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Early College Program Planning Checklist

Program Overview

Vermont's Early College Program (ECP) allows eligible 12th grade students from Vermont public school districts to enroll full-time for one academic year at one of the participating and approved higher education institutions. The ECP, as a flexible pathway to meeting graduation requirements, simultaneously serves as a student's senior year of high school and one academic year of college, tuition free. Upon completion of an ECP, the student meets secondary school graduation requirements and receives college credit from the approved higher education institution. For more information regarding ECP, please visit the [Early College Webpage](#).

Considerations that can lead to success in Early College

- Begin exploring and planning for Early College as early as middle school.
- Review your Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) with your High School Counselor. Now is the time to review your [Flexible Pathway Options](#).
 - To assist you with making Flexible Pathways decisions, we have developed these tools:
 - [VT Flexible Pathways Tool: Considerations for Student Participation in a Flexible Pathway](#)
 - [Student Sample: Early College](#)
 - [Flexible Pathways Toolkit Talking Points: Early College](#)
- Consider enrolling in [VTVLC's Intro to Online Learning course](#)
- Consider enrolling in the Community College of Vermont's [Introduction to College and Career Course](#)
- Complete one or two [Dual Enrollment Program](#) courses to better understand expectations of college coursework
- If you are a Career Technical Education (CTE) student, you can also connect with your technical center counselor to discuss Fast Forward courses. Students cannot participate concurrently in CTE and ECP([Memo: Early College and CTE Enrollment Requests](#)).

Fall Grade 11

- Revisit and update your PLP to include ECP planning.
- Research/visit ECP partnering institutions and discuss Early College options with admissions staff and your high school counselor.
- Determine application deadlines and begin the application process.



Spring Grade 11

- Finalize your applications for acceptance into an ECP at a participating institution of higher education.
- If you are currently in a high school, you will need a letter of support from your principal or their designee to participate in an ECP. If you participate in Home Study, you will need to be enrolled in an approved Home Study Program and submit a PLP/Minimum Course of Study (the Agency of Education will provide approval for all Home Study Students).
- Students on an IEP who participate in an ECP, and thus are unenrolled from school, are no longer eligible to receive special education services from their sending high school. Students with disabilities may be provided reasonable accommodation from the college through a 504 Plan that allows equal access. If you have questions about accommodations available at a specific college/university, please contact the school directly [Early College Program: Disability Services Contact Information](#).
- Plan your Fall Semester course schedule with your school counselor – ensure your PLP has been updated and courses meet any unmet high school graduation requirements.

Summer Following Grade 11

- Complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid ([FAFSA](#)) while not required, it is strongly encouraged; the [Vermont Student Assistance Corporation](#) (VSAC) has many resources to support students in applying for aid that are only available with a completed FAFSA.
- File both the FAFSA and the [Vermont Grant Application](#). While Early College students receive their first year of college tuition-free, students and families are responsible for books, fees, and supplies. Students choosing to live on campus must also pay for housing and meals. See following grant details:
 - Filing a FAFSA and Vermont Grant application will determine your eligibility to receive a \$1,000 VT Grant (\$500/semester).
 - If you are eligible, the grant will be sent to the college and applied to your account to cover any unpaid fees.
 - A refund check for the remaining amount will be mailed to you.
 - If you are found eligible for the Vermont Grant you will also automatically receive a textbook stipend of \$150/semester, which will be mailed directly to your home after enrollment is verified (usually during the fourth week of the semester).
 - Eligibility for the textbook stipend for Early College students is determined through the FAFSA and Vermont Grant.
 - EC students found eligible for the textbook stipend will receive the stipend regardless of how many textbook stipends they may have received for Dual Enrollment courses.

- Check your high school and college email often.**
- Log into your college's portal to review your to-do-list, access your school email, etc.
- Meet with your college advisor to plan your courses and schedule for the fall semester.
- Register for a full-time college course load (4 to 5 courses). Registering as early as possible is recommended as courses fill fast.
- Supply your high school counselor with your course list.
- Determine your schedule and plan for your first day of classes: If in-person, where is the class located; if online, how do you log in.
- If participating in online courses, ensure you have adequate internet access.
- Purchase or rent your textbooks and supplies.
- If applicable complete a health insurance waiver for the college.
- Attend an orientation session as determined by your college.

Fall Grade 12

- Work with your High School Counselor to unenroll from high school or with the AOE to unenroll from Home Study prior to beginning college course work.
- Check your high school and college email often.**
- Connect with your high school counselor; provide them with current contact email, phone, and course schedule.
- Maintain full time college course load (4 to 5 courses); ensure courses meet high school graduation requirements when applicable.
- Be aware of your institution's **add drop period**. **Check with your college advisor and high school counselor before dropping any courses.** If you need to change a course, give yourself plenty of time.
- As an ECP student you must be enrolled full-time. If a course does not run, or is dropped, and your course load falls below 12 credits, then you need to enroll in another course to remain in full-time status.
- Continue to check-in with your high school counselor, review any course changes, grades, plan for Spring semester classes, and update your PLP as needed.
- Register for a full-time college course load for the Spring. Registering as early as possible is recommended as courses fill fast.
- Utilize academic/social-emotional supports and services (office hours, tutors, counselors, Student Support Office, other support staff) as needed.

Spring Grade 12

- Check your high school and college email often.**
- Maintain a full-time college course load (4 to 5 courses); ensure courses meet high school graduation requirements when applicable.

- Be aware of your institution's **add/drop period**. **Check with your college advisor and high school counselor before dropping any courses.** If you need to change a course, give yourself plenty of time.
- As an ECP student you must be enrolled full-time. If a course does not run, or is dropped, and your course load falls below 12 credits, then you need to enroll in another course to remain in full-time status.