Examination Credit

Credit for Prior Learning

Credit for prior learning may be earned for eligible courses approved by the District for students who satisfactorily pass an authorized assessment. Authorized assessments may include the evaluation of approved external standardized examinations, and credit by examination. Details may be found at https://smccd.edu/creditforpriorlearning/index.php. Students may demonstrate proficiency in a course eligible for Credit for Prior Learning and receive college credit through the approved alternative methods for awarding credit listed below:

- Achievement of a satisfactory score on an Advanced Placement (AP) examination
- Achievement of a satisfactory score on a high-level International Baccalaureate (IB) examination
- Achievement of a satisfactory score on the College Level Examination Program (CLEP)
- Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT)
- Satisfactory completion of an institutional examination, known as Credit by Examination, administered by the college in lieu of completion of an active course listed in the current college catalog

Determination of Eligibility for Credit for Prior Learning

- The student must be in good standing in the District
- The student must have previously earned credit or noncredit from the District or be currently registered in the District
- Current students must have an education plan on file
- The course is listed in the current SMCCCD Catalog
- The student is not currently enrolled in the course to be challenged
- Credit by Examination: The student is registered in the District and not currently enrolled in nor received credit for a more advanced course in the same subject (may be waived by department).

Credits acquired by examination do not satisfy unit load requirements for enrollment status for programs such as financial aid, athletics, veterans’ benefits, or for graduation residency requirements. Credits acquired by examination shall not be counted in determining the 12 semester hours of credit in residence required for an associate degree.

Advanced Placement Test (AP)

The California Community College System, the CSU System, and the UC System all award credit for Advanced Placement (AP) Exams. San Mateo Community College District grants credit toward its Associate degrees and CSU GE and IGETC certification patterns to students who attain scores of 3, 4, or 5 on the Advanced Placement Examinations of the College Board.

Students may earn a minimum of 3 semester units of credit for each AP exam satisfactorily passed. Access the Advanced Placement Equivalency Guide to identify how AP exam credit can be applied. See a counselor for specific information regarding AP exam placement and credit awarded. Students intending to transfer to a four-year institution should consult a counselor or the individual university regarding its AP credit policy.

To receive credit, students must submit an official AP transcript to the Admissions & Records Office at their home institution. For information about obtaining a transcript, contact the College Board. Information is available on the web at https://www.collegeboard.com.

College Level Examination Program (CLEP)

San Mateo Community College District grants credit for successful completion of certain CLEP examinations to students who attain satisfactory scores. Access the CLEP Equivalency Guide to identify how CLEP credit can be applied.

Students may earn a minimum of 3 semester units of credit for each exam satisfactorily passed. See a counselor for specific information regarding CLEP placement and credit awarded. Students intending to transfer to a four-year institution should consult a counselor or the individual university regarding its CLEP credit policy.

To receive credit, students must submit an official CLEP transcript to the Admissions & Records Office at their home institution. The University of California does not award units for CLEP. CLEP credits do not apply to IGETC requirements. For information about obtaining a transcript, contact the College Board. Information is available at www.collegeboard.com.

International Baccalaureate Examination (IB)

San Mateo Community College District may award International Baccalaureate (IB) Examination credit toward the Associate degree, or for CSU GE or IGETC transfer certification, to students who attain an appropriate score on Higher Level exams. Access the IB Equivalency Guide to identify how IB exam credit can be applied.

See a counselor for specific information regarding IB exam placement and credit awarded. Students intending to transfer to a four-year institution should consult a counselor or the individual university regarding its IB credit policy for major course work. To receive credit, students must submit an official IB transcript to the Admissions & Records Office at their home institution. For information about obtaining a transcript, contact the International Baccalaureate. Information is available at https://www.ibo.org/
Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT)
San Mateo Community College District may award three semester units in CSU GE Breadth Subarea C2 utilizing the American Council on Education (ACE) recommendations.

If you took a DLPT exam, please request your official Official Defense Language Institute Foreign Language (DLIFLC) Transcripts sent to the Admissions and Records Office at your SMCCCD college.

NOTE: A Official Joint Services Transcripts (JST), Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) DLPT Examinee Results or DA Form 330 Language Proficiency Questionnaire may also be accepted as official documentation


Credit by Examination (CBE)
A currently enrolled student in good standing may be permitted to take a test for credit in lieu of a course, because of previous training or instruction. By completing an examination approved by the faculty of the appropriate division, credit will be recorded. Testing is not allowed for a course for which credit has previously been granted or if credit has been earned in a more advanced course in the same sequence. Credit by Examination may not be used in order to improve a grade already received for a course. A maximum of 12.0 units toward an Associate Degree or 6 units toward a certificate may be earned through Credit by Examination, however, it may not be counted in determining the 12.0 semester units in residence. The student’s academic record shall be annotated to reflect that credit was earned by examination. A student may complete any course through Credit by Examination procedures only once.

To pursue the Credit by Examination option, obtain a Credit by Examination form from Admissions and Records. Admissions and Records approves eligibility. The student must submit the approved form to the division offering the course. If the course is available using the Credit by Examination option, a faculty member will arrange for the examination(s) to be administered and graded. All grades issued upon completion of Credit by Examination will be used in the calculation of the student’s grade point average and for determining scholarship awards.