

CREDIT-BY-EXAM FOR WORLD LANGUAGES REGULATIONS

Students who enroll in high school as freshmen before July 1, 2018, as sophomores before July 1, 2019, as juniors before July 1, 2020 or as seniors before July 1, 2021 are required to earn standard and verified units of credit as specified in the regulations of the Board of Education. A “standard unit of credit” or “standard credit” is a credit awarded for a course in which the student successfully completes 140 clock hours of instruction and the requirements of the course.

The Alexandria City School Board recognizes that instruction, learning and outcomes equivalent to those achieved in 140 clock hours of instruction can be attained in a variety of ways. Therefore, ACPS allows students in grades 6-12 with the ability to comprehend and communicate in languages other than English to earn up to three (3) standard (World Languages) credits through Division-approved, national or international assessments approved by VDOE for the World Languages Seal of Biliteracy.

I. DIVISION-APPROVED ASSESSMENTS

Credit-by-Exam measures students’ foreign language proficiency through nationally-normed tests such as AAPPL, OPI, and the WPT for most languages. **Credits are awarded when students demonstrate at least a Novice-High proficiency level.**

Division-approved assessments:

- Have a standardized administration;
- Have been determined to be valid and reliable by an external body;
- Are used in other states or internationally;
- Are scored independently of the school division;
- Have been rigorously reviewed to align with the course objectives for which the waiver is being requested;
- Are scored either by a computer or an outside assessor who is proficient in the language of the exam; and
- Award standard credit(s) that equate with mastery of the World Languages course content and skills.

II. AWARD OF CREDIT

If successful, students will receive a “pass” grade for the equivalent course(s) which will appear as a “P” on transcripts to signify the levels have been successfully completed. Students will not receive a letter grade that will impact their grade point average (GPA).

Standard credits achieved through this option are considered equal to any other standard credit in terms of class rank, grade point average, extracurricular eligibility, and high school transcripts.

If students wish to graduate with an Advanced Studies Diploma (ASD), they need to earn World Languages credits. These are earned by taking three years/credits of one language (3 x 1) or two years/credits each of two different languages (2 x 2). Students pursuing the

Standard Diploma may apply a maximum of two credits of one language (2 x 1) to fulfill the elective requirement.

Students can earn up to three credits based on their level of proficiency as demonstrated by the exam. If a student was placed into a level III or IV class because of their language skills, they can take the test to earn retroactive credit for prior levels. **Multiple credits for the same world language course cannot be given.**

Students who earn world language credit(s) while in grades 6-8 will not be placed into a higher level class until grade 9, as they are not offered at the middle school level.

The exam is scored by either a computer or an outside assessor who is proficient in the language of the exam. Results are final and cannot be appealed. Credits will be awarded based on the following:

| Proficiency Level | Credits Awarded | Next Course Placement | Next SHS* Placement |
|-------------------|-----------------|---|---------------------|
| Novice-High | 1.0 | Level III | SHS II |
| Intermediate-Low | 2.0 | Level IV | SHS III |
| Intermediate-Mid | 3.0 | AP | AP |
| Intermediate-High | 3.0 | AP or Advanced Topics (Offered for Chinese, French and German), if applicable | AP, if applicable |
| Advanced-Low | 3.0 | N/A | N/A |
| Advanced-Mid | 3.0 | N/A | N/A |
| Advanced-High | 3.0 | N/A | N/A |
| Superior | 3.0 | N/A | N/A |
| Distinguished | 3.0 | N/A | N/A |

* Spanish for Heritage Speakers (SHS)

If a proficiency assessment provides more than one modality, (i.e., listening, reading, speaking and writing) and offers a rating for each mode of communication, the lowest rating will be used to determine the number of credits awarded. (For example, if a student receives the following scores: Listening: Intermediate 2, Reading: Intermediate 3, Writing: Intermediate 1, Speaking: Intermediate 3, then the Writing Score of Intermediate 1 will be used to determine the number of credits awarded. For VDOE-approved assessments that require multiple modalities, the speaking and writing components are required.)

III. ELIGIBILITY

Students in grades 6-12 are eligible to take a credit-by-exam assessment if they can read, write, speak and listen in the language of the exam tested. Students must be able to complete all work independently at the Novice-High proficiency level or higher. For example, students must be able *in the language being tested*, to:

- Ask and answer simple questions;
- Make simple statements in a conversation in response to another person;
- Communicate basic information;
- Express likes and dislikes;
- Fill out a basic form; and
- Read and write a list of daily activities.

Students interested in earning credit-by-exam should first complete the *Self-Assessment Grid* available through the Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) Department of Curriculum & Instruction web page at

<https://www.acps.k12.va.us/Page/2313>.

In lieu of the assessments offered below in Section V, students currently enrolled in World Languages Level IV or Spanish for Heritage Speakers (SHS) III courses will take the AAPPL exam at the end of the school year. Taking that assessment allows them to meet the World Languages requirement for the Seal of Biliteracy.

Students who achieve a Novice-High proficiency level or higher may also receive World Languages credit (for a lower-level language course) if they were initially placed in a higher-level language course and have not met the required credits for the Advanced Diploma.

Award of credit-by-exam does not convert any past failing course grade to a passing grade.

IV. TEST ADMINISTRATION

Students may register online through the ACPS Department of Curriculum & Instruction web page. Afterwards, students will be contacted to confirm the testing date, time and location.

For students under the age of 18, parent(s), guardian(s) or the student's school counselor must provide an electronic signature to verify that all information provided in the registration form is correct.

A student may attempt to achieve credit-by-exam once per year. There is one main testing date in the fall and one make-up date in the spring. (Registration for spring testing requires approval of the World Languages Instructional Specialist). Seniors who transfer into the school division mid-year may take the test in the spring. Both will be held on non-student days (i.e., teacher work days). **Assessments are offered to ACPS students at no cost the first time they test for a particular language. Re-tests are at the expense of the student and the cost varies per test.**

Parents/guardians will be notified of their student's results by U.S. mail.

V. TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

All students with disabilities and those identified as English Learners (EL) are assessed with appropriate accommodations in accordance with state and federal guidelines.

Students with Disabilities

Pursuit of credit-by-exam by students with disabilities will be prescribed by the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan.

English Learner Students

For English Learner (EL) students who have a home language of Arabic or Spanish, and who are at Level 1 or Level 2 on the *WIDA Access for ELLs* test, accommodations will be made to ensure test prompts are in the student's home language. For most tests, the directions and prompts are in English.

VI. WORLD LANGUAGES ASSESSMENT OFFERINGS

ACPS currently offers credit-by-exam for more than 90 languages. As more languages become available through nationally-normed assessments, the offerings are periodically expanded. In addition, if the opportunity arises to partner with another jurisdiction, credit-by-exam for additional languages not offered by ACPS may be provided through the other jurisdiction's administration of such assessments. In such cases, the number of credits awarded may necessarily be adjusted to align with the administering jurisdiction's policies.

The current list of languages available for credit-by-exam, the type of assessment utilized for each language and the associated cost for re-takes are all found on the ACPS Department of Curriculum and Instruction's web page at:

<https://www.acps.k12.va.us/site/Default.aspx?PageID=2315>.

VII. SEAL OF BILITERACY

Since 2015-16, the Board of Education's Seal of Biliteracy certifies attainment of a high level of proficiency in one or more languages in addition to English by graduating high school students. The Seal of Biliteracy is awarded to students who pass all required End-of-Course Assessments in English at the proficient or higher level (11th grade SOL), and who score an Intermediate-Mid level or higher in another language on a nationally-normed exam. The Seal of Biliteracy is awarded and placed on a student's high school diploma.

VIII. APPEALS

Assessment results for credit-by-exam are final and cannot be appealed.

Established: April 26, 2018
Revised: May 1, 2018
Revised: September 7, 2018

Revised: October 4, 2019
Revised: December 16, 2021

Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, § 22.1-253.13:4.
8 VAC 20-131-110.

Guidelines for Graduation Requirements; Local Alternative Paths to Standard Units of Credit, Virginia Board of Education (Oct. 2015).

Cross Refs.: IAA Notification of Learning Objectives
IGBG Homebound, Correspondence and Alternative Means of Instruction
IGBGA Online Courses and Virtual School Programs
IGBF English Learners
IKEB Acceleration
IKF The Virginia Assessment Program and Graduation Requirements
IKF-R The Virginia Assessment Program and Graduation Requirements Regulations
IKFD Alternative Paths to Attaining Standard Units of Credit: Credit-By-Exam for World Languages
JO Student Records