

ASU brings college courses to high school students worldwide

Students in over 30 countries are earning US university credit through international partnerships

By Samantha Becker, ASU News
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What if preparing for college abroad didn't mean navigating a maze of forms, exams and financial risk, but instead started in the classroom students already know?

As access to higher education grows more complex across borders, a new kind of global learning model is taking shape — one that brings university-level coursework directly into high schools.

From Addis Ababa to Kuala Lumpur, Arizona State University is working with international schools to make college-level learning more accessible and affordable. Through a growing partnership with the [International Baccalaureate](#) and a new collaboration with the [Council on Foreign Relations](#), ASU is reaching high schoolers across Asia, Africa, Europe and the Middle East with online and hybrid credit-bearing coursework.

“For many schools, the challenge isn't finding motivated students — it's finding college options that actually fit their schedules, staffing and systems,” said [Scott Weatherford](#), executive director of [Universal Pathways](#) at [ASU Learning Enterprise](#). “We've built a model that meets students where they are, earns them real college credit and plugs into the school day without adding burden.”

Global pathways, local relevance

[Launched in 2023](#), the ASU-IB collaboration enables students enrolled in the [IB Career-related Programme](#) to take ASU courses in subjects such as business, sustainability and health. Courses are taught online by ASU faculty, and students can earn university credit and career certificates — without GPA or transcript requirements.

The model has gained traction quickly. At [ICS Addis](#) in Ethiopia, students are using the program to reduce college costs while exploring subjects that match their interests.

“The biggest draw was students' ability to dive into areas of specific interest while earning college credit,” said Deanna Milne, curriculum coordinator at ICS Addis. “Whether it's for financial savings,

confidence or career exploration — for most, it's the chance to do all three.”

At [IGB International School](#) in Malaysia, the ASU-IB collaboration is reshaping how students prepare for life after high school. The school created a dedicated study space where students gather for advising, peer collaboration and independent study. The ASU Education College Foundations Certificates they are earning consist of [Universal Learner Courses](#) developed by many schools and colleges across the university, including the [W. P. Carey School of Business](#), [Fulton Schools of Engineering](#), [Edson College of Nursing and Health Innovation](#), and the [College of Integrative Sciences and Arts](#).

“ASU’s outstanding reputation, flexibility and breadth of academic offerings provide our students with meaningful pathways to begin university-level work in a low-risk environment,” said Gregory Brunton, head of school at IGB. “Our families value access to coursework from a top U.S. university.”

ASU is the first U.S. university formally recognized by IB as a global provider of career-related study — a designation that streamlines course integration into the IB framework and strengthens the college admissions prospects for international learners.

“Our partnership with ASU represents a significant step forward in expanding access and opportunity in higher education and career pathways,” said Miriam Choi, senior development associate for IB North America.

Complementing global expansion with local customization

While international schools are integrating ASU coursework into well-established IB programs, others are tailoring the experience from the ground up.

At [Creation Village World School](#) in Florida, a newer IB campus, leaders are using ASU courses to build foundational skills in ninth grade.

“It really provides core competencies students need to prepare for university, continued education or even going directly into the workforce,” said Derek Cummings, head of school. “It’s helping families better understand what their students can do — and how ASU plays a part in that.”

The school’s curriculum begins with project management and expands into tracks such as health care and technology, emphasizing both academic readiness and real-world agency.

Global literacy for all learners

In a separate initiative, ASU and the Council on Foreign Relations have co-developed [Introduction to Global Affairs](#), a three-credit online course that explores today’s most pressing international challenges. Delivered through [ASU’s Universal Pathways](#) portfolio, the course includes modules on migration, trade, governance and cybersecurity — designed for learners at any stage.

The course was co-designed by ASU faculty, including [Laine Munir](#), from ASU’s [School of Politics and Global Studies](#) within [The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences](#), in collaboration with CFR experts. Grounded in global policy expertise, the curriculum combines academic rigor with real-

world relevance and invites students to engage in role-play simulations and policy decision-making. For Munir, the work is deeply personal.

“Years of living and working across Africa and Asia taught me that the best classrooms don't always have walls,” Munir said. “Drawing on my policy and humanitarian field experience to design Introduction to Global Affairs let me once again cross borders and build connections, breaking down barriers to link students everywhere with the real-world policy debates driving today’s most pressing global challenges.”

That global perspective is exactly what ASU and CFR set out to deliver — connecting learners to the issues shaping the world and equipping them with the tools to engage.

“At the Council on Foreign Relations, we believe that informed citizens are the cornerstone of a healthy democracy,” said Caroline Netchvolodoff, CFR’s vice president of education. “Our collaboration with ASU brings this belief to life at scale.”

Building momentum for learning across life stages

ASU’s global high school partnerships are part of a broader effort to reimagine higher education not just as a destination, but as a continuum of opportunity. Through its Learning Enterprise, the university now reaches learners in more than 140 countries.

“By removing traditional barriers to dual enrollment and college access, we’re opening new doors for learners around the world,” said Weatherford. “It’s about meeting students where they are and helping them see where they can go.”

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Main image



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