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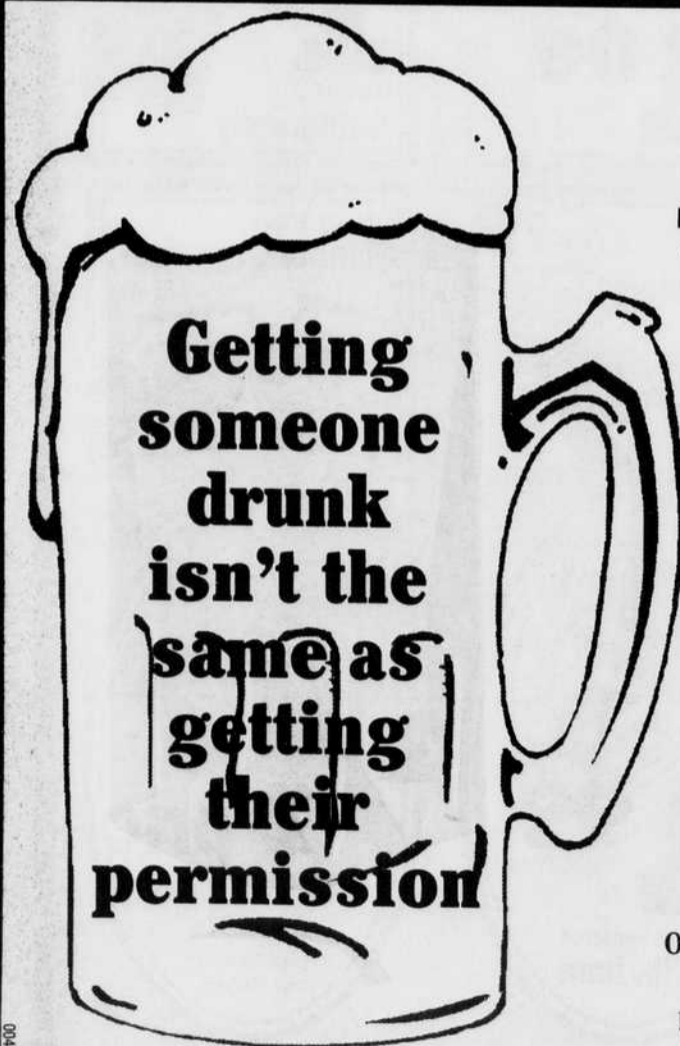


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Testing for credit eases course load

The testing center also offers WR 121 and WR 122 waiver exams

By Leanne Nelms
Associate Editor

The University Testing Center is much more than just the office that inflicts placement tests on incoming students.

Last year, the center administered more than 12,500 exams that helped students enter graduate school, qualify for overseas employment, earn teacher's certifications or even waive University writing requirements.

"In a way, it's a Fred Meyer approach — one-stop shopping," said David Espinoza, testing center psychometrist.

The center offers the usual alphabet soup of national exams — GED and SAT; PRAXIS and CBEST for future teachers; GRE, GMAT and LSAT for graduate or law school hopefuls; and TOEFL and AEIS for non-native-English speakers. "We serve as a clearing house for information about all the national tests," Espinoza said.

In addition, the center also administers waiver exams for WR 121 and WR 122, as well as exams that can help students earn University credit, such as the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP).

Writing waiver exams are offered during the first week of each term. During the two-hour test, students develop a thesis and write an essay — either long-hand or on a computer — in response to a short reading chosen by the writing department, which also scores the essays. The tests are \$3 each and can only be taken once.

While the writing tests merely waive a particular requirement, credit-by-examination programs such as CLEP can actually help students earn credits toward graduation. Espinoza said quite a few students take the Spanish CLEP subject exam in an attempt to fulfill the language requirement for a Bachelor of Arts. In addition to Spanish, subject exams are also available for French, U.S. history, economics, U.S. and British literature, chemistry and calculus, just to name a few.

Espinoza also said CLEP can be a good alternative for students who did not score high enough on Advanced Placement (AP) exams, but still seek some University credit for their learning. "We get people coming in who scored two or threes on AP tests," he said.

According to a flier available at the test center, the University generally grants four to 12 credits for each passing score on CLEP subject examinations and 12 credits for each passing score on CLEP general examinations in areas such as humanities and natural sciences.

Espinoza said other credit-by-examination options available at the testing center include department-approved tests for the second-year German sequence and Introduction to Geography (GEOG 101). Information is also

Upcoming tests

■ **SEPT. 21-25:** Placement testing for incoming students. Consult the Week of Welcome booklet for times and places.

■ **OCT. 1-2:** Writing waiver tests for WR 121 and 122. Advance sign-up required.

■ **OCT. 2:** Registration deadline for Nov. 7 GRE.

■ **OCT. 20:** Registration deadline for Nov. 21 PRAXIS.

■ **NOV. 6:** Registration deadline for Dec. 5 LSAT.

■ **NOV. 6:** Registration deadline for Dec. 5 CBEST.

For more information, contact the center at 346-3230 or visit their Web site at darkwing.uoregon.edu/~testing/. The center is located in Room 238 of the Student Health Center.

SOURCE: University Testing Center

available about the procedure for challenging courses, he said.

Because the University doesn't give direct credit for life experience, writing waiver exams and CLEP are especially valuable for non-traditional students, said Espinoza.

Some other services offered by the testing center include scoring of personality and interest inventories given by the Career Center, providing specific testing arrangements for students with documented disabilities, administering state licensing and certification exams for trades such as plumbing, and providing standardized-testing services for home-schooled children, which Espinoza said has turned into "quite a niche market."

"We wear a lot of different hats," he said. "I think our main goal here is to provide competent service to the University community and the community at large."

One new addition planned for the center is expanded computer-based testing. Recently, the center won a contract with the Educational Testing Service to administer TOEFL, GMAT, the GRE general test, and the PPST section of PRAXIS using computers instead of traditional paper-and-pencil tests. "We've been working on this since '94," Espinoza said.

"We're anticipating being 'installed' by mid-September," Espinoza said. The computer-based testing will be up and running shortly after — "just as soon as the software and hardware is set up and the staff is trained," he said.

Espinoza stressed that even though test-taking is an experience filled with anxiety for many, the testing center is a service working to help University students reach their academic and career goals.

"Primarily, we are a student services operation," he said. "All students are welcome to come here. We have an open-door policy. We stand ready to answer any questions people might have — testing-related or not."

www.uoregon.edu/~ode
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