



Larry Hogan
Governor

Boyd K. Rutherford
Lt. Governor

Mary Pat Seurkamp, Ph.D.
Chair

James D. Fielder, Jr., Ph. D.
Secretary

Bill Number: House Bill 966

Position: Letter of Information

Title: Higher Education - Academic Credit for Prior Learning Examinations - Policies and Procedures

Committee: House Appropriations Committee

Hearing Date: March 8, 2022

Bill Summary:

House Bill 966 requires each public institution of higher education, on or before October 1, 2022, to develop and implement policies and procedures for awarding academic credit for prior learning examinations; and requiring each public institution of higher education and the Maryland Higher Education Commission to post the policies and procedures on their websites.

Information:

We provide this letter of information on two specific elements of HB966: exceptions regarding minimum standards and data collections.

First, MHEC will likely need to adopt regulations to effectively implement the examination requirements of House Bill 966. More specifically, MHEC will need to clarify what is sufficient “evidence” that a score higher than a 3 on an AP exam and higher than 50 on the CLEP is necessary for a student to be successful in a particular course. Additionally, MHEC will need to establish a process for the Commission to review such evidence. We presume that the legislative intent is that MHEC would have the authority to deny an institution from implementing a higher standard; if that is not legislative intent, we welcome an opportunity to discuss. MHEC will also need to establish procedures and processes (likely through regulations) for institutions to establish minimum scores for Cambridge exams and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program Exam. To do all regulatory work, MHEC may need to convene a workgroup of relevant stakeholders to review proposed regulations and further discuss details of implementation.

Second, we currently do not collect the specific data outlined in House Bill 966. To undertake the collection of credit for prior learning data (particularly for specific exams) will take some time. We estimate that it will take at least one year to (a) develop the collection requirements, (b) establish statewide definitions, and (c) standardize collection and reporting procedures. Again, MHEC would likely convene a workgroup of relevant stakeholders to determine the collection processes, timeline, and deadlines. It is likely that institutions may not be systematically collecting credit for prior learning data and additional time must be considered to allow institutions to begin/improve these processes (in alignment with HB966).

To reiterate, The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) found in its analysis of implementing credit for prior learning that “there is currently no established protocol within higher education to categorize and track prior learning assessment data. Without such a standard, institutions and systems are spending time and resources to determine their own methods for tracking data, if they track it at all.” (CAEL, PLA Data Tracking: Proposing a Model

for Institutional Tracking and Reporting of Credit Earned through Prior Learning Assessment, 2016)

Once a data collection is underway, it is important to note some limitations of the data collection as outlined in House Bill 966. We will have little insight into how credit for prior learning may or may not be applied to institutional or programmatic requirements over the course of a student's enrollment. For example, a student can change their major and in doing so can change how credit for prior learning is applicable to specific graduation requirements. These data can only be elicited at the time of graduation, as that is when institutions perform an award or degree audit indicating what credit was applied toward specific graduation requirements.

For additional information, please contact Dr. Emily Dow, Assistant Secretary for Academic Affairs, at emily.dow@maryland.gov for more information.