

Policy Code: 3101 Options to Earn Course Credits for Graduation

The Board of Education shall ensure that all required and elective courses have sufficient rigor, breadth, and depth to be awarded high school credit, in accordance with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study.

A high school principal shall award course credit toward high school graduation based upon a student's demonstration of sufficient mastery of the standards for a course as defined in the NC Standard Course of Study. Current graduation requirements are found in SBE policy [GRAD-004](#).

In its effort to provide a rigorous expanded curriculum that will adequately prepare students for future educational and workplace endeavors, the Board will support the following requirements for students enrolled in the school district who also wish to enroll in classes taught by a college, university, community college, or other approved entity, or to take online or independent study courses in accordance with the requirements of this policy, state law and State Board of Education policy. Approval of alternative options to earn course credits may be requested for credit recovery, fulfillment of graduation requirements, courses not available at our high schools, and/or for acceleration.

A. Career and College Promise

The Career and College Promise program is designed to offer qualified high school students structured dual enrollment opportunities that provide both entry-level job skills as well as pathways leading to a certificate, diploma or degree.

The board, in collaboration with local community colleges, may provide for dual enrollment of a qualified high school student in community college courses through (1) a Career and Technical Education Pathway leading to a job credential, certificate or diploma aligned with one or more high school Career Clusters or (2) a College Transfer Pathway leading to college transfer credits.

The board may also partner with institutions of higher education to establish cooperative innovative high school programs that enable a student to concurrently obtain a high school diploma and (1) begin or complete an associate degree program, (2) master a certificate or vocational program, or (3) earn up to two years of college credit within five years. Students are eligible for these programs beginning in ninth grade.

The board will implement the Career and College Promise program in accordance with a Career and College Promise Partnership Agreement developed as required by State Board of Education Policy [CACP-000](#) and revised annually. The superintendent shall develop any necessary procedures consistent with the partnership agreement, this policy, state law, and State Board policies.

B. Other College Courses and Options to Earn High School Graduation Credit

The superintendent shall develop procedures and requirements for awarding high school credit toward graduation upon request to students who self-enroll in courses taught by a college, university, community college or other approved entity, including online and independent study courses.

1. Credit towards graduation shall be granted only for courses that are consistent with policies and standards of the school district and State Board requirements, including the requirements of State Board policy, [CCRE-001](#), which defines "Course for Credit."
2. State Board policy [CCRE-001](#) states the following courses, including the honors

versions, must be earned through the high school except where indicated otherwise below. State Board policy regulations and guidance also allows LEAs to grant high school credit for graduation courses taken through North Carolina Virtual Public School (NCVPS).

English

- English I: This credit may be earned in middle school;
- English II: This credit shall be earned through the high school;
- English III and IV: These credits may be earned with appropriate college/university course sequences.
 - AP English Language and Composition satisfies the English III credit requirement
 - AP English Literature and Composition satisfies the English IV credit requirement

Math

- NC Math 1, NC Math 2, and NC Math 3: These credits may be earned in middle school;
- The fourth math credit may be earned in middle school or with an appropriate college/university course or course sequence.
 - Pursuant to state graduation requirements, the following Advanced Placement (AP) courses satisfy the requirement for a fourth mathematics credit:
 - AP Calculus AB
 - AP Calculus BC
 - AP Computer Science A
 - AP Precalculus
 - AP Statistics
- Students seeking to complete minimum course requirements for UNC institutions must successfully complete four mathematics courses that include a mathematics course with NC Math 3 as a pre-requisite.

Science

- Earth/environmental science: This credit may be earned in middle school or with an appropriate college/university course or course sequence;
 - AP Environmental Science satisfies the earth/environmental science credit requirement
- Physical science: This credit may be earned in middle school or with an appropriate college/university course or course sequence;
 - AP Chemistry satisfies the physical sciences credit requirement
 - AP Physics (all options) satisfies the physical sciences credit requirement
- Biology: This credit may be earned in middle school or with an appropriate college/university course or course sequence.
 - AP Biology satisfies the Biology credit requirement

Social Studies

- American History: This credit may be earned prior to grade 9 as part of an accelerated plan or with an appropriate college-level course(s). This graduation credit may be earned by taking AP US History;
- The Founding Principles of the United States of America and North Carolina: Civic Literacy: This credit may be earned prior to grade 9 as part of an accelerated plan or with an appropriate college-level course(s); This graduation credit may be earned by taking AP United States Government and Politics as long as the course covers the specific topics mandated by law ([NCGS 115C -81.45\(d\)](#)).
- World History: This credit may be earned in middle school or with an appropriate college/university course or course sequence. This graduation credit may be earned by taking AP World History: Modern.
- Economics and Personal Finance: This credit shall be earned in high school, grade 9 and beyond. No substitution course is allowed per State Board of Education policy.

Health and Physical Education

- The health and physical education credit may be earned with an appropriate college/university course or course sequence;
- The CPR requirement may be met through instruction in the middle school; or by providing documentation of successful completion of an instructional program and/or test approved by the American Heart Association or the American Red Cross.

Electives and other credits

- Elective credits may be earned with an appropriate college/university course or course sequence; World Language credits may be earned in middle school or with an appropriate college/university course or course sequence. It is strongly recommended that students seeking admission to UNC institutions successfully complete two credits of a single world language.
- Credit requirements added in the future may be earned in middle school for disciplines where such credit is currently allowed (English, math, science, social studies, and world languages), or with an appropriate college/university course or course sequence, unless explicitly prohibited in this or other State Board of Education policies.

Note: Graduation requirements are determined when a student enters Grade 9 for the first time. High school courses may be taken prior to Grade 9 with an accelerated plan as outlined above for high school course credits. These credits may satisfy specific graduation course requirements if those courses are part of the graduation requirements as outlined in [GRAD-004](#) when a student enters Grade 9.

3. Students may earn dual credit for any high school course and meet graduation requirements using an appropriate college course or combination of college courses. Principals shall award dual credit according to the Career and College Promise program guidelines established by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). For courses not addressed by DPI guidance, a principal may award dual credit for a college course if an evaluation of the course content against the NC Standard Course of Study requirements demonstrates that the college course offers substantial coverage of the high school course standards.

Prior to 2018-19 academic school year, college and university courses shall earn high school dual credit as specified below:

Semester Hours Credit***	High School Credits
1-4*	1
5-8**	2
9 or more**	3

* For college courses having an associated lab component (such as math or foreign language lab), the combination of the course and the lab count as a single course and earn one credit only.

** These occur only in certain Career and Technical Education courses.

*** High school credit applies to college courses in college curriculum programs.

Beginning with the 2018-19 academic school year, college and university courses shall earn high school dual credit as specified below:

College Semester Hours Credit	High School Credits
1-2	0
3-4	1
5-8	2
9 or more	3

College credit is determined by the course credit value indicated officially by the college system, such as, the Combined Course Library for the NC Community College System. College class hours and lab hours shall not be combined to equal high school course credit. However, college course credit may be combined when two or more courses of one or two semester hour credits are taken in the same academic year.

High school credit applies to college courses in college curriculum programs.

Effective 2019-20, high school credit may be awarded for articulated Career and College Promise (CCP) Workforce Continuing Education pathways that have been approved by the CCP Leadership Team (CCPLT) and do not duplicate efforts by the high school. The CCPLT consists of representatives from NCDPI Career and Technical Education Advanced Learning and Gifted Education Divisions and Community College System Office representatives from Workforce Continuing Education, Career and Technical Education, and Academic Programs.

4. Students in grades 6-8 who pass English I and/or mathematics, science, social studies, or world language courses that are described in and aligned to the North Carolina

Standard Course of Study for grades 9-12 may use the course(s) to meet high school graduation requirements. Such course(s) shall count toward meeting graduation requirements and the number of credits required to graduate, and shall appear on the high school transcript. These courses shall not be included in the calculation of students' high school Grade Point Average (GPA). Student GPA shall be computed only with courses taken during high school.

5. To receive credit toward high school graduation, the provider from which the course is offered must provide such essential information as is generally included in official transcripts of school records. In the case of independent study credit, it will be the responsibility of the designated teacher to provide the information.

6. This information includes:

- a. identification of content of subject matter covered;
- b. expected time required to complete course objectives;
- c. the student's achievement or performance level in the course; and
- d. a syllabus that includes course goals, objectives, course activities, and grade requirements must be provided.

7. Alternative high school course providers must be approved by the leader of the Instructional Services Department after a curriculum review process. Principals and parents may request approval for additional course providers. Parents must submit their request through the principal, who will forward the request to the leader of the Instructional Services Department. Approved providers will be listed in the Policy Regulations Code 3101-R.

8. The course must be approved by the principal or principal designee in advance of the student's enrollment. Prior to granting approval, the principal shall determine whether the course qualifies for credit toward graduation in accordance with procedures and requirements developed by the district.

9. The parent or guardian of the student must give permission for enrollment in an alternative option course and the student must complete any forms required by the school district.

10. Except as provided elsewhere in this policy, all fees, charges, and transportation required of the student are the responsibility of the student and the parent or guardian.

11. Enrollment of a student in an alternative option course, including a university, college course, dual enrollment course, or online course is the responsibility of the student and his/her parent or guardian.

12. School counselors will provide guidance to students on alternative options to earn course credit for graduation and ensure they select the appropriate courses.

13. The school Online Learning Facilitator is responsible for coordinating enrollment, monitoring progress, and administering tests for students enrolled in online courses, as well as supervising students enrolled in school-based credit recovery courses.

14. A highly-qualified teacher is responsible for supervision, instructional support, and

assessing learning for students enrolled in independent study.

15. Students may not enroll in alternate options for courses that require an End-of-Course (EOC) test unless the curriculum is the NC Standard Course of Study. If students enroll in such a course they are required to take the EOC test immediately after having completed the semester-long, year-long, or summer course. The principal must notify the district testing coordinator at the time of enrollment so that testing materials will be available. The approved alternative options (providers) are listed in Policy Regulations 3101-R.

16. Students can enroll in Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses through dual enrollment at community colleges that are not offered at a high school in the district. If the course has a VoCATs test, the student will be required to take the test at their high school upon completion of the course. The CDC must notify the district testing coordinator at the time of enrollment so that testing materials will be available.

17. High school credit, grade, grade point average, and class rank will be awarded in accordance with state and local procedures and requirements (Local Board policies 3400, 3450, and 3460; State Board policy [GCS-L-004](#)).

18. The alternative options to earn course credits described in this policy are limited to high school courses. If parents/guardians of middle school students would like their child to enroll in a high school course for which the student has met the prerequisites, they must request prior approval from the principal. Middle school students who take high school courses for which there is an EOC test are required to take that test and score a Level III or above to receive high school credit.

The principal must notify the district testing coordinator at the time of enrollment so that testing materials will be available. The grade received for a high school course completed in middle school shall appear on the high school transcript but will not be used in the calculation of the student's high school grade point average. Middle school students may only enroll in math and world language high school courses or high school courses that are needed to fulfill the Individual Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP).

C. North Carolina Virtual Public School and Third-Party Course Providers

The superintendent shall develop procedures and requirements consistent with State Board of Education policy and this policy for students enrolling in the North Carolina Virtual Public School (NCVPS) and other third-party courses (e.g., approved online high school courses or approved dual enrollment college courses). To the extent NCVPS courses are made available, they shall be provided at no cost to the student or the student's family.

The district may partner with eligible providers of e-learning opportunities other than the North Carolina Virtual Public School. Eligible providers shall meet all of the following:

- Be accredited by a regional accrediting agency such as, but not limited to, AdvancEd or the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).
- Employ teachers who hold teaching licenses from states that participate in the NASDTEC Educator Identification Clearinghouse.
- Ensure that courses offered to North Carolina students are aligned to the North Carolina Standard Course of Study.

The following procedures apply to enrollment in NCVPS courses and other third-party course providers, including e-learning courses. Students are considered "high school" beginning with

the summer prior to ninth grade.

1. High school students may take a NCVPS course or other third-party course as part of their academic course load or in addition to their academic course load.

High school students shall not enroll in more than eight (8) courses per academic year (July 1 - June 30), including NCVPS courses, or other third-party course options, except as provided below.

High school students may enroll in one NCVPS or other third-party course during the summer session, which must be included in the 8-course maximum per academic year. Enrollment requires prior approval by the principal.

The superintendent shall adopt regulations that may permit an exception to the eight (8) course maximum per academic year for high school students who are overage and/or under-credited and who need additional courses to graduate with their cohort or before aging out of the K-12 public school system.

2. Middle school students may take a NCVPS high school course if the principal gives prior approval because the course is required to continue a sequence in math or world languages or the course is needed to fulfill the Individual Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP); and the course is an approved course for the district middle schools but is not available at the school in the specific year.

3. Schools will administer End-of-Course (EOC) tests, VoCATs tests, or Advanced Placement examinations for students enrolled in NCVPS courses. Students are required to take the appropriate tests. Students taking a NCVPS summer course must take any associated EOC/VoCATs test at an assigned district school during the designated August EOC test administration. Rising 9th grade students enrolled in NCVPS summer courses will take the EOC/VoCATs test at an assigned district school.

4. Access to a computer and Internet access outside of the school day should not be a limitation for students who wish to take advantage of NCVPS courses.

Legal References: [G.S. 115C art. 16 pt. 9](#); [115C-36](#), [-47](#), [-81](#); [115D-5\(b\)](#), [-20\(4\)](#); [S.L. 2011-145](#) sec. 7.1A(a), 7.1A(b), 7.1A(c), 7.1A(k); State Board of Education Policies [CCRE-001](#), [GRAD-004](#)

Cross References: Curriculum Development (Policy 3100), Time for Learning (policy 3300), Student Evaluations (Policy 3400), Class Rankings (Policy 3450), Graduation Requirements (Policy 3460), Extracurricular Activities, Co-curricular Activities, and Student Organizations (policy 3620), Attendance (policy 4400)

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