

BOARD OF REGENTS
BRIEFING PAPER

Credit by Examination – College Board Advanced Placement Examination Scores

BACKGROUND & POLICY CONTEXT OF ISSUE:

Existing Board policy under Title 4, Chapter 14, Section 20 authorizes institutions to establish procedures for administering and accepting credit for many different examinations, including the College Board Advanced Placement examinations (CBAPE or “AP Exams”). The College Board’s Advanced Placement program provides high school students with the opportunity to take college courses while in high school and then take the College Board’s AP exam for that course at the end of the high school course. Students receive a score on these national tests from 1 to 5.

Each year millions of students across the country take the AP exams. In 2014, 2.3 million students took one or more of these exams (4.2 million exams taken overall). Students may submit these scores to colleges and universities for consideration. The American Council on Education (ACE) and the College Board recommend that colleges and universities award credit for AP scores of 3 (“qualified”) or higher on any AP Examination. According to the College Board, a score of 3 is the college course grade equivalent of a C+. Institutions often accept scores of 3, 4, or 5 on these exams for credit in specified courses, but institutions vary on the acceptable minimum score. All NSHE institutions currently accept AP exam scores but the minimum scores accepted for credit vary by the exam topic (biology, calculus, history, etc...) and by institution. For example, a 3 on the U.S. History AP exam is acceptable for course credit at UNLV, NSC, CSN and TMCC, but a 4 is required at GBC and UNR.

According to research by the College Board, AP students who earn credit and advanced placement for the corresponding introductory college course perform well in subsequent courses within the same discipline; take more, not fewer, courses in the discipline for which they’ve received AP credit; tend to earn higher GPAs than non-AP students; and are more likely to graduate from college in four or five years. In addition, more than 5,800 college faculty participate in AP work on an annual basis, including AP course and exam development, AP exam scoring and score setting, and professional development for high school AP teachers. For more information, see the College Board’s website <https://aphighered.collegeboard.org/>

SPECIFIC ACTIONS BEING RECOMMENDED OR REQUESTED:

Amend Board policy under Title 4, Chapter 14, Section 20 to provide that beginning with the 2016-2017 academic year, scores of 3, 4, and 5 on the CBAPE shall be accepted for credit to satisfy electives, general education requirements, or major requirements. Each institution shall publish the CBAPE score course granting policy in accordance with the requirements in its course catalog and on its Internet website before the beginning of the 2016-2017 academic year. (See attached policy proposal.)

The 2015 Legislature approved \$1.2 million over the biennium to expand student participation in Advanced Placement courses through additional teacher preparation and targeted grants to improve participation and passage rates among key population groups.

POTENTIAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

Requiring acceptance of a minimum score of 3 for course credit at all institutions takes away faculty discretion to set a higher minimum score (4 or 5) for a particular subject matter.

ALTERNATIVE(S) TO WHAT IS BEING REQUESTED/RECOMMENDED:

Retain existing policy that allows institutions to set minimum scores.

COMPLIANCE WITH BOARD POLICY:

Consistent With Current Board Policy: Title # _____ Chapter # _____ Section # _____
 Amends Current Board Policy: Title # _____ Chapter 14, Section 22

POLICY PROPOSAL

TITLE 4, CHAPTER 14, SECTION 22

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