

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
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FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 109 (Senators Frosh and Madaleno)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

**Public Institutions of Higher Education - Course Credit - Advanced Placement
and International Baccalaureate Examinations**

This bill requires a public institution of higher education that grants course credit for Advanced Placement (AP) examinations to grant comparable course credit for standard and higher level International Baccalaureate (IB) examinations.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Public institutions of higher education, including Baltimore City Community College (BCCC), can make any required changes to their course credit policies using existing resources.

Local Effect: Community colleges can make any required changes to their course credit policies using existing resources.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Each public institution of higher education develops its own policies on granting course credit for AP and IB examinations.

Background: AP courses and IB Diploma Programme are rigorous curriculums with external assessments which are offered at many Maryland high schools. The AP curriculum is sponsored by the College Board and the IB Diploma Programme is sponsored by the International Baccalaureate. However, the structures of the programs

are different. AP courses are designed as a collection of 33 stand-alone courses while the IB Diploma Programme is a two-year college preparation program.

Students who choose to take AP courses may take as many or as few of the courses as their school offers and allows, and the College Board allows a student to take an AP exam regardless of participation in its respective course. AP exams are scaled on a five-point scale with a five being the highest score. Many colleges and universities offer credit to students who receive at least a three or four on the AP exam. However, the policies on the score required to receive credit vary widely between institutions and even between particular exams. In addition, many institutions have separate criteria for awarding credit and for course placement. For example, a student may receive credit for an AP exam score but still be required to complete the course at the institution if the course is required for the student's major.

IB Diploma Programme students must take six courses at either a standard or high level, from at least five different subject areas. At least three courses must be taken at the high level, which requires at least 240 hours of instruction, as opposed to the 150 hours required for the standard level. In addition, to complete the diploma, a student must complete an extended essay, a course called "theory of knowledge," and activities outside of the classroom which meet standards of creativity, action, and service. Finally, at least three courses must be taken at the high level.

At the end of the program, IB students take written assessments, which are marked by external examiners. Throughout the program students also complete assessment tasks at the school, which are either initially marked by teachers and then moderated by external moderators or sent directly to external examiners. Exams for individual courses are scored on a seven-point scale with a seven being the highest score. According to a survey of institutions in Maryland, institutions in the State that grant credit for IB exams require the student receive at least a four, five, or six.

IB diplomas are awarded to students who gain at least 24 points in their course exams, and meet certain other minimum levels of performance across the whole program. Approximately 1% of students earn 45 points, which is the maximum possible. A few colleges and universities in the United States and many prestigious foreign institutions set a minimum IB diploma score for admission.

Students who receive credit for AP or IB exams may be able to complete graduation requirements in less than the normal four years, which is a cost savings for the student. Alternatively a student with AP or IB credit may choose to take a lighter course load or complete a double major.

In 2010, Virginia enacted legislation that requires each public institution of higher education's policies for granting course credit for standard and higher level IB course to be comparable to its policies for granting course credit for AP course.

The University System of Maryland (USM), Morgan State University, and BCCC report that their institutions already offer credit for AP and IB exams. USM further reports that the bill codifies current practice at USM institutions.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Baltimore City Community College, Morgan State University, University System of Maryland, International Baccalaureate, College Board, Department of Legislative Services

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