

## **USA, Advanced Placement Program (APP), General University Entrance Qualification (AP-Empfehlung)**

The Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Research recommends to recognize examinations taken in the framework of the Advanced Placement Program for the purpose of admission to studies in Austria as follows:

### **1. General:**

1. The Advanced Placement Program (APP) is based upon the cooperation between institutions of the secondary sector (high schools) and the tertiary sector (colleges, universities) in the United States of America.
2. The Program is open for scholars and graduates of US secondary schools who are willing and able to show evidence of their knowledge and skills according to the prerequisites set up for post-secondary level. It consists of intensified courses in certain subjects eligible by the persons interested, ending up with final examinations each (AP examination).
3. At present, AP courses and examinations are offered in the following subjects (some of them in a few variants):
  - a) Art
    - Art History
    - Studio Art
  - b) Biology
  - c) Calculus
    - Calculus AB
    - Calculus BC
  - d) Chemistry
  - e) Computer Science
  - f) Economics
  - g) English

- English
- International English Language / APIEL
- h) Environmental Science
- i) French
- j) German Language
- k) Government & Politics
- l) History
  - European History
  - US History
  - World History
- m) Human Geography
- n) Latin
- o) Music Theory
- p) Physics
- q) Psychology
- r) Spanish
- s) Statistics

Grading scale:

- 5: extremely well qualified
- 4: well qualified
- 3: qualified
- 2: possibly qualified
- 1: no recommendation

## **2. Starting-point for the assessment in Austria:**

A certificate proving the completion of a US High School (High School Diploma) will as a rule not be assessed as equivalent to an Austrian secondary school leaving certificate (*Reifezeugnis*) due to permanent legal practice. This corresponds to the practice used in most other European countries.

This fact has led in most European countries to the result that graduates of US High Schools are expected to pass additional qualifications in order to be granted access to higher education. Insofar Austria demands the additional proof of successful studies at an accredited institution of post-secondary education (college or university) to the extent of two years. One academic year comprises, related to the semester system, 30 US credits.

It is evident from the knowledge of US educational system that the solution mentioned under item 2 above effects an equivalent to the standard of European secondary school leaving certificates, that, however, it does not in any case correspond to the actual educational standard of the individual applicant: On the one hand, in the United States there exist some “accredited colleges” with comparably low academic standard; on the other, High School graduates whose high qualification would be sufficient even for an immediate access to university studies are forced to undergo at first some compensation mechanisms merely out of formal reasons.

This situation – i.e. the value of a High School Diploma which is to be assessed generally low, and the merely formal treatment of applicants for university studies in other countries mentioned above – has led the College Board to develop the APP.

The AP system is comparable to the British and the Irish schooling system which focuses on the access to higher education on the basis of Ordinary Level (O-Level) and Advanced Level (A-Level) Examinations. Taking into account the fact that the United Kingdom as well as Ireland are Contracting States to the European Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the Europe (“Lisbon Recognition Convention”), Federal Law Gazette III no. 71/1999), it seems appropriate to make an analogue treatment of APP graduates in respect to the general university entrance qualification.

### **3. Recommendations:**

Referring to the considerations above, it is recommended to assess a US High School Diploma as equivalent to an Austrian secondary school leaving certificate (*Reifezeugnis*) according to art. 64 para. 1 subpara. 3, third indent, of the Universities Act 2002 – UG, BGBl. I no. 120/2002, provided that the holder has passed AP examinations, under the prerequisites defined in items 11 to 14 below.

Provided that the holder has passed at least four AP examinations, each of them being passed with a grade better than 2, and that the subjects passed comprise in any case one language (German Language, English, French, Latin, Spanish) and Calculus, the Diploma should be assessed as equivalent to an Austrian secondary school leaving certificate without

the need to pass additional examinations. If, however, the subjects passed comprise only either one language or Calculus, the Diploma should be assessed as equivalent to an Austrian secondary school leaving certificate after having passed an additional examination in the one of the two subjects (language or Calculus, respectively) not covered by an AP examination.

Provided that the holder has passed at least three AP examinations, each of them being passed with a grade better than 2, and that the subjects passed comprise either one language (German Language, English, French, Latin, Spanish) or Calculus, the Diploma should be assessed as equivalent to an Austrian secondary school leaving certificate after having passed an additional examination in the one of the two subjects (language or Calculus, respectively) not covered by an AP examination.

In case that the holder has passed less than three AP examinations, or that examinations have been passed neither in a language (German Language, English, French, Latin, Spanish) nor in Calculus, the Diploma should not be assessed as equivalent to an Austrian secondary school leaving certificate.

One of the AP examinations passed or of the additional examinations according to items 12 or 13 above should be of substantial relevance for the prospective field of study.

#### **4. Other:**

Further information:

College Board: <http://www.collegeboard.com/>

USNEI: <http://www.ed.gov/NLE/USNEI/>