



Apex High School Academy of Information Technology Frequently Asked Questions

What is AOIT?

The Academy of Information Technology (AOIT) is a four-year career academy affiliated with the National Academy Foundation (NAF). It is a smaller learning community in which a cohort of students have core and IT classes together. Academy teachers share the 90 cohorted students and work together to *integrate technology* into their curricula as well as develop *interdisciplinary projects*. Class sizes in AOIT are comparable to same class sizes at AHS.

Who is it for?

Under current school board policy, only students assigned to Apex High School may apply and be admitted to AOIT. Only rising freshmen may apply. AOIT is a four-year program so students cannot be admitted to AOIT after 9th grade. Students must be on the standard course of study and enjoy using technology.

Does my student need to be experienced in technology?

No. Students will learn IT skills in five IT courses over four years. Students should enjoy using and learning about technology.

Is AOIT only for students interested in IT careers?

No. While many AOIT students are interested in IT and engineering careers, the skills the students will learn in AOIT are transferable to any career choice.

How are students admitted?

Similar to the WCPSS magnet school policy, siblings of current and alumni AOIT students have priority. A lottery is used to fill the remaining spots with a maximum of 90 students. If more than 90 students apply, the lottery is used to determine the order of the wait-list. Students may be brought in from the waitlist over the summer or during the school year if a spot opens.

How many students typically apply? How many are siblings?

For the 2010-2011 school year, there were 135 applicants. Twenty-two of the 90 admitted students were siblings. The number of siblings applying is an unknown and will vary from year to year.

Why is a lottery used?

According to school board policy, a career academy should be homogeneous to the school's student population. A lottery is the most equitable method to achieve this. Interest in IT and grades are not a factor in admittance.

Can my student take honors or AP classes in AOIT?

Yes. In core AOIT classes such as English, social studies, and science students will be in combined classes of academic and honors depending on what level they are recommended for. Teachers will differentiate assessments for the academic and honors levels. In 11th and 12th grades, students may take AP courses but they will not be AOIT cohort classes. This does not have any effect on their status in AOIT.

Can my student take other elective courses?

Yes. While five IT courses are required in AOIT in the four years, students still have the opportunity to take many other elective courses. AOIT IT courses (CTE) do meet the following graduation requirement:

2 Elective credits of any combination from either:

- Career and Technical Education (CTE)
- Arts Education
- Second Languages

4 Elective credits strongly recommended (four course concentration) from one of the following:

- Career and Technical Education (CTE)
- JROTC
- Arts Education

Is AOIT more difficult?

No. All courses follow the NC standard course of study. What will be different are the integration of technology into core classes, interdisciplinary approach/teaching, and project based learning. Work based learning and 21st Century Skills are also included in AOIT courses. AOIT students will have many projects that involve working in teams and giving presentations.

Are there any conflicts with athletics or clubs?

No. AOIT students may participate in athletics and/or clubs at AHS or any activities that are after the school day. Many AOIT students do participate in athletics and/or clubs.

Are there any conflicts with marching band?

No. Marching band takes place after school. Many AOIT students participate in marching band.

What are the conflicts with AOIT and performing arts courses?

Because performing arts courses are often required for two semesters per year and because they are often only scheduled during one period, they may conflict with AOIT courses. Because there is a new master schedule each year, it cannot be guaranteed that there won't be conflicts over the four years. AOIT students can sometimes fit in one semester of band as freshmen and one or two performing arts courses each year after 9th grade. Because of conflicts, we ask that if performing arts are a priority, those students do not apply to AOIT.

Are there any costs or fees to be in AOIT?

Students are required to purchase an AOIT shirt (approximately \$28) in 9th grade and pay expenses for field trips. The inability to pay will not have any impact on student participation in AOIT. Funding is available for these situations.

Can my student drop out of AOIT?

We typically have a wait-list for enrolling in the AOIT Program and do not fill spots after the 9th grade. As a result, we expect students and their parents/guardians to seriously consider their decision to enroll because we expect a four-year commitment to the program's responsibilities and requirements.

Most of the time conflicts with a student's obligations have been worked out to allow students to meet their goals and stay in the AOIT. If the conflict cannot be resolved, then the student and parent must submit a letter to the Apex High School administration requesting to drop AOIT. The decision to drop will be made on a case-by-case basis.