



Early College Programs Policy

Merit Preparatory Academy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to specify the requirements and procedures for those students wanting to earn college credit while still attending Merit Preparatory Academy.

Definitions

(I) "Advanced placement" (AP) means a rigorous course developed by the College Board that:

(A) Is developed by a committee, composed of college faculty and Advanced Placement teachers, and covers the breadth of information, skills, and assignments found in the corresponding college course; and

For which a student who performs well on an exam for the course may be:

(1) Granted college credit; or

(2) Given advanced standing at a college or university

(II) "Concurrent enrollment" (CE) means enrollment in a course that allows a student to earn credit both towards high school graduation and at an institution of higher education.

(III) "Early college programs" means Merit Preparatory Academy's AP courses and CE programs.

(IV) "Eligible student" means a student who

(A) is enrolled in and counted towards average daily membership at Merit Academy,

(B) has on file a plan for college and career readiness, and

(C) is in grade 9, 10, 11 or 12.

(V) "Underrepresented students" means a subset of students, as determined by Merit Academy and approved by the State Superintendent, that holds a smaller percentage in a program as compared to the overall student population.

(VI) "USHE" means the Utah System of Higher Education

Eligibility and Application.

(I) Merit Preparatory Academy shall apply for Early College Program funds annually.

(II) Merit shall submit an application to the State Superintendent that includes the Academy's plan for:

- (A) how to spend program money;
- (B) how to engage all parents so that parents understand the opportunities available for their children in middle school, high school and beyond.
- (C) how MPA will comply with Rule R277-462; and
- (D) how to eliminate barriers and increase student enrollment, in Early college programs, including underrepresented students.

(III) This plan will include provisions to comply with the Superintendent's

- (A) expectations;
- (B) targets related to gap closures for underrepresented students; and
- (C) timelines related to the application.

Use Of Funds for Early College Programs

(I) Merit will use the academy's allocation of funds for:

- (A) professional learning for teachers;
- (B) identification of underrepresented students;
- (C) Advanced Placement courses;
 - (1) Merit shall use at least a portion of its allocation for Advanced Placement test fees of eligible low-income students, as defined in Section 53F-2-408.5.

(II) CE funds shall be allocated in accordance with Section 53F-2-409.

- (A) CE funds allocated to Merit will not be used for any other program or purpose, except as provided in Section 53F-2-206.
- (B) CE funding may not be used to fund a parent or student-initiated college-level course at an institution of higher education.
- (C) Merit's use of state funds for CE is limited to the following:
 - (1) increasing access for groups of students who are underrepresented;
 - (2) aid in professional development of an eligible CE instructor in cooperation with the participating USHE institution;
 - (3) assistance with delivery costs for distance learning programs;
 - (4) participation in the costs of LEA personnel who work with the program;
 - (5) student textbooks and other instructional materials;
 - (6) fee waivers for costs or expenses related to CE for fee waiver eligible

students under R277-407;

(7) purchases of classroom equipment required to conduct CE courses;
and

(8) other uses approved in writing by the Superintendent consistent with the law and purposes of R277-701.

Reporting Requirements

(I) Merit shall provide the Superintendent with the following:

(A) an annual evaluation report consistent with Section 53F-2-408.5.

Merit Academy shall also present the evaluation report to its governing board in a public meeting. The report shall include the following:

(1) an accounting of student performance, disaggregated by student group for each early college program that the LEA participates;

(2) evidence of stakeholder input demonstrating that MPA engaged parents;

(3) an accounting of how funds were disbursed to the teacher level; and

(4) evidence that MPA is making progress toward its plan goals.

Early College Programs Requirements.

(I) Merit Academy shall provide all course registration opportunities to each student; and through consultation with students, parents, educators, and administrators, may consider academic readiness, but may not require prerequisites for enrolling in an AP or CE course.

(II) Except as described in USHE Policy R165, a school that offers an early college program shall not prohibit a student from enrolling in the course based on the student's:

(A) grades or grade point average;

(B) state standardized assessment scores; or

(C) referral or lack of a referral from an educator;

(D) grade level;

(E) participation in or passing a prerequisite course;

(F) participation in or passing an honors-level or college-preparatory course;

(G) requirements over the summer.

Student Eligibility and Participation for CE.

(I) Merit Preparatory Academy shall appropriately evaluate the supports it employs to assist in achieving the highest access rate reasonable for all students to enroll in a CE course.

(II) A student participating in CE shall be an “eligible student” as described in Subsection 53E-10-301(5).

(A) Student eligibility requirements for CE shall be:

- (1) established by MPA and a USHE institution;
- (2) sufficiently selective to predict a successful experience;
- (3) in accordance with Subsection R277-701-5(3)(b).

(III) Merit Academy has the primary responsibility for identifying a student who is eligible to participate in a CE course.

CE Course Credit and Approval Process.

(I) Credit earned through a CE course:

(A) has the same credit hour value as the CE course’s counterpart on a college campus;

(B) applies toward graduation on the same basis as a course taught at a USHE institution to which the credits are submitted;

(C) generates higher education credit that becomes a part of a student's permanent college transcript;

(D) generates high school credit that is consistent with MPA policies for awarding credit for graduation; and

(E) is transferable from one USHE institution to another.

(II) Merit Academy, along with a USHE institution, shall provide the Superintendent and USHE with proposed new course offerings, including syllabi and curriculum materials, by November 15 of the year preceding the school year in which the courses would be offered.

Program Management and Delivery.

(I) Merit Academy shall use a Superintendent-designated 11-digit course code for a CE course.

(II) MPA and a USHE institution shall jointly align information technology systems with all individual student academic achievement data so that student information will be tracked through both education systems consistent with Section 53E 4-308.

(III) Merit Academy shall ensure that its course enrollment matches the USHE institution enrollment in the technology systems as described in Subsection (2).

Faculty and Educator Requirements.

- (I) All Merit Academy employees who facilitate and teach CE course work shall:
 - (A) meet the requirements of Subsections 53E-10-302(5) and (6).
- (II) An educator employed by MPA who teaches a CE course shall be approved as an adjunct faculty member at the contracting USHE institution prior to teaching the CE course.
 - (A) High school educators who hold adjunct or part time faculty status with a USHE institution for the purpose of teaching CE courses shall be included as fully as possible in the academic life of the supervising academic department at the USHE institution.
 - (B) MPA and a USHE institution shall share expertise and professional development, as necessary, to adequately prepare a teacher to teach in the CE program, including federal and state laws specific to student privacy and student records.

Student Tuition and Fees.

- (I) A CE program student may be charged partial tuition and program-related fees, in accordance with Section 53E-10-305.
- (II) Postsecondary tuition and participation fees charged to a CE student are not fees, as defined in R277-407, and do not qualify for a fee waiver under R277-407.
- (III) All costs related to CE courses that are not tuition and participation fees are subject to a fee waiver consistent with R277-407.
 - (A) CE costs subject to fee waiver may include:
 - (1) consumables;
 - (2) lab fees;
 - (3) copying;
 - (4) material costs;
 - (5) application fees; and
 - (6) textbooks required for the course.
- (IV) Merit Academy shall be responsible for fee waivers.
 - (A) An agreement between a USHE institution and Merit Academy may address the responsibility for fee waivers.

Annual Contracts and Other Student Instruction Issues.

- (I) Merit Academy and a USHE institution that plan to collaborate to offer a CE course shall enter into an annual contract for the upcoming school year by no later than May 30.

(II) Merit Academy shall provide the USHE with a copy of each annual contract entered into between Merit and the USHE institution for the upcoming school year by no later than May 30.

(III) Merit Academy and a USHE institution shall use the standard contract language developed by the Superintendent and USHE.

Board Approved: 3/21/23