

Memo To: All UH-Downtown PS Holders
From: Loren J. Blanchard, President
Subject: Credit by Approved College Credit
Equivalencies

UH-Downtown/PS 03.A.11
Issue No. 8
Effective Date: 05/01/2023
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1. PURPOSE

This PS sets forth policies and procedures for obtaining credit by examination or other non-course-based means.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 Examination: An instrument to assess one's knowledge or skill in an academic subject.
- 2.2 Portfolio of Documentation: A record of actions, experiences, and achievements submitted by a student and approved by a program, department, or college as the equivalent of one or more courses or a given number of semester credit hours.
- 2.3 Equivalency Agreement: An agreement between the University and another agency or academic institution that establishes the credit worthiness of a course of study offered by that agency to be judged equivalent to credit-bearing college courses.
- 2.4 Prior Learning Assessment: Describes the process of evaluating learning gained outside of credit-bearing college courses. This process calls attention to the purpose of the evaluation receiving college credit equivalency for acquired learning.
- 2.5 PLA Coordinator: Administrative role that manages the non-credit equivalencies approved by UHD. The PLA coordinator responsibilities will be assigned to an individual in the Office of the Provost.

3. POLICY

- 3.1 It is the policy of the University of Houston-Downtown to recognize the knowledge and achievements of its students, including the knowledge that they can demonstrate through alternate assessment methods.
- 3.2 All recommendations by faculty members and administrators in regard to the recognition of academic achievement shall be based on high academic standards and the best interests of the students.
- 3.3 Students may earn and apply credit toward degrees by establishing their knowledge or skills by means of:
 - 3.3.1 Nationally or internationally recognized standardized examinations and/or

examinations widely used within a professional field. For a comprehensive list of examinations, see the UHD catalog.

- 3.3.2 Examinations, portfolios of documentation, prior learning assessments (PLA), or equivalency agreements developed or approved by a program, department, or college, and approved through the normal curriculum approvals process.
- 3.4 The Office of Academic Affairs maintains and publishes the list of approved examinations or alternative methods of documenting academic credit and communicates course and credit equivalencies on its website. Special notices to the Registrar, the Testing Office, and academic advisors will also be published on this website so that such information is widely available.
- 3.5 Generally credit by examination or by means of other equivalencies is for first-year and second-year courses, (or first year for graduate work) unless an explicit exception is noted in the listing provided by the Office of Academic Affairs.
- 3.6 The maximum number of hours from all non-course-based credit applied to a bachelor's degree is 24. The maximum number of hours from all non-course-based credit applied to a graduate degree is 6. Exceptions to these limits may be established as part of the degree program structure and are approved only through normal curriculum approval processes.

4. PROCEDURES

- 4.1 The program/department curriculum committee, the curriculum support committee, or a subset of faculty members authorized by that committee or the chair makes recommendations concerning examinations, scores, or equivalencies for courses or credit hours. A department chair or program chair can also ask the committees to consider recommendations brought to their attention. Recommendations are submitted to the department or program chair.
- 4.2 The department chair or program chair submits the committee recommendations, along with their recommendation, to the dean for approval. After dean approval, the chair informs the university's PLA Coordinator of the program/department's recommendations so that other programs have the opportunity to take appropriate action.
- 4.3 The PLA Coordinator will forward the recommendations to the University Curriculum Committee for consideration. If the recommendations are approved by the University Curriculum Committee, they are then forwarded to the provost for final approval. These procedures are similar to those established for the approval of new courses (PS 03.A.12).
- 4.4 If the recommendations are accepted by the provost, all parties will be informed and the credit equivalencies will be posted in the UHD catalog/website immediately.

4.5 If the recommendations are not accepted by the provost, the dean will send the provost's concerns back to the department or program chair and PLA Coordinator so that there may be further action if warranted.

4.6 Other Provisions:

4.6.1 In accordance with Statutory Statement on the International Baccalaureate (IB) from the Texas Education Code §51.968 "an institution of higher education shall grant at least 24 semester credit hours or equivalent course credit in appropriate subject areas to an entering freshman student for successful completion of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program." The institution may grant fewer than 24 semester credit hours if the student received a score of less than four on an examination administered as part of the diploma program. Code §51.968 also states, "The institution may grant fewer credit hours only with respect to courses that are substantially related to the subject of that examination." Exact credits given based on test difficulty (high level, standard level), test area, and whether test was accompanied by diploma are listed on the [the International Baccalaureate \(IB\) webpage](#) maintained by the Office of Admissions.

4.6.2 In the case of credit by examination, the Testing Center administers nationally accepted standardized examinations, as specified in the UHD Catalog. Programs/Departments may administer examinations of their own design or which they adopt, provided that the examinations are agreed upon by the usual curriculum approvals process. Repeated exam attempts may be limited by the testing agencies or policies developed by UHD programs for program-specific exams.

4.6.3 Credit received by examination, portfolio or equivalency agreement does not count toward the UHD 30-hour residency requirement for graduation.

4.6.4 No grade is awarded for courses for which credit has been obtained by examination, nor are hours received for such courses averaged into the cumulative grade point average for graduation. The following information appears on the student's transcript:

- The course for which credit was received is listed.
- The number of hours of credit received is listed.
- The examination, portfolio and equivalency agreement through which credit was received is listed.

5. REVIEW PROCESS

Responsible Party: Senior VP for Academic Affairs & Provost

Review: As needed. Every three years on or before July 1st.

Signed original on file in the Office of Human Resources.

6. POLICY HISTORY

Issue #6: 09/28/2010

Issue #7: 05/28/2013

7. REFERENCES

[Texas Education Code §51.968](#)

[Credit by Examination Web Site](#)

[International Baccalaureate \(IB\) Credit](#)

[Provost Office Website](#)