



**Virginia Public Higher Education Policy on Course Credit for AP, Cambridge, CLEP, and IB
(Approved by Council action March 21, 2016)**

Virginia Code §23.1-906, enacted by the 2015 General Assembly, states:

- A. *The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (Council), in consultation with the governing board of each public institution of higher education, shall establish a policy for granting undergraduate course credit to entering freshman students who have taken one or more Advanced Placement, Cambridge Advanced (A/AS), College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), or International Baccalaureate examinations. The policy shall:
 1. Outline the conditions necessary for each public institution of higher education to grant course credit, including the minimum required scores on such examinations;
 2. Identify each public institution of higher education's course credit or other academic requirements that the student satisfies by achieving the minimum required scores on such examinations; and
 3. Ensure, to the extent possible, that the grant of course credit is consistent across each public institution of higher education and each such examination.*
- B. *The Council and each public institution of higher education shall make the policy available to the public on its website.*

The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) promulgates the policy guidelines below in fulfillment of the duty described by §23.1-906, and in accord with its general responsibility to establish policies for public higher education in the commonwealth, as per §23.1-203:15.¹

¹ “The Council shall...adopt such policies and regulations as the Council deems necessary to implement its duties established by state law. Each public institution of higher education shall comply with such policies and regulations.”

Prologue

The purpose of the *Virginia Public Higher Education Policy on Course Credit for AP, Cambridge, CLEP, and IB* (the Policy) is to facilitate consistency, to the extent possible, across institutions in credit granting policies related to the referenced assessments. In keeping with priorities of the General Assembly, Governor, and Council, this Policy intends to

- maximize students' ability to earn college credit consistent with institutions' academic standards;
- enhance transparency for Virginia students seeking course credit for prior learning;
- contribute to lower costs for Virginia families by enhancing students' ability to complete a degree in a timely manner;
- improve the college transfer environment; and
- support quality of undergraduate education at Virginia public institutions.

Guidelines

- Each public institution of higher education shall approve a policy or policies governing the granting of course credit to entering first year students according to their performance on the following assessments:
 - Advanced Placement
 - Cambridge Advanced (A/AS)
 - College-Level Examination Program (CLEP)
 - International Baccalaureate

Institutional policies shall conform to parameters delineated under section II below.

- Parameters of Institutional Review and Policy-Setting
 - A. Each institution shall review AP, Cambridge, CLEP, and IB exams in comparison to its course offerings and curricular requirements to determine the proper grant of credit for each level of performance at or above the minima specified:
 1. (3) or higher on an Advanced Placement examination
 2. (4) or higher on a higher level International Baccalaureate examination
 3. (5) or higher on a standard level International Baccalaureate examination
 4. (50) or higher on a CLEP examination
 5. (C) or higher on a Cambridge Advanced examination (A/AS)
 - B. Institutional policies shall grant the maximum credit for each level of performance on each assessment consistent with the faculty's review of the content of the assessment and its alignment with the following criteria:

1. institutional curriculum and academic standards;
 2. qualitative and quantitative student success data; and
 3. institutional persistence and completion patterns.
- C. Each institution shall make a submission to SCHEV of its final policies, specifying grants of credit, if any, for each level of performance on each assessment, and providing justification for each case where the minimum threshold for granting credit is above the minimum indicated under II.A above.
- D. Additional considerations
1. Students should be given the opportunity to earn the maximum credit consistent with the likelihood of student success and with the faculty's judgment of consistency with the institution's curriculum and academic standards.
 2. The faculty shall have responsibility for specifying all curricular equivalencies for each level of performance on each assessment, to include (but not necessarily to be limited to) the following considerations:
 - a. number of course credits granted;
 - b. course designation(s) for which credit is granted;
 - c. general education, program, or other degree requirements satisfied; and
 - d. program-based exceptions to a-d.
 3. An institution is not required to award course credit for performance on an assessment whose subject matter is not offered in its curriculum.
- Process
 - A. This Policy takes effect immediately. SCHEV staff and institutional staff and faculty shall cooperate to facilitate approval of institutional policies as expeditiously as possible.
 - B. The Director of SCHEV may provide further guidance to institutions and establish whatever processes or advisory groups he judges necessary to facilitate institutions' conformance with this Policy.
 - C. Each institution shall make its final policy or policies available on its web site in a format that is easily understood by the general public. SCHEV shall maintain a web resource that includes links to institutional policies.
 - D. Future changes to institutional policies shall be developed in conformity with this Policy.