

Want To Know How You Can Earn College Credit in High School?

Dear Student,

In your Universal Encouragement Program guidance survey, you indicated an interest in earning college credit while you are still in high school.

Earning college credit early can help you explore your interests, experience college-level learning, and make progress toward a degree or career credential. It may also save you time and money, depending on program costs and how your future college applies the credits.

If you are in middle school, you can begin preparing now by learning about these opportunities and planning your high school courses with your counselor.

Ways to earn college credit

Dual enrollment or dual credit. These programs allow you to take college courses while attending high school. In some programs, successfully completing a course earns both high school and college credit. Courses may be taught at your high school, on a college campus, online, or in a hybrid format. The terms *dual enrollment*, *dual credit*, and *concurrent enrollment* can have different meanings locally, so ask how your school's program works.

Advanced Placement (AP). AP courses provide college-level learning in high school. College credit generally depends on your AP Exam score and the college's policy—not simply on passing the course. A qualifying score may earn credit, placement into a more advanced course, or both. Each college sets its own requirements. Explore courses and credit policies at [AP Students](#).

International Baccalaureate (IB). If your school offers the IB Diploma Programme, some colleges award credit or advanced placement for qualifying IB results. Policies vary by college, subject, course level, and examination score. Learn more at [IB University Admission](#).

Credit by examination. Some colleges award credit when you demonstrate college-level knowledge through an approved examination. One option is the College-Level Examination Program, or CLEP, which high school students may take. Colleges decide which exams they accept, the scores required, and the credits awarded. Check those policies before registering at [CLEP](#).

College courses taken independently. Some colleges allow eligible high school students to enroll in individual courses during the school year or summer. Courses may be available in person or online. Ask your counselor whether these courses can also fulfill high school requirements. For online learning, confirm that the course awards actual college credit; a certificate of completion does not necessarily carry credit.

What about SAT or ACT scores?

SAT and ACT scores are generally used for admission and course placement rather than as a standard way to earn college credit. Placement may allow you to begin with a higher-level course, but it does not necessarily award credits toward your degree. Check the college's specific policy.

Questions to ask before enrolling

Your counselor can help you investigate:

- **Eligibility and preparation:** Are there grade-level requirements, prerequisites, minimum grades, or placement tests?
- **Costs:** Who pays for tuition, books, materials, and examinations? Are fee reductions or other assistance available?
- **Workload and support:** How will the course fit with your other classes and responsibilities? Are tutoring and accessibility services available?
- **College records:** Will the course create a college transcript? What happens if you receive a low grade or withdraw?
- **Transfer and degree requirements:** Will the colleges you are considering accept the credit, and how will it count toward your intended program?
- **Documentation:** Will you need to send an official college transcript or examination score report?

The most important question is how the credit will apply. A college might accept a course as an elective without allowing it to fulfill a requirement for your major. Credit that transfers may therefore have a different value depending on your college and program. Check directly with each college's admissions or registrar's office, and ask for help understanding its policies.

You do not need to take every advanced course or earn as many credits as possible. Choose opportunities that fit your interests, preparation, and goals. A manageable course load that helps you learn well is a strong place to start.

Please make an appointment with the counseling office. Bring any subjects, careers, or colleges that interest you. Together, we can identify your options and develop a plan that works for you.

Sincerely,

Your Counselor