SENATE COMMITTEE ON UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

Revisions to Senate Policy 42-50 (Credit by Examination)

(Legislative)

Implementation: Upon approval by the Senate and development of procedures

Background and Rationale

Long-standing Faculty Senate policy allows departments to offer, but does not mandate that they do so, Credit by Examination (or CRX), as outlined in Policy 42-50. Students may request CRX through appropriate procedures (AAPPM Procedure E-2), but only if they have not already received a quality grade (A, A-, B+, B-, C+, C, D, F) for the course or for courses for which credit has already been received in other ways (under Policies 42-80 and 42-90, for example.) An additional limitation on CRX for students who were in scheduled status was proposed by Undergraduate Education and approved by Faculty Senate vote on March 13, 2012 and the new wording is included in the ‘Revised Policy’ noted below, in italics. This approved revision to policy is awaiting implementation by ACUE.

It was brought to the attention of the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Education that similar issues had arisen where students who had taken courses on an audit grading scheme were then requesting to obtain Credit by Exam for the course which they had just ‘completed’ with one the two notations appropriate for a course audit, namely either an AU (“…if attendance has been regular…”) or W (“…if attendance has been unsatisfactory…”) (Senate Policy 34-68 – Visiting or Auditing a Course and Senate Policy 48-80 – Symbols for Course Audit).

While this practice does not pose the same tuition issue as that of students having been only in Scheduled Status after the end of the add/drop period and then requesting CRX at the end of the semester, the committee did feel that it was inappropriate to attend a course for a full semester and then attempt to obtain credit by taking only one exam, instead of having fully participated in the course over the entire semester. The committee also noted that current Senate policy explicitly restricts the ‘back-and-forth’ between taking a course for credit for a ‘quality grade’ or by audit as noted in Policy 34-68 which states “No course may be added for audit and dropped for credit, or vice versa, after the first ten calendar days of a fifteen-week semester or the same percentage of time if the course is offered under a different time schedule.” After several discussions, the committee agreed that students who had completed a course under the AU system should not be allowed to request credit-by-exam.

We also looked at one other case which might arise, namely of a student who had taken a course on a Pass/Fail basis (Senate Policy 49-60 – Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory) with transcript notations of either SA (satisfactory) of UN (unsatisfactory). Once again the committee noted current Senate policy about not allowing ‘switching’ grading schemes where it is stated that “Once the SA/UN grading system form is submitted, the candidate cannot revert to a conventional (A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, D, F) grade after 21 calendar days” and also felt strongly that a request for CRX after having taken a course on the SA/UN grading scheme should not be allowed.

The committee revisited the issue of whether to restrict students from requesting CRX for courses which had been late dropped (with the resulting transcript notation of WN) and agreed again that no change would be proposed for this case. Thus, the revised Senate policy below
simply proposes to further restrict the situations where students can request Credit by Exam to include those courses already completed under either the Audit or Pass/Fail grading systems. The proposed changes (beyond those approved on March 13, 2012) are included in bold and underline below.

If was also brought to the attention of the committee that some non-degree students seek to request credit by exam with the goal of using those credits for immediate transfer to another institution. The committee felt that this CRX was not designed for such purposes and discussed limiting the availability of credit by Exam to only degree or certificate-seeking students and approved this as another proposed restriction.

In the proposed revision of Policy 42-50 included below, changes passed last year are included in italics, and the newly proposed changes are noted in bold and underline.

Revised Policy

**42-50 Credit by Examination (CRX)**

In some circumstances credits may be earned through successful completion of comprehensive examinations made available by the Penn State academic units that offer particular courses. When such an examination serves as a substitute for completing all the usual requirements of a Penn State course, the credits received are described as “Credit by Examination” and are accepted as fulfilling degree requirements. A grade of “C” or higher must be earned in the examination for such credit to be awarded and to appear on the student’s transcript. Credit by Examination shall not be granted for any course previously completed for which a quality letter grade has been assigned, for any course completed under the audit (Policy 34-68) or satisfactory/unsatisfactory (Policy 49-60) grading schemes, or for credit awarded under Senate Policies 42-80 or 42-90, or for credit earned through the College Entrance Examination Board’s Advanced Placement Program. Credit by Examination shall not be available for any course for which a student was in scheduled status for that class after the late drop date of the course and is available only to degree or certificate-seeking students.

Students may initiate a request for Credit by Examination for a course, although the academic department or program offering the course determines whether it will make Credit by Examination available.

Credit by Examination does not result in a quality grade (A, A-, etc.) and is not included in the calculation of the student’s grade point average. Any credits earned in this manner will appear on the student’s transcript with the notation CRX and without a reported grade, similar to the way that credits appear if acquired through means such as transfer from other institutions (Senate Policy 42-80), Advanced Placement credit (Senate Policy 42-92), or Credit by Portfolio credits (Senate Policy 42-97). As with Policy 42-97, a fee may be assessed to cover the costs of the procedure (see also E-2: Credit by Examination [http://www.psu.edu/oue/aappm/]).