



# Early College Program Manual

**January 13, 2023**

Issued by the Vermont Agency of Education Student Pathways Division pursuant to [16 V.S.A § 946](#) of the Flexible Pathways Initiative, “Early College” means full-time enrollment by a Vermont student who is in grade 12 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 the Flexible Pathways Initiative, Vermont's Early College Program (ECP) allows eligible 12<sup>th</sup> grade students to enroll full-time for one academic year at one of the participating and approved higher education institutions. The ECP simultaneously serves as a student's senior year of high school and one academic year of college, tuition free. Upon completion of ECP, the student receives credit from the secondary school and from the postsecondary institution.

The ECP was established through the Flexible Pathways Initiative, [16 V.S.A. § 941](#), and expands upon the Vermont Academy of Science and Technology (VAST), an initial model of Early College in Vermont. Under [16 V.S.A. §946](#) and [§947](#), VAST was subsequently integrated into what is now known as the Vermont Early College Program and is subject to the rules governing the program. Students in the ECP must un-enroll from their high school and enroll as a full-time student in the postsecondary institution. Upon completion of the college spring semester, students must re-enroll in their high school 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.

### Early College Program Postsecondary Partners

The following colleges are approved to offer Early College Programs. Though this is a statewide program, application processes, academic calendars, and course credits are determined by each higher education institution. For more information about each partnering school, including any additional costs/fees, deadlines for application, room & board (if applicable), check out the school website linked below:

[Castleton University](#)

[Community College of Vermont](#)

[Goddard College](#)

[Northern Vermont University](#)

[Norwich University](#)

[Vermont Technical College/ VAST](#)

### Vermont Academy of Science and Technology Program

The Vermont Academy of Science and Technology (VAST) Early College Program is an approved independent school operated by Vermont Technical College exclusively open to high school seniors. Students who are eligible for reimbursement under the Vermont Early College Program must be approved for Early College as part of their Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) during their junior year (11<sup>th</sup> grade) at either a Vermont public high school, or a high school to which their district of residence pays tuition on their behalf.

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VAST students have the option to get a high school diploma from VAST or VAST and their 11<sup>th</sup> grade high school. If they choose to receive their prior school diploma, they will need to re-enroll in that school to receive the diploma. For more information about VAST at VTC check [the Vermont Technical College website](#).

## Management of the Program

The Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) has oversight of the Early College Program, [16 V.S.A. § 946](#), and maintains annual and biannual procedures to ensure program and policy updates are current and upheld across all partners.

## Early College Partnership Agreement Forms

Early College Assurance Forms must be submitted to the Agency of Education with appropriate signatures on an annual basis. Partnering schools typically receive the agreement forms via email from the AOE in the summer, and they are posted on the [Early College Website](#).

## Legislative Reporting ([16 V.S.A. § 947](#))

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.

## Reimbursement

All participating colleges are reimbursed based on the rates established in the annual state budget. Postsecondary institutions submit a fall and spring invoice to the AOE according to the designated timeline. The state shall make the payment directly to the postsecondary institution, which will accept the amount as full payment of the student's tuition.

## Request Forms

Student requests to complete the ECP below full-time status will be considered by the Secretary of Education on a case-by-case basis. If a student drops below full-time status for any unforeseen circumstance, the [Early College Request for Exception Form](#) must be completed by the secondary and/or postsecondary institution and submitted to the AOE in order to determine the request to continue the program in a part-time status.

Questions related to the Early College Program should be directed to the AOE Early College Group email at [aoe.earlycollege@vermont.gov](mailto:aoe.earlycollege@vermont.gov).

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## Students and Families

In this section students and families can find information about eligibility requirements, program readiness, and ECP participation processes. This information is organized according to secondary school programming options: general considerations for all eligible students; students enrolled in high school; students participating in Career Technical Education (CTE); and students enrolled in Home Study programs. This information is organized according to secondary school programming options: general considerations for all eligible students; students enrolled in high school; students participating in Career Technical Education (CTE); and students enrolled in Home Study programs.

### 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 (PLP). (For Home Study, the student and parent or guardian are responsible for developing their MCOS, which serves as their PLP) and it must be submitted to the Agency of Education.
- Is not enrolled in a school maintained by the district or is a student for whom the district pays tuition to a public or approved independent school.

#### 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. To support planning and preparedness for the ECP, 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 personalized learning plan (PLP) (e.g., short and long-term goals, action steps, and potential supports) as a pathway to high school completion.

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## 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 ECP. Dual Enrollment /Fast Forward vouchers may be used PRIOR to Early College but not during or after Early College completion.

## Eligible Early College Coursework

Remedial coursework offered by a college is not eligible for Early College Program funding. These courses do not apply toward college graduation requirements. High schools should develop programming independent of the Vermont Early College Program that supports students in need of remedial or developmental coursework to achieve college readiness. (NOTE: Courses offered through the [Vermont Virtual Learning Cooperative](#) are an available source of programming for this purpose.)

## Expectations and Requirements

Students in the Early College Program are expected to maintain full-time status at the college or university they are attending. Dropping below full-time status without approval of an "[Exception to full time status](#)" form will result in the student losing eligibility to participate in Early College. Students should work with their high school counselor, and with a student support specialist at the college or university in order to find supports to be successful in their Early College year.

*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 in credit-bearing courses.
- A goal of Early College is for students to complete a freshman year through the Early College experience. In most cases, this means 12-16 credits/semester for two semesters.
- At minimum, the successful completion of the Early College experience should also result in satisfactory completion of secondary school graduation requirements and the award of the diploma.
- Students are expected to take non-remedial, credit bearing course work as part of the Early College program.
- Students pay for textbooks, lab fees, materials fees, and any other associated costs.

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 16 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).

## Participation Process

Though partner high schools will have established ECP policies and programs, the following process outlines general steps that apply to secondary school partners and students. High School students must have Early College (ECP) written into their [Personalized Learning Plan \(PLP\)](#). To support planning for Early College, 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.

- High School students must have Early College (ECP) written into their [Personalized Learning Plan \(PLP\)](#) to ensure that students' engaging in this flexible pathway opportunity aligns with students' goals and action steps towards secondary school completion and postsecondary transition plans.
- Students must get permission from their high school principal (or in the case of Home Study students their parent/guardian).
  - *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.*
- Students apply for admission to any of the post-secondary institutions approved as an Early College program provider;
- 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 unenroll from high school and/or Home Study program prior to the start of Fall semester;
- Students must re-enroll in high school at the end of spring semester in order to receive their high school diploma.



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Note: 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.

### Specific Information for Home Study Students

- Home Study students in ECP do not need to re-enroll in the Home Study program because they are not issued diplomas (Home Study students in the Vermont Technical College VAST program will receive a diploma).
- 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.
- Home Study students do not need to re-enroll in the Home Study program because they are not issued diplomas
- Every Home Study student who wants to participate in the ECP must submit a Home Study Enrollment Form (Form A) and a Minimum Course of Study

(MCOS) regardless of their MCOS exemption status. [Home study forms.](#)

- Every student who wants to participate in ECP must have a Personalized Learning Plan (PLP). The MCOS serves as a student's PLP and must include how the ECP courses will align with and advance their education goals.
- A Home Study student and the student's parent or guardian shall be solely responsible for developing a MCOS/PLP.
- Students seeking to participate in the Early College Program will apply directly with colleges in the spring of their 11<sup>th</sup> grade year, and then will need to unenroll from Home Study prior to beginning coursework.

### Secondary School Partners

This section provides information about secondary school partnership responsibilities, ECP resources, student supports and services information, and options for schools to consider with regard to the development and implementation of Early College programming and policies within the supervisory union/district and school.

### Secondary School Partnership Responsibilities

The following responsibilities below are part of the secondary school participation agreement:

- Assisting eligible students to plan for Early College (including documentation in students' PLP)
- Ensuring students complete the respective college's FERPA waiver

- Issuing the high school transcript inclusive of college courses
- Awarding the high school diploma. (upon the student re-enrolling following the completion of the Early College Program)
- The secondary school may not charge additional fees in order to meet these responsibilities.
- Secondary schools understand that if an Early College student drops below full-time status due to any unforeseen circumstance, the Early College Program Request for Exception form must be completed by the secondary and/or post-secondary institution. The completed Request for Exception form must be submitted to and approved by the AOE in order to support the accommodation of continuing in a part-time status.
- Early College students must disenroll from their high school to participate – this includes high school students attending a technical center. For students enrolled in the second half of a part-time CTE program that want to pursue ECP and CTE concurrent enrollment must submit an [Early College and CTE Concurrent Enrollment Request](#) to the AOE for review.

### 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.

Participation in the Early College program requires that a student's PLP identifies Early College as part of a broader exploration of career and college readiness

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

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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. Below are some links that may be useful, and we recommend also contacting the college's office of student support services in order to find out more information.

- [Early College Program Options for Students and Families](#)
- [Developmental Disabilities Services Division: Postsecondary Education Opportunities](#)
- [Early College Program: Disability Services Contact 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, they must check with the Athletics Director at the college to make sure they are eligible to play.

For 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. In order to assist schools and LEAs in decision making processes that are equitable for all students, the Agency of Education has published a [VT Flexible Pathways Profile Tool](#). This tool is designed to ensure all students are considered when implementing local ECP policies that are effective, equitable, safe, and compliant. Additionally, the [VT Principals Association \(VPA\)](#) also provides extra-curricular activity resources available on their webpage.

### **ECP and Career Technical Education (CTE) 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 part-time technical center programs as 16 V.S.A § 1551a(a) and State Board of Education rules already permit unenrolled Vermont students (without a high

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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 part-time CTE programs may be permitted based on a review of the [Memo and Early College Program and Career Technical Education - Concurrent Enrollment Requests Form](#)

## Financial Aid and Assistance

### Scholarships

The Vermont Student Assistance Corp. ([VSAC](#)) helps Vermont students of all ages save, plan, and pay for college and career training. Below are a few guidelines to support your work with students interested in the ECP that may need financial assistance:

- [VSAC Scholarships](#) identify high school students by the answer to the question “I am a high school senior.”
- [VSAC's scholarships booklet](#) contains information is updated each fall. The VSAC scholarship booklet contains both VSAC-assisted scholarships and scholarships administered directly by the group that sponsors the scholarship.

### Financial Aid

While Early College students receive their first year of college tuition-free, students and families must pay their housing and meals (if they choose to live on campus), books, supplies, and fees. Students do not have access to federal financial aid during Early College. However, high school students with financial need can complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the Vermont State Grant application to qualify for a need-based (income-contingent) Vermont Basic Incentive Grant (“VSAC Grant”) of up to \$1,000 which is dispersed to the institution from the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC). Students who qualify for the [VSAC Grant](#) also automatically qualify for a stipend of \$150 per semester. The stipend is mailed directly to the student to cover books, fees, travel expenses, etc., after the college has verified enrollment. 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 Grant Department at 802-654-3750 or 800-882-4166.

### 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. Some colleges and universities provide a tool that allows students to determine if credits will transfer. An example of this is [UVM's Transfer Guide](#). Ultimately, it is incumbent upon the student to do their own research in advance to determine if credits will transfer to other colleges.

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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 students and their 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.

## Post-Secondary Partners

This section provides information about post-secondary partnership responsibilities, ECP policies, funding, and invoicing and reimbursement processes.

### Post-Secondary Partnership Responsibilities

The following responsibilities are part of the postsecondary/Institutions of Higher Education participation agreement.

- Partnering postsecondary institutions must be a NECHE accredited school or a school accredited by another regional accrediting agency recognized by the US DoE.
- The postsecondary institution shall submit to the Legislature and to the [AOE Early College Group](#) email a copy of their Early College report, **due in January** as required by [16 V.S.A. § 947](#).
- Courses administered through an Early College Program shall be included in the course catalog of the postsecondary institution and shall not differ in designation, description, or credits.
- Postsecondary institution instructors serving Early College Program students must be approved by the respective postsecondary academic department and shall meet the same requirements for teaching the courses as other college faculty.
- The postsecondary institution will ensure that Early College Program students meet all relevant course prerequisites.
- Early College Program students will be enrolled as full-time students for one academic year in the postsecondary institution receiving payment and students' experiences shall be recorded on an official postsecondary institution transcript.
- Early College Program students will be held to the same full-time enrollment status requirements as other matriculated students at the postsecondary institution.
- 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 and the principal of the high school has approved that the student is academically ready for the Early College Program.
- The postsecondary institution will provide Early College Program students with a comprehensive publication that outlines student rights and responsibilities.
- The postsecondary institution will provide Early College Program students with an orientation to available student support services.

- The postsecondary institution will ensure that Early College Program students are held to the same standards and grading policies as those expected of other students.
- 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 work with every student to sign FERPA waivers so that the postsecondary institution can share student information with the sending high school.
- Postsecondary institutions shall work with high schools to ensure that the Early College Program will also meet the requirements for high school graduation.
- The postsecondary institution will be responsible for contacting the high school about dropping/adding courses as these changes may impact issuance of the high school diploma.
- The postsecondary institution will send high schools a list of enrolled courses for students after the drop/add period.
- In the event that a student does not successfully complete the Early College Program, the postsecondary institution, in conjunction with the sending high school, 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.
- If a student drops below full-time status for any unforeseen circumstance, the [Early College Request for Exception form](#) must be provided to the AOE for review and approval if the student is seeking to continue on a part-time basis. The secondary and/or postsecondary institution will need to complete the request form.
- The postsecondary institution shall comply with Vermont Agency of Education finance procedures for the purpose of effecting payment.
- The postsecondary institution will meet the following deadlines for invoicing: November 15 and April 15 by the close of business day (if the 15<sup>th</sup> falls on a weekend, it should be submitted the last business day before the 15<sup>th</sup>). 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 shall complete the *EC Enrollment and Snapshot Data* spreadsheet that is located on the [AOE Early College webpage](#) under the College/University Resources section. Post-secondary partners will need to collect in provide the following information:
  - Student Last name, First name, MI
  - Gen code
  - DOB
  - Gender
  - Town of residence
  - Town code
  - High School
  - PS Code
  - Assigned Semester for enrolled students (e.g., 1 or 2)

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- Full time number of credits per semester

## Early College Program Funding

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.

## Early College Program Tuition

The state shall make the payment directly to the postsecondary institution, which will accept the amount as full payment of the student's tuition. For each 12th grade Vermont student enrolled, the State will pay an amount equal to 87% of the base education amount to an Early College program that is developed and operated or overseen by one of the Vermont State Colleges, or an accredited private post-secondary school located in Vermont and that is approved for operation by the Secretary.

The base education amount is established in the annual state budget. The state will cover 87% of that rate to pay for Early College. 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, will be published as well. Current Fiscal Year rates are posted on the Agency of Education's [Early College website](#).

## 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).

### Invoicing and Add/Drop Periods

1. If a student unenrolls from the program before the add/drop period, then NO invoice should be submitted to the AOE.

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2. If a student withdraws from the program after the add/drop period, then YES, an invoice should be submitted to the AOE.

### **Invoice Instructions**

Due dates for submitting student enrollment information are 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. More information about file transfer and ECP data forms are located on the [AOE Early College webpage](#) under the College/University Resources section.

### **Who do I Send the Invoices to?**

Participating colleges can submit completed invoices to the School Finance Manager at the Agency of Education, Brad James at [Brad.James@vermont.gov](mailto:Brad.James@vermont.gov) or Julie Robinsons at [Julie.Robinson@vermont.gov](mailto:Julie.Robinson@vermont.gov).

### **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 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. Colleges should always bill for full time status; invoices should not be pro-rated. The AOE will determine if the invoice amount should be pro-rated or paid in full which only happens on rare occasions.



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## FAQ's

### **Q1. 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](#).

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### **Q2. 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 ECP.

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### **Q3. 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.

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### **Q4. 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.

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### **Q5. 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.

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**Q6. 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.

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**Q7. 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.

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**Q8. 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.

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**Q9. 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 necessary transition planning and re-enrollment processes with the student.

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**Q10. Does a student have to pass all 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.

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**Q11. What if a high school has a student who is currently a junior, but they have all 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.

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**Q12. Can an ECP 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) must 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?

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**Q13. Can an ECP student repeat a course that they used their Dual Enrollment voucher for (prior to their ECP year) in hopes of a higher grade?**

Yes, but all parties (the college, high school & the student) must agree on this. They should consider how repeating a course would fit into their PLP and meet their HS graduation expectations. 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.

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**Q14. Can an ECP student (Home Study) use their second DE voucher to take a summer course following their EC year if their graduation date is not officially until August?** Dual Enrollment vouchers are meant to be used prior to the Early College year. 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 – June 30; therefore, any plans in place now will end on July 1. This would make them ineligible for use of the second voucher in August.

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**Q15. If a student wishes to enroll in more than 30 credits during their ECP year, can they pay out of pocket for the additional credits?**

Yes.

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**Q16. 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 ECP 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.

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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 ensure that the high school will count the first year of college as the senior year of high school.

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### **Q17. What is a Personalized Learning Plan?**

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.

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### **Q18. 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. Both the [Conceptual Framework for Adults](#) and the [Conceptual Framework for Students](#) describe how it can be helpful for students to review their plan with greater frequency.

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### **Q19. 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.

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### **Q20. 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.

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**Q21. 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.

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**Q22. Would this student be eligible for ECP 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 ECP?**

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

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**Q23. 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 is eligible to participate in the ECP.

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**Q24. 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.

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## Resources

### Students & Families

[Vermont AOE Early College Webpage](#)

[Flexible Pathways Overview](#)

[VT Flexible Pathways Tool: Considerations for Student Participation in a Flexible Pathway](#)

[VSAC's scholarships booklet](#)

[Conceptual Framework for Students:](#)

[VSAC Financial Aid for Students](#)

[Developmental Disabilities Services Division: Postsecondary Education Opportunities](#)

[Early College Program: Disability Services Contact Information](#)

### College Partner Websites

[Castleton University](#)

[Community College of Vermont](#)

[Goddard College](#)

[Northern Vermont University](#)

[Norwich University](#)

[Vermont Technical College/ VAST](#)

### Secondary Schools

[Vermont AOE Early College Webpage](#)

[Participation Agreement Memo](#)

[Memo and Early College Program and Career Technical Education - Concurrent Enrollment Requests Form](#)

[Flexible Pathways Overview flyer](#)

[VT Flexible Pathways Tool: Considerations for Student Participation in a Flexible Pathway](#)

[VSAC website](#)

[VSAC Scholarship FAQ for High School Teachers](#)

[Early College Request for Exception Form](#)

- [Developmental Disabilities Services Division: Postsecondary Education Opportunities](#)
- [Early College Program: Disability Services Contact Information](#)

## **Post-Secondary Partners**

[Vermont AOE Early College Webpage](#)

[Dual Enrollment and Early College Rate Information](#)

[Early College Program HE Agreement Memo](#)

[Early College Request for Exception Form](#)