Challenge Exam Frequently Asked Questions

LOGISTICS AND TECHNOLOGY

How and when do I register for Challenge Exams?

Instructions on signing up for challenge exams will be sent via email on Friday, May 28. The deadline to register is Friday, June 25. There will not be extensions made to the deadline.

Which exams are offered, and when do the exams take place?

See the Challenge Exams 2021 Schedule for full details on the types of exams offered and the date/time information.

Is there a fee for taking the exams?

There is no cost associated with taking a challenge exam.

Are the exams in person or virtual?

The exams are virtual.

What technology do I need to complete the exam?

Students will need access to a stable internet connection and a supported device to take challenge exams. Students are encouraged in the final week of June to log into the Canvas Challenge exam course to take the challenge exam tech check. Students who do not have a supported device should contact help@northeastern.edu to request a temporary loan.

Challenge exams require students to download and use Respondus Lockdown Browser, which is free to you and will prevent additional applications or browser windows from opening unless indicated by the exam settings and instructions. Students will not need a webcam or microphone to take the Challenge Exams.

Students taking only the English challenge exam or the History challenge exam will not need to use Respondus.

Device requirements for Respondus Lockdown Browser are listed below

- Windows: 10, 8, 7
- Mac: MacOS 10.15 to 10.13
- iOS: 11.0+ (iPad only)

Can I request testing accommodations for the challenge exams?
To discuss any accommodations and submit supporting documentation, please contact the Disability Resource Center at drc@northeastern.edu by Friday, July 2.

EXAM CONTENT AND GRADING

What content is covered on each exam?

The content covered on each exam is provided in the Challenge Exam Topic Areas document, available through the Admitted Student Resources webpage.

Will there be study resources provided?

Yes. Faculty have prepared recommended resources. Please see the Preparation Resources document on the Admitted Student Resources webpage.

What is the format of the exams?

All are multiple choice/short answer except for the English exam which is essay-based.

What is the duration of the exams?

See below for the length of time that each exam is open. All are between 60-120 min except for English, which is open for 72 hours:

- English – 72 hours
- History – 120 min
- Microeconomics – 75 min
- Macroeconomics – 75 min
- Calculus – 60 min
- Chemistry – 90 min
- Biology – 90 min
- Physics – 90 min

How will exams be graded?

Exams will be graded on a credit/no credit basis.

When will I learn the results of my exam(s)?

Exam results will be released in mid-August.

Is there a process to appeal the results of an exam?

No, students are not able to appeal exam results.
Are there opportunities to retake the exam if I miss it or am unsatisfied with my result?
No, exams cannot be retaken under any circumstances.

Are there penalties for not taking an exam or for failing an exam?
No, there are no penalties for not taking an exam or for failing an exam, and it will not appear on your transcript.

CREDIT

What is the difference between AP/IB credit and challenge exams?
The credit awarded for AP scores of 4 or 5 and IB scores of 5, 6, or 7 on Higher Level exams is equivalent to the course credit awarded for challenge exams. If you have achieved or anticipate achieving a 4 or 5 on an AP exam or a 5, 6, or 7 on an IB Higher Level exam, we do not recommend taking a challenge exam in the same topic.

I will have completed a dual credit program for high school by the time these exams are available. I am in the process of finding out which of my classes will successfully transfer over to Northeastern University. Is there a department that can inform me of which challenge exams I will still have the option of taking once my credits go through?
To see if any of your dual enrollment courses have been previously evaluated for credit, please visit our Transfer Equivalency Database. If your course is not listed in the database, it likely has not yet been evaluated for credit. To receive credit for this course, please provide a course syllabus and/or description and have your official college transcript sent to Northeastern. Please note that the course will then be evaluated by faculty for credit, which may not happen prior to challenge exams. We recommend talking with your academic advisor to determine the most appropriate next steps.

What is the process to submit my AP or IB scores?
Please note that we will only award credit if we receive official results sent to us by College Board or the IB Organization. For AP scores, please use CEEB code 3667 when submitting scores. For IB scores, please request for your transcript to be sent to Northeastern by submitting a request through rrs.ibo.org. We advise students to have them sent as soon as possible when they are available in June/July in order to have transfer credit awarded in time to create your Fall schedule. You can view our AP/IB policies here: https://www.northeastern.edu/admissions/application-information/credit/

If I were to fail a challenge exam, will it show on my transcript?
Exams are graded on a credit/no credit basis. If you do not receive credit, this will not be reflected on your degree audit.

Am I able to take challenge exams that are not a part of my major for advanced credits?

You can sign up for challenge exams that are not part of your major requirements, but please keep in mind that the credits will correspond to a specific course at Northeastern. While this credit will count towards your degree, you will also have to successfully complete your major and NUPath requirements.

If I register myself for an exam and ultimately receive AP/IB credit for the equivalent exam when results are released later in the summer can I unregister myself from the challenge exam?

Students will register for challenge exams starting on May 28. If you have already received advanced standing credit through AP, IB or other exams in any of the above topic areas, you should not sign up for that specific challenge exam; credit will not be given for both another exam and a challenge exam in the same topic area. Please note that the challenge exam registration deadline is before AP/IB exam results are released; you should keep this in mind when making your challenge exam selections. While you cannot unregister from an exam and will still see it reflected in Canvas, there is no penalty for not taking the exam.

If I do not register myself for an exam because I am anticipating AP/IB credit for the equivalent exam but I do not earn AP/IB scores that earn transfer credit to Northeastern, can I add a Challenge Exam to my schedule after the June 25 deadline?

We recommend that students sign up for any exam they may possibly want to seek credit for through a Challenge Exam. The deadline to register is June 25 and there will be no deadline extensions granted. As a reminder, there is no penalty for not taking an exam for which you are registered.

Is it possible to receive credit from a challenge exam as well as advanced examination/dual enrollment credit in the same subject area?

To determine this, you need to compare the transfer equivalencies for each course and/or exam. To find the challenge exam equivalencies, see the Challenge Exam Course Equivalency Descriptions. To find transfer equivalencies for other advanced credit, visit the Transfer Equivalency Database.

Example: How do I know if I can receive credit for a Calculus challenge exam as well as AP calculus? The Calculus Challenge Exam has a course code of MATH 1341. You will then need to look up the transfer equivalency of your AP Calculus exam to compare, and you will find that it also has a course code of MATH 1341. The answer is no, you cannot receive duplicate credit for the same course code.
If I am already anticipating receiving 32 credits of exam-based advanced standing credit through AP and/or IB HL, is it possible to earn additional credit through Challenge Exams?

The maximum number of credits that a student can bring to Northeastern through exam-based advanced standing credit is 32. If you will already reach 32 credits through AP and/or IB HL, we do not recommend you take Challenge Exams.

What about credit from dual enrollment or an accredited college or university?

If a student has credits from an accredited college or university, those credits do not count toward the 32 credit maximum and instead follow post-secondary Transfer Credit Policies.

My major requires a course that seems similar to one of the Challenge Exams but is not listed as the main course equivalency. Would it still count toward that requirement?

See the Challenge Exam Course Equivalency Chart for more information on additional Northeastern University courses that are considered equivalent to the Challenge Exam. This chart will be published on our webpage on May 28. After you review the chart, we recommend you connect with your academic advisor with any additional questions.

Example: My major requires MATH 1241. The Calculus Challenge Exam has a listed course equivalency of MATH 1341, but the Challenge Exam Course Equivalency Chart lists MATH 1241 as an additional course equivalency. This means that the Challenge Exam for Calculus would indeed fulfill your MATH 1241 requirement.

For the physics challenge exam, which physics curriculum is being tested? Is it the equivalent of AP physics 1, AP physics 2, or does it also include calculus, such as the equivalent of AP Physics C mechanics or AP Physics C electricity and magnetism exams?

The content covered on each exam is provided in the Challenge Exam Course Equivalency Descriptions.

Does the English exam cover the first-year writing core requirement?

Yes, the English exam will provide credit for the first-year writing requirement.