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# OSDE Transcript Guidance

Awarding Secondary Course Credit Based on Out-of-Country Transcripts

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# OSDE Transcript Guidance

Awarding Secondary Course Credit Based on Out-of-Country Transcripts

## Introduction

This guidance document provides a methodology and common best practices in the awarding of secondary core-content class credit based on out-of-country transcripts. Note that newcomer students entering Oklahoma secondary schools will present a diverse set of experiences and information related to documented credit, descriptions of coursework, and time spent in formal education. Despite this diversity, it is the responsibility of the enrolling LEA to review all available documentation and provide equivalent course credit, where appropriate, to ensure every student has the opportunity to graduate with a high school diploma within a reasonable period of time.

Please note that the guidance and best practices outlined in this document are applicable only in cases where secondary credit must be determined based on an out-of-country transcript(s) (or similar documentation). This document is not to be used to interpret prior credit earned in a U.S. school, nor is it relevant in the determination of English Learner class placement and/or promotion.

## General Guidelines

In order to award course credit based on an out-of-country transcript, an LEA should develop a local policy to ensure transcripts are interpreted consistently and in a manner that best ensures the student is awarded all appropriate credit, while also maintaining the academic integrity of the LEA. Staff responsible for the translation, interpretation and potential awarding of credit must recognize that this process can, and likely will have a significant impact on whether or not the student is able to earn a high school diploma within a reasonable period of time.

In instances in which students arrive without transcripts or student records it may require the students' academic history be re-created using the student's academic history gathered through structured interviews with the student and family members to gather additional information on course names, hours of instructional time, length of course, and grades obtained in addition to the steps included in the general guidelines.



The locally developed policy should incorporate the following steps:

- **Translating the transcript and any additional relevant documentation into English.** Translation may be completed by the LEA if local staff possess the appropriate mastery of the transcript language or may be completed by a translation service. LEAs are encouraged to use local staff or a contracted service to address any translation requirements and should not rely on the student's immediate family for translation assistance. It is important to note that translating course names is usually not sufficient to evaluate international transcripts, as courses with identical names completed in another country may vary in key characteristics such as clock hours towards credit, length of courses, grading practices. It is important to gather relevant information about the corresponding country's education system. It may be beneficial to consider a professional interpretation of international transcripts.
- **Conducting a family/student interview.** After the transcript and relevant documentation have been translated and reviewed, a family/student interview can be helpful in answering any questions that may have arisen (e.g., How were clock hours accounted for a given class? What content was taught in a certain class? Was the credit awarded for a certain class based on a full school year or a shorter term of enrollment? etc.)
- **Reaching out to the embassy of the student's home country (if necessary).** There may be instances where an LEA is unable to accurately interpret or evaluate the provided documentation. In these cases, contacting the embassy or consulate of the student's home country may be of additional assistance.
- **Evaluating the transcript to determine the maximum amount of credit that may be awarded.** An LEA should make every effort to ensure that credit is awarded for core content classes (Math, English, Science, and Social Studies) in alignment with the clock hours for equivalent classes documented on the out-of-country transcript. As an example, a student with two complete years of math credit documented on an out-of-country transcript should be awarded the equivalent amount of local credit if it can be reasonably determined that the student was exposed to similar content and can be successfully placed in an age-appropriate class.
- **Building a local transcript and determining if any additional credit may be earned through alternate assessment.** Using the information gathered in the previous steps, an LEA should create a transcript based on the local template and determine if the student is eligible to gain additional credits through alternate assessment (refer to the Alternate Assessment section below). Note that it may be difficult to determine an appropriate letter grade to assign for previously earned credits. In these cases, LEAs are encouraged to use the Credit or No Credit option that does not impact overall GPA if available in the local student information system.





- **Recognizing a student's ability to achieve the Oklahoma Seal of Biliteracy.** Established in September 2020 (70 O.S. § 11-103.2; 201:10-1-16), the Oklahoma Seal of Biliteracy is a credential bestowed by the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) to recognize and honor high school students who have attained a high level of proficiency in one or more languages in addition to English. The Oklahoma Seal of Biliteracy is available to any student who is able to demonstrate biliteracy in English and another language at the Intermediate-Mid or Advanced-Low level. The recognition for attaining biliteracy becomes part of the high school transcript and recognizes the student's readiness for career, college and engagement as a global citizen which increases opportunities for employment and advancement in higher education by sometimes allowing the opportunity to earn college credits in a foreign language. More information on the Oklahoma Seal of Biliteracy can be found [here](#).

## Core Content Classes

### English Language Arts (ELA)

Unlike other core-content classes, English Language Arts presents unique challenges in the awarding of equivalent credit. The following courses count towards the four units or sets of competencies of English required for graduation:

4045 English I (Grammar and Composition)	4057 AP English Language and Composition
4048 English II (World Literature)	4010 AP English Literature and Composition
4051 English III (American Literature)	4065 IB Language Arts
4054 English IV (British Literature)	

Best practice dictates that the awarding of credit for any of the classes noted above based on an out-of-country transcript should be done in consideration of the level of English language proficiency the student is able to demonstrate upon initial enrollment.



## Example 1

A fifteen-year-old student enters an Oklahoma secondary school from Kuwait. The student is a native Arabic speaker but has documented transcripts from an American school for the previous ten years. While the student is determined to be an English Learner upon enrollment, a review of the student's transcripts notes completion of classes indicated as "English" and "French" in their ninth-grade year and English classes completed every year prior to their secondary-equivalent enrollment in their home country. A review of additional assessment and observational data generated by the LEA, as well as a family and student interview, lead to a local consensus that the student possesses the level of English language proficiency necessary to demonstrate success in an English-only classroom with a minimum of EL-specific supports.

In this case, the student's transcript history and demonstrated level of English language proficiency justify awarding the student local credit for course **4045 English I (Grammar and Composition)** and enrolling the student in course **4048 English II (World Literature)** at the outset of their tenth-grade year. Additionally, the student may be awarded World Language credit for **3111 French I**, noting that best practice dictates that the student successfully demonstrates equivalent course content knowledge through a locally administered, criterion-referenced assessment or approved alternate assessment prior to such credit being awarded.

LEAs assessing a student's native language proficiency are strongly encouraged to utilize those assessments that may provide the student the opportunity to earn the [Oklahoma Seal of Biliteracy](#).

## Example 2

A seventeen-year-old student enters an Oklahoma secondary school from Guatemala. The student is a bilingual native speaker of both Spanish and Quiché and has transcripts documenting an interrupted formal education over the past three years. While the student is determined to be an English Learner upon enrollment, a review of the submitted transcripts shows the student was enrolled in and completed their 9th grade and half of their 10th grade year and has completed classes indicated as "Mother Tongue" (Quiché) and "English" in each of their three secondary-equivalent semesters. A review of additional assessment and observational data generated by the LEA, as well as a family and student interview, lead to a local consensus that the student does not yet possess the level of English language proficiency necessary to demonstrate success in an English-only classroom without significant EL-specific services and supports.

In this case, the student's demonstrated level of English language proficiency and likelihood of demonstrating success in an English-only classroom justify awarding the student **3260 Other World Language** course credit for both classes mentioned above, named "Mother Tongue," and "English," on the out-of-country transcript. In this case both Mother Tongue and English will count as World Language credits. The LEA would



then enroll the student, as appropriate to the local EL program and available supports, to best ensure the student both acquires English language proficiency and completes the four units or sets of competencies of English required for graduation.

## Points to Note

- Four units or sets of competencies of English Language Arts (ELA) are required for graduation in Oklahoma, and an LEA has discretion to award ELA credit that counts towards this requirement based on an out-of-country transcript.
- Best practice dictates that the awarding of any ELA credit counting towards the four units or sets of competencies of English required for graduation may be made only in situations where, upon initial enrollment, the student demonstrates a level of English language proficiency necessary to ensure success in an English-only classroom without the provision of significant EL-specific services and supports (i.e., those supports considered above and beyond the interventions and accommodations implemented by a student's primary instructor(s) in a Tier 1 instructional environment).
  - For the purpose of awarding ELA credit counting towards the four units of competencies of English required for graduation, LEAs may determine their own definitions of English language proficiency. One possible guide is given below simply as an example:
    - ELA credit may be awarded for English courses taken out of the country if both of the following conditions are met:
      - Course title indicates that course content was similar in scope to an ELA course
      - WIDA ACCESS or Screener reflects a composite score at or above the 3.0 level in all four WIDA-assessed language domains (Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking).

A WIDA score below 3.0 does not preclude a student from participating and earning credits in English language arts or other for-credit courses.

- It is at local discretion to determine the level of English language proficiency a student must possess to successfully demonstrate success in an English-only classroom with only minimal EL supports, but this level should be determined locally in consideration of both:





1. The accessibility of any applicable local curriculum to English Learner students.
  2. The ability of the student's instructors to effectively integrate EL supports into Tier 1 instruction.
- The credit awarded for a course indicated as "English," or similarly named course, on an out-of-country transcript may be awarded as English or as a World Language dependent on the student's unique circumstances and level of demonstrated English language proficiency.

## World Languages

In nearly every country, local educational systems prioritize the acquisition and development of one or more languages. As such, all out-of-country transcripts should include one or more classes designed to increase a student's proficiency, usage, and/or conceptual understanding of a language other than English. How such classes may be awarded local credit will depend on the available information and the state course codes associated with the documented language. Generally, a secondary-equivalent language class focused on native language acquisition for a native speaker of that language may be awarded credit for the closest content-equivalent world language class. In cases where Oklahoma has no equivalent language course code, contact the OSDE Director of World Languages to verify if awarding credit under the **3260 Other World Languages** course code is appropriate. It is also strongly recommended that as a student progresses in their English language proficiency that districts encourage and support the further development of their first and second languages and provide the student the opportunity to earn the Oklahoma Seal of Biliteracy.

### Example 1

A seventeen-year-old student enters an Oklahoma secondary school from Mexico. The student is a native Spanish speaker and has attended Mexican public schools for the duration of their education. A review of the student's transcripts notes completion of classes indicated as "Spanish" in their 9th and 10th grade years.

In this case, the student's level of Spanish language proficiency is likely to be significantly more advanced than the equivalent Spanish language proficiency of a local, native English-speaking student completing all reportable Spanish courses through the Advanced Placement level. While it would not be appropriate to assign the student AP course credit based on their out-of-country transcript, it would likely be appropriate to award the student local credit for **3169 Heritage Spanish I** and **3170 Heritage Spanish II** for the courses completed in the student's 9th and 10th grade years to satisfy the two units or sets of competencies in the same World Language Other Than English or Native American Language required for graduation.





Again, best practice dictates that an LEA administer an appropriate, locally created content-area assessment aligned to the Oklahoma Academic Standards for World Languages, or a standardized norm-referenced test, prior to awarding course credit. Note that OSDE strongly recommends that an LEA select a national, norm-referenced language proficiency assessment for this purpose as it will provide the student the opportunity to qualify for the Oklahoma Seal of Biliteracy. Please consult the OSDE Director of World Languages for guidance on selecting assessments for World Languages credit.

## Example 2

A sixteen-year-old student enters an Oklahoma secondary school from France. The student is a native French speaker and has attended French public schools for the duration of their education. A review of the student's transcripts notes completion of classes indicated as "French" in their 9th and 10th grade years.

In this case, the student's level of French language proficiency is likely significantly more advanced than the equivalent French language proficiency of a local, native English-speaking student who has completed all reportable French courses through the Advanced Placement level. While it would not be appropriate to assign the student AP course credit based on their out-of-country transcript, and there is no "Heritage" option for languages other than Spanish, it would be appropriate to award the student local credit for **3113 French III** and **3114 French IV**, even though those courses are generally completed in a student's 11th and 12th grade years, to satisfy the two units or sets of competencies in the same World Language Other Than English or Native American language required for graduation. Alternately, if the LEA is confident that either local instruction or other learning opportunity is available to move the student

forward in their native language, the LEA can award the student credit for **3111 French I** and **3112 French II** for those French classes completed in the student's 9th and 10th grade years. The LEA would then ensure the student is enrolled in **3113 French III**, **3114 French IV**, **3115 AP French Language**, or other class type (e.g., concurrent, online, independent, etc.) that will satisfy those class requirements beginning in their 11th grade year.

Again, best practice dictates that an LEA administer an appropriate, locally created content-area assessment aligned to the Oklahoma Academic Standards for World Languages, or a nationally recognized proficiency assessment, prior to awarding course credit. Note that SDE strongly recommends that an LEA select a national, norm-referenced language proficiency assessment for this purpose as it will provide the student the opportunity to qualify for the Oklahoma Seal of Biliteracy. Please consult the OSDE Director of World Languages for guidance on selecting assessments for World Languages credit.



## Mathematics

Educational systems of the world overprioritize the acquisition and development of mathematical knowledge. As such, all out-of-country transcripts should include one or more classes designed to increase a student's usage and conceptual understanding of mathematical concepts. When reviewing out-of-country documentation, LEA staff should note that some educational systems address mathematical and scientific content and concepts within the same instructional context, so extra care should be taken to clarify the specific instruction a student has received if math-specific classes appear to be absent on the out-of-country transcript.

### Points to Note

In either a college preparatory/work ready or core curriculum path to graduation, a student must complete a minimum of three units or sets of competencies in mathematics in the areas of:

- Algebra I
- Algebra II
- Geometry
- Trigonometry
- Math Analysis
- Calculus
- Advanced Placement Statistics
- Any mathematics course with content and/or rigor above Algebra I and approved for college admission requirements

LEAs should make every effort to award math credit through both previously completed class hours and locally administered measures of proficiency that allow the student to demonstrate their subject-area knowledge (e.g., assessments, projects, portfolio, etc.).

## Science

Generally, global education systems prioritize teaching one or more of the major fields of science education- Physics, Biology, and/or Chemistry. That said, it is important to note that some systems may combine the teaching of science into another discipline (e.g., mathematics) and/or may combine one or more scientific fields into stand-alone classes. Additionally, there can be a wide variance in the intention of local science instruction, with some systems prioritizing content memorization and others placing a



greater emphasis on the importance of the scientific process and practical application of scientific concepts.

### Points to note

In either a college preparatory/work ready or core curriculum path to graduation, a student must complete a minimum of three units or sets of competencies in science in the areas of:

- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physics
- Any laboratory science course with content and/or rigor equal to or above Biology and approved for college admission requirements

Given the variability in how science instruction may be documented on an out-of-country transcript, LEAs should be considerate in both determining the nature of the content a student has been exposed to and the prospective number of class hours that may be aligned with specific scientific disciplines. This can be done through reviewing additional assessment information, structured family and student interviews, and supplemental transcript notes. As needed, LEAs are strongly encouraged to use all available resources (OAS-aligned subject area assessments, alternate assessments, etc.) to ensure the student is awarded the maximum allowable credit upon enrollment.

### Social Studies

While many educational systems around the world do not formally or explicitly use the term “Social Studies,” most will provide instruction in one or more areas that would align with the content area as it is generally perceived in the United States. Most commonly, LEAs will see classes such as Government/Civics, Economics, History and Geography (e.g., world, country and/or state-specific, etc.), as well as classes such as Psychology and Sociology.

### Points to note

In either a college preparatory/work ready or core curriculum path to graduation, a student must complete a minimum of three units or sets of history and citizenship skills, including:

- American History (1 unit)
- Oklahoma History (1/2 unit)
- United States Government (1/2 unit)



- A course that has been approved for college admission requirements in one of the following subjects (1 unit):
  - History
  - Government
  - Geography
  - Economics
  - Civics
  - Non-Western culture

Please note the following points regarding the requirements above:

- The American History requirement may not be satisfied with a country or regionally specific history class completed in another country, although such a class may be used to meet the additional course requirement noted above through either the History and/or Non-Western Culture sub-areas.
- Generally\*, the Oklahoma History requirement may not be satisfied with a country or regionally specific history class completed in another country, although such a class may be used to meet the additional course requirement noted above through either the History and/or Non-Western Culture sub-areas.  
*\*In cases where a student enters from an out-of-country school and is determined by the LEA to have credits sufficient to allow graduation within one year of instruction (i.e., the student enters as a true senior), a region or country-specific history credit earned in the student's home country may be used to meet the Oklahoma History requirement, understanding that a single class may not be used to meet more than one requirement.*
- The United States Government requirement may not be satisfied with a government class completed in another country, although such a class may be used to meet the additional course requirement noted above through either the History and/or Non-Western Culture sub-areas.

## Alternate Assessment

Acknowledging the diversity of instruction that may be present on an out-of-country transcript and/or documentation, a nationally recognized norm-referenced assessment may not exist to assist an LEA in determining a student's existing level of content area



knowledge. In these cases, state statute allows for alternate assessments including, but not limited to:

- A portfolio of student work;
- A criterion-referenced assessment;
- A student thesis;
- A student project;
- A student performance or recital

Use of an alternate assessment may also be appropriate to award credit across content areas where there exists no direct equivalency between the class or classes indicated on the out-of-country transcript and those detailed on the state [9th-12th Grade Subject Codes list](#). Note it is the responsibility of the LEA to ensure that an alternate assessment 1) requires the student to demonstrate proficiency that is appropriate to the subject area and 2) is aligned to the LEA's curriculum standards and accurately measures the student's demonstration of the sets of competencies in the current academic method and process standards most recently adopted by the State Board of Education. Note that the use of the alternate assessments noted above to award world language credit would generally be limited to 3260 Other World Languages.

## RAEL Status and Graduation Cohort Year

LEAs should note that a student's Recently Arrived English Learner (RAEL) status has no bearing on their determined graduation cohort year or their inclusion in the Graduation Indicator component of site Accountability. A student's graduation cohort year will be determined by the grade level assigned to the student upon their first recorded enrollment in Oklahoma schools. For a secondary-level student entering an Oklahoma school for the first time from another country, the following rules would apply:

If the student enters **at any point** over the school year and is initially enrolled in:

- 9th Grade- Graduation cohort year is the current school year plus three years
- 10th Grade- Graduation cohort year is the current school year plus two years
- 11th Grade- Graduation cohort year is the current school year plus one year
- 12th Grade- Graduation cohort year is the current school year

**Note that a student's graduation cohort year cannot be modified once it has been initially determined by the Accountability Reporting system.**



## Example 1

A 16 year-old student enters an LEA from another country, presents limited documentation, and is enrolled in the 10th grade based on reported age. After completing all measures to determine existing credit (e.g., transcript translation and review, content-area assessment(s), portfolios, projects, etc.), the LEA reassigns the student to the 9th grade to allow sufficient time to attain the credits necessary for high school graduation. Regardless of the subsequent change in grade level, the Accountability Reporting system determined the student's graduation cohort year based on the rule for a student entering in the 10th grade (noted above). The subsequent reclassification of the student to the 9th grade does not change the initially determined graduation cohort year, which the student is now likely to exceed.

## Example 2

A 16 year-old student enters an LEA from another country, presents limited documentation, and is enrolled in the 9th grade until all measures to determine existing credit have been completed (e.g., transcript translation and review, content-area assessment(s), portfolios, projects, etc.). After all existing credit has been determined, the student is reassigned to the 10th grade. Based on the initial enrollment, the Accountability system determined the student's graduation cohort year based on the rule for a student entering in the 9th grade (noted above). The subsequent reassignment of the student to the 10th grade does not change the initially determined graduation cohort year, which the student is now likely to meet.

Given the examples above, best practice would dictate that in cases where a student:

- Is initially enrolling in an Oklahoma school from out-of-country and has no previous enrollment record in U.S. schools;
- Will initially enroll in a site serving 9th grade students or above;
- Presents transcript documentation that will require district translation and/or additional measures to determine any existing credit that may be applied toward state graduation requirements;

The student should be initially enrolled in the 9th grade until all measures to determine existing credit have been completed. If justified, the student may then be moved up to the appropriate grade level at local discretion. **Note that this guidance is valid ONLY in cases where the enrolling student meets ALL THREE criteria noted above.**

