



ACADEMIC AFFAIRS GUIDELINES

Section 7:	Dual Credit, Credit by Exam, and Placement	
Title:	Credit by Examination Administration Guidelines	
Number (Current Format)	Number (Prior Format)	Date Last Revised
7.4	XII.A	01/2019
Reference:	BOR Policy 2:10 – Grades and Use of Grade Point Averages (GPA) BOR Policy 2:5 – Transfer of Credits	
Related Form(s):		

1. Purpose & Background

- 1.1. Credit by examination falls within Board of Regents Policy 2:5 Transfer of Credit which specifies that “Credit for college level courses granted through nationally recognized examinations such as CLEP, AP, DANTEs, etc., will be evaluated and accepted for transfer if equivalent to Regental courses and the scores are consistent with Regental policies.” Board practice specifies that when new examinations are accepted under this policy, or when modifications are made to existing examinations, faculty in the respective disciplines are asked to evaluate course materials and make an equivalency recommendation. These recommendations are considered by the Academic Affairs Council and forwarded to the Board of Regents for approval and subsequent addition to the Regental system equivalency matrix for the various examinations.

2. Approved Equivalency Matrix

- 2.1. The Board of Regents has approved a number of system equivalency matrixes for a series of examinations that reflect scores that are routinely brought forward by students. Examinations developed by the following companies or organizations are eligible for inclusion in the equivalency matrixes.
 - 2.1.1. **Advanced Placement (AP) – College Board¹**
 - 2.1.1.1. Program that offers college-level curricula and examinations to high school students. High school teachers are required to meet standards set by the College Board in order to deliver the coursework.

¹ The following language was added to the SDBOR Advanced Placement (AP) Policy Appendix depicting a special advising note for students pursuing graduate and professional degrees outside of the Regental system upon graduate. “Upon student application all AP credits will be applied to student’s transcripts following the *Advanced Placement Guidelines for Regental Institutions* and *BOR Policy 2:5 Transfer of Credit*. Although Regental institutions accept AP credits there are many professional schools throughout the country that do not accept AP to satisfy the pre-requisite requirements for admission to their program. For example, some programs simply state that they do not accept AP and other programs specify that courses completed through AP can be used to meet pre-requisites *only* if the student has completed upper division coursework in that content area and/or demonstrates evidence of competency in that academic area via scores on professional school admissions exams. Due to these varying degrees of value placed on AP courses by professional programs throughout the country, and in order to not unfairly limit students’ options upon graduation, it is advised that students be informed of this variation upon admission and initial course registration. Additionally, students should seek guidance on this matter from the professional programs to which they intend to apply as well as seek the counsel of their campus’ Health Professions Advisor.”

2.1.1.2. AP Tests are scored on a 1 to 5 scale indicating that students scoring a 3 or higher are “qualified” with multiple choice components of the exam scored by computer, while the free response and essay portions are scored by trained Readers assigned by College Board.

2.1.2. College Level Examination Program (CLEP) – College Board

2.1.2.1. Standardized exams that assess college-level knowledge in designated subject areas with the intent of awarding credit to students meeting minimum qualifying scores.

2.1.2.2. Exams are primarily multiple-choice and scored on a scale of 20 to 80 and credit awards dependent upon course equivalencies established at the institutional and system level.

2.1.3. Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES)

2.1.3.1. Testing service designed originally to provide service members and veterans pursue educational goals through assessments designed to measure skills acquired through military service or training. The service has grown to provide testing opportunities for non-military testers.

2.1.4. International Baccalaureate (IB)

2.1.4.1. Curriculum opportunities with assessment options designed to measure student proficiency in a series of middle year, diploma, and career-related programs.

2.1.4.2. Only diploma and career related program coursework/assessments are evaluated for inclusion in the Board of Regents equivalency matrixes.

2.1.5. Project Lead the Way

2.1.5.1. A national program supported by the South Dakota Department of Education that provides high school equivalent coursework in the areas of science and engineering.

2.1.5.2. Tracks in the area of engineering and biomedical sciences have been established in South Dakota to align with approved school district engineering curriculum.

2.2. Students seeking to earn credit for an examination that does not have an established course equivalency matrix may do so on a course-by-course basis at the institutional level through the academic petition process.

3. Examination Review Process

3.1. An examination review process can be facilitated resulting from the creation of a new exam, modifications to an existing exam, or a request from campus personnel/students to review an exam that has not yet been added to the equivalency matrix.

3.2. Once a request is advanced to the Board of Regents central office, campus personnel from each Regental institution are asked to advance examination materials to the appropriate faculty in the discipline most closely aligned to the exam.

3.3. Faculty representatives are asked to assess the materials and determine the alignment of the examination with an equivalent course in the Regental system.

3.4. Recommendations from faculty representatives are forwarded to the Academic Affairs Council for consideration and approval.

3.4.1. Affirmative support from the majority of faculty representatives will warrant inclusion on the equivalency matrix.

- 3.4.2. Assenting recommendations from the majority of faculty representatives will warrant inclusion of a “no credit” designation on the equivalency matrix.
- 3.4.3. Score assignments will align with recommendations set forth by the American Council on Education (ACE).
- 3.5. Recommendations from AAC will be advanced to the Board of Regents for consideration and become active upon approval.
- 3.6. The National Career Readiness Certificate used by ACT to test workplace readiness skills may not be used for prior learning or placement into a higher level math course. Regental credit will not be awarded for performance on this assessment.

4. Transcription & Accepting of Credit

4.1. Grade Assignment

- 4.1.1. Students earning the necessary score approved by the Board of Regents recognized on the equivalency matrix will be awarded credit. All course credit earned through credit by examination will be assigned an “EX” grade.
- 4.1.2. “EX” grades may not be used in the calculation of a student Cumulative GPA calculation in accordance with BOR Policy 2:10 Use of Grades & Grade Point Averages.
- 4.1.3. Students taking an examination that awards credit for multiple courses who has already earned credit for one of the courses in the recognize matrix, will only be granted the “EX” credit for the additional course(s).
- 4.1.4. Credit earned through validation methods other than nationally recognized exams may not exceed 30 credits for students seeking a bachelor’s degree, or 15 credit hours for those seeking an associate’s degree.

4.2. Score Acceptance Timeline

- 4.2.1. Valid test scores must be received within five years from the date of testing to earn credit for one of the recognized credit by examination services.

4.3. Transfer for Credit by Examination Coursework

- 4.3.1. If a valid test score was transcribed at an accredited postsecondary institution within this five-year timeframe, then approved credit by examination scores may be transferred among institutions without requiring additional testing or course completion by students.
- 4.3.2. Coursework earned through credit by examination by one Regental institution will transfer automatically to all Regental institutions.
- 4.3.3. An institution granting “challenge exam credit” or “credit through prior learning assessment” will accept the grade and course equivalency assigned by the awarding institution.
- 4.3.4. Students may transfer in coursework from an institution outside the Regental system that has been awarded through the institution’s credit by examination policy. Institutional policies for assigning course credit must align with the scores approved by the South Dakota Board of Regents. This applies only to nationally normed examinations, and credit by exam or challenge examinations developed at the institutional level must be evaluated on a one-to-one basis upon transfer.

4.4. **Repeat Courses**

- 4.4.1. Credit by validation can be used to repeat a prior course if the student had earned an unsatisfactory grade in the initial attempt.
- 4.4.2. Meeting the qualifying score for the credit by validation examination is used to establish proficiency for the course, and the “EX” grade will still be applied with the earned grade from the initial attempt still calculated in the student’s cumulative grade point average.

4.5. **Credit Earned from Meeting Prerequisites**

- 4.5.1. Following the successful completion of upper division coursework, students may request to have coursework transcribed for courses that serve as prerequisite.
- 4.5.2. Coursework may only be transcribed for those students who demonstrated proficiency prior to the upper level course enrolment by:
 - 4.5.2.1. Meeting the scores approved by the Board of Regents on a nationally normed examination depicted in Section 2 of these guidelines; or
 - 4.5.2.2. Meeting the required scores on established placement examinations approved by the Board of Regents; or
 - 4.5.2.3. Passing a department challenge examination developed by faculty at the student’s home institution; or
 - 4.5.2.4. Completing a portfolio review or formal evaluation by department faculty.
- 4.5.3. Students will be assessed the Challenge by Exam – Course fees should be assessed on a course by course basis as outlined in the Board of Regents Tuition and Fee Schedule when transcribing prerequisite coursework.

SOURCE:

AAC May 2015; AAC February 2016; May 2017 (Clerical); AAC October 2017; AAC July 2018; AAC January 2019.