

Policy Recommendation
Credit By Examination (CBE) & Challenge Examinations

Background SJSU has no campus policy governing Credit By Exam. Current practices are not in line with most other CSU campuses or with guidelines given by the Chancellor’s Office. CSU Executive Order 1036, Article 1.1 addresses “Campus-Originated Challenge Examinations” stating that “Students who pass campus-originated challenge examinations... shall earn credit toward the degree”

The Office of Academic Programs & Faculty Development of the CSU Chancellor’s Office has informed the individual campuses that “challenge exams” (CBE) should generate Earned Units toward graduation, but should never generate FTES (Full Time Equivalent Students), nor should student (tuition) fees be collected for administration of such examinations. SJSU is among the 11 of 23 CSU Campuses not following these CSU Guidelines (survey data available from the Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs). The rationale is that students receive no instruction when challenging a course, and FTES is generated as a measure of faculty instructional time.

Justification Currently, SJSU may earn credit by exam in three different ways. The color coding shows in **green** where we are complying with CSU policy, and in **red** where our campus is out of compliance.

Current Practice

Type of Exam	Administered by	Earned Units toward graduation	Course registration required & FTES generated	Student fee
AP, CLEP, & IB	External Testing Services	Yes	No	paid externally, unless administered by the SJSU Testing Office
“Waiver Exams” for US1, US2, US3, and Critical Thinking	SJSU Testing Office using exams written by HIST, POLS, & PHIL	No *	No	minimal administrative fee collected by Testing Office

“Challenge Exam” (to SJSU course)	Individual faculty or departments	Yes	Yes *	course registration required; may require sizable tuition fees
Type of Exam	URLs			
AP, CLEP, & IB	http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/cbe.html			
“Waiver Exams” for US1, US2, US3, and Critical Thinking	http://testing.sjsu.edu/we			
“Challenge Exam” (to SJSU course)	catalog: http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/schedules/rec-11749.11794.11811.11812.html petition: http://www.sjsu.edu/registrar/docs/Credit_by_Exam.pdf			

* Only the AP (Advanced Placement), CLEP (College Level Examination Program), and IB (International Baccalaureate) Exams comply with EO-1036 and guidance from the Academic Programs Division of the Chancellor’s Office. This policy proposes to discontinue the existing “waiver exams” and to administer only “challenge exams” that do not generate FTES, but which do earn credit toward graduation. In table form, this policy will not modify the row associated with external examinations, but will modify the “challenge exams” as shown.

Proposed Policy

Type of Exam	Administered by	Earned Units toward graduation	Course registration required & FTES generated	Student fee
AP, CLEP, & IB	External Testing Services	Yes	No	paid externally, unless administered by the SJSU Testing Office
“Challenge Exam” (to SJSU course)	Individual faculty or departments, or the Testing Office on behalf of a	Yes	No	generally none, unless administered and/or evaluated by the Testing

	department			Office
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Resolved That the existing “waiver exam” and “challenge exam” practices be discontinued and that the following be adopted immediately as campus policy for Credit By Exam (CBE) and challenge examinations.

- A. CBE Credit (including challenge exams) is not permitted to generate FTES, nor associated WTU (Weighted Teaching Units) workload. The costs of administering such exams by the Testing Office shall be determined by CFAC (Course Fee Advisory Committee). Earned units (UE) must be generated and these must be recorded on the SJSU transcript. There shall be no CBE for 200-level courses.
- B. **Where there are existing AP or CLEP or IB exams** that have been determined to earn General Education (GE), American Institutions (AI), and/or course credit (see <http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/cbe.html>), these external exams should be used rather than campus generated exams. If there is a discrepancy between the units earned according to the CBE website and the units assigned to the articulated course at SJSU, the units found at the CBE website shall be assigned.
- C. **Where there are no external AP or CLEP or IB exams equivalent to SJSU courses**, the determination of whether “campus-originated challenge examinations” (per EO-1036) are available for a particular course is determined by the department or school curriculum committee, and not by individual faculty who may teach that course. Courses such as laboratory, clinical, internship, fieldwork, or 200-level graduate courses are not eligible for CBE. A list of courses deemed most appropriate for CBE via challenge exams shall be recommended by departments/schools, approved by their respective Dean’s Offices, and maintained by the Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs. A department may opt to require students seeking CBE via challenge exams to take the regularly administered final exam for a course, if that exam is comprehensive. Departments may choose to use the Testing Office for the administration of CBE challenge exams.

Students are not eligible to take a CBE exam for a particular course if that course has already been taken for a letter or CR/NC grade. A “W” grade shall not prevent a student from taking a CBE exam. Students shall not be allowed to take a campus generated challenge examination for a particular course more than once.

As is current practice, if a challenge exam is passed, then a grade of CR and a notation of CBE shall be recorded on the transcript.

- D. A small administrative fee to cover the costs of administering and grading may be requested. The Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs shall apply for a single CBE-CFAC fee (per student) for any campus generated CBE exam. If a department wishes to use the services of the Testing Office (not a requirement to do so), then the CBE fee will be collected by the Testing Office. Details

regarding the distribution of the administrative fee will be set forth in the CFAC application.

- E. The Registrar's Office shall work with the Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs to develop reporting forms, processes, and transcript notations consistent with this policy.

Approved (C&R): 12-1-0 (April 20, 2015)

Present: Ardalan, Brada-Williams (chair), Blaylock, Brown, Buzanski, Heil, Jaehne, Mathur, Matoush, Muller, Ng, Schultz-Krohn, Sibley

Absent: Stacks

Curricular Impact: The net effect may be more students taking (and passing) courses with CBE. This in turn would lead to the freeing up of seats in classrooms, more timely graduation for those who pass the CBE exams, and more access to enrollment of new students if the CBE students graduate more quickly.

Financial Impact: As former challenge exams generated FTES and the proposed CBE exams will not do so, CBE exams could reduce campus FTES, though the effect is not anticipated to be very large.

Workload Impact: There will be an initial staff and administrative workload associated with the creation of a new reporting forms and processes consistent with this policy, primarily affecting the Registrar's Office and the Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs. Long term, taking advantage of appropriate AP and CLEP exams, permitting the administration of challenge examinations during regular final exam periods, and systematizing the administration of SJSU CBE exams could reduce faculty and staff workload.