January 5, 2015

To: Sarah Mangelsdorf, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

From: Jocelyn Milner, Director, Academic Planning and Institutional Research
       Michelle Young, Academic Planner, APIR

Subject: Draft Policy on Credit by Departmental Exam for UAPC Discussion

Copies: University Academic Planning Council

Attachment: Policy document

We have been working with colleagues across campus to draft a policy on Credit by Departmental Exam. Currently the University has no policy governing credit by exam although it is a practice in some areas of campus. Credit by exam accounts for 200 to 300 student credit hours each year, mostly in the Department of Math and the School of Nursing. Credit by exam is fairly uncommon but there is potential for growth, and the practice could be useful to students and academic units, especially if the practice is supported by policy and protocols. In addition, a policy on credit by exam is required to align with the Board of Regent policy on transfer of credit.

We have been working on this policy for about 15 months and have circulated it widely. We have discussed the plan to charge a fee with Darrell Bazzell, Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance. We have consulted with colleagues in the Registrar’s Office, the Bursar’s Office, and Business Services/CashNet on implementation considerations. Colleagues in several academic departments, especially those that already offer credit by exam, had been consulted and have provided advice. In Fall 2014 we collected comments informally from representatives in all the school/college dean’s offices.

At this time we’d like feedback from the UAPC at an upcoming meeting prior to the next step, which would be circulating the policy to the school/college dean’s offices for formal endorsement. The policy will then come back to the UAPC for approval.

Please let either of us know if you have questions.
Overview and Context

Students may acquire knowledge, skills and competencies through experiences that are academic in nature but may not necessarily correspond to a setting in which UW-Madison awards traditional credit. Credit by department examination is one opportunity for undergraduate students to demonstrate mastery of material that is equivalent to what would be learned in a specific UW-Madison course. The course credits granted through department examination are based on a student’s demonstration that they have mastered the learning outcomes equivalent to those for the specified course. Examples of circumstances that will lead students to seek credit by examination may be: they completed preparation for advanced placement exams in high school but were unable to take the AP test; they have a placement test scores that place them in a course lower than what they think they are prepared for; they didn’t get transfer equivalency for a course but they judge that they have completed the material in a course at another university.

Offering students the opportunity to earn credit by examination has several benefits for both students and the University. Students will have a low-cost option for earning credit for skills and knowledge they already possess. They will have the opportunity to quickly move on to more challenging and enriching courses. The University will benefit by freeing up seats in courses that are in demand and by supporting timely progress to degree.
This policy does not cover transfer credit, UW System placement exams, Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), College Level Examination Program (CLEP), retroactive credits or departmental placement examinations. These mechanisms for awarding credit are covered in well established, existing policy. See Appendix B for a summary of how the various ways of earning credit are related to each other.

Students who wish to earn credit by examination should contact the relevant department. A list of courses that offer credit by exam is available at [website to be created after policy approval].

For the purposes of this policy the word “exam” or “examination” will be cover all potential methods of evaluation of student learning.

Eligibility and Limits
A student must be classified as a degree-seeking undergraduate (i.e. career = UGRD). They must be in good academic standing with no holds on their record.

Credits earned by department examination do not count toward the credit residency requirements for a bachelor’s degree.

Students may not attempt a department examination for credit for any course they are enrolled in or were previously enrolled in at UW-Madison beyond the add deadline.

Students may not take a credit by examination for a specific course more than once.

Students may not earn credit by examination for a course or course equivalent for which they have previously been awarded credit.

No student may attempt credit by examination in a course which is a prerequisite, stated or implied, for an advanced course in the same subject for which credit has already been earned.

Students must take a separate exam (or set of assessments) for each course they are seeking credit for.

The department offering the exam is responsible for determining a student’s eligibility for taking the exam. Once the student has been given permission to take the exam they will be considered eligible to receive credit regardless of circumstances that may indicate otherwise.

Students are strongly encouraged to take departmental examinations for credit prior to earning 90 degree credits (including the semester in which the 90th credit is earned) in order to avoid complications with the residence requirement.

Posting Credits
The Office of the Registrar will post credits to the student record. It will be posted in a way that is easily distinguishable from other types of credit.
The credits will be posted for specific regularly taught UW-Madison courses. (Credit by exam will not be provided for not independent study, topics courses, general or departmental credit.)

Course credit earned via examination does not carry grade points and does not factor in to the grade point average.

Course credit earned via examination does not factor in to a semester course load.

The Office of the Registrar will post credits earned through credit by exam within 10 days of receiving a completed credit by exam form from a department.

No entry will be made on a student's transcript if the attempt for credit by exam is unsuccessful; an entry will be made when he or she successfully completes the requirements for departmental examinations.

The course credits will be posted to the term that corresponds with the date the examination was completed.

Department Requirements

It is up to each department to determine which courses they offer that they want to make eligible for credit by examination. There is no requirement or expectation for credit by examination, but if a credit by examination will be offered for a course, it must follow these policy guidelines. Generally, courses that provide credit by examination will be large enrollment and will be offered as lower- or mid-level courses.

Department faculty will determine the standards, methods, and procedures for evaluation. Departments may use any evaluation method or combination of methods including:

- Written examination
- Oral examination
- Performance evaluation (practical exam)
- Examination of completed work and/or records presented and defended by the student (portfolio)
- Other methods consistent with evaluation of student learning in the corresponding regular course

The content, quality and quantity of material covered in the examination for credit must be consistent with what is covered in the specified UW-Madison course for which the exam is intended to provide credit. The method of evaluation must be similar to the standard method used in the equivalent course. (Ex. a course that carries Com B credit should include evaluation of an oral or written presentation, a dance course that had a performance as the final exam should include some type of performance evaluation.)

If a course is crosslisted, all crosslisted units will agree on an examination and select one department to administer all examinations for the course.
If the department also offers placement exams, the department must clearly state whether the examination results in credit or course placement. Such information must be clearly communicated to students.

**Approval to Offer Credit by Examination for a Course**

Before offering credit by examination for a specific course, a department must get approval to do so. The approval process will be handled through the existing course approval process. Credit by exam for a course will be proposed and approved by the subject owner (department) of the course and by any crosslisted subjects. The proposal would then be reviewed by the school or college followed by the University Curriculum Committee.

Once a course has been approved it will be listed on a master list of all courses available for credit by exam. This process will serve as the only avenue for awarding departmental credit other than by offering for-credit courses. Departments will be required to review and assess all credit by exam opportunities at least once every 3 years to determine whether the exam continues to match the content of the course. For courses that are not reviewed, approval will expire and they will be removed from the list of courses available for credit by exam. Anytime the equivalent course is changed through the course change proposal process the examination must be evaluated to make sure it is still aligned with the learning outcomes of the course.

**Administration of Exam**

Department examinations must be administered and/or supervised by a member of the faculty.

The department is responsible for validating the identity of the student prior to administering the exam, by checking the student ID.

The department is responsible for determining whether the student is eligible to take the exam. If the department administers an exam to a student it is assumed that they have verified their eligibility. Training and tools will be available to assist department faculty and staff in validating eligibility.

Departments must submit a Credit by Examination Form to the Office of the Registrar within 7 business days of scoring the exam/evaluation for all students who attempted credit by examination, even if the attempt is not successful. The Office of the Registrar will process the form and archive it with the student’s record in ImageNow. The ImageNow student record will serve as a record of all credit by exam attempts and will allow for the enforcement of the single attempt rule.

**Fees**

The fee for each exam is $75. The fee must be paid prior to attempting an examination. The fee is not refundable. The department offering the exam is responsible for verifying that the fee has been paid.

The fee is waived for Banner, FASTrack and Pell students.
The fee will be paid using the CASHNet system. The Bursar’s Office will provide support with set up and reconciliation.

The fee will be divided among the department offering the exam (60% of the fee), the Office of the Registrar (20%) and Bursar’s Office (20%).

The fee will be reviewed every 3 years by the Office of Academic Planning and Institutional Research.

See Appendix A for additional information about the rationale for charging the $75 fee.
Appendix A. Rationale for Charging a Fee for Credit by Exam

Offering credit by examination to students provides them with a low-cost, efficient means of demonstrating knowledge and earning credit toward a degree. The department that offers the exam incurs costs based on the use of resources to develop and maintain the evaluation instrument and to administer the exam. The administrative units that are involved with record keeping will also have resources costs.

Other UW System schools that offer students opportunities to earn college credit by examination or portfolio review have fees ranging from $20 to $150. The College Board’s Advanced Placement program where the fee is $89 and the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) where the cost is $80 per exam. The fee that is charged represents a small fraction of the tuition for the equivalent course.

The proposed fee of $75 is in line with these other fees and modest compared to tuition.

### UW System Institutional Prior Learning Assessment Fees
(From Spring 2014; Working Document)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UW Institution</th>
<th>PLA Departmental Exams Fees</th>
<th>PLA Portfolio Fees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colleges</td>
<td>$100 per portfolio</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eau Claire</td>
<td>$15.00 for taking this type of test. If passed, there is no charge for the first credit earned and the student must pay $7.50 for each additional credit earned. There is no fee beyond the initial $15.00 if the test is not passed.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Green Bay</td>
<td>$90.00 per departmental exam</td>
<td>$50.00 administrative fee and $50.00 per credit requested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Crosse</td>
<td>$20.00 per exam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madison</td>
<td>No fee is collected by our office. Not aware of any department charges.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Milwaukee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Oshkosh</td>
<td>$95.00 fee associated with the assessment (w/$75.00 of fee paid as stipend to assessor of portfolio).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parkside</td>
<td>$50.00 assessment fee. An additional fee of $75.00 for entering up to 10 credits on transcripts (i.e., total of $125.00) and additional $10.00 per credit for each credit over 10 (i.e., 11 or more credits).</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Platteville</td>
<td>$20.00 per credit for Math and English</td>
<td>Business – regular tuition charged for course along with $75 portfolio development fee paid at time of enrollment.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Computer Science and Speech typically require students to enroll in course (i.e. full tuition)</td>
<td>Transcript fee paid at end of course that is based on number of credits earned.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Criminal Justice and Business (typically Distance Learning) - $150/test but may vary</td>
<td>Engineering - $500 per course</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Graduate - $150/test</td>
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<tr>
<td>River Falls</td>
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<td>After completion of the Learning Counts.org portfolio course, there is a fee of $250 for 0-6 credits per subject area petitioned for.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stevens Point</td>
<td>$20.00 per application</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stout</td>
<td>$10 base fee + $10 per credit hour</td>
<td>$25 base fee + $5 per credit after the first four credits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Superior</td>
<td>$100 administrative fee plus</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$75 for each 1-3 credits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whitewater</td>
<td>$20.00 per departmental exam</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix B

### Ways of Earning Credit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course based – in residence</th>
<th>Course based – other institutions</th>
<th>Prior Learning Assessment Credit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UW-Madison Course Credit (at least 30 credits must be earned in residence to earn a UW-Madison degree)</td>
<td>Transfer Credit (no more than 72 credits from 2-year institutions may be transferred in and applied to degree requirements)</td>
<td>Third Party credit by exam (AP, IB, CLEP)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Retroactive Credits (foreign language)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Credit by Department Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prior Learning Assessment – portfolio reviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proposed policy</td>
<td>No existing policy and none proposed for UW-Madison</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Covered by existing policies