

# Credit Flexibility—A Pathway to Graduation: Test-Out Development and Implementation Web Conference Summary

Tuesday, March 29, 2011  
1:30–2:30 p.m. EST

## Opening Remarks

Tom Rutan, associate director of Curriculum and Instruction with the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), provided opening remarks. This was the first Web conference in a three-part series, co-hosted by ODE and the Great Lakes East Comprehensive Center, related to the implementation of the credit flexibility policy. A set of [guidance documents](#), currently posted on ODE's website, can support schools and districts as they move forward with their own policy development and implementation. This Web conference focused on test-out development and implementation and allowed participants the opportunity to hear from staff at ODE as well as guest experts from the field with backgrounds in World Language and Physical Education.

## Test-Out Considerations

Districts are required to have test-out options and students may earn credits through any of the following (or a combination of):

- Completion of traditional courses
- *Testing out* or otherwise demonstrating mastery of the course content
- Pursuit of one or more “educational options”

Key questions to consider regarding test-out policies include:

- What are the knowledge and skills expected from the course?
- To what extent does the test measure:
  - content covered in the course
  - depth and breadth of knowledge and skills expected from the course
- Do the test questions proportionately match the content covered?
- How many measures are needed to reflect the scope, depth and breadth of the course?
  - When should the assessments be taken?
  - What types of assessments should they be?
- How will the grade for the test-out be determined?

## Advanced Placement (AP) Considerations

- *Can students use an Advanced Placement (AP) exam to test out of a class?*
  - Yes. *If* a score of 3, 4 or 5 is earned, it can be entered on the student transcript as an AP course.
  - The test must be administered in *May* when all other AP exams are given nationwide.
  - The results of the test will not be made available until July.
  - The school must still determine the “grade” earned.
  - If a college accepts AP test scores as a replacement for college courses, it may count as dual credit.

## Questions and Answers

**Q:** *What's the difficulty level of the language being considered for Credit Flexibility?*

**A:** All difficulty levels are available to students through credit flexibility – there is no restriction. The languages that most students traditionally take in the classroom (e.g. Spanish or French) are considered Level 1 difficulty languages. Schools that offer languages such as Arabic, Mandarin Chinese, Farsi or Hindi fall in the Level 3 or 4 difficulty range and will require different assessment considerations.

**Q:** *What is the specific number of credits that a district can award for different levels of demonstrated proficiency?*

**A:** This is a local decision under the policy requirements outlined in Senate Bill 311. ODE cannot state how many credits should be awarded based on varying levels of proficiency.

**Q:** *If a student is taking a language course where there is no school- or district-based teacher in that language, who will administer and grade the assessment?*

**A:** Schools and districts are encouraged to contact local universities or colleges to identify someone who teaches or speaks that language that is qualified to help assess that student's proficiency.

**Q:** *Is there a deadline to request the test-out option?*

**A:** In regard to a deadline, schools are encouraged to set reasonable deadlines by working with students and parents to establish deadlines for both the fall and spring semesters. Setting a January deadline for the fall semester is a bit unreasonable; however, it is understood that for scheduling purposes and staff allocations deadlines will likely need to be set.

**Q:** *Can a pass/fail option be instituted with Credit Flexibility?*

**A:** Schools and districts should approach pass/fail in the same way for Credit Flexibility that they would approach it for traditional classroom courses. If it's available for the traditional students, it ought to be available for the Credit Flexibility students and, if not, then it probably shouldn't be unless there is a unique situation.

**Q:** *Can you use Credit Flexibility for students with medical excuses or medical issues?*

**A:** Accommodations for students with medical issues should be made the same way as they are in regard to a traditional classroom course. If they would need modifications or some other assistance provided for that proficiency option, a school or district should provide that modification and deal with that on an individual basis. If they have an IEP, the accommodations set forth in the IEP should be followed, whether it is for the test-out option or any other Credit Flexibility option.