

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. § 20-2002-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. § 20-2002-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 Studio Art: 2-D Design	3
AP Studio Art: 3-D Design	3
AP Studio Art: Drawing	3
AP Art History	3
IB Courses/Exams	
Dance (HL)	4
Music (HL)	4
Film (HL)	4
Theatre (HL)	4
Visual Arts (HL)	4
DSST Exams	
Art of the Western World	400

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 is typically a 4-semester sequence; therefore, a solid understanding is crucial to students' future academic success.

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.

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

The score should be a minimum of 3 credits.

Rationale

Per the committee's understanding, AP credits would be equivalent to one art history course, typically 3 credit hours - not 6 credit hours.

Additional Credit & Course Equivalency Guidance

The decision to transfer one or two courses for the AP exam can be determined at the institution's discretion based on the student's AP exam score and the institution's individual course offerings and program requirements.

For instance, an AP score of 3 is the equivalent to 3 credits for a one-semester survey course (e.g., Intro to Art History). AP score of 4 or 5 is the equivalent to 6 credits for a two-semester survey (e.g., Art History I and Art History II).

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 suggests knowledge of a wide range from the pantheon of Art History. The test includes 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional works from prehistoric through contemporary time periods, produced in western and non-western cultures. We recommend that credit awarded be based on program preferences, substituting for an elective Art History course, but might also be substituted as a more general Art Appreciation course.

International Baccalaureate (IB) Exams

DANCE HL

The IB dance course takes a holistic approach to dance and embraces a variety of dance traditions and dance cultures - past, present and looking towards the future. Performance, creative and analytical skills are mutually developed and valued whether the students are writing papers or creating/performing dances. The curriculum provides students with a liberal arts orientation to dance. This orientation facilitates the development of students who may become choreographers, dance scholars, performers or those, more broadly, who seek life enrichment through dance. Students will compose their original work, explore comparative development of world dance studies, and develop an understanding of and facility in performing dances. Students are assessed through composition and analysis of dance works, a formal investigation comparing and contrasting dance styles, and two to three dance performances showing proficiency and expressive ability. Higher Level consists of 240 teaching hours. Additional information can be found on the IB Dance Course brief at www.ibo.org.

Minimum Score

Credit will be awarded for a score of 4 or higher on the Dance Higher Level Examination.

Rationale

The scoring descriptors in the International Baccalaureate guidance documentation indicate that students scoring 4 or higher on this assessment demonstrate a sound understanding of the concepts covered by the course.

Additional Credit & Course Equivalency Guidance

A score of a 4 or higher on the IB Dance HL examination should equate to a minimum of three credits for introductory Dance coursework. Ultimately, credit should be awarded based upon the student's selected program, program structure, and best interest of the student at the discretion of the awarding institution.

MUSIC HL

The IB higher level music course seeks to develop students' knowledge and potential as musicians, both personally and collaboratively. IB Diploma Program music students are required to study musical perception and actively listen to a wide range of music from different parts of the world, musical cultures and time periods. They also develop aural perception and understanding of music by learning about musical elements, including form and structure, notations, musical terminology, and context. Curriculum includes musical perception, creation, and solo performance. Assessment encompasses a listening paper comparing and contrasting pieces of music of two prescribed works and two different genres, creation of three different pieces of music, an investigation into musical links between two or more pieces from distinct musical cultures, and creation and performance of original work.

Higher level consists of 240 teaching hours. Additional information can be found on the Music Higher Level Course Brief at www.ibo.org.

Minimum Score

Credit will be awarded for a score of 4 or higher on the Music Higher Level Examination.

Rationale

The scoring descriptors in the International Baccalaureate guidance documentation indicate that students scoring 4 or higher on this assessment demonstrate a sound understanding of the concepts covered by the course.

Additional Credit & Course Equivalency Guidance

A score of a 4 or higher on the IB Dance HL examination should equate to a minimum of three credits for introductory Music coursework. Ultimately, credit should be awarded based upon the student's selected program, program structure, and best interest of the student at the discretion of the awarding institution.

FILM HL

The IB film course aims to develop students' skills so that they become adept in both interpreting and making film texts. Through the study and analysis of film texts and exercises in film-making, the course explores film history, theory and socio-economic background. The course develops students' critical abilities, enabling them to appreciate the multiplicity of cultural and historical perspectives in film. To achieve an international understanding within the world of film, students are taught to consider film texts, theories and ideas from the points of view of different individuals, nations and cultures. Students also develop the professional and technical skills (including organizational skills) needed to express themselves creatively in film. The course emphasizes the importance of working individually and as a member of a group. A challenge for students following this course is to become aware of their own perspectives and biases and to learn to respect those of others. This requires willingness to attempt to understand alternative views, to respect and appreciate cultural diversity, and to have an open and critical mind. Curriculum includes textual analysis, film theory and history from various international traditions, and techniques and organization of production. Students are assessed through an independent study and presentation on an aspect of film theory or history requiring a minimum of four films, a presentation of detailed critical analysis, and a completed production portfolio of a film project.

Higher Level Exams consist of 240 teaching hours. Additional information can be found on the Film HL Course Brief at www.ibo.org.

Minimum Score

Credit will be awarded for a score of 4 or higher on the Film Higher Level Examination.

Rationale

The scoring descriptors in the International Baccalaureate guidance documentation indicate that students scoring 4 or higher on this assessment demonstrate a sound understanding of the concepts covered by the course.

Additional Credit & Course Equivalency Guidance

A score of a 4 or higher on the IB Film HL examination should equate to a minimum of three credits for introductory Film coursework. Ultimately, credit should be awarded based upon the student's selected program, program structure, and best interest of the student at the discretion of the awarding institution.

THEATRE HL

Theatre is a practical subject that encourages discovery through experimentation, risk-taking and the presentation of ideas. The IB theatre course is multifaceted and gives students the opportunity to actively engage in theatre as creators, designers, directors and performers. It emphasizes working both individually and collaboratively as part of an ensemble. The teacher's role is to create opportunities that allow students to explore, learn, discover and collaborate to become autonomous, informed and skilled theatre-makers. Students learn to apply research and theory to inform and to contextualize their work. Through researching, creating, preparing, presenting and critically reflecting on theatre, they gain a richer understanding of themselves, their community and the world. Students experience the course from contrasting artistic and cultural perspectives. They learn about theatre from around the world, the importance of making theatre with integrity, and the impact that theatre can have on the world. It enables them to discover and engage with different forms of theatre across time, place and culture, promoting international-mindedness and an appreciation of the diversity of theatre. Curriculum includes theory and context, process and production of theatre with assessment encompassing creation and production of a solo piece, developing ideas for the staging of a piece, a research presentation into an aspect of theatre tradition, and an original collaboration piece tailored to a specific audience.

Higher Level consists of 240 teaching hours. Additional information can be found on the IB Theatre Brief at www.ibo.org.

Minimum Score

Credit will be awarded for a score of 4 or higher on the Theatre Higher Level Examination.

Rationale

The scoring descriptors in the International Baccalaureate guidance documentation indicate that students scoring 5 or higher on this assessment demonstrate a sound understanding of the concepts covered by the course.

Additional Credit & Course Equivalency Guidance

A score of a 4 or higher on the IB Theatre HL examination should equate to a minimum of three credits for introductory Theatre coursework. Ultimately, credit should be awarded based upon the student's selected program, program structure, and best interest of the student at the discretion of the awarding institution.

VISUAL ARTS HL

The IB Visual Arts course encourages students to challenge their own creative and cultural expectations and boundaries. It is a thought-provoking course in which students develop analytical skills in problem-solving and divergent thinking, while working towards technical proficiency and

confidence as art-makers. In addition to exploring and comparing visual arts from different perspectives and in different contexts, students are expected to engage in, experiment with and critically reflect upon a wide range of contemporary practices and media. The course is designed for students who want to go on to further study of visual arts in higher education as well as for those who are seeking lifelong enrichment through visual arts. Curriculum encompasses the comparisons of the different cultural contexts and influences on/upon of artists, application and experimentation of techniques, and communicating art through visual and written means.

Higher Level (HL) courses consist of 240 teaching hours of coursework. Additional information can be found on the IB Visual Arts Course Brief at www.ibo.org.

Minimum Score

Credit will be awarded for a score of 4 or higher on the Visual Arts Higher Level Examination.

Rationale

The scoring descriptors in the International Baccalaureate guidance documentation indicate that students scoring 4 or higher on this assessment demonstrate a sound understanding of the concepts covered by the course.

Additional Credit & Course Equivalency Guidance

A score of a 4 or higher on the IB Visual Arts HL examination should equate to a minimum of three credits for introductory Art coursework. Ultimately, credit should be awarded based upon the student's selected program, program structure, and best interest of the student at the discretion of the awarding institution.

DSST Exams

THE ART OF THE WESTERN WORLD

This exam was developed to enable schools to award credit to students for knowledge equivalent to that learned by students taking the course. This examination includes the history of art during various periods, including Ancient World, Middle Ages, Renaissance, Baroque, Rococo, Neoclassicism, Romanticism, Realism, Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, early twentieth-century, Post-war to Post-modern and Contemporary.

Minimum Score

Credit will be awarded for a score of 400 or higher.

Rationale

The minimum score standard is in line with the [American Council on Education's](#) Minimum score recommendations.

Additional Credit & Course Equivalency Guidance

The committee recommends institutions award 3 credits for an introductory Art History or Art course.