

Guidance for World Language Credit

Ohio's Credit Flexibility Plan (Adopted March, 2009 by the State Board of Education)

Background

Senate Bill 311 (the Ohio Core legislation) raised the graduation requirements for high school students in the hope that more students would be ready to meet the demands of our global and technological age. It included among its several provisions a requirement that by March 31, 2009, the State Board of Education adopt a plan that enables “students to earn units of high school credit based on a demonstration of subject area competency, instead of or in combination with completing hours of classroom instruction.” In September, 2010, districts were to have in place a plan to award credit by proficiency.

The purposes behind this provision of the law are to allow students to:

- Show what they know and that they are ready to move on to higher-order content; and
- Learn subject matter or earn course credit in ways not limited solely to seat time or the walls of a school building.

Students may earn credits by:

- Completing coursework;
- Testing out of or demonstrating mastery of course content; or
- Pursuing one or more “educational options” (e.g., distance learning, educational travel, independent study, an internship, music, arts, after-school/tutorial program, community service or other engagement projects and sports).

The overall effect is to increase student engagement and sense of ownership of learning to reduce the dropout rate, accelerate learning and cultivate habits of mind essential for success in careers, post-secondary education and lifelong learning.

Why this change? “Because the structure of Carnegie credit is tied to seat time, seat time serves as a proxy measure for learning. Though useful for management purposes (such as scheduling students and staff), the utility of seat time as an accurate measure of student learning is limited.”

Credit flexibility is intended to motivate and increase student learning by allowing:

- Access to more learning resources, especially real-world experiences;
- Customization around individual student needs; and
- Use of multiple measures of learning, especially those where students demonstrate what they know and can do, apply the learning or document performance.

Ohio Provisions

Five provisions currently exist in Ohio law. Each operates as an exemption, rather than an alternative pathway, thus serving relatively few students earning high school credit (less than 5% of all high school credits earned).

Code	Description of the Provision
ORC §3313.603	Core subjects delivered through integrated academic and career technical instruction can be used to meet graduation credit requirements.
OAC §§3301-35-01; 3301-35-06	Alternative learning formats based on student need and outlined in an educational plan may be awarded credit for locally determined performance objectives in a manner determined by local policy.
OAC §3301-35-06	Any district or school can request a waiver for an innovative pilot program to be exempted from specific laws or rules.
ORC §3313.603	A student may graduate without meeting the core requirements by a) execution of an alternative plan, or b) by successfully completing a competency-based instructional program administered by the dropout prevention and recovery program which has received a waiver from the department of education.
ORC §3313.613 OAC §3301-44-07	Students must be awarded high school credit for college credit.

How Can Educators Help Students Earn Credit?

- Schools (Teachers, curriculum directors, administrators) and students pre-identify and agree on the learning outcomes and measures of success;
- Teachers use a multi-disciplinary team, a professional panel or a performance-based assessment to determine what learning has occurred;
- Credits earned through this alternative means will be reflected on students' high school transcripts, like any other class; and
- Local boards of education will adopt local policy for flexible credit and communicate this provision annually to parents and students.

Existing Language Assessments

Test	Grades or Ages	Languages Available	Skills Measures
Student Oral Proficiency Assessment (SOPA) CAL	Grades 2-8	French, German, Japanese, Spanish	Listening, oral fluency, grammar, vocabulary Scored by classroom teacher who has been trained to rate samples
National Online Early Language Learning Assessment (NOELLA) CASLS	Grades 3-6	Chinese, French, Japanese, Korean, and Spanish	Web-based reading, writing, speaking, and listening Textbook independent Available free of charge
STAndards-based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP) CASLS and Avant Assessment	Grades 7-16	Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Spanish Arabic, Hebrew, Hindi, Persian, Swahili, Turkish, Urdu, and Yoruba in development and available for piloting	Novice-Low to Intermediate-Mid presentational speaking, reading, presentational writing (Listening and contextualized grammar in development, 20011)
The Ohio State University's Collaborative Articulation and Assessment Project (CAAP) Early Assessment Measures	Grades 9-12 with three years of language (two years for Chinese)	French, German, Spanish Chinese in development (2011)	Listening, speaking, reading, writing
College Board Advanced Placement (AP)	Grades 7-12	Chinese, French, German, Latin, Japanese, Spanish (Russian in development) Latin	Listening, speaking, reading, writing Reading, writing

ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI)	Ages 14 through adult	50 languages tested	Speaking
ACTFL Writing Proficiency Test (WPT)	Ages 14 through adult	50 languages tested	Writing
Scholastic Achievement Tests SAT II	Ages 13 through adult	Chinese, Korean, French, Latin, German, Modern Hebrew, Italian, Spanish, Japanese.	Some tests assess reading only (Italian, Latin, and Modern Hebrew), others assess reading and listening (Chinese, Japanese, and Korean), while others appear in both reading only and reading and listening modes (French, German, and Spanish).
Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SCPI)	Best for adults	ASL	Comprehension and production. Focus on form and function. Form focuses on (1) vocabulary knowledge, (2) production of signing, (3) fluency, (4) grammar, and (5) comprehension. On the functional side, the pragmatic/functional use of signing for work and social communication is assessed.

Please download the document entitled “Supporting Data--Proficiency and Course Credit” from the ODE Credit Flexibility page (www.education.ohio.gov) for guidance on how to award credit based on results.

Credit Flexibility and Language Learning

For each scenario, tell how best to award credit for proficiency by considering the following:

Who will be involved in the pre-identification of learning outcomes and measures of success?	How will the student demonstrate what s/he knows and can do, apply the learning or document performance?	Which existing assessment(s), if applicable, and performance tasks will be used to measure success?	What scoring criteria will be used to measure performance/proficiency (for locally designed tasks and assessments only) ?	What score/rating does the student need to obtain to earn ___ credit(s)?
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Scenario One: Maribel is a heritage speaker of Spanish who grew up in Ohio and wants credit for her home language. (Hint: determine if she has both oracy AND literacy skills.)

Scenario Two: Boris is a recent immigrant from Russia in your high school ESL program. He is interested in having his language skills assessed to earn credit, but you don't have a Russian program at your school.

Scenario Three: You have a standards-based, content-enriched K-8 German program in your school and want to award students credit for their learning prior to high school.

Scenario Four: Jon Colbert is a freshman taking French 1. He will be in France next year living with his grandparents and attending school in France. He wants to know if, upon his return, he will have enough credits to earn an honors diploma (three years of one language or two years of two languages).

Scenario Five: Lili is an avid, unconventional language learner. She heard Chinese as a child when her grandparents were living, went to Chinese Camp OFLA for a week each summer from grades four through six, downloads Chinese language podcasts, and taught herself to read and write characters through online tutorials and authentic materials. During her junior year, she goes to study in China for the summer.

Scenario Six: Hussein came to Ohio in middle school. He is the National Honor Society president and, as part of his service requirement, volunteers as a translator at the Toledo Medical Clinic. He wants to attend the University of Michigan Arabic Language Flagship as a premed student and may wish to work for Doctors without Borders. Help him earn credit.

Scenario Seven: Mary Lynn has been home schooled by her two, highly educated parents since she was a baby. They used *Baby Einstein* videos to introduce her to ASL, and hired a babysitter fluent in ASL to watch her each weekend and care for her each summer. In her sophomore year, the family moved to your town. She wants credit for her proficiency in ASL.

Scenario Eight: The director of your local heritage school (there are weekend schools around Ohio for Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Somali, German, and Arabic heritage learners) reads about the Credit Flexibility Plan for Ohio in the newspaper and contacts the superintendent in your district about getting his students credit for their many years of learning through their home language.

Local Decisions to Ponder

- What specific number of credits do we give for demonstrated proficiency (e.g., Novice-High = ____ high school credits)?

The *Supporting Data: Proficiency and Course Credit* PFD and the *Language Proficiency* PDF on the ODE Web site provide guidance on how much credit to award based on demonstrated proficiency (www.education.ohio.gov and enter “credit flexibility guidance” in the search box).

In addition, if credit is being awarded for a commonly taught language, look at the assessments that already exist for a comparable commonly taught language. See if performance tasks (not discrete grammar or vocabulary items) align with the measures you ask credit flex students to use to demonstrate proficiency. If students score well, award the same number of credits as for traditional students. For example, if you have a series of performance tasks for Spanish III students in your traditional course scored by rubrics and you design comparable tasks for students seeking credit for Italian, award the students three credits if they demonstrate comparable proficiency to the Spanish III students.

- Do you have a mechanism to award partial credit (e.g., ½ unit)?

You may have students who demonstrate adequate proficiency in listening and speaking, but who struggle with reading and writing. Does your credit flex plan offer partial credit for oracy skills? If so, you would be sending a message that these skills are valued and provide a foundation for literacy skills.

- Is there an individualized plan in place to encourage students to keep learning?

Much like playing an instrument or participating in a sport, language proficiency may atrophy without use. Encourage all students to keep their language skills alive by:

- Setting their Internet browser to come up in the language of study (add .fr, .es, .cn, .de, etc. to the end of the web address) and skimming and scanning the site;
 - Listening to radio or TV broadcasts in the target language online;
 - Watching DVDs and enabling the target language soundtrack;
 - Social networking with speakers of the target language; or
 - Reading magazines, newspapers, or books (e.g., children’s or adolescent literature) in the target language.
- Who pays the costs associated with using a standardized test of proficiency or for a non-traditional learning opportunity (e.g., online course, community-based program)?

Please consult the financial guidance documents on the credit flexibility guidance page of the ODE Web site (www.education.ohio.gov) for detailed information.