Theory, are difficult to administer and should be avoided as alternates when possible.

## Get score reports from the College Board organized by teacher/section

- By using the “School Use Only” area on the answer sheet, you can get scores broken down by teacher, section or period
- Assign codes (1-9) before the exam and give to proctor to have students fill in the correct info

## Create folders or envelopes for each student

- Student name and exams on each folder/envelope
- Create before pre-admin sessions
- Record pre-admin completion on envelope
- Student packet
- Answer sheets for all exams

Keeping all of the student information organized makes prepping for exams much easier. Many schools create a folder for each student labeled with:

- student’s name
- student id
- exams the student is taking (in order by exam date)
- accommodations including the SSD #

In these folders you place the student packet with any additional answer sheets needed. Create these before the pre-admin sessions and the sessions will go more smoothly. When the students turn them in at pre-admin, check that they are complete. This is an easy way to “take roll” for the pre-admin.

## Email reminders to students & parents

- Students who have not paid
- Pre-admin reminders
- Exam reminders
- Materials and supplies that are permitted or forbidden on exam day

Most email programs allow you to send emails to multiple recipients easily. We recommend sending the email to yourself and putting the student emails in the “BCC” field so that the students do not see everyone’s email addresses (this is a privacy issue).