

July 31, 2006

MEMORANDUM

TO: Advisory Committee on Academic Programs

FROM: Dr. R. Lynn Kelley, Acting Director of Academic Affairs &
Licensing

**Proposed International Baccalaureate Credit Award Policy:
Background Information on the International Baccalaureate
Organization, the IB Diploma, and Policy Models**

Background

In July 2004, the staff of the Academic Affairs and Licensing Division provided a draft document for consideration of a statewide acceptance policy for the International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma to the membership of Advisory Committee on Academic Programs. The information was presented and discussion followed, but no final action was taken. Since then, according to the International Baccalaureate Organization website, the number of public high schools that offer the IB Diploma Programme has increased in South Carolina from seventeen (17) high schools to thirty-eight (38) high schools.

The passage of the Education and Economic Development Act of 2005 created statutory responsibility for the alignment of curricula and the creation of *seamless pathways* from secondary to postsecondary education, and further directed the Commission on Higher Education to expand Advisory Committee on Academic Programs to examine these issues. Subsequently, the Articulation and Dual Enrollment, High School Graduation and Postsecondary Education Alignment Committee (ADEHSGPSEA, or “Expanded ACAP”) was formed. The ADEHSGPSEA Committee recently reported to the EEDA Coordinating Council

that a policy for statewide acceptance of the International Baccalaureate would be completed by Fall 2006.

In order to provide an overview of current and emerging IB policy and legislation, the staff has been collecting information about the work several other states have undertaken, or in which states are currently engaged. The staff also contacted all public South Carolina institutions of higher education to request copies of their current IB policies. A follow-up memo has been sent to those institutions who have not yet responded. At the October 11, 2006, meeting of ACAP, based upon all information staff has collected, summarized and disseminated to members of ACAP, we will work to complete an acceptable statewide IB policy for all public higher education institutions.

As part of the process to inform members about IB, on September 8, 2006, (the next scheduled meeting of Expanded ACAP) some of South Carolina's International Baccalaureate educators, State Department of Education officials, and other stakeholders will be invited as a panel to discuss with ACAP members critical issues for a statewide IB policy.

Historical Information on The International Baccalaureate

The International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) was established in Geneva, Switzerland in 1968 (see www.ibo.org) to promote international education and to prepare students to enter into institutions of higher education that recognize the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma. The International Baccalaureate Diploma curriculum was created to encourage understanding of different cultures, languages, and points of view. In the beginning, the International Baccalaureate diploma program existed at private high schools, but has expanded into public high schools as a way to strengthen the quality of the public education system.

International Baccalaureate students are required to choose one offering from each of six academic subject areas, including: ***Language A1*** (the student's native language, along with the study of selections of world literature from that language); ***Second Language*** (language other than native tongue and literature selections from that language); ***Individuals and Societies*** (offerings from history, geography, economics, philosophy, psychology, social and cultural anthropology, business and management); ***Experimental Sciences*** (biology, chemistry, physics, environmental systems, and design technology); ***Mathematics and Computer Science*** (mathematical methods, mathematical studies, and further mathematics); and the ***Arts*** (visual arts, music, theatre arts).

In addition, students complete the Theory of Knowledge assessment, the Creativity, Action, and Service program, and an extended essay of 4000 words. The Theory of Knowledge component includes 100 hours of teaching in a course that challenges students to question the bases of knowledge and to gain the ability to analyze evidence. The Creativity, Action, and Service component prepares students to be better citizens and promotes the development of the entire person through involvement in community service and creative and physical activity. The essay prepares students for college-level writing assignments, but it also allows the student to examine further a particular topic of his/her own choosing. The essay must be independent, self-directed, and at a minimum, 4000 words. To obtain the diploma, a student must score at least 24 points of a maximum 45 points on six exams. Each subject exam is graded on a scale of one point (the lowest) to seven points (the highest). In addition to the examination portion of the Diploma Programme, a maximum of three points is available for combined performance in the essay and the Theory of Knowledge. Below is a table outlining the requirements for the International Baccalaureate Diploma:

Requirements for the IB diploma:
Numeric grades have been received in all six subjects registered for the diploma
An approved Creativity, Action, and Service programme has been completed
Grades A (highest) to E (lowest) have been awarded for both Theory of Knowledge and an extended essay, with a grade of at least D in one of them
There is no grade 1 in any subject
There is no grade 2 at higher level
There is no more than one grade 2 at standard level
Overall, there are no more than three grades 3 or below
At least 12 points have been gained on higher level subjects (Candidates who register for four higher level subjects must gain at least 16 points at higher level)
At least 9 points have been gained on standard level subjects (Candidates who register for two standard level subjects must gain at least 6 points at standard level)

There are two types of courses in the program: higher level and standard level. Higher level courses represent 240 hours of teaching and require greater

depth of study across a broader range of content. Standard level courses require 150 teaching hours and provide a broader perspective of the entire Diploma Programme. Students can be awarded credit at the university level for the completion of the International Baccalaureate Diploma as well as for satisfactory scores on course examinations given at the end of the International Baccalaureate program. The examinations correlate with the courses taken. Students completing higher level courses take higher level examinations and standard level courses require standard level exams. Most students complete three courses at the higher level and three at the standard level; however, some students will complete four courses (the maximum) at the higher level.

Current Status

Currently, there is not a statewide acceptance policy among higher education institutions for International Baccalaureate credits in South Carolina. Each of the four-year public institutions has individual policies or procedures by which they accept International Baccalaureate credits.

Nine states responding in 2004 to a CHE staff inquiry affirmed implementation of statewide acceptance policies for IB diploma graduates. Colorado created its policy in 2003, requiring every public institution of higher education to adopt a policy for IB credits and to post it on the university website. Colorado's public universities must also grant students a minimum of 24 credit hours, upon completion of the IB diploma, unless the student receives a score of less than four on an exam. This policy does not establish a minimum score for receiving credit nor does it grant credit to students who take IB examinations without completing the degree. Florida also has a standard policy on IB. Florida's policy grants credit for students who do not receive the diploma and establishes score requirements. Nevada and Oklahoma simply require a score of four or more to grant college credit. South Dakota's policy is very specific. It lists not only the score requirements but establishes the course for which credit will be given. Virginia is currently in the process of adopting a state level policy.

A South Carolina policy for accepting International Baccalaureate credits might be configured similarly to the already developed statewide policy for accepting Advanced Placement (AP) credits. This policy, adopted in July 1985, states that "credit shall be given for scores of three or better on pertinent Advanced Placement examinations." Although individual institutions may only award AP credit for courses offered in their curriculum, this statewide policy gives students and institutions reasonable guidelines for accepting AP credit, eliminates confusion between the student and the institution, and ensures equitable treatment of students. Without this policy, students' scores would be assessed based on each

institution's policy. This is the case as it now stands in South Carolina for accepting International Baccalaureate courses. While many institutions do have IB acceptance policies, the range of acceptable exam scores varies. Most accept a score of four, while some will not accept scores lower than five on certain exams.

Current IB Policies in South Carolina Institutions

Senior Public Institutions Reporting as of July 21, 2006

The following institutions award college credit for scores of four (4) or higher on higher level exams. The number of credits is determined by the score on the exam and the subject/course:

- Citadel
- Coastal
- Francis Marion
- Lander (No credit for Business & Management, Chemistry, Economics, Music, Philosophy, Theatre Arts)
- University of South Carolina
- USC-Aiken
- USC-Beaufort (No credit for English A1, Biology, Business & Organization, Chemistry, Computing Studies, Economics, Foreign Languages, Geography, History, Mathematics, Music, Physics, Psychology, Social Anthropology)
- Winthrop University

The following institutions award college credit for scores of five (5) or higher on higher level exams. The number of credits is determined by the score on the exam and the subject/course:

- Clemson (Foreign Language and Visual Arts – 4 or higher)
- College of Charleston

Credit at the following institution may be awarded for completion of higher level exams. No specific list was provided; however, award of credit is determined by the appropriate schools or divisions:

- USC-Upstate

Technical Colleges Reporting as of July 21, 2006

Credit at the following institution may be awarded with a score of four (4) or higher on higher level exams. No specific list of courses was provided:

- Trident Tech

The following institution does not accept the IB for credit:

- York Tech

Recommendation

The staff suggests that the Advisory Committee develop a statewide policy on IB credit by establishing a study committee of one (1) sector representative from each of the three (3) sectors: research, technical and four-year comprehensive universities. This committee will work with staff to develop and bring forth for consideration for approval on October 11, 2006 a statewide IB policy addressing:

1. The establishment of the maximum number of credit hours to be awarded for students achieving the IB diploma.
2. The establishment of the maximum number of credit hours to be awarded for students who attempt the IB diploma, but fail to achieve it on the basis of test scores.
3. The establishment of the number of credit hours to be awarded to students who complete one or more IB courses with a minimum score (to be defined) on higher level examinations.
4. The establishment of the number of credit hours to be awarded to students achieving a minimum score (to be determined) on the standard level examinations.

In all cases, the proposed statewide policy will assure that academic credit would be granted only if courses are found in the institution's catalogue and are applicable to the student's major course of study.