

Resolution on Changes to Pre-Matriculation Credit Policies

Reported out by the Educational Policy Committee

Date: Spring 2009

It has been decades since our pre-matriculation policies, particularly with regard to Advanced Placement, have been looked at in a comprehensive fashion. In that time, much has changed. Even in recent years, the number of students coming to the university with numerous A.P. credits has grown enormously, a result of the number of subject tests now offered by the Educational Testing Service and of the academic strength of students being admitted to the university.

The increase in the number of advanced placement credits awarded has some potential repercussions given the university's recent changed policies on advanced standing and Latin honors. Moreover, some faculty members have expressed an interest in looking at the substance of advanced placement tests, whether they really represent a college-level course, and whether they are preparing students to skip right to upper-level courses. Finally, some faculty have expressed concern that advanced placement opportunities are not available to all students and that the university's present policies on advanced placement contribute to an uneven playing field for students from less privileged backgrounds.

E.P.C. has examined several of these questions, and we present several findings in the next section, before proceeding to a series of proposals.

Findings

Increasing Numbers/Improving Scores: The number of students coming into Tufts with A.P. credits has grown significantly, even in the past few years. The number of A.P. credits granted by the university has grown 32 percent in the last five years (Table 1). Part of this stems from an increase in the number of subject tests offered by ETS. Five years ago, there were 21 such tests; last year, there were 30. Part of this is a result of the increased academic strength in our incoming first-years. Of scores submitted to the university, an ever larger percentage is in the highest ranges of 4 and 5 (Table 2).

A Modest Socio-Economic Skew to A.P.Credits: Breaking down the data by financial aid status shows a very modest skew to A.P. testing. Students in the highest aid categories submit A.P. scores and receive A.P. credit, though not quite at the rate of students who do not receive aid or who receive low or moderate levels of aid (Table 3). On average, the high aid student comes into Tufts at almost half a credit disadvantage as a result of A.P. tests.

Many of Our Peers Do Limit A.P./I.B. Credits: A survey of the A.P./I.B. policies of ten of our peer institutions shows wide variation in how A.P./I.B. is treated. Two programs (Boston College and Williams) do not give pre-matriculation credit. Williams set this policy this past year. Several schools do give credit, but limit the number of credits a student is able to receive. A few have no limits on how many A.P./I.B. credits they will accept. See the list in Table 4 for a review of the various policies.

Proposals

We offer the following four proposals, to be voted upon separately by the faculty. Should these proposals pass, they would go into effect for students entering Tufts in Fall, 2009.

1) To bring greater clarity to the *Bulletin* language on our pre-matriculation credit policies.

Rationale: The pre-matriculation credit policies laid out in the *Bulletin* are not clearly laid out. Because some of the advanced placement tests provide students the ability to move directly to upper-division courses and others provide students with actual credit, the use of the term *acceleration credit* causes some confusion (it is generally used to refer to the latter, but it sounds like it should refer to the former). E.P.C. has reworked the language in the *Bulletin* for greater clarity (see Attachment).

2) To restrict the use of advanced placement and international diploma credits in fulfilling distribution requirements so that students may use only one such credit in meeting the two course requirement in each Arts and Sciences distribution area.

Rationale: In Arts and Sciences, some students fulfill large swaths of their distribution requirements with pre-matriculation credits. This runs counter to the purpose of our distribution requirement that students take courses across our curriculum. Moreover, we find that some students have avoided the challenge of one or more distribution areas and are thus at an advantage in the competition for Latin honors. This rule change would require Arts and Sciences students to take at least one course in each distribution area at Tufts. Note that this rule change does not preclude transfer students from using credits earned at another institution for both of their distribution requirements.

3) To cap the number of pre-matriculation *credits* students may bring into Tufts at five.

Rationale: Given the explosion in A.P. test-taking, the modest socio-economic skew in the availability of advanced placement tests, and a sense of the E.P.C. faculty that the advanced placement experience cannot fully replicate the experience of a college classroom, we propose limiting the number of pre-matriculation credits that a student can bring in. This change is unlikely to have much financial impact. Though it may affect the number of students who

accelerate graduation by a full year (a very small number), it will not affect the number of students who accelerate their graduation by one term.

4) To charge each department with reviewing the advanced placement test in their area and report back to the committee any changes to the department's credit policies. If passed by the full faculty, each department must report back its policies to E.P.C. by the end of spring term, 2009. We encourage each department to investigate how their peer departments treat the A.P. test.

Rationale: With the passage of time, the tests may change, but most departments do not systematically revisit the test and its grading standards. E.P.C. asks that each department do this now so as to assure that the entire A.P. structure is up-to-date.

Change in Bulletin Copy

Below is a proposed section to replace the present section on "Advanced Placement and Acceleration Credit" (p. 37). A marked up copy of the Bulletin passages affected by these changes in policy will be available at the faculty meeting.

Pre-Matriculation Credits

Pre-matriculation credits are defined as credits earned from certain scores on Advanced Placement and SAT II examinations, scores on examinations of certain international diplomas, as well as credits earned from college courses taken prior to matriculation at Tufts. These scores and their equivalencies have been determined by the individual departments and are listed below. Pre-matriculation credits are treated as regular course credits, but are not normally applied toward the concentration. These credits may be accepted in partial satisfaction of the foundation requirements. They also may count toward one of the two courses required in each distribution area. If the credit received is equivalent to a Tufts course, the student may not take that course for additional credit toward the degree. Students do not need to take the next-level course in order to keep the pre-matriculation credit (except where stated). *Students are limited to five pre-matriculation credits toward their degree.* Credits earned prior to matriculation via Tufts summer session are not included in this limit.

Secondary school students who have taken college courses should consult the appropriate departments regarding their placement and the possible award of credits. Credit is generally awarded only for courses taken at a college with regularly enrolled college students. Some colleges offer their courses in nearby secondary schools for classes composed entirely of secondary school students; credit is not awarded for these courses. [NOTE: this paragraph comes from p. 44 and should be removed from that section.]

Table 1
Number of Advanced Placement Credits Awarded, 2004-08

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Number of A.P. Credits Given By Tufts	2453	3010	3047	3589	3248
Number of Subject Tests Offered by E.T.S.	21	25	29	30	30

Table 2
A.P. Test Scores, 2004-08

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
% of submitted tests scored 5	35	36	39	40	44
% of submitted tests scored 4/5	67	70	75	75	76

Table 3
Number of Advanced Placement Tests by Financial Aid Categories (2004-08 combined)

	<u>No Aid</u>	<u>Low/Med Aid</u>	<u>High Aid</u>
Number of Students	2342	643	778
Ave # of Test Scores Submitted	5.67	5.68	5.44
Ave # of Credits Received	3.55	3.58	3.17

Table 4
Advanced Placement Policies at Other Institutions

MINIMAL RESTRICTIONS (LISTED FROM GENEROUS TO STINGY)

Brandeis

- Accepts 4's for most A.P. tests. 5's only for Biology, Computer Science (AB), Government, German, Latin Literature, Music.

Dartmouth

- Grants credit for A.P. tests.
- Gives credits for scores of 5 in Biology, Chemistry, History (American, European), Latin, and Psychology.
- Gives credits for scores of 4 or 5 in Comp Sci, Env Studies, French (Lit/Lang), Geography, German, Italian (Lang), Physics C, Spanish (Lit/Lang), Statistics.

Tufts HERE

Yale

- Only 5s get credit in Biology, Chemistry, English Lang/Lit, Calc AB
- 4s and 5s accepted for Comp Sci AB, French, German, Art History, Latin, Calc BC, Music, Physics C, Spanish
- No credit for Arabic, Art, Chinese, Comp Sci B, Economics, Greek, Hebrew, History, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Political Science, Stats.

Penn

- A.P.'s can place students out of the language requirement, but no other general education requirements.
- "Policies remain under ongoing review, and are subject to change without notice."
- A.P.s can lead to "credits" or "waivers" (no credit, but allows students to move into advanced courses). With only one exception, 4's are not accepted for credit.
- Credit for 5s in: Art History, Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, English Language/Literature, Envi Sci, History (U.S./World), French Lang/Lit, German, Italian, Latin, Math BC, Physics B/C, Spanish Language, Statistics.
- No credit but waivers for 5s in Studio Art, Econ, Psych. No credit but waivers for 4 or 5 in languages.
- No credit of waivers for Government, Geography, Math AB.
- No cap on A.P. credits.

A.P. CREDIT CAPPED (LISTED FROM GENEROUS TO STINGY)

Emory

- 4s and 5s are accepted on all A.P. tests and receive graduation credit. Some exams are paired so that students cannot receive credit for both of them.
- There is a cap on A.P./I.B. credits of 32 semester hours (8 A.P. tests). For students coming in with more than 8 A.P. tests, Emory will grant placement out of core requirements in areas covered by exams for which credit can't be conferred.

Wellesley

- Scores of 4 and 5 for most A.P. exams.
- Number of A.P. credits capped at 8 total.
- No lab credit for A.P. No credit for majors/minors in most departments. No distribution credit.

Washington University

- No department offers credit for scores lower than 4.
- A.P. credits are capped at 15 units (120 units are required to graduate). That is the equivalent to 5 courses out of 40 required.
- A.P. scores do not count toward Core Skills, Social and Cultural Perspectives, or Distribution requirements.

Wesleyan

- 4s and 5s work for most tests, but only if completing a required follow-up course.
- Only 2 pre-matriculation credits go toward the degree, though all A.P.s are listed on the transcript. This is a recent policy.

NO CREDIT GIVEN

Boston College

- "Boston College reserves the right to reevaluate and update the following policies at any time."
- A.P. generally used to place students out of requirements, but students are not awarded credit toward graduation.
- However, if a student has taken 8 A.P. tests, they may apply for advanced standing and graduate in 3 years.
- Accepts 4's for everything but the language tests (where 3's give advanced placement) and statistics (where only a 5 gives placement).

Williams

- A.P. scores do not reduce the number of courses required for graduation and do not reduce the standard load of 4 courses per semester. A few departments offer major credits, which reduce the number of courses required to complete that major. But, as of 2008, no general credit is given toward acceleration (i.e. completion of the degree in fewer than 4 years).