

The 2025-6 AP Credit Sub-Committee's charge was to "Support institutions in adopting an AP score of 3 for all courses granting credit, including sharing College Board recommendations, institutional experiences with score changes, and methods for collecting data to support score recommendations for specific courses and programs." The Sub-Committee met two times during the 2025-6 academic year, once on October 28th, 2025 and once on March 9th, 2026. Both meetings were conducted remotely via. Zoom. What follows is a summary of the topics discussed and initial findings and outcomes.

1. 2020-2 Recommendations and Empirical Data. The 2025-6 AP Credit Sub-Committee began its first meeting by reviewing the 2020-1 AP Credit Sub-Committee's Recommendations. These included the recommendation that all state institutions set AP score expectations at 3 for all courses. Although the 2020-1 recommendations were sent to the Chair of Council of University Chief Academic officers in January 2021, follow-up had been limited and most four-year institutions still had minimum AP scores higher than the recommended score of 3 (Alabama community colleges have a minimum score of 3 for credit awards for all exams). In discussion, Sub-Committee members noted that program faculty are a common source of resistance to lowering minimum AP scores. A faculty concern noted by some Sub-Committee members is that a score of 3 in many AP discipline tests does not reflect a level of mastery comparable to that had by a student who takes the corresponding course at a four-year institution. The Sub-Committee discussed the need for data supportive of adopting a score of 3 for a credit award. Consequently, the Sub-Committee reviewed some of the empirical literature investigating the relation of AP credit awards on factors such as college attendance, subject performance, and college completion. A number of early studies by the College Board, which offers the AP program, found that AP exam participation is predictive of positive outcomes in these areas. However, these early studies have subsequently been criticized for failing to control for potentially confounding variables such as student socio-economic status or academic. The Sub-Committee thus reviewed the results of some more recent studies, conducted by independent researchers, that have found a modest but positive effect of AP participation on both college admission rates and on bachelor's degree attainment rates, provided that, at a minimum, the AP test was taken, or that some college credit was awarded to the AP program participants.

2. Statewide AP Credit Spreadsheet. Alabama Transfers staff members assisted the 2025-6 Sub-Committee by creating a spreadsheet showing all score minimums and credit awards for all AP exams accepted for credit by Alabama public institutions. After reviewing the spreadsheet, the Sub-Committee observed the following: (i) Regional institutions tend to have lower overall AP score requirements; (ii) Art, History, and Chemistry tend to have the highest AP score requirements state-wide; (iii) Institutions differ regarding how much credit they grant with a score of "3". It was observed that some institutions, e.g. the University of Alabama, offer some way to get at least one course credit in major areas with a score of "3" for most AP exams. The Sub-Committee observed that given the empirical finding noted above that credit-granting policies are the main driver of improved graduation outcomes for AP students, finding ways to provide at least some credit for an AP score of '3', as UA is close to doing, may allow most of the benefit of AP programs to be realized by Alabama students.

3. Sample Course Grade by Prerequisite Dashboard. The Sub-Committee viewed an example dashboard created at the University of South Alabama which shows aggregate and average course grades for a given course by course prerequisite (AP, IB, CLEP, Transfer Credit, course taken at South Alabama, etc.) for courses that allow AP to fulfill prerequisites for the course. This provides an alternative way of viewing the performance of AP credit recipients relative to other students. For most courses at South

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Alabama with an AP prerequisite, students meeting a prerequisite with an AP score out-perform all other students in the successor course, including for courses accepting an AP score of “3”.

4. AP Transfer Challenges. The Sub-Committee discussed the specific case of transfer students who have met a prerequisite requirement for a course with an AP score of “3” or “4” at an institution, successfully completed the successor course at that institution, and then transferred to another institution that does not accept the original AP score for the prerequisite. There was general agreement among Sub-Committee members that students in this situation should not be asked to take the prerequisite course at their new institution, but there is no state-wide policy requiring this.

2025-6 Sub-Committee Outcomes/Ongoing Projects

At its second meeting, the Sub-Committee discussed, but has not yet approved, some possible recommendations, including:

- i. Tracking secondary credit outcomes by monitoring student performance in successor courses at more institutions.
- ii. Encouraging institutions to offer some college credit with an AP score of “3”, even if it is only a single course.
- iii. Recommending a statewide policy on transfer students who pass a successor course at a prior institution with a lower AP score than that accepted by the receiving institution.