



Understanding College Credit

This document is provided as a first step in understanding how IB and AP scores can help a student earn college credit and what that really means.

It is important to note that ***there is no uniform standard*** for universities or colleges on college credit and it is up to the student to understand the policies of a particular college of interest.

What follows is a generic guide to understanding how college credit works.

What is Credit?

Step 1: Understanding what “credit” means

Step 2: Graduation credit requirements

Understanding how college works - pre-requisite classes

Understanding degree requirements:

IB Courses and College Credit

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Example of how this all works

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE COST OF TUITION WILL GO UP AS SOON AS YOU HAVE 64 CREDITS ON YOUR TRANSCRIPT!

Using all the available information, find what your credit gets you:

Placement Tests: Another way to move ahead

RESEARCH

What is Credit?

Step 1: Understanding what “credit” means

At large universities, each course is assigned a number of credit hours. The credit hours roughly translate to how much active class time (time in class) per week can be expected with a class.

In general, most college courses are four (4) credits. It is the expectation that a student carry a 16 credit load each semester. This is equivalent to four 4 credit classes.

Step 2: Graduation credit requirements

Using the information above, a student usually takes 16 credits per semester to get to approximately 128 credits to graduate.

The table below illustrates this point.

Year	Semester 1	Semester 2	Total credits
First year	16 credits	16 credits	32 credits
Second year	16 credits	16 credits	64 credits
Third year	16 credits	16 credits	96 credits
Fourth year	16 credits	16 credits	128 credits

For most large universities, to graduate a student must have successfully complete both 128 CREDITS as well as taken and passed **ALL DEGREE REQUIREMENT COURSES**.

***** Each degree (or declared major) has different requirements! **You must do the research to see what the requirements are for your potential declared major.**

Understanding how college works - pre-requisite classes

In general for large universities, classes that are for first-year students begin with 100, second-year students with 200, and so on. This lets you understand the level of the coursework.

In general, to take a 300 or 400 level course, you have to have completed and passed 100 and 200 level courses.

Understanding degree requirements:

You will need to really dig around each college website to see the required courses for a particular major. Here are two samples of what you are looking for from the University of Michigan and Michigan State University.

[Biology Major Requirements](#)

[Business Major Requirements](#)

AP/IB Courses and College Credit

The next step is to take a look at individual universities and their college credit.

Some general guidelines:

1. Larger universities generally only give credit for IB HL exams. In general, students must score a 5 (out of 7) to get credit.
2. State universities in Illinois, California, Colorado, Florida and Texas will give up to 32 credits for earning the IB diploma
3. Smaller colleges - such as Alma - will automatically give 32 credits for earning the IB Diploma.
4. Credit for AP exams are given individually for each exam taken. In general, students must score a 4 or 5 (out of 5) to get credit.

Samples of IB credit

[Alma College](#)

[Michigan State](#)

[Michigan Tech](#)

[University of Illinois](#) - note that credit is giving for SL courses

[University of Michigan](#)

[University of Texas at Dallas](#)

[Wayne State University](#)

Samples of AP credit

[Alma College](#)

[Michigan State](#)

[Michigan Tech](#)

[University of Illinois](#)

[University of Michigan](#)

[University of Texas at Dallas](#)

[Wayne State University](#)

How to understand the charts

First, look for the score for HL (in general) or AP. Next look to see if the college identifies either course equivalents or course placement. This lets you know which course your credits allow you to “pass” out of and then are eligible to take the next level of course. Each chart will be different. You will need to take your time with this.

Example of how this all works: IB

Sarah Spartan is potentially looking at Michigan State University and is considering a Business Major. Sarah is taking Biology HL, Economics HL and Lit HL. She scored a 6 on all of these exams.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY				
International Baccalaureate Program Equivalencies				
Note: MSU recognizes subjects taken at the higher level (HL). This table reflects HL subject equivalencies.				
IB Subject	Score	Credit or Waive	MSU Equivalent	Adviser
Biology*	7, 6, or 5	8 credits	BS 161, 162, GCU, and waive BS 171, 172	ISB
Business and Management	7, 6, or 5	No credit		
Business and Organization	7, 6, or 5	No credit		
Chemistry*	7 or 6	8 credits	CEM 151, 152, 161	ISP
	5	5 credits	CEM 141, 161	ISP
Computer Science	7, 6, or 5	3 credits	CSE GCU	
Design Technology	7, 6, or 5	3 credits	EGR GCU	
Economics*	7 or 6	6 credits	EC 201, 202	ISS
	5	Waive course (no credit)	Waive EC 201, 202	
Economic Policy	7, 6, or 5	1.5 credits	EC GCU	
English A - Language & Literature	7 or 6	8 credits	ENG GCU	
	5	4 credits	ENG GCU	
English A - Literature	7 or 6	8 credits	WRA 101 (effective FS16) (Tier I requirement)/ GCU	
	5	4 Credits	WRA 101 (effective FS16)	

Using the chart, this is what Sarah's IB scores indicate:

Exam	Credits	MSU Equivalent
Biology HL - Score 6	8	BS 161, 162, GCU and waive BS 171, 172 then ISB??
Economics HL - Score 6	6	Econ 201 and 202
Lit HL - Score 6	8	WRA 101 (Tier I requirement)/ GCU
Total Credits	22	

With 22 total credits, you will be walking on campus as though you are halfway through your second semester of year 1.

Example of how this all works: AP

Sarah Spartan is potentially looking at Michigan State University and is considering a Business Major. Sarah is taking AP Biology, AP Economics - Micro and AP Literature & Comp. She scored a 4 on all of these exams.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY				
College Board Advanced Placement Program Equivalencies				
AP Subject	Score	Credits	MSU Course	Adviser
Biology* Exam 20	5 or 4	8 credits	BS 161, 162 & Waive BS 171, 172, GCU	Or, ISB 200-level course
	3	No credit		
	2 or 1	No credit		
Economics* - Micro Exam 34	5 or 4	3 credits	EC 201	Or, ISS 200-level course
	3	0 credit	Waive EC 201	
	2 or 1	No credit		
English* Language & Composition Exam 36 and/or Literature & Composition Exam 37	5	4 credits	WRA 101	Or, with Literature = ENG 210(3)
	4	4 credits	WRA 101	Or, with Literature = ENG GCU(3)
	3	0 credit	Waive WRA 101	
	2 or 1	No credit		
NOTE:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If BOTH English composition exams are taken and a score of 5 is posted, WRA 101 + ENG 210 will be posted • If BOTH English composition exams are taken and a score of 4 is posted, WRA 101 + ENG gcu (3 crs.) will be posted • If BOTH English composition exams are taken and a score of 5 and 4 is posted, WRA 101 + ENG 210 (3 crs.) will be posted • An override process takes place by the Registrar's Office to place "NR" (not a repeat) into the system to allow credit for both WRA 101 and AL 192H • For Non-History Majors: If credit is earned for WRA 101 and HST 202/203, then HST 203 becomes IAH 201 • For Non-History Majors: If credit is earned for WRA 101 and HST 205B/206, then HST 206 becomes IAH 202 • For Non-History Majors: If credit is earned for WRA 101 and HST 140/150, then HST 150 becomes IAH 202 				

Using the chart, this is what Sarah's AP scores indicate:

Exam	Credits	MSU Equivalent
AP Biology	8	BS 161, 162, GCU and waive BS 171, 172 or ISB 200-level course
AP Economics - Micro	3	Econ 201 or ISS 200-level course
AP Literature & Comp	4	WRA 101 or with Literature = ENG GCU (3)
Total Credits	15	

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE COST OF TUITION WILL GO UP AS SOON AS YOU HAVE 64 CREDITS ON YOUR TRANSCRIPT!

Using this information, look at the potential degree requirements for a [Business Major](#):

BROAD DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

(courses in parenthesis are the prerequisite course requirements as of Fall)

I. UNIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS		
___ WRA 101	Writing as Inquiry; Tier I Writing Req.	4 credits
___ ISB 2**	Integrative Studies in Biological Science (MTH 103/B or MTH 124 or concurrently)	3 credits
___ ISP 2**	Integrative Studies in Physical Science (MTH 103/B, MTH 124 or concurrently)	3 credits
___ ISB/P 2**L	Biological or Physical Science Lab (ISB/P 2** or concurrently)	2 credits
___ IAH 201 - 210 I/N/D	Integrative Studies in Arts and Humanities (Tier I Writing Req.)	4 credits
___ IAH 211 - 241 I/N/D	Integrative Studies in Arts and Humanities (IAH 201-210)	4 credits
___ ISS 2** D	Integrative Studies in Social Science	4 credits
___ ISS 3** I/N/D	Integrative Studies in Social Science (ISS 2**, 28+ credits)	4 credits
___ Diversity Req., two different diversity designations I/N/D must be represented within the IAH and ISS courses		
II. BUSINESS CORE REQUIREMENTS		
___ MTH 103/B	College Algebra	3 credits
___ MTH 124	Survey of Calculus I (MTH 103/B)	3 credits
___ STT 200	Statistical Methods (MTH 103/B)	3 credits
___ CSE 101	Computing Concepts and Competencies	3 credits
___ EC 201	Introduction to Microeconomics	3 credits
___ EC 202	Introduction to Macroeconomics	3 credits
Restricted to Business-Admitted Students (28+ credits):		
___ ACC 201	Principles of Financial Accounting (CSE 101)	3 credits
___ ACC 202	Principles of Managerial Accounting	3 credits
___ ITM 209	Business Analytics and Information Systems (CSE 101); <i>ITM 309 taken prior to Fall 2016</i>	3 credits
___ MGT 250	Business Communication: Oral and Written Communication; <i>BUS 250 taken prior to Fall 2018</i>	3 credits
Restricted to Business-Admitted, Accounting, Finance, Human Resource Management, Management, Marketing, Supply Chain Management Students (56+ credits):		
___ GBL 385	Business Law and Ethical Leadership; GBL 295 taken prior to Fall 2018	3 credits
___ FI 311	Financial Management (STT 200/201/315 and ACC 201)	3 credits
___ MGT 315	Managing Human Resources and Organizational Behavior	3 credits
___ MKT 300	Managerial Marketing	3 credits
___ MKT 310	International and Comparative Dimensions of Business	3 credits
___ MKT 317	Quantitative Business Research Methods (STT 200/201/315)	3 credits
___ SCM 303	Introduction to Supply Chain Management	3 credits
___ International Experience, satisfied by an additional course with international content		3 credits
Restricted to Business-Admitted, Accounting, Finance, Human Resource Management, Management, Marketing, Supply Chain Management Students (88+ credits):		
___ MGT 409	Business Policy and Strategic Management (FI 311, MKT 300, and SCM 303)	3 credits

The courses above are the core requirements for the school. After the list above, the courses are at the 300+ level and not eligible for credit from IB or AP. [Please see this link for the rest of the required courses.](#)

FOR IB: Using all the available information, find what your credit gets you:

- The Econ HL credit takes two courses off the list - EC 201 and 202
- The Lit HL credit takes care of WRA 101 (for sure) and then there are 4 other GCU credits.
**This means you need to talk to your college academic advisor as to what the GCU means and how to use them.*
- Biology HL credit is used for GCU and maybe ISB but it is not clear.

In total then, your IB scores places you out of three required classes for a total of 10 credits of your required major. **What happens to the other 12 credits?** This is when you need to speak with the college academic advisor at the university.

FOR AP: Using all the available information, find what your credit gets you:

- The AP Economics-Micro credit takes one course off the list - EC 201 - 3 credits
- The AP Literature & Comp credit takes care of WRA 101 (for sure) and then there are 4 other GCU credits. **This means you need to talk to your college academic advisor as to what the GCU means and how to use them.*
- AP Biology credit is used ISB for 3 credits.

In total then, your AP scores places you out of three required classes for a total of 10 credits of your required major. **What happens to the other 5 credits?** This is when you need to speak with the college academic advisor at the university.

Note that for a Business degree from MSU:

IV. ELECTIVE COURSES REQUIREMENTS

- A minimum of 120 credits is required for graduation; 123 credits are required for students who earn credit for MTH 1825 at Michigan State University. Most Broad students need 20+ elective credits to reach the required graduation credits. At least 9 of those 20 credits must be outside of Business.
- For non-Accounting majors, a maximum of 3 credits of internship or other work experience counts towards graduation (BUS 491, Business Internship). Accounting majors are restricted to 2 credits of internship or other work experience counts towards graduation (ACC 493).
- A maximum of 6 credits in English as a Second Language (ESL) 220, 221, 222, or 223 counts towards graduation as elective credits.

Placement Tests: Another way to move ahead

Also remember that students can take placement exams at the universities. This allows them to be properly placed but do not put credits on the student's transcript. In the example above, Sarah Spartan was a Math Analysis SL student. She took the math placement exam at MSU and tested out of Math 103B which is another 3 credits completed for the major.

Students often take placement tests in **World Languages and Math**. Depending on the university, there are also science and English placement tests.

RESEARCH

It is important that you do your own research on the topic of credit. Every degree program is different even at the same university.