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BOARD OF ADMISSIONS AND RELATIONS WITH SCHOOLS (BOARS)

David Volz, Chair
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June 5, 2026

Ahmet Palazoglu
Chair, Academic Council

RE: Policy for Reviewing Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), & A-Level Exams

Dear Chair Palazoglu,

On behalf of UC's Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS), I am writing to inform the Divisions about BOARS' policy for reviewing Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), & A-Level Exams. There is currently no clear, step-by-step exam review process and standardized evaluation rubric that provides guidance to facilitate the review or re-review AP, IB, and A Level exams in a timely and consistent manner. Therefore, the purpose of this policy is to fill that gap by establishing a systematic exam review process with an accompanying standardized evaluation rubric. Additional details about the background, purpose, and exam review process can be found within the attached document accompanying this memo. Depending on how the exam will be applied, the exam review process may involve collaboration with the University Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP) and University Committee on Preparatory Education (UCOPE). Therefore, UCEP and UCOPE have also reviewed and provided input to the final attached policy.

Thank you for your assistance in conveying this information to the Divisions.

Sincerely,

David Volz, Chair
BOARS

cc: Associate Vice Provost Yoon-Wu
UCEP Chair Sugar
UCOPE Chair Queen
Divisional Senate Chairs
Divisional Admissions Committee Analysts
Senate Division Executive Directors



**Policy for Reviewing Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB),
and A-Level Exams**

Background: The UC Academic Senate’s Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS), University Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP), and University Committee on Preparatory Education (UCOPE) govern systemwide policies specific to undergraduate admissions, academic programs, and student preparation, respectively. Awarding credit by exam overlaps with the jurisdiction of all three committees, as these external evaluations allow students to 1) fulfill A-G subject requirements for first-year admissions (BOARS); 2) fulfill general education (GE) requirements for transfer admissions (BOARS); 3) fulfill GE and specific subject requirements for UC degrees (UCEP); and/or 4) guide systemwide and campus-specific placement decisions in subjects such as English and math (UCOPE).

Exams are reviewed by BOARS, UCEP, and UCOPE for systemwide admissions eligibility, college credit, and placement decisions, respectively; if exams are approved, BOARS, UCEP, and UCOPE provide recommended minimum passing (“cut”) scores at the systemwide level. Currently approved programs include Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and Advanced Level (A Level) (General Certificate of Education, or GCE, and Singapore-Cambridge GCE) exams. If approved with passing scores, AP/IB exams can be used to fulfill systemwide admissions requirements, obtain college credit, and guide placement decisions, whereas A Level exams can only be used for systemwide admissions and college credit (summary provided in figure to right). Importantly, for college credit, [Senate Regulation 620](#) states that “[c]redit by examination may be earned only in accordance with general policies established by the appropriate committee on courses in each Division” and that “[t]he deans of the several schools and colleges shall have the power to approve or reject any application for the examination.” Therefore, the Committee on Courses and schools/colleges at the Divisional-level will, per Senate Regulation 620, continue to have the autonomy and authority to establish more stringent (higher) cut scores even if exams and minimum cut scores are approved at the systemwide-level.

Approved exam w/ passing scores	BOARS	UCEP	UCOPE
	First-year and transfer admissions	College credit	Placement decisions
AP/IB exams	Yes	Yes	Yes
A-Level exams	Yes	Yes	No

Purpose: Per [Senate Bylaw 145](#) and [Senate Regulation 621](#), BOARS is responsible for determining, in collaboration with UCEP and UCOPE, whether exams are sufficient for systemwide admissions eligibility, college credit, and/or fulfilling the Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR), respectively, and, if so, recommendations for minimum cut scores at the systemwide-level. There is currently no clear, step-by-step exam review process and standardized evaluation rubric that provides guidance to facilitate the review or re-review AP, IB, and A Level exams in a timely and consistent manner. The purpose of this policy is to fill that gap by establishing a systematic exam review process with an accompanying standardized evaluation rubric.

Exam Review Process: The following process applies only to systemwide review of AP, IB and A Level exams, as UC does not intend to review exams from additional programs per [UCEP's 2024 statement on Credit by Exam](#).

There are two pathways for exam reviews:

1. **New, or significantly revised, exams:** For a new AP, IB, or A Level exam or existing exams with significant content revisions, UCOP's Office of Undergraduate Admissions will initiate the review process by notifying BOARS. If circumstances specific to an existing exam change prior to the regular review cadence (e.g., the scoring method for an exam is revised), then BOARS has the authority to request an immediate, emergency review.
2. **Existing exams:** The UC Academic Senate office maintains a calendar to prompt regular re-review of existing exams – using the most current rubric – on a 5- to 10-year cadence. When an existing exam is due for review, the UC Academic Senate will notify UCOP's Office of Undergraduate Admissions, triggering notification and initiation of re-review by BOARS.

Steps for reviewing or re-reviewing AP, IB, and A Level exams:

1. UCOP receives notification that a new or existing exam requires review.
2. UCOP undergraduate admissions provides a materials packet to the BOARS Chair for review, as BOARS is the committee with designated authority per Senate Regulation 621. The materials packet will contain any available course outlines, exam preparation content, and a standardized, faculty-developed rubric (see below) to guide assessment.
3. The BOARS Chair recruits 3-4 UC faculty with exam-specific, subject-matter expertise to convene a single faculty workgroup.
4. The BOARS Chair shares the materials packet with the faculty workgroup that will conduct a review using the standardized rubric provided below.
5. Within 30 days of receiving the materials packet for review, the faculty workgroup provides a written review to the BOARS Chair.
6. Following receipt of the review, the BOARS Chair then transmits the review to the Chairs of UCEP and/or UCOPE depending on how the exam will be applied. Once the review is transmitted, BOARS, UCEP, and/or UCOPE will be responsible for the following actions if the exam is deemed suitable by the faculty workgroup for admissions eligibility, college credit, and/or placement decisions:
 - a. BOARS
 - i. determine minimum systemwide cut score for admissions and/or A-G eligibility
 - ii. determine Cal-GETC area, if applicable
 - b. UCEP
 - i. determine minimum systemwide cut score for college credit
 - ii. determine systemwide credit/units conferred
 - iii. submit letter with recommendation to BOARS

- c. UCOPE
 - i. determine minimum systemwide cut score for placement
 - ii. recommend placement level based on passing score
 - iii. submit letter with recommendation to BOARS
- 7. Within 30 days of BOARS, UCEP, and UCOPE receiving the faculty workgroup review, the BOARS Chair incorporates final recommendations from BOARS, UCEP, and/or UCOPE into a single letter that is sent to UCOP's Office of Undergraduate Admissions. Importantly, to preserve lines of authority within BOARS, UCEP, and UCOPE, recommendations from the other committees will not be altered by the BOARS Chair prior to transmission within a single letter to UCOP. If there are major discrepancies in the recommendations among one or more committees, then the Chairs of BOARS, UCEP, and UCOPE should attempt to resolve these discrepancies before final recommendations are transmitted by BOARS to UCOP's Office of Undergraduate Admissions.

BOARS, UCEP, and UCOPE's Standardized Rubric for Exam Review

Provided below are a series of standardized questions that will be used by BOARS-recruited faculty with subject-matter expertise to determine whether the exam is acceptable or not for systemwide admissions eligibility, college credit, and/or placement decisions.

GENERAL

1. How is the exam structured and administered, including the number and format of questions, test modality (in-person or online), test proctoring, and time allotted for completion?
2. Are exam administration and security protocols adequate to prevent academic misconduct? If so, what security protocols are used?
3. What data/reporting have been received by UCOP from the testing organization/institution?
4. For existing exams that are being re-reviewed: Using available IRAP data, was student performance on subject-specific AP, IB, and/or A Level exams predictive of performance in subsequent subject-specific UC courses?

BOARS

1. Are the rigor and scope of course content included within this exam sufficient to fulfill an entire year of high school level instruction in a specific A-G area, even without completing a corresponding course prior to completing the exam?
2. If the rigor and scope are sufficient, then which A-G subject area and/or courses can the exam be used to fulfill?
3. If the exam can be used to fulfill an A-G requirement, what is the recommended systemwide passing (cut) score (indicating basic proficiency) for conferring credit for admissions eligibility?

UCEP

1. Are the rigor and scope of course content included within this exam sufficient to fulfill an entire quarter or semester of college-level instruction, even without completing a corresponding course prior to taking the exam?
2. If the rigor and scope are sufficient, how many units of credit are recommended?

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3. Can the exam be considered for credit beyond elective units towards graduation and, if so, in what areas (e.g., General Education requirements, foreign language requirements, etc.)?
4. If the exam can be used to receive college credit, what is the recommended systemwide passing (cut) score (indicating basic proficiency) for this purpose and does this depend on the type of credit proposed?

UCOPE

1. If exams in English and mathematics can confer credit for admissions eligibility, should the same cut score be used to determine a recommended cut score for satisfaction of the Entry Level Writing Requirement and/or math proficiency for placement?
2. If a cut score is used for satisfaction of the Entry Level Writing Requirement, should the same cut score be used to meet English language proficiency for students' whose language of instruction was not English?