

Pennsylvania Statewide Transfer and Articulation System Uniform Standards for Credit for Prior Learning Exams

English and Public Speaking Exams

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Introduction

In 2017 the Pennsylvania general assembly enacted legislation adding a section to the Pennsylvania Public School Code, 24 P.S. § 20-2004-C(d), requiring public institutions of higher education to:

- (1) Adopt and make public uniform standards for determining academic credit for prior learning as outlined in paragraph (4) within 18 months of the effective date of this subsection.
- (2) Agree to award academic credit for prior learning, which is determined to meet the standards established under section 2004-C(c)(6) and apply the credit toward graduation, unless prohibited by external accreditation or licensure.

This document establishes the uniform standard minimum scores for which all PA Transfer System participating institutions will award academic credit pursuant to 24 P.S. § 20-2004-C(d).

During the standard setting process, committees of faculty and personnel from Transfer System institutions developed minimum score standards for which any participating member of the PA College Transfer System will award credit, as well as additional guidance and recommendations for courses that institutions may offer as equivalencies for exam scores at or above the minimum. The course equivalency recommendations are considered guidance by the Oversight Committee and may vary between institutions in accordance with their course catalog and program design.

Uniform Standard Minimum Scores for Awarding Academic Credit

Exam	Minimum Score to Receive Credit
AP Exams	
AP English Language and Composition	3
AP English Literature and Composition	3
CLEP Exams	
American Literature	50
Analyzing and Interpreting Literature	50
College Composition	50
College Composition Modular	50
English Literature	50

English & Public Speaking Advanced Placement (AP) Exams

AP English Language and Composition

The AP English Language and Composition course aligns to an introductory college-level rhetoric and writing curriculum, which requires students to develop evidence-based analytic and argumentative essays that proceed through several stages or drafts. Students evaluate, synthesize, and cite research to support their arguments. Throughout the course, students develop a personal style by making appropriate grammatical choices. Additionally, students read and analyze the rhetorical elements and their effects in non-fiction texts, including graphic images as forms of text, from many disciplines and historical periods.

Minimum Score

Credit will be awarded for a score of 3 or higher.

Rationale

Most of the transfer system colleges already award a three-credit composition course to students who successfully earn a three on the AP English Language exam, and there is little reason to change their current policies. Students taking an AP English course receive sufficient practice and feedback with the formal elements of essay writing. The examination itself sufficiently assesses a student's ability to research, organize, and draft essays under time constraints. While the AP Exam does not require students to demonstrate the full citation process, research does suggest that most students who earn a three on this exam are as successful in college writing as their peers who take a first-semester composition course.

This standard is in line with College Board and American Council on Education's minimum score recommendations <https://aphighered.collegeboard.org/setting-credit-placement-policy/credit-granting-recommendations>.

Additional Credit & Course Equivalency Guidance

A score of three should award three credits of a first-year composition course

AP English Literature and Composition

The AP English Literature and Composition course aligns to an introductory college-level literary analysis course. The course engages students in the close reading and critical analysis of imaginative literature to deepen their understanding of the ways writers use language to provide both meaning and pleasure. As they read, students consider a work's structure, style, and themes, as well as its use of figurative language, imagery, symbolism, and tone. Writing assignments include expository, analytical, and argumentative essays that require students to analyze and interpret literary works.

Minimum Score

Credit will be awarded for a score of 3 or higher.

Rationale

Most transfer system colleges currently offer three credits of an introduction to literature course to students who earn a three on this exam.

This standard is in line with College Board and American Council on Education's minimum score recommendations <https://aphighered.collegeboard.org/setting-credit-placement-policy/credit-granting-recommendations>.

Additional Credit & Course Equivalency Guidance

A score of 3 should award a three-credit “introduction to literature”-type course (not a specific literature survey course).

College Level Examination Program (CLEP) Exams

American Literature

The American Literature examination covers material that is usually taught in a survey course at the college level. It deals with prose and poetry written in the United States from colonial times to the present. It is primarily a test of knowledge about literary works — their content, their background, and their authors — but also requires an ability to interpret poetry, fiction and nonfiction prose, as well as a familiarity with the terminology used by literary critics and historians. The examination emphasizes fiction and poetry and deals to a lesser degree with the essay, drama, and autobiography.

Minimum Score

Credit will be awarded for a score of 3 or higher.

Rationale

The score of 50 should be the minimum score for receipt of credit of the American Lit CLEP. It's not an easy test, and it covers from the start of an American Lit I survey course all the way almost to today. The range of knowledge needed is wide if not particularly deep. It covers recognition questions but also a modicum of literary analysis. Most colleges in the sample provided to us by TAOC as of Spring 2018 use a score of 50 to determine equivalencies, with none more than 50 and only two offering credit for less than 50. With the test being so comprehensive and so many colleges accepting a 50, that seems a fair minimum score.

This standard is in line with College Board and American Council on Education's minimum score recommendations <https://clep.collegeboard.org/develop-your-clep-program/create-a-clep-policy/ace-credit-recommendations>.

Additional Credit & Course Equivalency Guidance

A score of 50 or higher should award (3 or 6) credit American literature course. The fact that it covers what is often offered as two three-credit courses (American Lit to the Civil War and American Lit after the Civil War) is arbitrary. It could just as well be split into two tests. An example is a college using terms where three courses were offered in a sequence: American Lit I, American Lit II, and Contemporary American Lit. If CLEP is to “cover” all the courses in a sequence, then said college could have awarded nine credits. (this was not the case; the college awarded three credits in an elective). Colleges in the sample provided by TAOC as of Spring 2018 are split: seven colleges award three credits and five colleges award six credits. The subcommittee recommends colleges should be able to continue offering credit as they have in the past.

Analyzing and Interpreting Literature

The Analyzing and Interpreting Literature examination covers material usually taught in a general undergraduate course in literature. Although the examination does not require familiarity with

specific works, it does assume that candidates have read widely and perceptively in poetry, drama, fiction, and nonfiction. The questions are based on passages supplied in the test. These passages are taken primarily from American and British literature.

Minimum Score

Credit will be awarded for a score of 50 or higher.

Rationale

As of April 2018, 10 of the 14 PASSHE universities have entered equivalencies for this exam into PATrac.

- Nine universities accept the exam with a score of 50 and give three credits.
- One university accepts the exam with a score of 50 gives up to six credits (Intro to Literature and Special Topics in Literature).
- Research conducted on the four universities that had posted no equivalencies found that the institutions:
 - Have introductory literature courses already in place.
 - Offer the CLEP at their testing sites and therefore should be familiar with the College Board rationale for choosing 50 as an “equivalent to a grade of C in the corresponding course.”
 - Their websites seem to indicate that they may accept CLEP exams but approval from a department or advisor is required

Additionally, four of the 14 Community Colleges accept a score of 50 and one accepts a 47 or higher. One Community College offered six credits, while the other four offered three credits.

This standard is in line with College Board and American Council on Education’s minimum score recommendations <https://clep.collegeboard.org/develop-your-clep-program/create-a-clep-policy/ace-credit-recommendations>.

Additional Credit & Course Equivalency Guidance

A score of 50 should award a three-credit introduction to literature course.

College Composition & College Composition Modular

The CLEP® College Composition examinations assess writing skills taught in most first-year college composition courses. Those skills include analysis, argumentation, synthesis, usage, ability to recognize logical development and research. The exams cannot cover every skill (such as keeping a journal or peer editing) required in many first-year college writing courses. Candidates will, however, be expected to apply the principles and conventions used in longer writing projects to two timed writing assignments and to apply the rules of Standard Written English.

The knowledge and skills assessed in the College Composition Modular are the same as those measured by the College Composition examination, but the format and timing allow a more extended indirect assessment of test-takers’ knowledge and skills.

Minimum Score

Credit will be awarded for a score of 50 or higher.

Rationale

The exam is broken down into five parts: Conventions of Standard Written English, Revision Skills, Ability to use source materials, Rhetorical Analysis and the two essays. The subcommittee reviewed all of the multiple-choice questions as well as the essay prompts (from the 2015/2016

exam) that are based on non-fiction readings. The subcommittee also researched the CLEP equivalent scores at a number of community and four-year colleges.

The subcommittee used the list of Participating PA TRAC Colleges and Universities and discovered that the schools that do accept the CLEP College Composition require a score of 50 or higher for a 3.0 credit English 101 course. Some schools only accept the test with a score of 60 or higher. Taking all of this under consideration and measuring these scores alongside the TAOC competencies, the subcommittee recommends a score of 50 for the College Composition exam.

This standard is in line with College Board and American Council on Education's minimum score recommendations <https://clep.collegeboard.org/develop-your-clep-program/create-a-clep-policy/ace-credit-recommendations>.

Additional Credit & Course Equivalency Guidance

A score of 50 should award a three-credit first-semester composition course

English Literature

The English Literature examination covers material usually taught in a course at the college level. The test is primarily concerned with major authors and literary works, but it also includes questions on some minor writers. Candidates are expected to be acquainted with common literary terms, such as metaphor and personification, and basic literary forms, such as the sonnet and the ballad. In both coverage and approach, the examination resembles the historically organized survey of English literature offered by many colleges. It assumes that candidates have read widely and developed an appreciation of English literature, know the basic literary periods, and have a sense of the historical development of English literature.

Minimum Score

Credit will be awarded for a score of 50 or higher.

Rationale

This standard is in line with College Board and American Council on Education's (ACE) minimum score recommendations <https://clep.collegeboard.org/develop-your-clep-program/create-a-clep-policy/ace-credit-recommendations>

Most transfer system universities currently accept the College Board and ACE CLEP's recommended minimum score of 50. According to the College Board, "A standard-setting panel, consisting of 15-20 faculty members from colleges and universities across the country who are currently teaching the course, is appointed to give its expert judgement on the level of student performance that would be necessary to receive college credit in the course." In the case of CLEP English Literature, the faculty would be specialists in British Literature. They define a 50 as equivalent to a C in British Literature.

Additional Credit & Course Equivalency Guidance

The questions on CLEP English Literature are based on "the historically organized survey of English literature offered by many colleges." They are drawn from all periods of British Literature. According to the College Board, English Literature "is primarily concerned with major authors and literary works...Candidates are expected to be acquainted with common literary terms, such as metaphor and personifications, and basic literary forms, such as the sonnet and the ballad."

At some universities, British Literature is a 3-credit course. At others, it is a 6-credit course broken down into British Literature I (usually from the Anglo-Saxon period through the Enlightenment) and British Literature II (from the Romantic period to the present). Because the

CLEP English Literature Exam questions cover both parts, it should satisfy the entire British Literature requirement.

A score of 50 or higher should award a 6-credit British Literature course.