



CLEP®

Developing Effective PLA Policy

Kansas Board of Regents
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- Goals in developing a policy
- Best practices
- Things to avoid
- State examples
- Why CLEP is a good fit for PLA success



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Goals in Developing a Policy

- Completion strategy
- Military student support
- Adult student access
- Consistency/fairness
- Recruitment aspect
- Affordability measure
- Ease course demand
- Meet Student expectations



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Best Practices

Policies should emphasize an institution's broad interest in awarding credit-by-examination while also ensuring institutional control over academic decisions and educational standards.

Buy-in is essential.

Treat PLA-earned credit like transfer credit.

- Review ACE recommendations for credit awards.
- “ACE is to courses as accreditation is to institutions.”
- ACE reviews CLEP test content, rigor and validity on an on-going basis to reach recommendations.

Establish credit awards that promote degree attainment

- Credit awarded must fulfill program requirements or general education requirements
- Avoid elective credit restrictions
- Ensure transferability
 - Following ACE recommendations supports transfer

Include language that allows an institution to make adjustments to the credit awards only when it is in the best interest of the student

Now That You Have a Policy

Post the policy where students can easily find it.

Inform academic advisers

Promote strategies to prepare students

Track usage and success rates

A background image showing a group of students in a hallway. In the foreground, a young woman with long dark hair is smiling. In the background, a man in a teal polo shirt and a woman in a purple top are talking. A blue arrow-shaped graphic points to the right, containing the text 'CLEP®'.

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Things to Avoid

Unduly restricting the number of hours students can earn by PLA

- Honor residency policy

Charging large fees to post credit

Restricting use within related majors/programs

Arbitrary deadlines



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State Policy Examples

- The California State University system of 23 universities enrolling over 400,000 students passed a policy of System-wide Credit for External Examinations in 2010.
- The goal of the policy is two-fold:
 - To ensure fair treatment to students seeking validation of prior learning, particularly military service members
 - To relieve enrollment capacity pressures

- Long-standing policy, integrated into advising
- If a student achieves the score listed on an AP, IB or CLEP exam, state universities and community colleges must award the minimum recommended credit for the course or course numbers listed, **even if they do not offer the course. Up to 45 total credit-by-exam credits may be awarded.**
- Institutions must use the course number listed, unless it would be advantageous for the student to award a specific course number with equal credit
- ACE Score recommendations followed

Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education passed a Dual Credit Policy for all Kentucky Public Postsecondary institutions in 2012 that ensures uniformity and transparency for all students seeking proper acceptance of their prior learning.

- AP and CLEP exams are included
 - Credit awarded must fulfill program requirements or general education requirements (not elective credit)
- Primarily ACE recommended scores
- Credit is articulated and guaranteed to transfer
- Institutions may alter how credit transfers only if it benefits the student

In May 2012, Gov. Patrick signed the Valor Bill which calls for a state-wide credit by examination policy with a special emphasis on veterans and military personnel.

“Active-duty members would be able to complete the requirements for approximately 33 different entry-level course areas, paving the way for more advanced coursework upon their return home. Again, by recognizing the training they’ve received and the skills they’ve obtained, we can save them both time and money in furthering their college career.”

Full implementation by July 2014.

- Development of standards started with two-year institutions
- Four-year Tennessee Board of Regents institutions currently joined the policy in the second phase
- All 33 exams included with ACE recommendations used for scores and credit awards
- Institutions can “opt out” of awarding for any CLEP exam but they must honor all CLEP credit awarded by other institutions and transferred in as part of the Tennessee Transfer Pathways

Virginia Code 23-9.2:3.7 B, established by the 2012 General Assembly, states:

The governing boards of each public institution of higher education shall, in accordance with guidelines developed by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, implement policies for the purpose of awarding academic credit to students for educational experience gained from service in the armed forces of the United States.

Guidelines were developed in 2013 and must be implemented by the institutions by June 2014.



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What is CLEP and How It Promotes PLA Success

What Is CLEP?

- **College Level Examination Program**
- Credit-by-exam program that validates knowledge students already have and translates that learning into college credit that is commonly recognized.
- More than seven million exams taken since 1967
- 1,800 colleges administer CLEP
- 2,900 colleges grant credit for CLEP exams
- 185,700 exams administered in 2012–13, including over 59,000 administered to military service members
- Exam fee is \$80

History and Social Sciences

- American Government
- History of the United States I
- History of the United States II
- Human Growth and Development
- Introduction to Educational Psychology
- Principles of Macroeconomics
- Principles of Microeconomics
- Introduction Psychology
- **Introductory Sociology**
- Social Sciences and History
- Western Civilization I
- Western Civilization II

Business

- Information Systems and Computer Applications
- Principles of Management
- Financial Accounting
- Introductory Business Law
- Principles of Marketing

Composition and Literature

- American Literature
- **Analyzing and Interpreting Literature**
- **College Composition**
- College Composition Modular
- English Literature
- Humanities

Science and Mathematics

- Calculus
- **College Algebra**
- Precalculus
- College Mathematics
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Natural Sciences

World Languages

- French Language
- German Language
- **Spanish Language**

Structure

- 33 computer-based exams.
- Mostly multiple-choice, essays, and listening sections for foreign languages
- Most are approximately 90 minutes in length.

Scoring

- Immediate score reports (except exams with essays).
- Exams are scored on a scale of 20–80. A score of 50 is equivalent to a grade of C.
- “Rights-only” scoring (no penalty for wrong answers).
- Student must wait 6 months to retest

Development

- 600+ faculty contribute to the development of and standard-setting for CLEP.
- Standing faculty committees oversee ongoing test development, shape content, review data, set exam policies.
- Opportunities to participate in College Board ACES Placement Validity studies.

2010 study of southeast US public institutions:

- CLEP students graduate in less time than non-CLEP students
- CLEP students have higher GPAs than non-CLEP students
- Students earning credit through CLEP perform better in subsequent English courses than non-CLEP students

Who Takes CLEP?

- **High School Students/Graduates**
 - Where AP exams are not available
 - Home-schooled students
- **Undergraduate College Students**
 - First-year students looking to accelerate their college path
 - Juniors or seniors who have not met lower-division requirements
 - Students who are fluent in Spanish, French, or German...Math, Biology, etc.
 - **Transfer Students**
 - Credit recovery options needed due to accreditation or transfer issues
 - International students who need to translate their overseas credit
- **Adults Students**
 - Military service members – CLEP exams are free
 - Veterans – Depending on benefits, exam fees can be reimbursed
 - Prior Learning Assessment option for workplace learning
- **All students struggling to finance their education**

- **Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)**
 - Portfolio course/credit
 - Credit by exam
 - ACE recommendations

- **Credit for Prior Learning (CPL)**
 - Focus on outcome, not process
 - Student terminology
 - Easier to promote

- California
- Colorado
- Connecticut
- Florida
- Iowa
- Kentucky
- Massachusetts
- Minnesota
- South Dakota
- Tennessee
- Virginia
- West Virginia



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Questions?

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