

Concurrent Enrollment Programs **2014** Frequently Asked Questions

These questions relate and are applicable to both Concurrent Enrollment and ASCENT Programs

General

Q: What is Concurrent Enrollment?

A: Concurrent Enrollment is a program in which qualified students in the ninth grade or higher in a school district or charter school take courses for both high school and college credit. Classes may be offered by an eligible institution of higher education and may be delivered on the high school campus, college campus, online, or hybrid format. Concurrent Enrollment became state law in 2009 when both houses of the General Assembly unanimously passed the [Concurrent Enrollment Programs Act](#) and Governor Bill Ritter signed it into law. [Concurrent Enrollment Programs Act, HB 09-1319; C.R.S. § 22-35-101]

Q: What is ASCENT?

A: ASCENT stands for **Accelerating Students through Concurrent ENrollmentT**. Students who have completed at least 12 credit hours of transcribed postsecondary credits (non-remedial) prior to completion of their 12th grade year may be eligible for the ASCENT Program. They remain pupils in their Local Education Provider (LEP) for one year following their 12th grade year, and the LEP receives ASCENT specific state funding that it uses to pay their college tuition at the resident community college rate. Students take courses primarily on college campuses. Students receive their high school diplomas at the end of their ASCENT year. [C.R.S. § 22-35-108]

Q: How are Local Education Provider (LEP) and Institution of Higher Education (IHE) defined?

A: School districts, boards of cooperative services (BOCES), and district and institute charter schools are called "local education providers" (LEPs) in the law. State universities, colleges, community colleges, junior colleges, local district colleges and area vocational schools, or meeting other eligible requirements as outlined in § 22-35-103 (12)(b) are referred to as "institutions of higher education" (IHEs). [C.R.S. § 22-35-103 (12 & 13)]

Q: What is the difference between Concurrent Enrollment and ASCENT?

A: Concurrent Enrollment is open to students in 9th-12th grade, including, to a limited extent, students who have been retained past their 12th-grade year to complete graduation requirements [C.R.S. § 22-35-103 (15); C.R.S. § 22-35-104 (1)(d)]. ASCENT is a program that allows students to continue to participate in concurrent enrollment in the year following their 12th grade year. [C.R.S. § 22-35-108 (2)(a)].

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Q: How is the college tuition paid?

A: College tuition is separated into two parts in Colorado: the student share of tuition and the [College Opportunity Fund](#) (COF) stipend. In Concurrent Enrollment and ASCENT, the LEP pays the student share of tuition, which cannot exceed the local public community college rate. Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) charge LEPs directly for the student share of tuition. Students and their parents or guardians may be required to sign a document agreeing to reimburse their LEPs if the student withdraws from or fail any classes. (Before the new law, students paid college tuition and were reimbursed by their LEPs if they successfully completed their college classes.) Students also apply for and authorize the COF stipend to pay that portion of their tuition. All Concurrent Enrollment and ASCENT students are eligible for the COF stipend, but if they do not apply or for some reason do not receive it, the IHE may charge them the stipend amount.

If a Concurrent Enrollment student attends an IHE with higher tuition than the local community college resident rate, the student may be responsible for paying the remaining balance of the tuition. [C.R.S. § 22-35-105]

Q: Is every district required to implement a Concurrent Enrollment program or ASCENT program?

A: No. There is no statutory mandate for districts or schools to create a Concurrent Enrollment program or ASCENT program. The law encourages “[a]ll of the state's high schools should eventually develop equitable access to concurrent enrollment programs to provide the infrastructure necessary to improve high school retention, to motivate young people to take seriously the need to become postsecondary- and workforce-ready, and to accelerate students' progress toward a postsecondary credential.” However, if a district chooses to create a program, it must follow the concurrent enrollment guidelines with exception of state board approved early colleges and extended studies. [C.R.S. § 22-35-102(1)(g)]

Q: What is the difference between extended studies and Concurrent Enrollment Programs?

A: Concurrent Enrollment is a type of dual enrollment program, which allows students to receive college credit before high school graduation. Concurrent Enrollment replaced the Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) program, the Fast College Fast Jobs program, the High School Fast Track program, and other local programs that were not covered by law. The ASCENT and Concurrent Enrollment programs require the LEP to pay the tuition of participating students up to the resident community college tuition rate up front, using the LEP’s Per Pupil Revenue. [C.R.S. § 22-35-101]

Unlike Concurrent Enrollment programs, extended studies are a type of dual enrollment programs offered through a separate arrangement between a school district and a four-year institution. Students are generally responsible for payment of these programs (though districts may assist with payment) and do not carry College Opportunity Fund eligibility. These programs are authorized through the Colorado Commission on Higher Education policies and rules [C.R.S. § 23-1-109].

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Cooperative Agreements

Q: What needs to be included in a cooperative agreement between an LEP and an IHE?

A: Any LEP that wants to allow students to participate in concurrent enrollment must enter into a cooperative agreement with an IHE. A suggested model for a cooperative agreement can be found [here](#). The cooperative agreement must include at least:

- The amount of academic credit granted for successfully completed course work
- A requirement that course work qualifies as credit towards a degree/certificate or basic skills credit
- A requirement that the LEP pay tuition for courses completed by a student, according to the negotiated amount
- A requirement that the LEP and IHE establish an academic program of study for the student included in the student's academic plan of study, and a plan for the LEP to provide ongoing counseling and career planning
- Confirmation by the LEP of the student's unique student identification number (SASID)
- Authorization for payment of COF on behalf of the student
- Consideration/identification of ways for student to remain eligible for interscholastic high school activities
- Financial provisions

[C.R.S. § 22-35-104 (6)]

Q: Are there separate cooperative agreements for Concurrent Enrollment and ASCENT?

A: Yes. It is recommended that LEPs have separate agreements for Concurrent Enrollment and ASCENT. If an LEP is participating in ASCENT, it is required that LEPs have a cooperative agreement(s) that cover both concurrent enrollment and ASCENT. Sample models for both types of agreements can be found on the CDE website in [Concurrent Enrollment, District Resources](#).

Q: Must concurrent enrollment and ASCENT cooperative agreements between LEPs and IHEs be signed by the state attorney general and controller?

A: No. Cooperative agreements can be signed by designees of the attorney general and the controller.

Q: Can districts send students to either a two-year or four-year institution?

A: Yes, a cooperative agreement can be signed between a local education provider and an institution of higher education (see definition above), which include both two- and four-year institutions. Local education providers may enter into multiple cooperative agreements. If a student attends an IHE with higher tuition than the local community college resident rate, the student may be responsible for paying the remaining balance of the tuition.

[C.R.S. § 22-35-104 (6)(b)]

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Q: Can IHEs and LEPs participate in multiple agreements?

A: Yes. There is not a limit to the number of cooperative agreements that an IHE or LEP may sign.

However, cooperative agreements must comply with the defined service areas of public community colleges, local district colleges, and technical colleges (area vocational schools), unless there is a Service Area Clearance Agreement in place. [See Colorado Community College System [Concurrent Enrollment Statement of Standards](#)]

Q: What are service areas? Can an LEP make an agreement with an IHE outside of the service area it is in?

A: Held for further review. See Colorado Community College System [Concurrent Enrollment Statement of Standards](#), the [Service Area Clearance Form](#), and [CCCS Policy on Service Areas](#)

Q: Can students attend an IHE nearest to their home address if the IHE is out of the LEP's service area? Are online classes affected by service areas?

A: Held for further review. See Colorado Community College System [Concurrent Enrollment Statement of Standards](#), the [Service Area Clearance Form](#), and [CCCS Policy on Service Areas](#)

Q: Can a stipend be provided for teachers in the high school by the IHE?

A: This may be part of the negotiations between the IHE and LEP and should be included in the cooperative agreement, if applicable.

Q: Should the district release SASID information to the IHE?

A: Yes, in order for a student to enroll into Concurrent Enrollment or the ASCENT program the student must complete an enrollment form which includes authorization by the qualified student and parent or legal guardian for the Local Education Provider to release the State Assigned Student Identifier (SASID) to the Institution of Higher Education. This should also be covered in the cooperative agreement. [C.R.S. § 22-35-104 (6)(b)(V); [1 CCR 301-86, 2.01 \(2\)\(d\)\(vii\)](#)]

Q: Is there a disclosure in the Concurrent Enrollment College Agreement form that declares that information can be released to high school?

A: Yes. The Concurrent Enrollment Agreement form that student, parent, and LEP sign gives permission for the IHE to share information about the student's academic progress with the LEP. Parents seeking information about a student's progress are encouraged to speak with the LEP.

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Q: Can cooperative agreements include delivery of college course offered in an online format for CE and ASCENT students?

A: Yes. However, LEPs will be billed for the resident online tuition rate, which may be different from the resident tuition rate for on campus courses. LEPs may choose not to allow students to enroll in online classes. [C.R.S. § 22-35-104 (6)]

Q: What is considered a failing grade for Concurrent Enrollment?

A: LEP's reserve the right to define passing and failing according to internal Board policies for Concurrent Enrollment programming. Many colleges define C- or higher as passing, and often a C- or higher is required to transfer credit and/or apply credit toward a degree or certificate. Many LEPs accept D's as passing for high school requirements. LEPs should specify their practices in the repayment notice provided to students and parents/guardians prior to the start of each semester.

Funding/Tuition

Q: Are books and fees included in the funding for these programs?

A: Law does not require a LEP to fund books and fees; however, the school district may choose to cover these expenses, and it is recommended that those expenses be addressed in both the student agreement and the cooperative agreement between the LEP and IHE. [C.R.S. § 22-35-105 (3) (b)]

Q: If a CE/ASCENT student goes to a college or university that charges higher tuition than a community college, must the LEP pay the higher tuition rate?

A: No. The most an IHE can charge an LEP is the student share of tuition at the local community college resident rate. The student may be responsible for any additional balance not covered by the LEP. [C.R.S. § 22-35-105 (3) (b)]

Q: Do LEPs pay for total credits, or total classes?

A: Districts may choose to pay for a student by credits or classes. A district can select the amount of **classes** that the student will be allowed to take regardless of the credits for each class (i.e. the district will pay for a student to take up to two courses through Concurrent Enrollment) **OR** a district can select the amount of **credits** that a student can take as long as a students' courses do not surpass the amount of credits paid for by the district (i.e. if the district selects to pay for 12 credits, than the course that the student takes must equal 12 or under. If courses go over the designated amount, the student has the option to pay for an additional class on their own.

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Q: Are there circumstances that would require a student or family to pay back the tuition money for concurrent enrollment or ASCENT classes?

A: Yes. Students and their parent/guardians are required to sign a document stating they will reimburse the LEP for tuition paid by the LEP for any course the student does not complete without the consent of the high school principal. Additionally, an LEP may adopt a policy requiring a student or their parent/guardian to reimburse the LEP for tuition for any course in which a student receives a failing grade. These requirements can vary by LEP, check your LEP's student agreement provisions [C.R.S. § 22-35-105 (4)]

Q: Can Perkins monies be used for CE or ASCENT tuition?

A: No. Perkins funds may not be used by secondary or postsecondary recipients for individual student tuition for Concurrent Enrollment or ASCENT.

Q: Are CE or ASCENT tuition an allowable expense under the Colorado Technical Act (CTA)?

A: Local school districts eligible to receive CTA funds may claim tuition and FTE for Concurrent Enrollment for Career & Technical Education (CTE) within an approved postsecondary CTE program in their final CTA report for reimbursement as a contract expense. However, because districts receive separate funds for ASCENT students, ASCENT tuition is not a CTA claimable expense.

Q: Do online courses have the same tuition rate as in-person courses?

A: The tuition rate between online and in-person may differ depending on the IHE. These tuition rates should be stipulated in the cooperative agreement if online courses are approved by the LEP.

Q: If an IHE charges more than the resident community college rate, can the institution receive COF on behalf of that student?

A: Yes, as long as it is a COF eligible institution. Public and private institutions of higher education are eligible for different rates of COF. For more information on COF rates and eligible institutions see more information on [COF here](#).

Q: Can districts pay for students to participate in concurrent enrollment or ASCENT during the summer term?

A: An LEP may elect to permit students to participate in Concurrent Enrollment and ASCENT courses during the summer. Dependent on which academic year the summer term is connected to determines which year the credit will be transcribed. Concurrent Enrollment and ASCENT students must be enrolled during the October count period in order for the district to receive PPR. Credits/classes taken during the summer do not factor into October count enrollment confirmation.

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Q: What documentation do LEPs need to provide on Concurrent Enrollment Students as part of October Count?

A: Please see a [summary on funding determinations for CE](#), the [Student October Count Guide \(CE sections\)](#), and [attendance example forms](#).

COF, Financial Aid and Transferability of CE

Q: Are students in Concurrent Enrollment and ASCENT programs eligible to receive the College Opportunity Fund stipend?

A: Yes. All students participating in the Concurrent Enrollment and ASCENT programs are eligible to apply for the COF stipend. If COF is not processed, the IHE may charge the student the stipend amount. [C.R.S. § 22-35-104 (6)(b)(IV)]

Q: Will Concurrent Enrollment/ASCENT credits be included in the student's College Opportunity Fund lifetime total?

A: Yes, with the exception of basic skills courses. Students may seek a waiver if they exceed COF credits (see below). [[1 CCR 301-86, 2.01 \(2\)\(d\)\(v\)](#)]

Q: Is there a COF waiver for students who used COF for Concurrent Enrollment and ASCENT credits?

A: Yes. Students who are nearing completion of their undergraduate degrees and are running out of the total lifetime COF stipend credits may seek a waiver from their current IHE based on the credits used when they were in the CE and ASCENT programs. The IHE is permitted to waive COF for up to five percent (5%) of its student population in any year, and former CE and ASCENT students have the first priority in those waivers by statute. [C.R.S. § 23-18-202(5)(f); See more info on [COF here](#)]

Q: Are students that participate in ASCENT and concurrent enrollment still considered a first-time freshman for financial aid and scholarships? How does that work for students?

A: Yes, students that participate in concurrent enrollment courses during their high school experience are considered first-time freshman when entering college following high school graduation for the purposes of admissions and financial aid, even if they have enough credits to be classified as a sophomore or junior in college. This is also true for most private scholarship providers, however, it is prudent to inquire with the specific scholarship administrators regarding individual scholarship requirements.

Students taking college-level courses in high school may be subject to an IHE's Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) policies upon entry into college.

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Q: Do basic skills courses taken as Concurrent Enrollment count against the credit-hour limit for COF?

A: College remedial courses (basic skills courses) are COF-eligible but are not counted against the lifetime credit-hour limit. [[1 CCR 301-86, 2.01 \(2\)\(d\)\(v\)](#)]

Q: Do Concurrent Enrollment courses transfer to other colleges and universities?

A: Courses taken in the CE and ASCENT programs transfer between institutions to the same extent that the same courses taught on the IHE's campus transfer. Students should work with their counselors at the LEP and IHE to determine how the specific courses they take as part of CE or ASCENT can transfer between institutions. See more information on [transfer policies here](#).

Q: Is there any requirement for concurrent enrollment courses to be guaranteed transferable?

A: No. The only requirements for a course are that it must be part of a degree or certificate that the IHE offers or, for 12th-graders only, a basic skills course. Additionally, the Concurrent Enrollment Programs Act specifically includes career and technical education (CTE) courses and programs which are traditionally not part of guarantee transfer agreements.

Academic Plans & Assessment

Q: What is an academic plan of study?

A: An academic plan of study is used to describe all the courses that the student intends to complete to satisfy his or her remaining requirements for graduation from the LEP. A principal, counselor, or teacher advisor of the student's LEP must approve the student's academic plan prior to concurrent enrollment in an IHE. Per state rule, academic plans must include at least:

- A description of the courses that the students intends to complete to satisfy remaining requirements for graduation from the LEP
- A student's academic progress including courses taken, any remediation, credit recovery, and any concurrent enrollment credits earned
- An intentional sequence of courses showing progress towards accomplishing a student's postsecondary and workforce objectives
- Any assessment scores relevant to the student's postsecondary and workforce objectives; and
- A timeline for the student to sign up for ASCENT

[C.R.S. § 22-35-104 (3); [1 CCR 301-86, 2.02](#)]

Q: How does the ICAP relate to the academic plan for concurrent enrollment and ASCENT students?

A: The academic plan of study is a portion of the ICAP that provides a clear college/career goal and a supporting body of evidence that reinforces the student's academic pathway. Concurrent Enrollment

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Rules require that a student's application includes verification that each course a student enrolls in is consistent with the student's ICAP. See more information on the [ICAP here](#). [[1 CCR 301-86, 2.01](#)]

Q: How does an institution of higher education determine that the student is qualified for their selected course(s)?

A: The institutions of higher education use the same course prerequisites as with all other postsecondary students seeking to enroll in the same class on their campus. [C.R.S. § 22-35-104 (4)(a)]

Q: Does the Accuplacer exam have to be taken prior to enrollment?

A: A qualified student who intends to concurrently enroll in a postsecondary course must satisfy the minimum prerequisites for the course prior to his or her enrollment in the course. The institution of higher education may require testing or other means to demonstrate preparedness. [C.R.S. § 22-35-104 (4)(a)]

Students with Disabilities

[Frequently Asked Questions for Students with Disabilities](#)

Q: How will compliance with the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) be addressed in Concurrent Enrollment and ASCENT programs?

A: Students with disabilities have the right to access any program offered by the school district as long as they meet all of the same eligibility requirements and prerequisites for enrollment. Students with disabilities are held to the same financial obligations, academic performance expectations, and consequences for both success and failure as all other students.

Q: Can Concurrent Enrollment or ASCENT be used for alternative programs for adult education?

A: No. Concurrent enrollment and ASCENT are for students who are less than twenty-one years of age and are enrolled in the ninth grade or a higher grade level with a local education provider [C.R.S. § 22-35-103 (15)].

Q: For students with disabilities, should the IEP dictate the accommodations for a concurrent enrollment course?

A: No. Since requirements under the IDEA do not apply to the postsecondary level, services in the IEP would not be required for concurrent enrollment classes. Although the IEP team plays a key role in providing recommendations and documentation for requested accommodations, decisions about the

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accommodations provided in college classes will be determined by the college following 504 and ADA guidelines.

Q: Can Concurrent Enrollment or ASCENT be used to provide special education transition services to an 18-21 year old student?

A: No. Concurrent Enrollment is a type of dual enrollment that is explicitly defined in Statute and available to students in 9th-12th grade. 18-21 transition services are based on individually designed services for students with disabilities who need specific supports beyond the typical senior year to link with postsecondary systems.

Other

Q: Are home study students eligible for Concurrent Enrollment?

A: The CE agreement is between an LEP and an IHE, so a student would only be able to participate if they are eligible for PPR through the LEP and enrolled according to the LEPs policies and procedures. Home study students are only eligible for part-time funding.

Q: How do high school teachers qualify to teach Concurrent Enrollment courses?

A: At a minimum, high school teachers must meet the same hiring requirements as other faculty at the IHE. For guaranteed transfer classes in the liberal arts and sciences at community colleges, it is common practice that an instructor must have a master's degree in the subject area, or a master's degree and have successfully completed at least 18 graduate-level credits in the subject area, regardless of whether the credits were part of the master's degree. For the majority of classes in career and technical education (CTE), an instructor must be eligible to obtain a postsecondary credential in the area. It is the IHE's responsibility to review a candidate's qualifications to instruct a course.

These requirements are in line with the Colorado Community College System [Concurrent Enrollment Statement of Standards](#), and the [accreditation policies of the Higher Learning Commission](#), and IHEs may have additional criteria. Interested high school teachers should check with their local IHE for more information.

Q: What happens if a course is full?

A: With approval from the principal or designee, the student may enroll in another course as long as that course is aligned with the goals of the ICAP and the student meets all requirements for entry into the course. Prior to changing enrollment status the student should be in contact with their academic advisor at the IHE and counselor at the LEP.

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Q: If an LEP chooses not to participate in Concurrent Enrollment, can a student still enroll in college credit courses?

A: Yes. The student, parent, or guardian would be responsible for paying for all costs and it would be up to the discretion of the LEP if the course would count for any high school credit. Students must meet enrollment requirements of the IHE they plan to attend. Additionally, any courses taken would not be considered Concurrent Enrollment hours reported to CDE or DHE as they would not be covered by PPR.