

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** June 21, 2012

**TO:** Deans, Directors, Department Heads, and Advisors

**FROM:** George Gehrels, Chair, Undergraduate Council (UGC)  
Celeste F. Pardee, Associate, Curricular Affairs

**RE: Credit-by-Exam Policy Modifications**

International students who are fluent in languages other than English may now earn credit by taking a department exam and demonstrating their proficiency in those languages; the restriction on earning credit for one's native language has been removed. The request to remove this restriction for bilingual or multilingual international students was initiated by the College of Humanities in February 2012. The proposal was approved by Undergraduate Council on 3/20/12 and by the Faculty Senate on 5/7/12. Effective in Summer/Fall 2012, this exam option is available to all undergraduates, regardless of catalog year.

**Modification to "Special Examination for Credit or Grade,"** <http://catalog.arizona.edu/2012-13/policies/profexam.htm>:

### *Limitations*

*The credit so earned may not duplicate units already presented for admission to the University. Nor may the credit be in a course which is equivalent to, or more elementary than, another course in which the student is enrolled or for which the student has already received credit. The head of the examining department has the responsibility of determining the application of this limitation in each student's case. ~~No credit may be earned by this type of examination for beginning or intermediate language courses in the native language of the applicant.~~*

**Modification to "Second Language Proficiency/Competency Examinations Policy:"**

*It is possible for students to satisfy [second language requirements](#) in whole or in part by passing a non-credit proficiency/competency examination at the two- or four-semester level. Passing the proficiency examination at the required level in a foreign language fulfills the language requirement. Passing a course for which the required level is prerequisite also establishes proficiency in that language. Credit may not be earned merely by passing the proficiency/competency examination. ~~International students will be allowed credit by transfer in their native language only for those courses taken during the years equivalent to the United States college years.~~*

### **Rationale for removing the restriction:**

- Credit policies should not be based on "native language" status to deny the opportunity to earn credit and/or grade by examination or credit by transfer. This is outdated terminology.
- Transfer credit is **only available** for courses "taken during the years equivalent to the United States college years," regardless of whether the course in question is a language; therefore, the statement on transfer credit is unnecessary.
- There is no clear definition of a "native speaker," making the former policy difficult to enforce. "Heritage learners," who have a family or community connection to a language, may have varying levels of proficiency. It is impossible to draw a line between "native" and "non-native" heritage learners. On the other hand, students who have lived as expatriates in another country may have "native" competency in the language of that country. By virtue of their U.S. citizenship and "native" English ability, however, they may be able to "fly under the radar" and be granted credit by examination in that language. The same could be true of bilingual speakers who grew up in the U.S. and are perceived as speaking "native" English.

- The former policy discriminated against students who are bilingual or multilingual from birth, and against international students who learned English as a second language. Despite being proficient in two or more languages, these students were not allowed to earn credit with a department exam for demonstrating their proficiency in a language.
- The former policy was inconsistent, as students could earn credit for beginning and intermediate knowledge in their “native” language via AP, IB, or CLEP.

**Management of the Policy:**

Departments that offer special examinations for credit or grade for languages no longer need to determine a student’s “native language” status before offering the student a department exam. All international students are eligible to earn credit by special examination for any languages in which they are proficient.

Questions about the modifications to Credit-by-Exam Policies may be addressed to Celeste Pardee, Curriculum Associate, at 621-5375, or at [cpardee@u.arizona.edu](mailto:cpardee@u.arizona.edu).