



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA  
Department of Education

**DATE:** March 23, 2018  
**TO:** Division Superintendents  
**FROM:** Steven M. Constantino, Ed.D., Acting Superintendent of Public Instruction  
**SUBJECT:** **Expansion of IB/AP/CLEP Credits for High School Students**

In March 2016, in accordance with *Virginia Code* §23.1-906, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) approved the *Virginia Public Higher Education Policy on Course Credit for AP, Cambridge, CLEP, and IB* ➡. This policy required all public institutions to review their institutional policies regarding the award of credit for performance on Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Cambridge, and College Level Examination Program (CLEP) exams. The policy asked institutions to grant the maximum credit for performance on the four exam types “consistent with the likelihood of student success and with the faculty’s judgment of consistency with the institution’s curriculum and academic standards.” Furthermore, SCHEV’s policy established minimum score thresholds for each exam and asked that institutions provide evidence-based justification for any credit decisions that require a higher level of performance. In this way, the policy set forth expectations for the expansion of credit while also respecting the standards of individual institutions and the professional judgment of their respective faculties.

Institutional reviews were conducted over the course of the 2016-2017 academic year, and most revised policies were in effect by fall 2017. The review process resulted in a significant expansion of credit awards across Virginia’s 17 institutions (including 15 public four-year institutions, Richard Bland College, and the Virginia Community College System).


For example:

- The number of institutions granting credit for a score of 3 on at least 20 AP exams (out of 38) has increased from **nine** to **fourteen**.
- Prior to the review, only **two** institutions granted credit for a 3 on at least 30 AP exams. That number has increased to **nine**.
- Five institutions **more than doubled** the number of AP exams for which they grant credit for a 3. Most of the other institutions could not reach that level because they were already granting credit for a 3 on the majority of exams.

All institutions are required to make their exam credit policies available on their own websites. The SCHEV has also created a web page with a list of links to the institutional web pages where the respective credit policies can be found. That page is [located at http://schev.edu/index/students-and-parents/prepare/credit-for-ap-ib-cambridge-and-clep-exams](http://schev.edu/index/students-and-parents/prepare/credit-for-ap-ib-cambridge-and-clep-exams) ➡.

Although the SCHEV policy and subsequent institutional reviews have succeeded in expanding possible awards of credit for students who perform well on AP, IB, Cambridge and/or CLEP exams, it is important to understand that **there is no single, consistent policy** across all institutions regarding the amount or type of credit awarded for each level of performance on these exams. Credit awards may vary even within an institution depending on a student's chosen course of study. Students should look at the institutions' own policies and inquire about any program-specific exceptions as they consider their options for postsecondary study. The organizations that offer these exams (e.g., the College Board for AP and CLEP exams) may

attempt--with the best intentions--to advise students about how the credit policies at Virginia institutions will apply to them; SCHEV does not recommend turning to these organizations for guidance on institutional credit policies. The most accurate sources of information about credit awards are the institutions themselves.

Questions about the ***Virginia Public Higher Education Policy on Course Credit for AP, Cambridge, CLEP, and IB*** may be directed to Jodi Fisler, SCHEV's Associate for Assessment Policy and Analysis, at (804) 371-0023 or [JodiFisler@schev.edu](mailto:JodiFisler@schev.edu) .

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