

**SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY  
ONE WASHINGTON SQUARE  
SAN JOSE, CA 95192**

**F15-5, University Policy, Credit by Exam for Challenge Examinations**

**Legislative History:**

At its meeting of October 5, 2015, the Academic Senate approved the following policy recommendation presented by Senator Mathur for the Curriculum and Research Committee.

**Background:** SJSU has no campus policy governing Credit by Exam (CBE)- Challenge Exams. 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” should generate Earned Units toward graduation, but should never generate FTES (Full Time Equivalent Students). SJSU is among the 11 of 23 CSU Campuses not following these CSU Guidelines. The rationale is that students receive no instruction when challenging a course, and FTES is generated as a measure of faculty instructional time.

**Action by University President:** **Approved on October 18, 2015 by Interim President Susan W. Martin**

**University Policy:  
Credit by Exam for Challenge Examinations**

**Justification** Currently, SJSU students may earn credit by exam- challenge exams in two 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
“Challenge Exam” (to SJSU course)	Individual faculty or departments	Yes	Yes *	Course registration required; may require sizable tuition fees

\* 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 administer “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)	Departments or the Testing Office on behalf of a department	Yes	No	generally none, unless administered and/or evaluated by

				the Testing Office
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**Resolved** That the existing “challenge exam” practices be discontinued and that the following be adopted immediately as campus policy for challenge examinations.

- A. **CBE- Challenge exams are not permitted to generate FTES, nor associated WTU (Weighted Teaching Units) workload.** Students are not eligible to take a CBE-Challenge 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-Challenge exam. A student may not receive credit by examination via Challenge exam to remove a grade of “F,” “WU”, or “NC”. 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. Earned units (UE) must be generated and these must be recorded on the SJSU transcript. Units earned through challenge exams will not be counted as part of the SJSU residency requirements. Only matriculated SJSU students are eligible to take CBE-Challenge exams.
- 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 challenge 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 college curriculum committee, and not by individual faculty who may teach that course. A list of courses allowable for CBE via challenge exams shall be recommended by departments/colleges, approved by their respective Dean’s Offices, and maintained by the Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs. Credit by examination for 100W and for 200-level graduate courses are not eligible for CBE-Challenge Exams. Courses that are cross-listed will be determined by the home department following consultation with the other department.
- D. The Testing Office will oversee registration and reporting results of all campus challenge exams. The Testing Office can oversee administration of the exam and will coordinate with the department where needed. The Testing Office will determine the costs of administering the exams and propose a fee to the Course Fee Advisory Committee. Students must register for Challenge Exams with the Testing Office **no later** than 5:00 p.m., 28 days after the last day to add classes.

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

**Approved (C&R):** September 21, 2015

**Vote:** 9-0-0

**Present:** Buzanski, Bacich, Clements, Heil, Mathur, Matoush, Schultz-Krohn, Sibley, Stacks

**Absent:** Anagnos, Backer, Coopman

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

**Financial Impact:** As former challenge exams generated FTES and the proposed CBE- Challenge exams will not do so, these 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 new reporting forms and processes consistent with this policy, primarily affecting the Registrar's Office and the Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs. Systematizing the administration of SJSU CBE-Challenge exams could reduce faculty and staff workload.