

Early College Program Manual

2019-2020

Pursuant to 16 V.S.A § 946 of the Flexible Pathways Initiative, “Early College” means full-time enrollment by a 12th grade Vermont student for one academic year in a program offered by a postsecondary institution in which the college credits apply to secondary school graduation requirements.



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Vermont's Early College Program (ECP)

Through Vermont's Flexible Pathways Initiative, seniors who enroll in Early College Programs will take a full year of college-level courses tuition free. This year not only has the potential to cut students' cost for higher education, but also enables the student to engage in a rich array of college course offerings and experiences that will prepare them for subsequent college years. Vermont Colleges and Universities may apply to the AOE for approval to offer and develop an early admissions program that allows high school seniors to take a full year of college-level classes while completing their high school degree. The Early College Program (ECP) simultaneously serves as a student's senior year of high school and full year of college. Students may take a year-long course of study in any discipline.

The Flexible Pathways Initiative (16 V.S.A § 941) was created to:

1. Encourage and support the creativity of school districts as they develop and expand high-quality educational experiences that are an integral part of secondary education in the evolving 21st Century classroom;
2. Promote opportunities for Vermont students to achieve postsecondary readiness through high-quality educational experiences that acknowledge individual goals, learning styles, and abilities; and
3. Increase the rates of secondary school completion and postsecondary continuation in Vermont.

Management of the Program

The Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) has oversight of the Early College Program. The Early College Program established by Act 77 expands upon the Vermont Academy of Science and Technology (VAST) model. The Vermont Early College Program is structured differently than the VAST model, which can act as both an early college program and high school (i.e., students can be concurrently enrolled and receive a high school diploma from VAST). However, students who choose not to attend VAST as a diploma-granting institution must disenroll from high school in order to participate in the ECP. And, unlike students attending VAST, students in the ECP at other postsecondary institutions must re-enroll in high school during the spring semester in order to receive a high school diploma. Secondary schools are therefore responsible for helping eligible students prepare for Early College as part of the PLP process, ensuring the college coursework satisfies graduation requirements and appears on the high school transcript, and awarding the high school diploma.

Who do I contact for Questions?

All questions related to the Early College Program should be directed to:

[Toni Marra](#), AOE or 802-479-1302

Student Eligibility and Readiness

Student Eligibility

Students are eligible to access the Early College Program if they:

- Are a resident of Vermont
- Are a 12th grade student
- Have permission from their high school principal/Home study program
- Have the Early College element written into their Personalized Learning Plan. (For home study, the student and parent or guardian are responsible for developing the PLP) and it must be submitted to the Agency of Education.

Readiness

The criteria and process for determining if a student is ready for postsecondary classes is currently determined at the high school, often in partnership with the approved colleges.

Limitations

Since the Early College Program is designed to replace a student's senior year, Dual Enrollment vouchers/Fast Forward tickets may not be used at the same time students are enrolled in Early College. Dual Enrollment /Fast Forward vouchers may be used PRIOR to early college but not during or after early college completion.

What is the process for students who wish to participate in the ECP?

- High School students must have Early College (EC) written into their Personalized Learning Plan (PLP). To support planning for EC, refer to the *VT Flexible Pathways Tool: Considerations for Student Participation in a Flexible Pathway* which is designed to support a consistent process for students and their advisors to determine how a flexible pathway opportunity fits within a student's short and long-term goals, how they can prepare for those learning experiences, and to identify the supports they may need to be successful.
- For students in the home study program, the student and parent or guardian are responsible for developing and maintaining the plan and it must be submitted to the Agency of Education.
- The student must apply to one of the partnering colleges. Once accepted in the college, the student:
 - Must have the Principal of the high school approve and sign off that the student is ready for the EC Program. In the case of a home study student, the home study parent confirms the student is ready. **Note: When principals approve participation in ECP, they agree to waive any senior-year mandated courses, projects, or requirements that would only be accessible to enrolled students. It is incumbent on the approving secondary school to ensure the student's intended ECP coursework is in alignment with the school's graduation requirements.**
 - Must disenroll from the high school or home study program;

- Shall be enrolled as a full-time student at the college;
- Is responsible for applicable fees and textbook costs.
- At the end of the school year, the student must re-enroll at their high school to receive their diploma. Home study students do not need to re-enroll in the home study program because they are not issued diplomas (with the exception of home study students in the Vermont Technical College VAST program).

For any 12th grade student enrolled in VAST and/or in any eligible Vermont Early College program, the credits, and grades earned shall, upon the request of the student or the student's parent or guardian, be applied toward graduation requirements at the Vermont secondary school that the student attended prior to enrolling in the Early College program.

Note: The Vermont Academy of Science and Technology (VAST) is an independent high school that issues high school diplomas. VAST students have the option, if they so choose, to earn a diploma from their sending school. In this case, they would need to re-enroll in their sending school prior to receiving their diploma.

What are the differences between the ECP and the VAST Program?

Early College Program

Students receive a high school diploma and complete a year of college at the same time.

Through the Flexible Pathways Initiative (Act 77), Early College is available to eligible Vermont high school seniors tuition-free. In order to participate:

- Students must get permission from their high school principal (or in the case of home study students their parent/guardian);
- Students apply for admission to one of six colleges offering the Early College program;
- Students must enroll in courses full-time for both the fall and spring semesters;
- Courses must satisfy high school graduation requirements so that students graduate from high school at the end of the spring semester;
- Students must disenroll from high school and re-enroll at the end of spring semester to get their high school diploma; and
- Students pay for textbooks, lab fees, materials fees, and any other associated costs.

Specific Questions? Contact the high school guidance counselor or [Toni Marra](#), Agency of Education, or 802-479-1302

Vermont Academy of Science and Technology (VAST) program offered at Vermont Technical College (VTC)

Students receive a high school diploma and complete a year of college through VTC at the same time.

VAST students have the option to get a high school diploma from VAST or VAST and their sending high school. If they choose to receive the sending school diploma, they would need to re-enroll in their sending school to receive the diploma.

- VAST is an independent, accredited high school exclusively for high school seniors. At VAST, students receive a high school diploma and complete a year of college at VTC at the same time.
- VAST is available to Vermont seniors tuition-free (students can apply their junior year).
- Students cover the cost of books and any applicable fees. Some students qualify financially for VTC fee waivers and VSAC grants. VSAC also offers loans to VAST parents.
- VAST students who elect to continue their education at Vermont Tech are eligible to receive the VAST Forward tuition scholarship of \$3,000 per year.
- Areas of focus are math and science but all VTC majors are open to VAST students including undeclared majors.

Specific Questions? Contact [Steve Airoidi](#), Vermont Technical College, or 802-728-1337

Approved ECP Postsecondary Partners – Assurance Form/Agreement

Early College Assurance Forms must be submitted to the Agency of Education with appropriate signatures on an annual basis. Colleges typically receive the agreement in the form of an email from the AOE in the summer.

Sample Assurance Form:

VERMONT EARLY COLLEGE PROGRAM – SAMPLE **Approved Early College Program Postsecondary Partners - Assurance Form**

The Agency of Education and Vermont’s approved postsecondary partners continue collaborating to create a system in which Vermont seniors can complete their final year of high school at a college, tuition free. This program enables students to complete one year of college level coursework, while also meeting the requirements for high school graduation.

Under Act 77, for each 12th grade Vermont student enrolled, the Secretary shall pay an amount equal to 87 percent of the base education amount, but not more than tuition charged by the institution, to an early college program that is approved for operation by the Secretary.

Early College Program Provider Responsibilities:

- A postsecondary institution shall not accept a student into an early college program unless enrollment in an early college program was an element of the student’s personalized learning plan.
- In the event that a student does not successfully complete the early college program, the postsecondary institution shall make every reasonable effort to facilitate the student’s reengagement in the personalized learning plan process in order to determine the most effective pathway to graduation.
- The postsecondary institution shall ensure that all published materials and resources related to the early college program are in accordance with statutory and policy requirements.
- The postsecondary institution shall submit to the Legislature and to the Early College Coordinator at the Agency of Education a copy of the Early College report due in January as required by Statute. (“Notwithstanding 2 V.S.A. § 20(d), any postsecondary institution receiving funds pursuant to 16 V.S.A § 946 of this title shall report annually in January to the Senate and House Committees on Education regarding the level of participation in the institution’s early college program, the success in achieving the stated goals of the program to enhance secondary students’ educational experiences and prepare them for success in college and beyond, and the specific outcomes for participating students relating to programmatic goals.”)
- The postsecondary institution shall comply with Vermont Agency of Education finance procedures for purpose of effecting payment.
- Courses administered through an early college program shall be found in the course catalog of the postsecondary institution and shall not differ in designation, description, or credits.
- Postsecondary institutions shall work with high schools to ensure that the early college program will also meet the requirements for high school graduation.
- Postsecondary institution instructors serving early college program students shall be approved by the respective postsecondary academic department and shall meet the same requirements for teaching the courses as other college faculty.
- Early college program students shall be enrolled as a full-time student in the postsecondary institution receiving payment, and student experience shall be recorded on an official postsecondary institution transcript.
- The postsecondary institution shall ensure that early college program students meet all relevant course prerequisites.

- The postsecondary institution shall provide early college program students with a comprehensive publication that outlines student rights and responsibilities.
- The postsecondary institution shall provide early college program students with an orientation to available student support services.
- The postsecondary institution shall ensure that early college program students are held to the same standards and grading policies as those expected of other students.
- The postsecondary institution will meet the following deadlines for invoicing: November 15, and April 15 by the close of business day. Invoices received after the close of business day will not be reimbursed from the AOE and any costs incurred will be covered by the institution (not the student or parent).
- The postsecondary institution will send high schools a list of enrolled courses for students after the drop/add period.
- The postsecondary institution must be responsible for contacting the high school about dropping/adding courses as these changes may impact the high school diploma.
- The postsecondary institution shall work with student to sign FERPA waiver so that conversations can happen with the sending high school.

The signature of the authorized representative below indicates understanding of and assurance that these responsibilities will be met.

ECP Partners

Castleton University
 Community College of Vermont
 Goddard College
 Northern Vermont University
 Norwich University
 Vermont Technical College/ VAST

Legislative Reporting

Early College Program partners must submit an annual report to the Legislature every January. Each college must report on the following items: the level of participation in the institution's early college program, the success in achieving the stated goals of the program to enhance secondary students' educational experiences and prepare them for success in college and beyond, and the specific outcomes for participating students relating to programmatic goals.

ECP Entry Requirements by Participating College

The following requirements are not comprehensive and may change at any time. Please check with the specific college to be sure of exact requirements.

	Castleton University	CCV	Goddard College	Northern Vermont University	Norwich University	Vermont Technical
Start date for Applications	Rolling	Feb. 15		Nov. 1	Rolling	Feb. 1
Deadline for Applications	Rolling	Aug. 1	July	Closed when full	Feb 1/ Nov 15	Apr. 15 for priority
Application Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Application •Supplement & Assurance forms •Essay •Letter of reference •High School Transcript •PSAT, SAT or ACT scores •Personal Interview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Application •Assurance Form •Accuplacer assessment •Letter of reference •High School Transcript • Essay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Application •Transcripts •Two letters of reference •Essay •Supplemental Materials •Interview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Application •Essay •High School Transcript •Letter of reference •Authorization & Assurance forms •Interview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Application •High School Transcript •SAT or ACT •Resume •Essay •Two Letters of Reference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Application •Essay •PSAT, SAT or ACT scores •Accuplacer assessment •Two Letters of Reference
Notification of Acceptance	Letter	You will be contacted	You will be contacted	You will be contacted	You will be contacted	Rolling, after interview
Required Credits per Semester	12	12	12-15	12	15	15
Contact(s)	Admissions	Natalie Searle	Admissions	NVU Johnson Campus - Joye Lyon NVU Lyndon Campus - Lexi Damato	Admissions	Steven Airoidi or Admissions
Approximate Fees & Costs	Fees: \$1,166 as well as (if applicable) Room and Board	Fees: \$500 and up	Fees: \$1,000 and up as well as (if applicable) room and Board	Fees: \$1,000-\$1,500 as well as (if applicable) Room and Board	Fees: \$4,000-\$5,000 as well as (if applicable) Room and Board	Fees: \$700 and up as well as (if applicable) Room and Board
Housing Available	Yes	No		Yes	Yes	Yes – Randolph campus
Other Information						VAST is an accredited, Independent HS. Students may earn a HS diploma from VAST and may receive a diploma from their sending HS.

ECP Funding and Tuition

In the past, a postsecondary institution receiving funds in connection with the Vermont Early College Program, with the exceptions of VAST and CCV, could not enroll more than 18 Vermont students in the program in one academic year. VAST could not enroll more than 60, and there were no limitations on enrollment in early college at CCV.

In FY18, 16 V.S.A § 947 (b) was added to read: In the budget submitted annually to the General Assembly pursuant to 32 V.S.A chapter 5, the Governor shall include the recommended appropriation for all early college programs to be funded pursuant to section 946 of this title, including the VAST program, as a distinct amount.

Program Tuition - For each 12th grade Vermont student enrolled, the State will pay an amount equal to 87% of the base education amount to:

- Vermont Academy of Science and Technology (VAST); and
- An early college program other than the VAST program that is developed and operated or overseen by one of the Vermont State Colleges, or an accredited private postsecondary school located in Vermont and that is approved for operation by the Secretary.

The state shall make the payment directly to the postsecondary institution, which will accept the amount as full payment of the student's tuition.

Base Education Amount

The base education amount is established in the annual state budget. For FY20 the base education rate is \$10,130, and 87% of that is \$8,813. This amount is intended to cover tuition for both semesters, not each. All participating colleges will be reimbursed at that rate, with the exception of CCV. The CCV tuition rate, depending on the number of credits, can calculate to less than \$8,813.

How is “full time” status defined?

Statute establishing the Early College Program states the following regarding student enrollment and funding.

“Early college means *full-time enrollment*, pursuant to subsection 4011(e) of this title, by a 12th grade Vermont student for *one academic year* in a program offered by a postsecondary institution in which the credits earned apply to secondary school graduation requirements.”

Statute does not offer a definition of “full-time.” As a result, the AOE looks to other sources to inform the definition:

- Many postsecondary institutions establish 12 credits/semester as defining the threshold for full-time enrollment.

- A goal of Early College is for students to complete a freshman year through the early college experience. In most cases, this means 15 credits/semester for two semesters.
- At minimum, the successful completion of the early college experience should also result in satisfaction of secondary school graduation requirements and the award of the diploma.

Therefore, the AOE defines full-time participation in Early College consistent with the post-secondary institution's definition of fulltime enrollment for any matriculated student, in most cases that being between 12 and 15 credits per semester, provided that the successful completion of those credits will lead to graduation from high school. As a result, decisions about the credit load to be undertaken in college should be made, and revised as necessary, through the PLP development/management process. The secondary school is responsible for ensuring that a successfully completed plan will result in graduation. The postsecondary institution is responsible for delivering services in accordance with the plan. Any proposed deviation from the plan should trigger a plan review and approval of a revised plan by the plan partners (i.e., student, high school, parent/guardian).

Invoicing

Invoicing Deadlines

Per signed agreement, the postsecondary institution will meet the following deadlines for invoicing:

- ❖ Fall Semester - **November 15** – by the close of business day
- ❖ Spring Semester – **April 15** – by the close of business day

Invoices received after the close of business day on the above dates will not be reimbursed from the Agency of Education and any costs incurred will be covered by the post-secondary institution (not the student or parent).

Invoice Instructions

Due dates for student enrollment information is on November 15 and April 15. Data is required at this time so that the AOE data management group can ensure these students are not enrolled in any high school.

Columns 1, 2, 5, 6, and 7 must be filled out completely.

Column descriptors

1. **required** - last name
2. **required** - first name
3. **optional** - middle initial
4. **optional** - generation code, e.g., Jr., Sr., II, III, etc.

5. **required** - date of birth, automatic formatting
6. **required** - gender - **this is a dropdown box, but you can type in "M" or "F" directly**
7. **required** - Town of residence - **this is a dropdown menu**
8. **auto-fill** - Town code - **this is an automatic fill-in based on the town of residence**

These are important differentiations when filling out Town of Residence:

Barre City, not Barre

Barre Town, not Barre

Essex Junction ID, not Essex

Essex Town, not Essex

Newport City, not Newport

Newport Town, not Newport

Rutland City, not Rutland

Rutland Town, not Rutland

St. Albans City, not St. Albans

St. Albans Town, not St. Albans

Who do I send the invoices to?

You can submit completed invoices to Brad James at the Agency of Education.

[Brad James](#), AOE or (802) 479-1043

What happens if an institution misses an invoicing deadline?

Invoices received after the close of business day on the above dates will not be reimbursed from the Agency of Education and any costs incurred will be covered by the postsecondary institution (not the student or parent).

Invoicing Specific Information regarding add/drop periods

1. If a student drops out of the program before the add/drop period, then NO invoice should be submitted to the AOE.
2. If a student drops out of the program after the add/drop period, then YES, an invoice should be submitted to the AOE.

What happens if a student falls below full-time status?

If a student is not considered a full-time student by dropping below full-time status, then the student should be disenrolled from the early college program. If an early college student drops below full-time status due to any unforeseen, extenuating circumstance, the [Early College Program Request for Exception](#) form below must be completed by the secondary and/or post-secondary institution for consideration of continuation in part-time status. The AOE (in rare cases) will only pay for the tuition for credits the student has taken. Once the form has been completed, it must be submitted to the Agency of Education for review and approval. Once the decision has been made, all high school and college/university contacts will be notified.

If there are not mitigating circumstances that have been reviewed through an education team process, and the student is not attending full time, then the student must be disenrolled from the Early College Program. If a student falls below full-time status, they have the option to use their two dual enrollment vouchers (if they have not already used them) to cover the cost of at least two courses and they have the option to pay out of pocket for a third course.

The AOE will pay tuition in full for each semester unless it is determined that it must be pro-rated. Prorates can happen on rare exceptions (not the norm; i.e., if accommodations are necessary). Invoices should NOT be pro-rated, and the college should always bill for full time status. The AOE will determine if the invoice amount should be pro-rated or paid in full.

Sample Invoice:

1 Semester		EC Enrollment data due: 15-Nov-17 ** Invoicing Deadlines for FY18: 11/15/17 and 4/15/18 Please e-mail completed file to: Brad James						Column descriptors	
College name				Please use the drop-down box - it matters.		 required		Required, optional, auto-fill	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1.	2.
required	required	optional	optional	required	required	required	auto-fill	required - last name	required - first name
LastName	FirstName	Middle Initial	GenCode	DOB	Gender	ResTown	T code	3.	optional - middle initial
			(Jr/Sr/II/III)	(mm/dd/yyyy)		(Town, not mailing address)		5.	optional - generation code, e.g., Jr., Sr., II, III, etc.
								6.	required - date of birth, automatic formatting
								7.	required - gender - this is a dropdown box, but you can type in "M" or "F" directly
1.								8.	required - Town of residence - this is a dropdown menu
2.									auto-fill - Town code - this is an automatic fill-in based on the town of residence
3.									
4.									
5.									These are important differentiations:
6.									Barre City, not Barre
7.									Barre Town, not Barre
8.									Essex Junction ID, not Essex
9.									Essex Town, not Essex
10.									Newport City, not Newport
11.									Newport Town, not Newport
12.									Rutland City, not Rutland
13.									Rutland Town, not Rutland
14.									St. Albans City, not St. Albans
15.									St. Albans Town, not St. Albans
16.									

Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs)

A Personalized Learning Plan or PLP is defined as: documentation of an evolving plan developed on behalf of a student in an ongoing process involving a secondary student, a representative of the school, and, if the student is a minor, the student's parents or legal guardian and updated at least annually by November 30; provided; however, that a home study student and the student's parent or guardian shall be solely responsible for developing a plan. (16 V.S.A. § 942 (10))

The process of developing and updating a personalized learning plan reflects the discussions and collaborations of a student and involved adults. When students engage in the personalized learning plan process, they assume an active role in the planning, assessment, and reflection required to identify developmentally appropriate academic, social, and career goals.

The plan shall define the scope and rigor of academic and experiential opportunities necessary for a secondary student to complete secondary school successfully, attain postsecondary readiness, and be prepared to engage actively in civic life.

PLP resources and tools to assist schools in the implementation of Personalized Learning Plans are available on the Agency of Education's [Personalized Learning webpage](#).

Special Education Services

Students on an IEP who participate in the Early College Program are no longer eligible to receive special education services from their sending high school. Students with disabilities may be provided reasonable accommodations through a 504 Plan or ADA Plan that allows equal access. If you have questions about accommodations available at a specific college/university, please contact the school directly. Colleges will typically not provide modifications to change course content or performance expectations that would substantially alter the essential elements of their courses. Students must be aware that not all accommodations available at a high school will be available or allowed in college courses. Please contact the college's office of student support services in order to find out more information.

ECP and Free & Reduced Lunch

In order for a student to be eligible to participate in the school meals programs, the student needs to be enrolled in secondary school. Students enrolled in the Early College Program are no longer enrolled in secondary school, and as such are not eligible for free or reduced price meals in the school meals program.

ECP and Extra-Curricular Activities

If a student is in the Early College Program and they are involved in extra-curricular activities at their high school, it is the high school's decision whether the student can continue to participate. If the student wants to play college sports, s/he must check with the Athletics Director at the college to make sure they are eligible to play.

Example: If a student is in the Early College Program and they are involved in JROTC in the high school then the high school would need to agree to let the student continue in JROTC (as the student is unenrolled from high school). However, a student in Early College would be eligible to participate in ROTC at the college as part of the student's college experience.

The high school is responsible for making the final determination of ECP students participating in extra-curricular activities. The [VT Principals Association \(VPA\)](#) also has extra-curricular activity resources available on their webpage.

ECP and Technical Center Programs

We often receive questions about students wishing to enroll in Early College Programs AND be enrolled in technical center programs.

Participation in the Early College Program requires students to disenroll from their high school, apply, and enroll in ECP full-time. However, this does not affect eligibility for enrollment in technical center programs as 16 V.S.A § 1551a(a) and State Board of Education rules already permit unenrolled Vermont students (without a high school diploma) to enroll in technical center programs and have it paid for (through separate funding mechanisms). If the student can manage the workload, and course schedules don't conflict, then enrollment in both ECP and CTE programs may be permitted based on a review of the [Early College Program and Career Technical Education – Concurrent Enrollment Prior Approval Request](#).

Financial Aid and Assistance

Financial Aid:

Below are a few guidelines to support your work with current Early College students who may need financial assistance:

- [VSAC Scholarships](#) identify high school students by the answer to the question "I am a high school Senior"
- VSAC Scholarships identify college students by their year in school
- VSAC Scholarships could award a student completing their first year of Early College scholarships for both high school students and scholarships for returning college students in the same year

- Early College students will receive communication from their college's financial aid office regarding any college specific scholarships and should talk directly to the college Financial Aid office with any specific questions for their continued studies at their host college

Students attending Early College at any of the six participating Vermont colleges should complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and a Vermont Grant application so that they can be considered for a Vermont state grant. Low income students enrolled in these programs may qualify for \$700 to help offset the cost of books, transportation, and fees.

There is now a question on the Vermont grant application where students can indicate that they are enrolled in Early College. Answering this question will help VSAC determine eligibility for the student. If you have additional questions, feel free to contact the VSAC Resource Center at 802-655-9602 or 800-642-3177. Resource Center hours are 8:00 am-4:30 pm, Monday – Friday. Resource Center staff are available to answer questions about current educational loans through VSAC, financial aid, and career and college planning.

Assistance Available for the ECP:

Financial assistance is available to eligible students who enroll in Early College at approved institutions, to be used for any additional expenses that may be incurred, such as fees or housing.

VSAC encourages students enrolled in Early College to complete the FAFSA, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, as well as the Vermont grant application to apply for a Vermont State Grant. If a student qualifies for a Vermont State grant, they may also receive a \$150 stipend as long as funds are available. Grants are disbursed to the college directly while the stipend is sent to the student to use to help defray the costs of books, fees, or transportation.

The Legislature approved \$75,000 to be used for stipends for students enrolled in Early College or taking dual enrollment courses. Funds will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Transferring of Credits to other Colleges/Universities

There is no guarantee that credits will transfer from college to college, whether In State or Out of State.

A conversation should occur with the student (and family) about which credits the student wants to take if they are deciding on attending the early college program. These credits may or may not transfer to other college/universities depending on what their transfer policy is. It is recommended that school counselors contact the college or

university the student is interested in attending in order to determine if courses will transfer and/or what the student will need to submit as supplemental information.

FAQ's

How do students apply for the ECP? Is there a deadline? How will school counselors find this information out?

Students will need their principal or headmasters' approval to apply for participation in the ECP. Once they have received approval, the student would apply and go through the college's enrollment process established by the college.

For a list of colleges approved for the Early College Program and the contact information, visit the [AOE Early College Program webpage](#).

What are the admissions requirements for an ECP student?

Each college has its own admissions requirements that can be found on the college website. ECP students will be held to the same standards as other students seeking admission to that college.

In addition to the college admissions requirements, students must have their principal or headmaster's approval to participate in an early college program.

Who will grant the ECP student a high school degree? (What name will appear on the transcript?)

ECP students will graduate from their sending high school with the exception of students in the Vermont Technical College VAST Program, which is an accredited high school and can grant high school diplomas.

Who ensures that the classes that the ECP student takes will qualify for high school graduation?

The ECP student, high school guidance counselor/advisor/principal, and the ECP director will work together to ensure that the courses taken at the college complete high school graduation requirements.

Can the ECP student take any courses at the college including online courses?

ECP students enroll in courses offered by the college through their published course catalog. ECP students may be required to take orientation courses that are required for all first-year college students at that college, and may be required to take courses for a major that has specific requirements as determined by the academic department directors and/or registrar (e.g. nursing). Any changes that ECP students make to their course selection must be approved by the high school guidance counselor and the college ECP program director to ensure alignment with high school graduation requirements.

Are ECP students required to live on campus?

Many Early College Programs do not offer residential options for early college students. In these cases, ECP students will be responsible for getting themselves to and from the college for classes or other activities.

Are all costs covered?

Only the college tuition is covered. All other college costs such as student support services, room and board (if applicable), and course materials including books and lab fees are billed to the student.

Are ECP students graded in the same way as other college students in the course?

ECP students are held to the same grading standards and assessments (e.g. papers, portfolios, quizzes, labs, etc.) as other students enrolled in that college level course.

Can students return to their high school during the add/drop period if they realize that college is not for them?

Yes. There should be a team at the high school to discuss what makes the most sense for the student.

Does a student have to pass all of their classes to be eligible to continue in the spring semester?

No. If a student is failing a college class – they are considered college students and therefore subject to the college policies (e.g., academic probation, etc.). Note: The College will need to consult with the high school contact, in order to determine impact on completion of graduation requirements.

What if a high school has a student who is currently a junior but they have all of their credits earned, can they graduate early, or would that student be eligible for early college next year?

If the student chooses not to pursue a high school diploma for the spring semester, that student will still be a publicly funded senior, VT resident, without a high school diploma, so yes, that student would qualify for the Early College Program.

Can an EC student repeat a course for a better grade? (Example: the student took A&P and received a “D” ... but wants a higher grade – can they repeat the course in the spring semester)?

Yes, but all parties (the college, high school & the student) have to agree on this. They should be looking at how does repeating a course fit into their PLP and meeting their HS graduation expectations? For example, does the student risk missing a graduation requirement by repeating a course instead of taking a different course?

Can an EC student repeat a course that they used their dual enrollment voucher for (prior to their EC year) in hopes of a higher grade?

This is the same as above and... the high school has a responsibility to look at how successful the student was in a dual enrollment course and that readiness should be a factor in deciding if Early College is the best option for the student their senior year.

Can an EC student (homeschooler) use their second DE voucher to take a summer course following their EC year if their graduation date is not officially until August?

Home study students are no longer eligible when their home study plan with the state expires and is not renewed. Most home study plans are good for one year – unless they are renewed. Plans are valid from July 1 – July 1 so any plans in place now will end on July 1. This would make them ineligible for use of the second voucher in August. Dual Enrollment vouchers are meant to be used prior to the Early College year.

If a student wishes to enroll in more than 30 credits during their EC year, can they pay out of pocket for the additional credits?

Yes

What are the steps for students who are interested in participating in the Early College Program?

Students who are interested in the Early College Program must have the approval of the principal at their high school and must be ready academically for college classes.

If the principal has approved the student, the student must then apply to one of the EC partnering colleges. Once accepted into the college, the student will need to un-enroll from the high school, be enrolled as full-time student at the college, and will be responsible for any applicable fees and textbook costs. There is a piece on the college application that asks students to get a signature from their principal.

The student will graduate with a diploma from their home high school but must be re-enrolled at the end of the school year to get their high school diploma.

The principal must approve the student to participate in the Early College Program and make sure that the high school will count the first year of college as the senior year of high school.

How easy is it for students to amend their PLPs as their interest changes?

Act 77 requires at a minimum a yearly review. The PLP work group recommended that the review process be continuous and updates to the PLP be made based on student need and not just yearly. See the [Conceptual Framework for Adults](#) at or see the [Conceptual Framework for Students](#).

Does college faculty know that these students are high school students?

No. College faculty do not know they are high school students unless the student discloses that information.

Can students participate in our JROTC program as an Early College student?

If a student is in the Early College Program and they are involved in JROTC in the high school – then the high school would need to agree to let the student continue in JROTC (as the student is unenrolled from high school) and include this in the students’ PLP.

If the student is in Early College and they want to participate in ROTC at the college – then yes, the student can do that, as this would be part of the student’s college experience.

Are students still eligible for extra-curricular activities when enrolled in the Early College Program?

If a student is in the Early College Program and they are involved in extra-curricular activities at their high school, it is the high school’s decision whether the student can continue to participate. If the student wants to play college sports, s/he must check with the Athletics Director at the college to make sure they are eligible to play. The high school is responsible for making the final determination of ECP students participating in extra-curricular activities. The [VT Principals Association \(VPA\)](#) also has extra-curricular activity resources available on their webpage.

Would this student be eligible for EC if she is a deferred action student and is not a US citizen, but is enrolled at the high school? Under the immigration regulations, can you tell if he/she is eligible for EC?

If the student (whether a legal or undocumented alien) is residing in Vermont then the student is considered a legal pupil with all of the same rights and privileges afforded to any other legal pupil in the state.

May a Vermont home study student participate in the Early College Program?

If the student is enrolled in a registered home study program pursuant to 16 V.S.A §166b, that student is eligible to participate in the ECP.

What is a Personalized Learning Plan? Who write this for a student and/or home study student?

Act 77 states “The plan shall be developmentally appropriate and shall reflect the student’s emerging abilities, aptitude, and disposition. The plan shall define the scope and rigor of academic and experiential opportunities necessary for a secondary student to complete secondary school successfully, attain postsecondary readiness, and be prepared to engage in civic life.”

For a student in the high school, the high school develops and maintains the plan. For students in the home study program, the parent or guardian is responsible for developing and maintaining the plan.

Do home study students who complete an ECP receive a diploma?

Since a home study student does not have a sending high school, he/she will not receive a high school diploma with the exception of students in the Vermont Technical College VAST program, which is an accredited high school and can grant high school diplomas. The home study student will receive a transcript of earned credits from the Early College Program.