

Awarding Credit in Lieu of Enrollment to Students Whose Native Language is not English

The Georgia Department of Education provides an opportunity for an exemption from the high school graduation requirements for two units of foreign language for students whose native language is not English. Included in each of the state graduation policies, Rule 160-4-2-.30, Rule 160-4-2-.06, Rule 160-4-2-.36, Rule 160-4-2-.46, and Rule 160-4-2-.47 in the foreign language section, is the following statement:

"Two Carnegie units of the same foreign language shall be required for the College Preparatory (CP) program of study in grades 9-12. Students whose native language is not English may be considered to have met the foreign language requirement by exercising the credit in lieu of enrollment option if they are proficient in their native language. A formal examination is not necessary if other evidence of proficiency is available."

One may access the full text of these rules, as well as all current rules that have been adopted by the State Board at the following URLs:

High School Graduation Rule

http://gadoe.org/_documents/doe/legalservices/160-4-2-.47.pdf

List of State Approved K-8 Subjects and 9-12 Courses

http://gadoe.org/_documents/doe/legalservices/160-4-2-.03.pdf

The Native Language (Not English) course should be utilized to award credit:

65.01000 Native Language (Not English) c/e c/e

That course may be found on the list of State Approved Courses at the URL listed above. The Native Language (Not English) course is listed on page 41 of that document.

Students who are simply given an exemption from this requirement may have problems either being accepted to college or qualifying for the HOPE Scholarship; therefore, granting an exemption without awarding credit is not recommended.

Page six of Rule 160-4-2-.03, List of State-Funded K-8 Subjects and 9-12 Courses, makes the following provision for giving credit in lieu of enrollment:

"A 3 as the 5th Numerical digit to the right of the decimal indicates that students receive credit for courses in which they are not enrolled. Such instances require a local policy which must be met in order for the student to receive credit without enrolling in the course."

Finally, Rule 160-4-2-.13, which governs Statewide Passing Scores, specifies that numerical grades must be assigned if credit is given. Therefore, these students must receive a grade, and the language for which credit is given should be indicated on the transcript. The grade may be based on a variety of criteria, including the student's performance on a proficiency examination, a project that the student has completed, community service in the community that speaks the language in question, student presentations that inform the wider school community about the language and culture, developing and teaching a mini-unit on the language and culture to other students, etc. How the grade is assigned will differ depending on the individual, the native language, and the method of evaluation chosen. The grade should reflect the level of proficiency in the language. Establishing a consistent local policy is critical.

It seems likely that the original intent of this rule was to prevent students with limited proficiency in English from being burdened with the need to learn an additional foreign language at the same time that they are learning English. Regardless, any student who is a native speaker of a language other than English can potentially take advantage of this rule. Guidance counselors should inform students and parents/guardians that there is no guarantee that credit in lieu of enrollment will be accepted by colleges for admissions purposes. Students should check with the post-secondary institutions they plan to apply to regarding their policies.

Speakers of less common languages who are already proficient in English might well be advised to study one of the languages prevalent in the occupation they wish to enter.

Finally, native speakers of who have not already achieved a high degree of literacy in their native language may benefit greatly from taking either upper-level foreign language courses in their native language, when available, or courses designed for native speakers. Please refer to the List of State-Funded courses for the complete list of foreign language courses available.

The following courses for native speakers are available on the State-Funded List:

60.07900 Spanish for Native Spanish Speakers Level 1 c/e c/e

60.07910 Spanish for Native Spanish Speakers Level 2 c/e c/e (page 35)

65.02000 Native Language Reading and Literacy I c/e c/e

65.02100 Native Language Reading and Literacy II c/e c/e (page 41)

These courses focus on developing reading and writing skills. It is well-documented that strong literacy skills in one's native language are an excellent foundation for higher achievement in one's second language.

Districts are required to adopt a policy regarding the implementation of the credit in lieu of enrollment provision. The policy below is based on an actual policy provided to the Department as an example.

Sample Local District Policy
Guidelines for Implementing
Foreign Language Exemption for International Students

The Georgia Department of Education provides an opportunity for an exemption from the high school graduation requirements in a foreign language for students whose native language is not English. Included in each of the policies, Rule 160-4-2-.06, Rule 160-4-2-.36, and Rule 160-4-2-.46, in the foreign language section, is the following statement:

Two Carnegie units of the same foreign language shall be required for the College Preparatory (CP) program of study in grades 9-12. Students whose native language is not English may be considered to have met the foreign language requirement by exercising the credit in lieu of enrollment option if they are proficient in their native language. A formal examination is not necessary if other evidence of proficiency is available.

The _____ School System will implement this rule using the following guidelines:

- 1) The policy is applied on a case-by-case basis, and must be approved by the counselor, the high school principal, and the system level foreign language curriculum coordinator.
- 2) The request may be initiated by the student or the guidance counselor. The exemption is intended for college bound students who have recently moved to this country and who are struggling to learn English. Students who are considering colleges that are not part of the University System should check with the enrollment offices of these schools. Students who already are proficient in English should be expected to enroll in foreign language courses in high school to be sure of meeting college entrance requirements if they decide to go out of state. All students who are interested in the exemption should be advised that documentation and/or testing will be required before the exemption is granted AND that some colleges might not agree that the student has met entrance requirements.
- 3) Once the counselor has agreed to pursue the exemption for a student, the counselor should contact the system-wide foreign language coordinator to discuss which category might be appropriate for the student. The counselor should be aware of what documentation will be available and in what language the student is proficient.
- 4) If the counselor and the foreign language coordinator agree that the request should be pursued, the counselor should contact the parent and discuss the exemption and possible consequences. The parent or guardian must sign the *Parent Request for Foreign Language Exemption* (see attachment 1) to indicate that they understand that some colleges do not recognize this exemption and that acceptance into these colleges **could be jeopardized**.
- 5) The counselor will then assemble a portfolio to include the following:
 - a) a written request for the exemption which explains the rationale for the request,
 - b) documentation of formal schooling showing language instruction (generally a transcript or a report card) or a request for a proficiency examination,
 - c) the signed parent request, and

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d) the Foreign Language Exemption Form for International Students, signed by the counselor and the principal.

The counselor will send the portfolio to the foreign language coordinator.

6) The foreign language coordinator will consult with the English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teacher to determine from the documentation if the student is granted the exemption with credit, granted the exemption without credit, or if proficiency testing will be required.

7) If the decision can be made from the documentation to grant the exemption, with or without credit, the foreign language coordinator will sign the Foreign Language Exemption Form for International Students and return it to the counselor. If testing is required, the counselor will be notified and will be expected to assist in the actual administration of the evaluation. The test will be returned to the foreign language coordinator who will arrange to have the test graded.

After the evaluation is scored, the foreign language coordinator will sign the Foreign Language Exemption Form for International Students approving the exemption and return it to the counselor or notify the counselor that the student did not demonstrate proficiency.

8) The counselor will then notify the student and parents that the student does or does not meet the proficiency requirement and will or will not receive the exemption. A copy of both the Foreign Language Exemption for International Students Form and the Parent Request for Foreign Language Exemption should be placed in the student's permanent record file. If the student receives the exemption, course numbers with the appropriate number of credits should be entered into the transcript.