Civic Literacy Guidance

*In accordance with Board Regulation 8.006*

*Updated May 16, 2022*

# Background

In 2017, the Florida legislature amended section 1007.25, Florida Statutes, and introduced a new civic literacy requirement for all students graduating from a public Florida institution, the State University System (the System) or Florida College System (FCS). Beginning in fall 2018, students entering a Florida public postsecondary institution for the first time would need to demonstrate civic literacy by either taking a certain course or passing an exam. The 2021 Legislature further amended Florida Statutes, requiring students to complete both a civic literacy course and civic assessment. As a result, there are three cohorts of students currently matriculating at Florida public institutions subject to varying requirements. As demonstrated in Table 1, the exact civic literacy requirements are based on the academic term in which a student first enrolled in a Florida public institution.

**Table 1: Civic Literacy Requirements by Cohort of Students**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Students Included in Cohort** | **Civic Literacy Requirement** |
| Cohort 1 | Students first entering the System or FCS prior to fall 2018 | None |
| Cohort 2 | Students first entering the System or FCS in fall 2018 – summer A 2021 | Complete a course ***or*** exam |
| Cohort 3 | Students first entering the System or FCS in summer B 2021 and thereafter | Complete ***both*** a course ***and*** exam |

Additionally, the 2021 Legislature made two additional exceptions: approving the use of accelerated mechanisms for meeting the course competency requirement and exempting high school students who pass the Florida Civic Literacy Examination in high school from the postsecondary exam requirement. These two changes are in effect for Cohort 3 only.

# Meeting the Civic Literacy Requirement

All undergraduate degree-seeking students who enroll in a Florida public institution in fall 2018 and thereafter must demonstrate civic literacy. Although Table 2 provides details on which options meet which competency, students in Cohort 2 need only complete either the course or the exam competency as noted above.

**Table 2: Current Options for Cohorts 2 and 3**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Options** | **Score** | **Meets Course Competency** | **Meets Exam Competency** |
| Courses | | | |
| POS X041 if taken after fall 2018 *(including dual enrollment if taken after fall 2018)* | Passing grade | X |  |
| AMH X020 if taken after fall 2018 *(including dual enrollment if taken after Fall 2018)* | Passing grade | X |  |
| Accelerated Mechanisms | | | |
| Advanced Placement Government and Politics: United States Exam | 3 | X | X |
| Advanced Placement United States History Exam | 4 | X | X |
| CLEP American Government Exam | 50 | X | X |
| Additional Assessments | | | |
| U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Naturalization Test  – Civics (U.S. history and government) with supplemental questions | 60 |  | X |
| Florida Civic Literacy Examination | 60 |  | X |

The 2021 Legislature also amended section 1007.25, Florida Statutes, allowing all accelerated mechanisms to count towards meeting civic literacy course requirements. However, some of the accelerated mechanisms identified in Table 3 did not include the competencies identified by the faculty committee. As a result, these exams will satisfy the course requirement but not the exam requirement.

**Table 3: Current Options for Cohort 3 Only**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Accelerated Mechanisms** | **Score** | **Meets Course Competency** | **Meets Exam Competency** |
| Cambridge AICE History, U.S. History, c.1840-1990 (A-Level) | A-E | X |  |
| CLEP History of the United States II: 1865 to Present | 50 | X |  |
| IB History: History of America | 5-7 | X |  |

# Frequently Asked Questions by Topic

**Students Subjected to the Requirement**

1. **How do the course and exam requirements apply to students who transfer to a System institution?**

Out-of-state students transferring to a System institution during the 2021-22 academic year or thereafter, who have never previously enrolled in a public Florida postsecondary institution, will be under the new civic literacy requirements and must meet both the course and exam requirements. If the out-of-state transfer student has already taken an equivalent to POS X041 or AMH X020, the institution should review the prior course syllabus to determine if the course contains the required course competencies outlined in Board Regulation 8.006. The same procedures would apply to students transferring from private institutions during the 2021-22 academic year or thereafter who have never previously enrolled in a Florida public postsecondary institution.

For in-state students or students that have been previously enrolled in a Florida public institution and are transferring back to a System institution, the institution should refer to Table 1 in this document to determine their cohort and civic literacy requirements.

1. **If a student received an associate degree from an FCS institution prior to fall 2018 and is enrolled in a baccalaureate program beginning fall 2018 or after, does this requirement apply?**

No, because the initial enrollment in a Florida public institution was prior to fall 2018.

1. **How does this requirement apply to dual enrollment students?**

Enrollment in a Florida public institution prior to graduating from high school does not exempt a student from having to meet the civic literacy requirement. These students would still be considered first-time-in-college upon their enrollment in a Florida public institution.

1. **How will universities know if a student transferring between public institutions within the state of Florida has met the civic literacy requirement?**

Transcripts in FASTER have been modified to include several indicators. There are three fields for civic literacy requirements.

* **Cohort 2:** Students in cohort 2 will satisfy the civic literacy requirement by taking either a civic literacy course or an exam. For these students, there is a general civic literacy competency indicator where yes, no, or not applicable can be selected.
* **Cohort 3:** Students in cohort 3 must complete both the civic literacy course and exam. For these students, there are two indicators: civic literacy course completion and civic literacy assessment requirement. Both indicators have the same yes, nor, or not applicable options.

1. **Does the civic literacy requirement apply to students seeking a second baccalaureate?**

If a student has never enrolled in a Florida public institution prior to fall 2018, yes. For students who enroll for the first time in fall 2018 and thereafter, refer to Table 1 in this document to determine their cohort and civic literacy requirements.

1. **Beginning in fall 2021, Florida high school students who take the United States Government course must take the Florida Civic Literacy Examination. If they pass, these students are exempt from the postsecondary exam requirement. How will postsecondary institutions be made aware of a student’s performance on this exam?**

The secondary FASTER transcripts will be updated to reflect if the student passed the civic literacy assessment.

**Civic Literacy Options**

1. **What qualifies as synchronous debate?**

All sections of eligible courses (POS X041 and AMH X020), regardless of the mode of delivery, must provide opportunities for synchronous discussions at least every other week when offered during the fall and spring terms. Courses offered during the summer should provide the equivalent minimum number of opportunities.

1. **What if my institution’s course-level outcomes for POS X041 or AMH X020 do not align with the competencies in statute?**

According to section 1007.25(5)(b), Florida Statutes, courses identified as satisfying the civic literacy requirement, in this case, POS X041 and AMH X020, must align with the competencies listed in the subsection beginning in fall 2018. Institutions should follow internal procedures to modify course outcomes to align with the competencies and work with the Office of Articulation to update the course profile(s) in the Statewide Course Numbering System database.

1. **What if my institution’s POS X041 or AMH X020 course did not provide students with opportunities to engage synchronously in political discussions and civil debates with multiple points of view and to master the ability to synthesize information that informs civic decision-making?**

According to section 1007.25 (5)(b)(1), Florida Statutes, courses must include such opportunities to be eligible to meet the civic literacy requirement beginning with courses offered during summer B 2021.

1. **What if POS X041 or AMH X020 do not align with a student's approved program of study?**

If POS X041 or AMH X020 do not align with a student’s program of study, the options available will depend on the student’s first entry into a Florida public institution:

* **Cohort 2:** The institution should encourage the student to consider demonstrating competency through one of the approved assessments to avoid possible excess credit hours.
* **Cohort 3:** Academic advisors should inform students of the graduation requirement to complete both a civics literacy course and civics literacy assessment and work to include POS X041 and AMH X020 as part of the general education requirements to avoid excess hours.

1. **What if an institution does not offer POS X041 or AMH X020?**

Students in Cohort 2 may take an approved exam in lieu of these courses, or they have the option to take POS X041 and AMH X020 at a Florida college or university outside their home institution through the Transient Student Admission Application on Florida Shines (located at: <https://www.floridashines.org/web/guest/succeed-in-college/take-a-course-at-another-school>). Students should contact their institution for more information.

Students in Cohort 3 have the option to take POS X041 and AMH X020 at a Florida college or university outside their home institution through the Transient Student Admission Application on Florida Shines (located at: <https://www.floridashines.org/web/guest/succeed-in-college/take-a-course-at-another-school>). Students should contact their institution for more information.

1. **What are the costs associated with the CLEP and AP exams?**

The costs of exams are subject to change and costs may vary by testing center. Consult the [AP](https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/) or [CLEP](https://clep.collegeboard.org/) websites or the institution’s testing center for up-to-date information.

Some school districts may offset the cost of AP exams to students, so individual prices may vary. AP exams are only offered to high school students. Students should contact their high school for more information.

1. **Why does AMH 2010 not meet the course requirements?**

In 2017, a faculty workgroup convened to review courses and exams, and it was determined that AMH 2010 does not currently meet the competencies required by section 1007.25 (5)(b)(2), Florida Statutes.

**Assessments**

1. **Which exams satisfy the civic literacy assessment requirement?**

Students enrolled in a Florida public postsecondary institution must receive a passing score on the Naturalization Test – Civics (U.S. History and Government) or the Florida Civic Literacy Examination.

1. **Are there any exemptions for the civic literacy assessment requirement?**

Beginning with 2021-22 Academic Year, students enrolled in a Florida public secondary school taking the United States Government course are required to take the Florida Civic Literacy Examination. If a student achieves a passing score on the exam, the student is exempt from taking the exam at the postsecondary level. Other accelerated mechanisms that will count towards the exam requirement are identified in Table 2.

1. **How can the institution access the Naturalization Test – Civics (U.S. History and Government)?**

An authorized System institution representative may obtain an approved version of the assessment from Florida Virtual Campus at no cost to the institution.

1. **How can the institution access the Florida Civic Literacy Examination?**

The Florida Civic Literacy Examination is offered through Cambium Learning, Inc. Each institution has identified an institution test administrator. This individual is responsible for assigning institutional roles and training exam proctors. If you have recently assumed the role of institution test administrator and need access to the Test Information Distribution Engine, please contact the Board office for assistance. Additional information for institution test administrators can be found on the [Florida Statewide Assessment](https://fsassessments.org/resources/florida-civic-literacy-examination) website.

1. **How many questions from the test bank of the Naturalization Test – Civics (U.S. History and Government) should be given to students?**

Institutions must administer all 100 questions of the Naturalization Test – Civics (U.S. History and Government), which includes supplemental questions developed collaboratively by the Board of Governors’ office staff, the Florida College System office staff, and the Lou Frey Institute and incorporated into the test. An authorized System institution representative may obtain an approved version from the Florida Virtual Campus.

1. **What format will universities and colleges use to administer the Naturalization/Citizenship Test – Civics (U.S. History and Government)?**

Institutions may choose to administer the approved version of the Naturalization/Citizenship Test – Civics (U.S. History and Government) in any format. Test administration can be given in, but not limited to, a learning management system (LMS), a paper-based examination, or another format that is designed to meet the needs of students with special needs. Institutions should ensure that the test is administered in a manner that maintains the integrity of the test and its content.

1. **What format will universities and colleges use to administer the Florida Civic Literacy Examination?**

The Florida Civic Literacy Examination must be administered through the Cambium system and cannot be transported to a learning management system. The exam must also be proctored. There are tools within the Cambium system that allow the exam to be proctored remotely.

For students with a documented need, an institution test administrator can order the following through the Test Information Distribution Engine.

* Regular print test book and answer book
* Large print test and answer book
* One-item-per-page test and answer materials
* Uncontracted UEB Braille materials
* Contracted UEB Braille materials

1. **What is the cost of administering either the Florida Civic Literacy Examination or the U.S. Naturalization/Citizenship Test – Civics (U.S. History and Government)?**

There should be no cost to students for the test itself. Postsecondary institutions may incur costs as a result of offering the Florida Civic Literacy Examination.

1. **Will institutions be required to keep a record of each student’s score on either the Florida Civic Literacy Examination or the U.S. Naturalization/Citizenship Test – Civics (U.S. History and Government)?**

Yes. Institutions are required to maintain records of each student’s final passing score on the test. The scores, however, will not be noted on the transcript.

1. **What happens if a student fails either the Florida Civic Literacy Examination or the Naturalization Test – Civics (U.S. History and Government)?**

Institutions will develop and implement their own internal policies regarding test administration, including the number of attempts available to students. Students should contact their institution directly for more information.

1. **How many attempts does a student have to successfully pass either the Florida Civic Literacy Examination or the Naturalization Test – Civics (U.S. History and Government)?**

Institutions will develop and implement their own policies related to test administration, including the number of attempts available to students. Students should contact their institution directly for more information.

1. **Will students who previously took the U.S. Naturalization/Citizenship Test to become a U.S. citizen be considered to have satisfied the Civic Literacy requirement?**

No. Students who took the U.S. Naturalization/Citizenship Test to become a U.S. citizen will not have met the Civic Literacy requirement, as that test does not include the competencies as required by section 1007.25(4)(b)(2).

# Crosswalk of Key Changes by Enrollment Year

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Entry years: AY2018-19-AY2020-21** | **Entry year: AY2021-22 - present** |
| What are the requirements? | Complete ***one*** of the following:   * approved civics course * approved civics exam | Complete ***both*** of the following:   * approved civics course * approved civics exam |
| What if the institution does not offer POSX 041 or AMH X020 | Students may satisfy the requirement through approved exam(s) or take the course at another FCS or SUS institution and transfer the credit. | Students may take the course at another FCS or System institution and transfer the credit. |
| What if POS X041 or AMH X020 do not fit into the student’s course of study? | Students may satisfy the requirement through approved exam(s). | Advisors will need to work with students to devise an appropriate plan of study. |
| What if the course does not provide opportunities to engage synchronously in debate? | This requirement does not apply to courses taken between fall 2018 and summer A 2021. | Courses must include synchronous opportunities. |