
Higher Education Committee

ESB 5917

Brief Description: Requiring a systemwide credit policy regarding international baccalaureate and Cambridge international exams.

Sponsors: Senators Mullet, Palumbo, Wilson, Frockt, Rolfes and Liias.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill

- Requires public higher education institutions to establish a coordinated, evidence-based policy for granting undergraduate college credit to students who earn a minimum score of four on standard-level International Baccalaureate examinations or a minimum score of E on Cambridge International examinations.
- Requires the credit policy to be posted on campus web sites for the 2018 fall academic term.

Hearing Date: 2/21/18

Staff: Megan Mulvihill (786-7304).

Background:

High school students can often earn college credit by demonstrating competency in a subject by taking an examination. Students who score well on their examinations may earn college credit or have the option to opt-out of an introductory college course. Examples of college preparatory programs with examinations that are offered to high school students include Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and Cambridge International.

International Baccalaureate.

The IB Diploma Programme is a two-year university preparation program for students age 16 through age 19. Students in the Diploma Programme participate in a compulsory core that includes a Theory of Knowledge class, an extended essay, and a creativity, activity service, and take classes in six subject groups: language and literature, language acquisition, individuals and societies, sciences, math, and the arts. The IB courses are offered at either standard level (SL) or

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higher level (HL). The HL courses are comprised of 240 teaching hours whereas SL courses are 150 teaching hours. Students are required to take at least three courses at higher level, but no more than four. Students must pass an examination at the end of each course. The scoring for these examinations is a range of one to seven points. Students earn an IB diploma if they meet the minimum requirements of the program, including completing the core program and earning at least 24 points across the six subject examinations with a minimum score of three in at least four subjects. However, not all students seek to earn an IB diploma. Many students take individual IB classes. There are 23 high schools in Washington that offer the IB Diploma Programme, and according to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction's (OSPI) Washington State Report Card, for the 2015-16 academic year there were 8,223 students taking IB courses.

Cambridge International.

Cambridge International Advanced are programs for students age 16 through age 19. Programs are offered in 55 different subjects in either AS or A level. Cambridge International AS is typically a one-year program, while Cambridge International A level is two-years. The examinations at the end of a course are graded on a scale of A* through E. According to the OSPI, in the 2015-16 academic year there were 1,070 students enrolled in Cambridge International courses.

Each institution of higher education has its own policy for how to award credit for IB and Cambridge International examinations. Some of the institutions only award college credit for higher level IB courses or Cambridge International A levels, and some provide more credits for students who earned the IB diploma.

Advanced Placement Credit Policy.

During the 2017 Legislative Session, Engrossed Senate Bill 5234 was enacted and requires the institutions of higher education to establish a coordinated, evidence-based policy for granting undergraduate college credits to students who earn minimum scores of three on AP examinations. The institutions are required to post the policy on campus web sites effective for the 2017 fall academic term and conduct reviews of the policy and report noncompliance in annual reports to the Legislature beginning November 1, 2019.

Summary of Bill:

The public institutions of higher education are required to establish a coordinated, evidence-based policy for granting as many undergraduate college credits as possible and practical to students who have earned a minimum score of four on standard-level IB examinations or a minimum score of E on Cambridge International examinations. The credit policy for all IB examinations and Cambridge International examinations must be posted on campus web sites effective for the 2018 fall academic term. The institutions of higher education are required to conduct biennial reviews of their IB and Cambridge International credit policy and report any noncompliance to the Legislature annually beginning November 1, 2020.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.