

TO: Lawrence Williams, Chair  
Undergraduate Committee

APPROVED OCT 30 2013  
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FROM: Richard Scamell  
Academic Policies and Procedures Subcommittee

SUBJECT: UC 12342 13F: Proposal for Arabic Course Placement With Appropriate  
Demonstrated Proficiency in Various Placement Tests in Arabic

DATE: October 23, 2013

The Academic Policies and Procedures Committee met on Wednesday, October 9 to consider a proposal to award course credit for students who demonstrate language proficiency on various placement tests in the Arabic Language. Participating in consideration of this proposal were committee members Christina Gola, William Munson, Richard Scamell, Shishir Shah, Lesley Sisk, and Stephen Soutullo. Emran El-Badawi, Director of the Arab Studies Program, and Patrick Daniel, Executive Director, Learning and Assessment Services, attended the meeting as guests.

**Background Information**

The goal of the proposed Arabic Credit by Examination program is to facilitate placement of students in University of Houston Arabic language courses. The standards for placement and credit given were set by Professor Emran El-Badawi in consultation with Patrick Daniel. These standards, including the number of credits given when a student places in any level between ARAB 1501 and ARAB 3302, conform with other established Credit by Examination programs at University of Houston (e.g., German, French, Spanish and Vietnamese).

As shown in Table 1, the Arabic Credit by Exam program contains three options by which students may earn Arabic test score credit.

1. Their performance on the Arabic placement/credit exam offered at the University of Houston. The assessment used will be the American Council on The Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Arabic test. This test means that students who have proficiency in a language have the opportunity to be awarded college credit for that competency, whether they learned the language in a classroom or non-classroom setting. Credit is available for proficiency in more than 50 languages through the ACTFL program.
2. Their performance on the Arabic language Advanced Placement exam (AP) while in high school.
3. Successful Arabic coursework completion in the International Baccalaureate (IB) Program while in high school.

Also shown in Table 1 are the three ways in which students may use credits earned in the Arabic Credit by Exam program.

1. Toward their college language requirement--typically six hours at the sophomore level (ARAB 2301 and ARAB 2302 ).
2. Toward the language requirements of degree programs, including the Minor in Arab Studies and the BA Degree in World Cultures and Literatures: Middle Eastern Studies Concentration.
3. Toward credit hour requirements for their degree programs as applicable.

**Table 1**  
**Conversion Table For Test Scores, UH Course Credit and UH Course Placement**

ACTFL Level (1-10)	IB Level (1-7)	AP Level (1-5)	ACTFL Recommendation	UH Course Credit	Placement
Written: 1-2 Oral: 1				No credit	ARAB 1501
Written: 3 Oral: 2	Standard Level 4 Plus Diploma		3 hrs. lower division	ARAB 1501 (5 credits)	ARAB 1502
Written: 4 Oral: 3	Standard Level 5 Plus Diploma Or High Level 4	3	3 hrs. lower division	ARAB 1501, 1502 (10 credits)	ARAB 2301
Written: 5 Oral: 4	Standard Level 6 Plus Diploma Or High Level 5	4	6 hrs. lower division	ARAB 1(1501, 1502, 2301 (13 credits)	ARAB 2302
Written: 6-7 Oral: 5	Standard Level 7 Plus Diploma Or High Level 6/7	5	6 hrs. lower division and 1 hr upper division	ARAB 1501, 1502, 2301, 2302 (13 credits capped)*	ARAB 3301
Written: 8-9 Oral: 6-7			6 hrs. lower division and 8 hrs upper division	ARAB 1501, 1502, 2301, 2302, 3301 (13 credits capped)*	ARAB 3302
Written: 10 Oral: 8-10			6 hrs. lower division and 8 hrs upper division	ARAB 1501, 1502, 2301, 2302, 3301, 3302 (13 credits capped)*	

During discussion of UC 12342 13F with the Committee, the concern was expressed that a student with a very high ACTFL score might qualify for course credit that exceeds that offered in other languages. In light of this concern a cap of 13 credit hours has been established (i.e., students whose placement is in ARAB 2302 will only receive a total of 13 credit hours). It is expected, however, that most students will end up being placed in ARAB 2302 or below. Thus the need to cap the credit hours earned at 13 is expected to be rare.

The proposed Arabic Credit by Examination program encourages the retention and graduation of students who wish to study Arabic, because it affords them the possibility of getting credit for prior knowledge of Arabic. In other words students can complete the Arabic language college or degree requirements faster and more efficiently. In addition, the proposed exam will also help new degree programs grow – especially the Minor in Arab Studies and the Middle East concentration of the BA in World Cultures and Literatures.

**Recommendation**

The Committee unanimously recommends approval of UC 12342 13F as revised.

\* Reflects a modification made to UC 12342 13F.