

AP Exam Registration – Using Late Fees

It is well known that students/parents will wait until the last few days of the registration period, regardless of the length of the registration window, to register and pay for AP exams. It is not unusual for more than 50% of the students to wait until the last 2 days to register and pay. One of the easiest ways to ensure that the last few days of registration are not stressful is to use a late fee registration period.

Why Use a Late Fee?

- A late fee allows schools to have multiple deadlines that they can stick to. The late fee becomes an artificial deadline that most students/parents register by.
- Using a late fee allows schools to show “grace”. If a school does not have a late fee and holds firm to their deadlines, there is a good chance that some students will not register in time and therefore not be able to sit for exams.
- Unfortunately, throughout their school career, students have been trained that deadlines are not always deadlines. They have learned that if they cry enough or their parents yell enough that exceptions are made to deadlines. A late fee model is not common in schools, albeit very common outside of education. Families are not sure whether they can get out of the late fee, causing most to register before the late fee.
- Using a late fee makes it easier for staff to remind stragglers to register. Without a late fee, more than half the students may register in the last couple of days. This is too many students for teachers/counselors to personally remind. When using a late fee, 90% of the students will register before the late fee, allowing teachers and counselors to personally remind the stragglers after the late fee begins but before the registration ends.
- Using a late fee reduces the stress at the end of the registration period as the vast majority of the students will register before the late fee kicks in, leaving just a few stragglers to remind.
- When students *choose* to register late, schools receive more funds to help cover fee waivers, proctor expenses, the cost of Total Registration’s online registration service, etc.
- Late fees are not an increase in exam fees. Students that do not wish to pay an increased cost can always register before the late fee date, paying just the regular exam fee.

Recommendations for Late Fees

During the past several years of registering students for the AP exams, [Total Registration](#) has learned much about the use of late fees. The following are several recommendations Total Registration has:

- All schools should use a late fee as it greatly reduces staff stress.
- When using a late fee, it is very important that all deadlines and fees, including the late fee date and fee, are clearly communicated before the registration begins. Schools that do not clearly communicate their late fee in advance typically receive complaints about the late fee. Families have no foundation for complaints if the

expectations are clearly communicated from the beginning.

- When using a late fee, it is important to allow an adequate registration period before the late fee begins. It is best to allow 2-3 weeks of registration at the “regular fee” before beginning the late fee.
- The late fee must be large enough to encourage students/parents to register in a timely fashion. The late fee should be at least \$10.00/exam. A late fee less than \$10.00/exam may result in a larger number of registrations during the late fee period.
- Students/Parents should be reminded of the pending late fee in a timely manner. Teachers should make class announcements a week prior to the late fee beginning. Schools may also want to send a school wide email.
- Structure the late fee in a way that families have the ability to pay their fees before the late fee begins. The late fee should begin during school hours instead of late at night or on the weekend. This provides families the ability to pay their fees before late fees begin.

About Total Registration’s Online AP Exam Registration Service

Total Registration, www.TotalRegistration.net, has been helping high schools simplify the AP exam registration process since 2007. In 2016, more than 370,000 students registered themselves online for over 730,000 AP exams at 888 schools using Total Registration’s service.

With Total Registration, students register themselves for their exams online, completely removing time consuming data entry. Coordinators login and run reports at the click of a button, removing cumbersome spreadsheets. Since data is instantly recorded at the time of registration, all reports are always up to date. Schools maintain complete control of the registration process while greatly reducing the time and stress involved in running an efficient and accurate exam registration. Learn more, watch a video overview, try the demo and request pricing at www.AP.TotalRegistration.net.