

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

Humanities and Fine Arts 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 Music Theory	3
AP Art History	<i>Pending</i>
AP Studio Art: 2-D Design	3
AP Studio Art: 3-D Design	3
AP Studio Art: Drawing	3

Humanities & Fine Arts

Advanced Placement (AP) Exams

AP Music Theory

The Advanced Placement (AP) Exam in Music Theory assesses both aural and written music theory skills. The exam produces an overall score, as well as subscores for the “aural” and “non-aural” components.

College music curricula vary with regard to how these aural and written music theory skills are covered. While the curriculum at some schools have separate courses in written music theory and aural skills, other schools offer music theory courses that combine these areas.

The AP Music Theory course corresponds to one or two semesters of a typical introductory college music theory course that covers topics such as musicianship, theory, musical materials, and procedures. Musicianship skills, including dictation and other listening skills, sight singing, and harmony, are considered an important part of the course. Through the course, students develop the ability to recognize, understand, and describe basic materials and processes of tonal music that are heard or presented in a score. Development of aural skills is a primary objective. Performance is also part of the curriculum through the practice of sight singing. Students understand basic concepts and terminology by listening to and performing a wide variety of music. Notational skills, speed, and fluency with basic materials are also emphasized.

Minimum Score

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

Rationale

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

1. For college music programs that separate aural and written music theory skills, the focus should be on the subscores (aural and non-aural) of the exam. In contrast, for college music programs that offer music theory courses that combine aural and written music theory skills, the focus should be on the overall score.

Rationale:

By taking into account the differences among music theory curricula, the approach outlined above offers the most appropriate way of assessing how students’ music theory skills fit into a particular school’s music theory curriculum. For example, suppose a student is seeking AP credit for music theory at a school that offers separate courses in written music theory and aural skills. If that student has a very high subscore for non-aural but a low subscore for the aural, it might be appropriate for that student to receive college credit for one or more written music theory courses, while not receiving any college credit for aural skills courses.

2. The following information provides a framework for interpreting AP Music Theory scores:

AP Scores

AP score of 3:	represents a basic understanding of aural and/or non-aural skills
AP score of 4:	represents a good understanding of aural and/or non-aural skills
AP score of 5:	represents a mastery of aural and/or non-aural skills

Aural skills that are assessed on the AP Music Theory Exam

Sight singing
Melodic dictation
Harmonic dictation
Identification of isolated pitch and rhythmic patterns
Identification of errors in pitch and rhythm
Contextual listening

Non-aural skills that are assessed on the AP Music Theory Exam

Music terminology
Notation
Part-writing and harmonization
Score analysis

3. While every institution will make its own determination with regard to awarding course equivalents for AP credit, the following recommendations are being advanced:

For institutions that offer music theory courses that combine written and aural skills

AP overall score of 3:	award 1 music elective course ¹
AP overall score of 4:	award 1 semester of music theory credit (i.e., the first course in the institution's sequence of music theory courses)
AP overall score of 5:	award 2 semesters of music theory credit (i.e., the first two courses in the institution's sequence of music theory courses)

¹If a student receives AP credit for one or two semesters of an institution's music theory courses, then that student will not receive AP credit for a music elective course.

For institutions that offer music theory courses that separate written and aural skills

AP overall score of 3:	award 1 music elective credit ²
AP aural subscore of 4:	award 1 semester of aural skills credit (i.e., the first course in the institution's sequence of aural skills courses)
AP non-aural subscore of 4:	award 1 semester of written music theory skills credit (i.e., the first course in the institution's sequence of written music theory skills courses)
AP aural subscore of 5:	award 2 semesters of aural skills credit (i.e., the first two courses in the institution's sequence of aural skills courses)
AP non-aural subscore of 5:	award 2 semesters of written music theory skills credit (i.e., the first two courses in the institution's sequence of written music theory skills courses)

²If a student receives AP credit for one or two semesters of an institution's written or aural skills music theory courses, then that student will not receive AP credit for a music elective course.

Rationale:

Many institutions might find an AP score of 4 appropriate for one semester of music theory credit (instead of an AP score of 3) because these initial courses lay the foundation of what it typically a 4-semester sequence; therefore, a solid understanding is crucial to students' future academic success.

AP Art History

The AP Art History course is equivalent to a two-semester introductory college course that explores the nature of art, art making, and responses to art. By investigating specific course content of 250 works of art characterized by diverse artistic traditions from prehistory to the present, the course fosters in-depth, holistic understanding of the history of art from a global perspective. Students become active participants in the global art world, engaging with its forms and content. They experience, research, discuss, read, and write about art, artists, art making, responses to, and interpretations of art.

Minimum Score

TBD

Rationale

TBD

Additional Credit & Course Equivalency Guidance

Pending

AP Studio Art: 2-D Design, 3-D Design, and Drawing

The AP Program offers three studio art courses and portfolios: 2-Dimensional Design, 3-Dimensional Design, and Drawing. The AP Studio Art portfolios are designed for students who are seriously interested in the practical experience of art. Students submit portfolios for evaluation at the end of the school year. The three portfolios correspond to the most common college foundation courses. Students may choose to submit any or all of the Drawing, 2-Dimensional Design, or 3-Dimensional design portfolios. Students create a portfolio of work to demonstrate the artistic skills and ideas they have developed, refined, and applied over the course of the year to produce visual compositions.

With regards to **2D Design**, the students' work should display evidence of:

- successful use of the design elements (line, form, shape, space, texture, color, and value)
- hints of deliberate decision-making
- nominal imagination and vision, aka. originality
- average technical competence in a variety of materials/media
- emerging visual impact that attempts to deliberately engage the viewer
- attention to craftsmanship, presentation, and detail

With regards to **3D Design**, the students' work should display evidence of:

- successful use of the design principles & elements (unity/variety, balance, emphasis, rhythm, proportion/scale, space and time)
- clear understanding of applying time and space in three-dimensional artworks
- emergence of deliberate decision-making and originality
- experimentation and risk-taking
- average technical competence in varied materials/media
- emerging visual impact that attempts to deliberately engage the viewer
- attention to craftsmanship, presentation, and detail

With regards to **Drawing**, the students' work should display evidence of:

- understanding of composition, concept, and execution
- emergence of deliberate decision-making and originality, imagination, and invention
- evidence of experimentation and risk-taking
- confident, evocative work that engages the viewer
- average technical competence and skill with drawing materials and media

- understanding and use of digital or photographic media
- emerging appropriation and student vision
- overall accomplishment

Additionally, in **Drawing**, the student's portfolio should (minimally) include examples of:

- line quality
- surface manipulation
- light and shade
- the illusion of depth
- rendering of form
- mark making
- composition

Minimum Score

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

Rationale

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

The following information provides a framework for interpreting AP Studio Art scores:

- AP score of 3: represents a basic understanding of basic design skills & execution
- AP score of 4: represents a good understanding of basic design skills & execution
- AP score of 5: represents a mastery of basic design skills & execution

While every institution will make its own determination with regard to awarding course equivalents for AP credit, the following recommendations are being advanced:

An AP score of 3 or higher should require a portfolio review, by college art faculty, in order to award most appropriate/relevant course for credit. As artworks are not restricted by media choice or specific topic coverage, there may be instances when portfolio entries do not correspond directly with current foundations curriculum at a given institution. As such, it is the recommendation of this subcommittee that a portfolio review be conducted at each school to determine most appropriate allocation of credit toward graduation, with options including foundations courses, elective studio art credit, or credit in a specific media's fundamentals course (i.e., ceramics, photography, graphic design, etc.). However, these credits are allocated, they must count towards the student's degree program.

It is the intention of this subcommittee to support AP efforts in challenging students by awarding credit in areas where the students already show mastery, allowing students to advance more quickly to courses that will challenge them.

The subcommittee is open to the award of upper-level course credit for AP scores of 4 or higher, as deemed appropriate by individual institutions. This subcommittee has the understanding that certain students may still be required to take a foundations-level course if there is a perceived hole in content mastery. For instance, it is the intention of this subcommittee to avoid denying students of lower socio-economic backgrounds access to introductory courses in digital media programming, that might not have been available locally at the high school level.