

## **Proposal**

Department of World Languages and Cultures

### **Request:**

We request approval to revise Eastern Illinois University's credit policy regarding the Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy. Specifically, we propose awarding:

- 12 credit hours for students who earned the full Seal of Biliteracy, and
- 8 credit hours for students who earned the State Commendation toward Biliteracy.

### **Background:**

The Illinois Seal of Biliteracy is an official recognition awarded by a district/school to graduating high school students who have demonstrated a high level of proficiency in English and in reading, writing, listening, and speaking in another language.

The State Commendation toward Biliteracy is a recognition given by a district/school to graduating high school students who have demonstrated significant progress toward achieving a high level of proficiency in English and in reading, writing, listening, and speaking in another language.

In 2017, Illinois enacted legislation requiring all public universities to award at least 8 credit hours to students who earn the Seal of Biliteracy. EIU currently adheres to this minimum standard.

<https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=101-0503>

### **ISBE Oversight and Program Structure:**

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) oversees the Seal program and provides detailed guidelines, including approved assessments. Participating school districts/schools must apply annually and report student results. The Seal or Commendation graphic is placed on the student's diploma and transcript, with the target language indicated.

<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/seal-of-biliteracy-faq.pdf>

### **Rationale for the Proposed Credit Policy Change:**

- Keeping EIU competitive with other public universities in Illinois. Over the past years several of our peer institutions have moved beyond the state-mandated minimum, offering more generous credit policies. Because ISBE maintains a publicly accessible comparison of Seal policies across institutions, prospective students and high schools can easily evaluate which universities offer the most credit for language proficiency. Updating our policy demonstrates EIU's commitment to attracting and retaining high-achieving, multilingual students. <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/College-Credit-Placement-Seal.pdf>
- Support for Regional High Schools. Regional language educators have emphasized that increased credit incentives strengthen and support their high school language programs and encourage student engagement. They also note that relatively few students in central Illinois attain the full Seal, making recognition of the Commendation particularly meaningful.
- Alignment with University Curriculum. ISBE-approved assessments (such as AP, STAMP, or AAPPL) are based on ACTFL proficiency standards. The full Seal corresponds to Intermediate High (ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines), which we expect in our third-year

courses. The Commendation corresponds to a proficiency level of Intermediate Low (ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines), which matches expectations for our second-year courses at EIU. <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Illinois-State-Seal-of-Biliteracy.aspx>

**Effective Year/Term:** Spring 2026

**Current:**

(2) Illinois Seal of Biliteracy

<https://www.eiu.edu/registra/biliteracy.php>

A student who has received the State Seal of Biliteracy will receive a total of 8 credits (lower division). This is the equivalent of first semester (4 credits) and second semester (4 credits) of language study at EIU.

**Proposed:**

(2) Illinois Seal of Biliteracy **and the Commendation**

<https://www.eiu.edu/registra/biliteracy.php>

A student who has received the State Seal of Biliteracy will receive a total of **8-12** credits (lower division). This is the equivalent of first semester (4 credits), **and** second semester (4 credits), **and third semester (4 credits)** of language study at EIU.

**OR**

**A student who has received the Commendation will receive a total of 8 credits (lower division). This is the equivalent of first semester (4 credits) and second semester (4 credits) of language study at EIU.**

**Date approved by department:** 4/14/2025

**Date approved by CLAS Curriculum Committee:**

**Date approved by CAA:**