

# **Academic Governing Council Decision Report**

## **Industry Recognized Credentials/Test Credit: Policy 8.33**

**March 17, 2025**

### **Decision**

On March 12, 2024 the AGC membership voted to approve modification of the wording of Policy 8.33, the “Industry Recognized Credentials/Test Credit” as follows:

*Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC) awards course credit for:*

- 1) Industry or professional credentials*
- 2) Commonly accepted exams and tests in higher education.*

*GRCC will award credit for the course(s) if the following guidelines are met:*

- *The course alignment with external credential has been formally documented in the Registrar’s Office prior to student request for course credit.*
- *The credential is current/valid at the time the credit is awarded (has not expired).*
- *All established GRCC requirements are met.*
- *Students will be made aware that the credit awarded by the college is typically not transferable to other institutions.*

### **Sponsors/Champions of Proposed Policy**

Co-Chairs: John VanElst, Associate Dean/Director of Workforce Training and Tassell MTEC; Jacob Pollak, Assistant Professor of Computer Information Systems.

Committee Members: Lisa Radak, Dean of the School of Health Sciences;  
Don VanOeveren, Associate Director of Academic Support & Tutoring Services;  
Matthew Schenk, Associate Professor of Digital Art and 2D Design

### **Rationale**

The diction and syntax changes serve to clarify the policy content and its intent for all readers.

### **Supporting Data**

The committee reviewing this policy:

- Sought and included input from AGC members at three meetings.
- Responded to any input from departments, programs, and individual faculty members

## **Implications for Action**

The committee reviewing this policy recommended new language for the Procedures (section X) of the policy. The implementation team working on the procedures for the policy may use the following recommendations:

## **X. Procedures**

### **Policy Application Guidelines**

#### **A. Test Credit**

##### **1. Establishing Test Credit Equivalence:**

- a. Test credit may be awarded for AP, CLEP, DANTES, and IB scores and challenge exams.
- b. The Registrar's Office with the academic departments will conduct an annual review of test credit cut scores to ensure alignment with academic standards and relevance to current educational demands.
- c. Test credit for courses not offered at GRCC are given discipline specific general credit (999).

##### **2. Awarding Test Credit:**

- a. GRCC shall provide a process for students to submit official test score documentation
- b. GRCC will award credit for recognized tests that meet or exceed predetermined score thresholds.
- c. Credit granted will be recorded on the student's transcript as credit with letter grade of "T" assigned.

#### **B. Industry Recognized Credentials**

##### **1. Industry Recognized Credentials:**

- a. Academic departments will establish criteria for industry recognized credentials equivalence with college courses.
- b. The college will establish and periodically review the equivalence of industry-recognized credentials to courses.
- c. Where possible, documentation regarding credential equivalency will be attached to the course proposal document.
- d. Institutional contact for the Industry Recognized Credential will be listed both on the Curriculum Document and list maintained by Registrar's Office.
- e. Equivalence will be demonstrated through:
  - i. Original documentation of content (standards, objectives, outcomes) for the credential to which the course is being equated;
  - ii. a recommendation as to what credential will demonstrate competency of the standards, objectives and outcomes.
- f. GRCC will require students to provide original documentation to demonstrate equivalence, maintaining high standards of academic integrity and verification.

- g. A list of Industry Recognized Credentials will be publicly available through the Transfer Credit webpage and also through corresponding course descriptions in the GRCC catalog.

## **2. Awarding Credit for Industry Recognized Credentials:**

- a. GRCC shall maintain a process for students to submit their industry recognized credentials for credit awarding.
- b. The college commits to a thorough validation and approval process, ensuring that each credential is evaluated fairly and in accordance with academic standards.
- c. Awarded credits for industry recognized credentials will be represented as "Industry Recognized Credential" on student transcripts.
- d. Credit granted will be recorded on the student's transcript as credit with a letter grade of "T" assigned.

### **Acceptance of College Level Equivalent Credit Examinations:**

The college shall uphold the acceptance of nationally recognized college-level equivalent credit examination opportunities. It will develop and implement policies and procedures for awarding academic credit through such examinations, fostering educational accessibility and acknowledging diverse educational backgrounds.

### **Non-Restrictive Credit Examination Opportunities:**

The college shall not establish any policies or procedures that unjustly prevent students from earning college credits through college-level equivalent credit examinations after their enrollment, ensuring equitable opportunities for academic advancement.

### **Public Availability of Credit Policies:**

The college will make its credit policies, including opportunities for college-level equivalent credit examinations, readily accessible to the public on the college's website, ensuring transparency and informed decision-making for prospective and current students.

### **Reporting Requirements for Credit Examination Scores:**

In cases where the college requires scores above those recommended by the American Council on Education for college-level equivalent credit examinations, it will provide a comprehensive report outlining the data and justifications for such decisions to the designated legislative and fiscal authorities by the specified deadline.

### **Information Dissemination of Accelerated Degree Pathways:**

The college commits to informing all enrolled students about accelerated degree completion pathways and options within their first semester of enrollment. This information will also be publicly available on the college's website by the legislated deadline.

### **Development of Accelerated Degree Completion Pathways:**

The college shall actively work towards creating accelerated degree completion pathways for enrolled students, enhancing educational

efficiency and catering to the needs of students seeking to expedite their academic journey.

**Date of Decision by AGC**

Date: March 12, 2024

42 YES

12 Proxy YES

0 NO

**Section to be Completed by the Provost****Evaluation Plan**

The Industry Recognized Credentials/Test Credit Policy will be evaluated according to the next scheduled review of the policy. This evaluation and review will include feedback from GRCC faculty members and College stakeholders as well as benchmarking from peer institutions.

Next scheduled review of policy: Academic Year 2027-28

**Response from Provost**

I received this AGC Decision Report on Wednesday, April 2, 2025. I approve of the revised policy statement recommended by the AGC as outlined above. I am charging the Dean of the School of Workforce Training to coordinate implementation of this policy revision with a team of faculty/staff volunteers, including representation from the Curriculum Support and Registrar's areas. This will include updating the policy document, reviewing the procedures, and making updates to the procedures according to the recommendations outlined in the implications for action section above. This will be followed by an update to the Academic and Student Affairs Council once the policy document has been reviewed and updated. Additional steps of implementation will include working with the Provost's Office to update the policy document on the appropriate GRCC webpage and a communication plan about the updated policy document. Full implementation of this revised policy statement should be accomplished no later than the start of the next Academic Year in August 2025.



April 7, 2025