



## Most Students Receive College Credit for Accelerated Courses; Programs Reduce University Class Time

### *at a glance*

Florida's public community colleges and universities generally accept accelerated college credits earned by high school students. The institutions have established policies for awarding accelerated college credit hours that typically meet or exceed the levels recommended by the Department of Education.

Almost 75% of high school students who take and pass acceleration courses subsequently attend a public college in Florida. Most of these students (90%) receive college credit for their acceleration courses. Students who did not receive college credit generally did not report their acceleration credits in order to take the classes while in college; these students give the state no return on its investment in these programs.

Generally, students can use accelerated credit hours towards their degree requirements. Students who earned acceleration credits typically graduated from college after taking 14 fewer credit hours at Florida's public universities.

### Scope

As directed by the Legislature, OPPAGA examined Florida's acceleration programs, which include Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Dual Enrollment, and the College Level Examination Program (CLEP). This is the third of four reports on these programs, and addresses three questions.

- How do college credit policies established by Florida's postsecondary institutions compare to state guidelines?
- To what extent have Florida's public post-secondary institutions awarded acceleration credits earned by high school students?
- Have these credits applied to college degree requirements?

Other reports in this series examine participation in acceleration programs by Florida's high school graduates and funding options for these programs, and summarize OPPAGA's overall conclusions.<sup>1</sup>

To examine Florida's acceleration programs, we analyzed the transcripts of two student groups—those who graduated from Florida high schools in 2001-02 and those that graduated from a Florida public university in 2002-03. We focused our study on this time period to enable sufficient time to elapse to determine whether earned college credits were subsequently accepted by Florida's public postsecondary institutions.

## Background

### *Types of programs*

Florida has established several programs to enable high school students to take accelerated courses in order to broaden their curricular options, increase

<sup>1</sup>The other reports in this series include *Acceleration Programs Provide Benefits But the Costs Are Relatively Expensive*, Report No. 06-24; *Most Acceleration Students Perform Well, But Outcomes Vary by Program Type*, Report No. 06-25; *State's High School Acceleration Programs Are Funded Through a Variety of Sources*, Report No. 06-27.

their depth of study in particular subject areas, and reduce the time it takes to earn a college degree.<sup>2</sup> Students who pass these courses and exams are eligible to earn college credit that may be used toward degree requirements. Acceleration programs can benefit both students and the state. They provide students the opportunity for broader curricular offerings or more in-depth study. The programs also can reduce the costs of higher education and free classroom space for other students.

There are three categories of acceleration programs.

Accelerated high school courses. These courses provide advanced level instruction and require students to take an exam at the end of the course to determine whether the student has mastered the material and is eligible to receive college credit. There are three basic types of accelerated high school courses: Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE).

- Advanced placement (AP) courses are offered by many high schools to prepare students to pass national subject matter exams. AP courses are designed to offer college-level instruction and are generally equivalent to college courses.<sup>3,4</sup> Students who earn requisite test scores on AP exams at the end of the year are eligible to receive college credit (students may also take these exams without enrolling in AP courses). In Fiscal Year 2004-05, 86,279 Florida high school students were enrolled in AP courses.
- International Baccalaureate (IB) courses are an intensive two-year curriculum offered by some Florida high schools to allow students to pursue an IB diploma in addition to their high school diploma or to enroll in more challenging courses. The curriculum is designed to enable students to meet various international university entrance standards. Students participate in the IB program at authorized schools and earn high school credits based on related coursework. Students who take an IB course examination at

the end of the school year are also eligible to receive college credit. (These students may also opt to take AP exams in addition to IB exams.) In Fiscal Year 2004-05, 8,258 Florida high school students were enrolled in IB courses.

- The Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) program was recognized as a state-funded acceleration program by the 2002 Legislature. The program provides accelerated courses to academically able students in grades 11 and 12. The coursework is based on an internationally developed curriculum. In Fiscal Year 2004-05, 635 Florida high school students enrolled in AICE courses. We did not examine the AICE program for this report because it was not in effect when our cohort of students was in high school.

Dual enrollment. In this program, school districts partner with colleges and universities to allow high school students to simultaneously take and earn credit for high school and college courses without having to pay college tuition. School districts and postsecondary institutions jointly agree to the dual enrollment courses offered to students within a school district. In order to participate in dual enrollment courses, students must maintain a 3.0 unweighted grade point average for college credit courses or a 2.0 for career and technical certificate courses.<sup>5</sup> In addition, students must pass the Common Placement Test to be eligible for a dual enrollment course and must then pass the course to earn college credit. While course offerings vary by district, statutes require that dual enrollment courses must apply to a student's high school graduation credits. In Fiscal Year 2004-05, 37,657 Florida high school students took dual enrollment courses.

College-Level Examination Program (CLEP). Unlike the other acceleration programs, the CLEP program is administered by community colleges and universities and is not offered in high schools. This program enables students to take a college-level exam to demonstrate mastery of selected subject areas. Students who pass the exams earn credit hours without having to enroll in the courses. In Fiscal Year 2004-05, 9,656 students took 11,477 CLEP tests at Florida test centers.<sup>6</sup> Students pay the cost of taking CLEP exams

<sup>2</sup> Section 1007.27(1), *F.S.*

<sup>3</sup> Advanced placement courses are offered in 19 subject areas, including calculus, American history, biology, economics, and several languages.

<sup>4</sup> Advanced Placement course curricula are developed by the AP Development Committee (by subject field) composed of both university faculty and experienced high school AP teachers.

<sup>5</sup> Section 1007.271, *F.S.*

<sup>6</sup> CLEP test takers include out-of-state students and students attending private institutions.

which includes a \$55 exam fee and an administrative fee (typically \$15).

### ***Program funding***

Funding for the AP, IB, AICE, and dual enrollment programs is provided to school districts through the Florida Education Finance Program. Students who enroll in these programs are included in their school districts' full-time equivalent (FTE) student count, and the districts receive allocations based on their FTE enrollment. Students who participate in dual enrollment programs with Florida's community colleges and universities are also included in the community college or universities' FTE count for funding purposes. There is no state funding for the CLEP program, as students pay a fee of \$70 to take these examinations.<sup>7</sup>

In addition, to encourage districts and schools to provide successful AP, IB and AICE courses, the Legislature provides incentive funding based on students achieving a minimum score on these exams.<sup>8</sup> Districts may use these incentive funds to pay for the AP, IB, and AICE exam fees. The AP exam fee is \$82 nationwide, while the fee per AICE exam is approximately \$43. The IB exam fee varies based on a number of factors. AP, IB, and AICE incentive funds also are used to pay teacher bonuses. Teachers are awarded a \$50 bonus for each student that passes these exams, and a one-time \$500 bonus is awarded to teachers in "D" and "F" graded schools that have at least one student pass an exam. The maximum annual bonus per teacher is \$2,000. In addition, for AP incentive funds, districts must allocate at least 80% of incentive funds to the high school that generates them.

The Legislature appropriated \$73.5 million in incentive funding for the AP, IB, and AICE acceleration programs for Fiscal Year 2005-06, representing an increase of \$5.8 million from the previous fiscal year.

In addition to the incentive funding, the Florida Department of Education entered into a partnership with the College Board in 2000 to help children from middle school through senior high improve their academic performance and prepare for college or a career. The Legislature appropriated \$7.13 million

to the Florida Partnership program in Fiscal Year 2005-06. Of this appropriation, \$2.3 million was used for AP teacher training, AP summer institutes, pre-AP training, curriculum development, and AP Virtual School exam preparation.<sup>9</sup> When the Florida Partnership monies and AP incentive funding are combined, the state spent \$58.4 million on the AP program in Fiscal Year 2005-06.

## **Questions and Answers —**

One of the goals of acceleration programs is to enable students to earn college credit while in high school and thus reduce the number of classes they need to take in order to earn a college degree. In order to reach this goal, it is critical for postsecondary institutions to accept credit hours earned through the acceleration programs and for students to use these credits towards their degrees. Our review accordingly examined whether

- Florida's postsecondary institutions adopted state guidelines to accept acceleration credit hours;
- students are receiving college credit for the acceleration hours they earn; and
- students are using acceleration credits to meet college degree requirements.

Overall, we concluded that Florida's public community colleges and universities generally are accepting acceleration credits and students are using these credits to reduce the number of courses they take in college. However, some students do not receive college credit hours for their acceleration courses, mostly because they do not submit required paperwork to their colleges.

### ***Have Florida's postsecondary institutions adopted state guidelines to accept acceleration credit hours?***

Policies for awarding credit hours for acceleration courses are generally consistent with state guidelines. Florida statute requires the Department of Education to identify minimum scores, maximum credit and the course or courses to be awarded for AP exams and IB exams.<sup>10</sup> The Department of

<sup>7</sup> This fee includes a \$55 examination fee and a \$15 administration fee paid to the community college or university.

<sup>8</sup> Incentive funding is discussed further in Report No. 06-27.

<sup>9</sup> The remaining funds from the Florida College Board Partnership appropriated by the Legislature in 2005-06 went to support SAT preparation, teacher professional development, statewide professional conferences, and College Board public service announcements.

<sup>10</sup> Section 1007.27(2) *F.S.*, contains this provision. In addition, the department also has guidelines for CLEP and AICE exams, but we did not compare institutional guidelines for these programs.

Education's Articulation Coordinating Committee issues guidelines to assist colleges and universities in guaranteeing the minimum number of credits to award to accelerated students. These guidelines are intended to be minimum credit recommendations and institutions are free to implement policies that award more credit than the recommended minimum.

Students are responsible for requesting the College Board to report AP and CLEP exam scores to the community college or university they attend. Students request the International Baccalaureate Organization to report IB exam scores to their postsecondary institution. Once a postsecondary institution receives a student's exam scores, the community college or university awards credit based on the school's institutional policy and the Articulation Coordinating Committee's Credit-by-Exam Guidelines.

The policies adopted by Florida's public community colleges and universities typically award the same number of credit hours for acceleration courses as recommended by state guidelines. However, in many cases Florida's postsecondary institutions award a higher number of credit hours than recommended by the state guidelines, and in a few cases the institutions award fewer credit hours than recommended.

Nine of the state's universities and 10 community colleges award more credit than recommended for some AP exams. The greatest deviation from the Articulation Coordinating Committee's Credit-by-Exam Guidelines occurred in the foreign language exams including French, German, Spanish, and Latin. For example the Articulation Coordinating Committee recommends a student receive three credit hours for scoring a 3 on the AP foreign language exam. However, most institutions award four credit hours to these students because the foreign language courses they offer are four-credit-hour courses, which include a one-credit-hour lab.

A few institutional policies (two universities and two community colleges) indicate the schools award fewer credits than the minimum contained in the ACC guidelines for some AP courses. For example, two universities have opted not to include a lab in the course equivalents for AP Biology and thus award three credit hours instead of the four recommended to students who score a 3 on the AP exam. Appendix A provides a

detailed comparison of Articulation Coordinating Committee's credit level guidelines and Florida's public university and community college AP and IB acceleration program credit policies.

A similar pattern exists for International Baccalaureate credits. Three universities and 18 community colleges adhere to the Articulation Coordinating Committee's minimum guidelines for awarding IB credits. However, seven universities and nine community colleges award more credit for some IB exams than recommended, while three universities and three community colleges award fewer college credit hours less than the guidelines indicate. The greatest area of deviation from the guidelines occurred in the foreign language and science subject areas. Often the differences in credit hours can be accounted for by the lab hours included in the university courses. For example, while the Articulation Coordinating Committee recommends three credit hours for students who earn a score of a 4 on the IB biology test, most universities award four credit hours, which includes credit for a lab.

### ***Are students receiving college credit for the acceleration hours they earn?***

In order for acceleration programs to help students expedite their college careers, students in these programs who are eligible for college credit must subsequently attend college and receive the credit hours from their institutions.

Almost 75% of the students we tracked who took acceleration courses and were eligible for college credit subsequently attended a public postsecondary institution in Florida the year following graduation. Most (90%) of these students were awarded college credit, although the proportion of students who received credit hours varied among the acceleration programs.<sup>11</sup>

Most eligible AP students received college credits. As shown in Exhibit 1, 68.5% of 2001-02 graduates who were eligible for AP credits in high school went on to attend public postsecondary

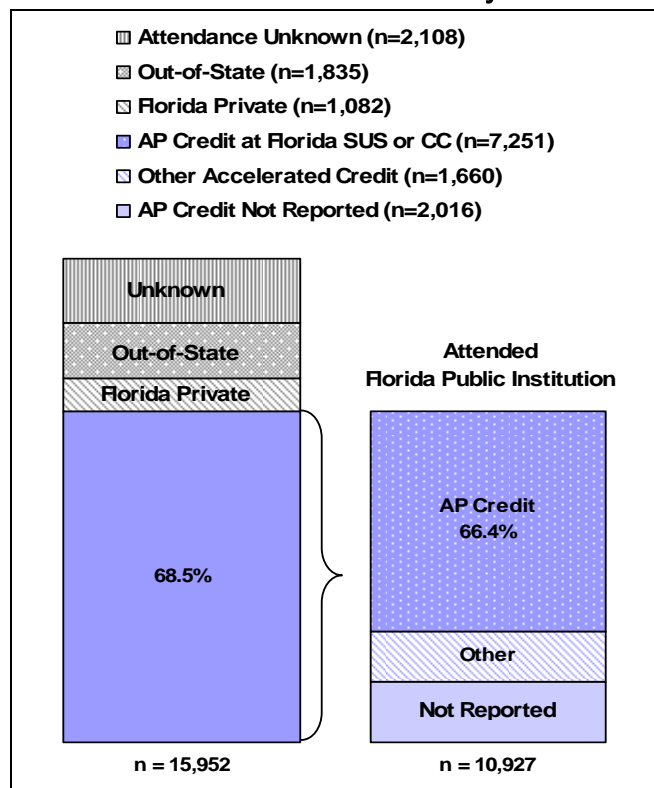
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<sup>11</sup> As discussed in the prior report in this series, 71% of the high school students who participate in accelerated courses met the standards to be eligible for college credit. See Report No. 06-25. We could not determine whether students who attended a private or out-of-state college were awarded accelerated credit.

institutions in Florida.<sup>12</sup> Of these, two-thirds (66.4%) subsequently received college credit for their AP courses. These students typically received seven credit hours for their AP classes. Some AP students (15%) received college credit for other types of acceleration programs (e.g., these students received dual enrollment and/or IB credit).

### Exhibit 1

#### Two-Thirds of Eligible Participants Received AP College Credits from Florida Public Postsecondary Institutions



Source: OPPAGA analysis of entry cohort transcript data 1998-2003.

Most Eligible IB graduates received college credit. As shown in Exhibit 2, about two-thirds (67.9%) of the high school graduates we examined who participated in IB programs in 2001-02 subsequently attended a Florida public university or community college the following year.<sup>13</sup> Most of these students (74.1%) were awarded college credits for their IB courses and these students typically earned 29

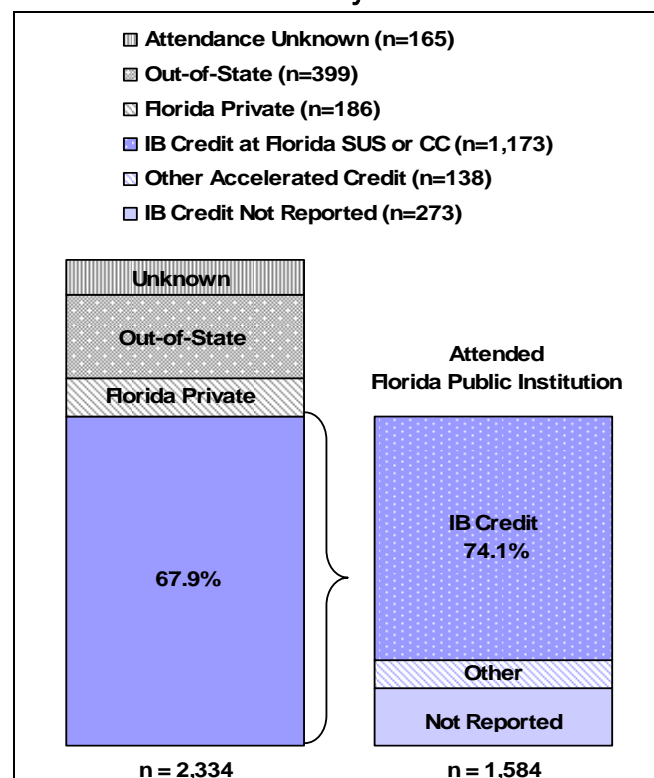
<sup>12</sup> This figure reflects only those students who participated in the AP program while in high school and took and passed at least one end-of-year exam required to be eligible to receive college credit. It thus excludes the 46% of AP high school participants who were not eligible to receive college credits because they did not take or pass the required exams.

<sup>13</sup> About one-fourth (27%) of IB participants were not eligible to receive college credit because they did not take or pass IB exams.

credits. Another 9% received college credit for other types of acceleration programs.

### Exhibit 2

#### Three-Quarters of Eligible Participants Received International Baccalaureate (IB) Credit from Florida Public Postsecondary Institutions in 2002-03



Source: OPPAGA analysis of entry cohort transcript data 1998-2003.

Most dual enrollment students received college credit. Similarly, three quarters (75.8%) of high school graduates in our cohort who passed their dual enrollment courses subsequently attended Florida public postsecondary institutions.<sup>14</sup> As shown in Exhibit 3, of these students, 88.9% received dual enrollment credits from a Florida public university or community college the year following graduation, typically receiving nine credit hours.<sup>15</sup> Not all dually enrolled students

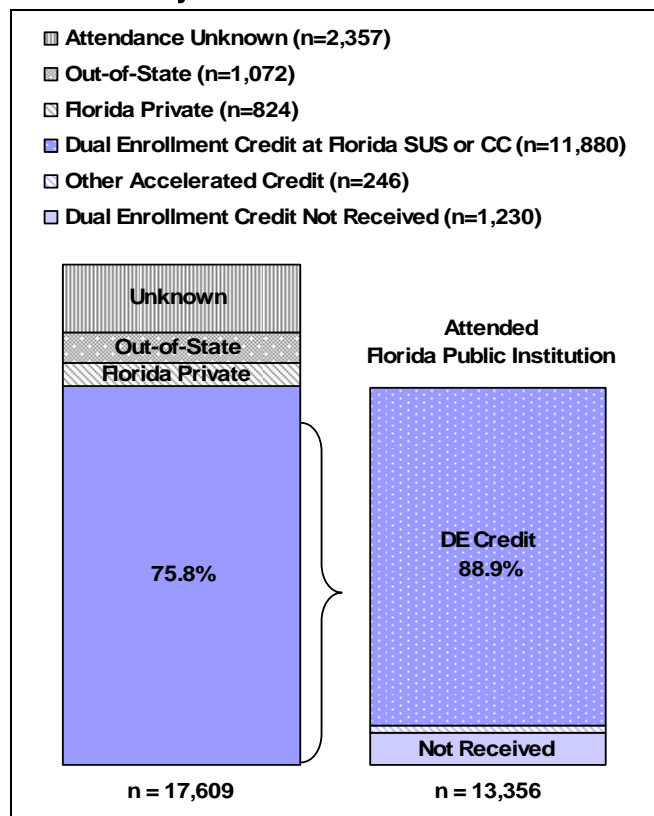
<sup>14</sup> Since the criteria for awarding dual enrollment credit varies among institutions and is not based on a test score as is the AP and IB programs, we used the award of high school credit as a proxy for eligibility for college credit. This may not be the case in all circumstances, as some students who earn high school credit may not perform well enough to earn college credit. College credit standards for dual enrollment programs are defined in local agreements made between secondary and postsecondary institutions.

<sup>15</sup> Dual enrollment is not always reported correctly to the Florida Department of Education. In a sample of cases we found that at times postsecondary institutions award credit students earned in high school but it was not always identified as dual enrollment, AP, or IB credit when reported.



who earned high school credit earned the requisite grade to be awarded college credit.

### Exhibit 3 Almost 90% of Eligible Participants Received Dual Enrollment Credits from Florida Public Postsecondary Institutions in 2002-03



Source: OPPAGA analysis of entry cohort transcript data 1998-2003.

Three-fourths of recent CLEP participants earned college credits, though few students participate in CLEP. The CLEP program is administered by the community colleges and universities rather than high schools. Students who seek to earn college credit through CLEP take subject matter tests to demonstrate their proficiency and must receive a score of 50 or higher to be eligible to receive college credit.<sup>16</sup>

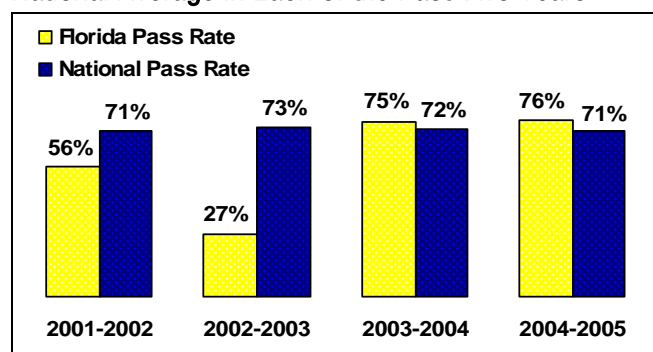
Few (3%) of our high school graduation cohort who subsequently attended Florida's public postsecondary institutions received CLEP credit. Pass rate information was unavailable for our cohort; however, CLEP participants in 2004-05

<sup>16</sup> The College Board reported that currently although students are generally eligible for college credit with a score of 50, some colleges require higher scores to receive credit.

passed 76% of their exams and met the standard for college credit.<sup>17</sup>

As illustrated in Exhibit 4, when compared to national CLEP pass rates, Florida students exceeded the national pass rate average in each of the past two years. Statewide, CLEP pass rates fell during the 2001-02 and 2002-03 years when Bright Futures Scholarship recipients were required to attempt five acceleration programs; those students who had not taken five or more AP or IB tests generally took CLEP tests to meet this requirement. As a result, many students took CLEP exams for which they were not prepared. Since this requirement was removed, CLEP pass rates have reached their previous levels.

### Exhibit 4 Florida's CLEP Exam Pass Rates Exceeded the National Average in Each of the Past Two Years<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Florida's CLEP pass rates dipped in 2002-03 due to a legislative requirement that all Bright Futures Scholarship recipients make five acceleration attempts, including CLEP. This requirement was rescinded by the Legislature in 2003.

Source: College Board, State and National CLEP Exam Pass Rates.

Florida public postsecondary institutions did not report college credit for 10% of students that participated in accelerated courses and were eligible for credit. While most high school graduates who pass AP, IB, and dual enrollment tests and classes subsequently receive college credit, some do not. Ten percent (2,189 students) of the students in our cohort who were eligible for college credit did not subsequently receive credit hours from the Florida postsecondary institutions they attended. We could not identify the number of students who did not receive credit for CLEP tests.

<sup>17</sup> CLEP pass rates are not available for our cohort because we could not identify students who took CLEP tests but did not pass them. The reported CLEP figures include both in-state and out-of-state students.

Students may fail to receive college credits for their acceleration courses for two primary reasons.

- First, students may fail to request that their acceleration program exam scores be submitted to their college or university. Students may purposefully not report their acceleration program exam scores in order to take the class again and earn a higher grade, thus improving their GPAs. Also, some students may be counseled to retake a course because their exam score was marginal and was not accepted for their college major.
- Second, in a few cases, students can be eligible for more acceleration credits than Florida public universities or community colleges typically allow. Most universities and community colleges accept a maximum of 45 credit hours earned by examination, including AP, IB, and CLEP programs.<sup>18</sup> In addition to this overall accelerated credit cap, most universities and community colleges also accept a maximum of 30 IB credit hours. No institutions have established a cap on the number of dual enrollment credits that can be awarded. These caps affect relatively few students—only 637 of the 2001-02 graduates (less than 2% of students participating in acceleration mechanisms) were eligible for more than 45 credit hours based on their AP, IB, and CLEP exam scores. Typically these students were eligible for 53 accelerated credit hours and thus would have lost eight credit hours that exceeded the cap.<sup>19</sup>

Finally, in some cases, students appeared not to receive credit for an acceleration mechanism because a community college or university where the student attended failed to report the credit to the Department of Education accurately or timely. For example, one institution had new software that could not differentiate between types of college credits and so did not report that students earned accelerated credit; another institution

entered credit dates incorrectly. Correcting such errors, if detected, can cause delays in reporting.

Acceleration credits that are earned but not received represent a loss of state investment. As one of the goals of acceleration programs is to allow students to earn college credit while in high school, the state receives no return on its investment if students do not subsequently receive credit hours when they successfully complete these programs.

In Fiscal Year 2002-03, the state paid an estimated \$3.4 million in incentive funds for 2,189 students who took AP and IB exams and earned the requisite scores for college credit but the credit was never reported to the Florida Department of Education.<sup>20, 21</sup> If these students subsequently re-took these courses while at a Florida postsecondary institution, the state also would have paid an additional \$1.3 million for these courses; the students also would have incurred tuition for these classes.<sup>22</sup>

### ***Are students using acceleration credits to meet college degree requirements?***

Most accelerated credit hours earned by the high school graduates we examined could be applied toward their degree requirements. Moreover, these students subsequently earned fewer credit hours at their postsecondary institution than other college students.

<sup>18</sup> There are five exceptions to this limit—the University of Florida accepts a maximum 30 acceleration credit hours; the University of West Florida and the Florida State University both accept a maximum up to 60 hours; Manatee Community College accepts a maximum of 30 hours, and Pensacola Junior College accepts a maximum transfer of 15 hours to apply to general education requirements (it has no maximum for elective credit transfers).

<sup>19</sup> These students were typically awarded 44 accelerated credit hours, with the difference due to non-reporting of courses to the community colleges and universities and/or the institutions awarding fewer hours than recommended by the ACC guidelines.

<sup>20</sup> Credit not reported includes students who did not submit AP and IB exam scores at the time of admission; and postsecondary institutions that had credit information but failed to report it to the Florida Department of Education.

<sup>21</sup> The estimate was made by multiplying the number of AP and IB exams passed by students in our high school cohort who were enrolled in Florida postsecondary institutions in 2002-03 but had no AP or IB credit reported by the average cost per exam, i.e., \$855 per AP and \$845 per IB exam. This is a conservative cost estimate, as it does not include the additional 0.3 FTE funding for IB diploma seekers. It was not possible to identify which students in our cohort were IB exam passers were also IB diploma seekers.

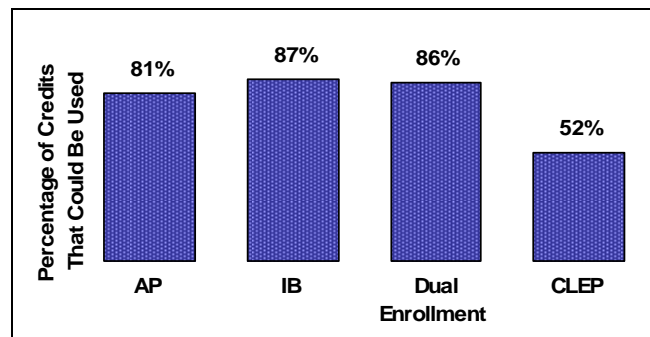
<sup>22</sup> This estimate was made by multiplying the number of AP and IB credit hours these students were eligible to receive by the state's cost per credit hour toward students' postsecondary education. The population was limited to students in our cohort who passed AP and IB exams and who attended either a Florida community college or university but had no AP or IB credit reported to the Florida Department of Education. The recommendations of the Articulation Coordinating Committee were applied to the test scores of these students to determine the amount of credit they were eligible to receive. In 2002-03 the state cost per credit hour was \$101.53 for students attending the community colleges and \$85.53 for students attending university.

Acceleration credits generally could be applied toward graduation requirements. Most (82%) of the accelerated credit hours earned by the students in our cohort could be applied towards degree requirements. However, in the remaining cases, some credits were earned in areas that did not correspond to the student's general education or major requirements and could not be used.

For example, a high school student could take multiple AP foreign language classes and become eligible to receive a large number of college credit hours for these courses. However, most college programs require only one year of a single foreign language, and the remaining credit hours would not satisfy other degree requirements unless the student majored in foreign languages (although some credit hours could count towards some electives). In this case, the earned foreign language credit hours could become classified as excess hours since they would not apply to the student's general education or major requirements. Due to data limitations, we could not determine the extent to which the accelerated credit hours earned by the students we examined were used to satisfy degree requirements.

However, the types of courses taken by acceleration students generally were in those areas that could be used to satisfy degree requirements, such as foreign languages, math, science, and literature. As shown in Exhibit 5, over 80% of the AP, IB, and Dual Enrollment credit hours earned by our cohort could apply towards degree requirements. In contrast, only slightly more than half of the credit hours earned through the CLEP program could apply towards degree requirements. Most unused CLEP credit occurred in foreign languages and many of these credits were not needed for students' majors. However, the state does not fund CLEP tests, as students pay the cost of taking these exams.

## Exhibit 5 Most Acceleration Program Credits Could Apply Toward Graduation Requirements



Source: OPPAGA analysis of 2002-03 FDOE Hours-to-Degree data.

Participation in acceleration programs reduces the amount of class time required by university graduates. The typical university graduate who earned accelerated credits took fewer classes while in college. These students typically had earned 14 credit hours by participating in accelerated programs.

The students who received acceleration credit and graduated from Florida public universities in 2002-03 earned a median of 129 credit hours (not including the 14 acceleration program credits). In contrast, those students who had not received acceleration program credit hours earned a median of 143 credit hours. Accordingly, the acceleration students avoided approximately five college courses, thereby freeing classroom space for other students.

## Agency Response

In accordance with the provisions of s. 11.51(5), *Florida Statutes*, a draft of our report was submitted to the Commissioner of Education to review and respond. The Commissioner's written response is reproduced herein in Appendix B.

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## Appendix A

# A Comparison of AP and IB Credit Guidelines

Section 1007.27(2), *Florida Statutes*, requires the Department of Education to identify minimum scores, maximum credit and the course or courses to be awarded for AP exams and IB exams. The Department of Education has given this authority to the State Articulation Coordinating Committee.<sup>23</sup> The Articulation Coordinating Committee's Credit by Exam Guidelines establish minimum amounts of credit that state community colleges and universities must award for Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) exams.<sup>24, 25</sup> In addition, the Articulation Coordinating Committee has determined that the maximum amount of credit to be awarded for each exam is based on each state university and community college's policies. The following tables illustrate how the state guidelines compare to each of the 10 university and 28 community college policies for awarding credit for AP and IB exams.<sup>26</sup>

### *Advanced Placement (AP)*

The Articulation Coordinating Committee establishes minimum credit amounts to be awarded for 34 AP subject tests.<sup>27</sup> The amount of credit awarded is based on how well a student performs on an exam. While most university courses are typically three credit hours, some science and foreign language courses include a lab requirement and, as a result, are awarded four credits.

Colleges and universities are allowed to award higher amounts of credit than recommended by the guidelines. For example, if a student scores a three on the AP Spanish Language Exam, the guidelines recommends awarding three credit hours. Many of the state universities and community colleges, however, award four credit hours for successful AP exams. Contrarily, while the guidelines recommend four credit hours for scoring a three on the AP Biology Exam, some universities policies indicated only awarding three credit hours.

State University System. Most universities differ from the Articulation Coordinating Committee recommendations for at least some AP credit. Overwhelmingly, university policies award more credit than recommended by the Articulation Coordinating Committee guidelines. Only two universities award less credit for a successful AP exam than recommended.

While the Articulation Coordinating Committee guidelines guarantee minimum credit for 34 AP exams, the state's public universities vary in their adherence to these guidelines. Table A-1 illustrates these variations by identifying the number and percentage of tests per university that differ from the guidelines. Additionally, the table reveals whether the credit difference is a result of the university awarding more or less credit than the guidelines recommend or whether the university does not specify credit for a particular exam.

<sup>23</sup> The Articulation Coordinating Committee is appointed by and reports to the Commissioner of Education. The State Board of Education administrative rule 6A-10.024 delineates the authority for the committee to determine these guidelines.

<sup>24</sup> In addition, the department also has guidelines for CLEP and AICE exams, but we did not compare institutional guidelines for these programs.

<sup>25</sup> Section 1007.27, *F.S.*

<sup>26</sup> New College, an independent Public Honors College, is not included in the analysis, as it is not a credit-based institution, but relies instead on academic contracts.

<sup>27</sup> The Department of Education reported that the Articulation Coordinating Committee is in the process of updating state guidelines as part of its review cycle.

Table A-1

**Variations in Credit Guidelines by Florida Universities in Accepting Acceleration Credits from Articulation Coordinating Committee Recommendations**

State University	Total Number of Tests Different from ACC Guidelines	Percentage of Tests Different from ACC Guidelines	Percentage of Tests Different from ACC Guidelines		
			More Credit (n)	Less Credit (n)	Credit Not Specified (n)
FAMU	3	9%	100% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)
FAU	15	44%	47% (7)	20% (3)	33% (5)
FGCU	2	6%	100% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)
FIU <sup>1</sup>	8	24%	75% (6)	13% (1)	25% (2)
FSU	8	24%	100% (8)	0% (0)	0% (0)
UCF	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
UF	5	15%	100% (5)	0% (0)	0% (0)
UNF	7	21%	43% (3)	0% (0)	57% (4)
USF	7	21%	43% (3)	0% (0)	57% (4)
UWF	3	9%	100% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)

<sup>1</sup> The 'Percentage of Tests Different from ACC Guidelines' exceeds 100% for FIU because one exam is counted in two categories, 'More Credit' and 'Less Credit.' FIU awards less credit for a score of three on the AP Biology exam than the ACC guidelines recommends and more credit for a score of four than recommended.

Source: OPPAGA analysis of Florida postsecondary institution guidelines for awarding accelerated credit to students based on AP and IB exam scores.

Community Colleges. Most community colleges also vary from the Articulation Coordinating Committee guidelines. Of the 28 community colleges, 17 follow the guidelines; 10 of these community colleges have policies that award more credit than recommended and 2 have policies that award fewer credit hours than recommended. Also, 8 community colleges do not specify credit for certain AP tests, generally for courses that are not commonly taken at community colleges such as foreign languages and literature.

While the Articulation Coordinating Committee guidelines guarantee minimum credit for 34 AP exams, the state's community colleges vary in their adherence to the guidelines. Table A-2 illustrates these variations by identifying the number and percentage of tests per community college that differ from the guidelines. Additionally, the table reveals whether the credit difference is a result of the community college awarding more or less credit than the guidelines or whether the community college does not specify credit for a particular exam.

**Table A-2**  
**Variations in Credit Guidelines by Florida Community Colleges from**  
**Articulation Coordinating Committee Credit Guidelines**

Community College	Total Number of Tests Different from ACC Guidelines	Percentage of Tests Different from ACC Guidelines	Percentage of Tests Different from ACC Guidelines		
			More Credit (n)	Less Credit (n)	Credit Not Specified (n)
Brevard CC	9	27%	56% (5)	0% (0)	44% (4)
Broward CC	6	18%	67% (4)	0% (0)	33% (2)
Central Florida CC	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Chipola JC	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Daytona Beach CC	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Edison College	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Florida CC-Jacksonville	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Florida Keys CC	7	21%	71% (5)	29% (2)	0% (0)
Gulf Coast CC	3	9%	67% (2)	0% (0)	33% (1)
Hillsborough CC	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Indian River CC	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Lake City CC	7	21%	0% (0)	0% (0)	100% (7)
Lake-Sumter CC	14	41%	64% (9)	0% (0)	36% (5)
Manatee CC	24	71%	50% (12)	4% (1)	46% (11)
Miami Dade College	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
North Florida CC	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Okaloosa Walton CC	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Palm Beach CC	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Pasco-Hernando CC	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Pensacola JC	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Polk CC	11	32%	64% (7)	0% (0)	36% (4)
St. Johns River CC	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
St. Petersburg College	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Santa Fe CC	3	9%	100% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Seminole CC	10	29%	30% (3)	0% (0)	70% (7)
South Florida CC	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Tallahassee CC	7	21%	100% (7)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Valencia CC	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)

Source: OPPAGA analysis of Florida postsecondary institution guidelines for awarding accelerated credit to students based on AP and IB exam scores.

### ***International Baccalaureate (IB)***

The Articulation Coordinating Committee establishes minimum credit amounts for 24 IB subject exams. It currently does not delineate credit between higher-level or standard-level exams for diploma recipients.<sup>28</sup> (Higher-level courses are 240 (two years) teaching hours and are an in-depth study of a wide array of content. Standard-level courses require 150 teaching hours and are a less intensive study than the higher-level coursework.) For non-diploma recipients, credit is recommended only for higher-level exams with scores of five or above.

<sup>28</sup> The Department of Education reported the Articulation Coordinating Committee is in the process of updating state guidelines as part of their review cycle.

Both the current Articulation Coordinating Committee and postsecondary institutions award IB exam credit based on how well a student performs on the exam. IB exam scores range from one to seven. The Articulation Coordinating Committee recommends credit for scores of four or higher for students seeking an IB Diploma and for scores of five or higher for students taking an IB exam but not seeking an IB diploma.<sup>29</sup> Credit not specified by both universities and colleges, for the most part, refers to foreign language exams that are uncommon in the state of Florida.<sup>30</sup>

Colleges and universities are allowed to award higher amounts of credit than recommended by the guidelines. For example the Articulation Coordinating Committee recommends three credits for a score of four on an IB Biology Exam and six credits for a score of five or higher. Most college and university policies, however, award four credits for a score of four and eight credits for a score of five or higher.

State University System. Three universities follow the Articulation Coordinating Committee credit recommendations for IB exams without variation, seven award more credit than recommended, and three award less credit than recommended. Four universities have either not awarded IB exam credit for a specific exam or simply have no policy addressing credit for a specific IB exam.

While the Articulation Coordinating Committee recommends credit for 24 IB subject exams, the state's public universities vary in their adherence to these guidelines. Table A-3 illustrates these variations by identifying the number and percentage of tests per university that differ from the Articulation Coordinating Committee's recommendations. Additionally, the table reveals whether the credit difference is a result of the university awarding more or less credit than the guidelines or whether the university does not specify credit for a particular exam.

**Table A-3**  
**Variations in IB Credit Guidelines by Florida Universities from**  
**Articulation Coordinating Committee Credit Recommendations**

State University	Total Number of Tests Different from ACC Guidelines	Percentage of Tests Different from ACC Guidelines	Percentage of Tests Different from the ACC Guidelines		
			More Credit (n)	Less Credit (n)	Credit Not Specified (n)
FAMU	9	38%	44% (4)	11% (1)	44% (4)
FAU	11	46%	18% (2)	18% (2)	64% (7)
FGCU	4	17%	100% (4)	0% (0)	0% (0)
FIU	6	25%	67% (4)	17% (1)	17% (1)
FSU	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
UCF	2	8%	100% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)
UF	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
UNF	9	38%	67% (6)	0% (0)	33% (3)
USF	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
UWF	7	29%	100% (7)	0% (0)	0% (0)

Source: OPPAGA analysis of Florida postsecondary institution guidelines for awarding accelerated credit to students based on AP and IB exam scores.

<sup>29</sup> Recently modified, the State Department of Education administrative rule 6A-10.024 makes no distinction between IB diploma exams and non-diploma exams.

<sup>30</sup> Two of the IB tests used in the analysis, Language A2 and Language A1, are uncommon in the state of Florida. The ACC has recommended credit amounts for these exams, but several community colleges and state universities do not.

Community Colleges. Eighteen community colleges follow the Articulation Coordinating Committee credit recommendations for IB exams without variation; nine award more credit hours than recommended, while three award less credit hours than recommended for certain exams. Nine community colleges do not give credit for some tests recommended by the Articulation Coordinating Committee, while one does not have an IB policy.

While the Articulation Coordinating Committee recommends credit for 24 subject IB exams, the state's community colleges vary in their adherence to the recommendations. Table A-4 illustrates these variations by identifying the number and percentage of tests per community college that differ from these recommendations. Additionally, the table reveals whether the credit difference is a result of the community college awarding more or less credit than the Articulation Coordinating Committee recommends or whether the community college does not specify credit for a particular exam.

**Table A-4**  
**Variations in IB Credit Guidelines by Florida Community Colleges from**  
**Articulation Coordinating Committee Credit Recommendations**

Community College	Total Number of Tests Different from ACC Guidelines	Percentage of Tests Different from ACC Guidelines	Percentage of Tests Different from ACC Guidelines		
			More Credit (n)	Less Credit (n)	Credit Not Specified (n)
Brevard CC	9	38%	44% (4)	11% (1)	44% (4)
Broward CC	2	8%	0% (0)	0% (0)	100% (2)
Central Florida CC	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Chipola JC	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Daytona Beach CC	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Edison College	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Florida CC-Jacksonville	10	42%	70% (7)	0% (0)	30% (3)
Florida Keys CC	7	29%	71% (5)	0% (0)	29% (2)
Gulf Coast CC	8	33%	63% (5)	13% (1)	25% (2)
Hillsborough CC	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Indian River CC	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Lake City CC	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Lake-Sumter CC <sup>1</sup>	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Manatee CC <sup>2</sup>	12	50%	42% (5)	25% (3)	42% (5)
Miami Dade College	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
North Florida CC	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Okaloosa Walton CC	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Palm Beach CC	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Pasco-Hernando CC	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Pensacola JC	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Polk CC	10	42%	70% (7)	0% (0)	30% (3)
St. Johns River CC	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
St. Petersburg College	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Santa Fe CC	9	38%	56% (5)	0% (0)	44% (4)
Seminole CC	5	21%	60% (3)	0% (0)	40% (2)
South FL CC	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Tallahassee CC	5	21%	100% (5)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Valencia CC	0	0%	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)

<sup>1</sup> Lake-Sumter CC does not have an IB policy.

<sup>2</sup> The 'Percentage of Tests Different from ACC Guidelines' exceeds 100% because one exam is counted in two categories 'More Credit' and 'Credit Not Specified.' Manatee CC awards more credit for a score of six or seven on the IB Physics exam than the ACC guidelines recommends but the school does not specify credit to be awarded for scores less than six on the exam.

Source: OPPAGA analysis of Florida postsecondary institution guidelines for awarding accelerated credit to students based on AP and IB exam scores.



## Appendix B

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# FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



### STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Commissioner of Education



March 13, 2006

Mr. Gary R. VanLandingham  
Director  
Office of Program Policy Analysis  
And Government Accountability  
111 West Madison Street, Room 312  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1475

Dear Mr. VanLandingham:

Please find attached the response to the preliminary and tentative audit findings and recommendations concerning:

1. *State's High School Acceleration Programs Are Funded Through a Variety of Sources.*
2. *Most Students Received College Credit For Accelerated Courses; Programs Reduce University Class Time*
3. *Most Acceleration Students Perform Well, But Outcomes Vary by Program Type*
4. *Acceleration Programs Provide Benefits But the Costs Are Relative Expensive*

If you have any questions, please contact Inspector General John M. Franco at 850-245-0403 or email [john.franco@fldoe.org](mailto:john.franco@fldoe.org).

Sincerely,

John L. Winn  
Commissioner

JLW/jmf/br

Attachment

**Florida Department of Education  
Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability  
Preliminary and Tentative Audit Findings and Recommendations  
March 10, 2006**

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**Accelerated Mechanisms (Four Draft Reports)**

- 1. State's High School Acceleration Programs Are Funded Through a Variety of Sources*
- 2. Most Students Receive College Credit For Accelerated Courses; Programs Reduce University Class Time*
- 3. Most Acceleration Students Perform Well, But Outcomes Vary by Program Type*
- 4. Acceleration Programs Provide Benefits But the Costs Are Relatively Expensive*

The Department of Education is committed to providing Dual Enrollment opportunities for students and recognizing credit earned through a wide variety of acceleration programs available to Florida's high school students. In general, we agree with the findings and recommendations presented in the four draft reports. We hope that these will be used to further the important discussions already taking place across the state. However, we do want to take the opportunity to clarify some information that was presented in the draft reports and to forward a proposal regarding incentive funding based on students earning postsecondary credit in all acceleration programs.

**AP is not a College-Level Course**

In each draft report, a brief description of the AP program indicates that "AP courses are designed to offer college-level instruction and are generally equivalent to college courses." However, that is not the case. The high schools offering AP courses are not accredited for offering college-level courses or granting college degrees. Additionally, high school instructors teaching AP courses are not required to meet the SACS accreditation standard for college faculty (i.e., master's plus 18 hours in the content area). Therefore, it should be specified that "AP courses are advanced high school instruction that may lead to college credit if the student earns the requisite score on a corresponding AP exam."

**Incentive Funding Should be Based on All Students Earning Postsecondary Credit**

We concur with the recommendation in the draft report *Acceleration Programs Provide Benefits But the Costs Are Relatively Expensive*, which suggests that the Legislature could alter Florida's incentive funding for acceleration programs.

Rather than the current practice of basing incentive funding on successful AP and IB exams, we suggest that there is a need to provide incentives to school districts for college credits earned by high school students in all acceleration programs, including Dual Enrollment. Using current incentive funding levels, a cost figure per accelerated credit hour earned should be determined for all school districts. A performance incentive program should be created to fund school districts based on the number of college credit hours earned by public high school students. This means that AP, IB, AICE, and Dual Enrollment would all be funded in the FEFP (which is current practice) and school districts would receive specific performance incentive funds based on all students who receive college credit through any accelerated program. This is not current practice because no incentive funds exist for Dual Enrollment even though OPPAGA data indicates that these students attend Florida public postsecondary institutions at higher rates than AP and IB students.