

EARLY COLLEGE PROGRAM DESIGNATION CRITERIA FOR ENHANCED STUDENT SUPPORT

The Early College Joint Committee of the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education developed and approved designation criteria for early college programs in June of 2017.

Guiding Principle 3: Enhanced Student Support

Designated programs should incorporate sufficient wraparound services to promote academic success and completion, taking into consideration the needs of diverse populations of students.

Early college should be designed not as a boutique program, but should reflect a holistic program design in contemplation of the lived experience of the target student population. Specifically, programs are encouraged to develop student support in consideration of a whole student, in contemplation of student development broadly, development of academic proficiency and support related to barriers faced both externally and with regard to academic course taking.

Preliminary Designation Criteria to demonstrate Enhanced Student Support:

1. The program plan identifies potential academic and nonacademic challenges for potential student participants.
2. Plans include supports for academic, nonacademic, and career purposes. These plans should incorporate evidence-based strategies and consider the supports offered by existing college access programming, e.g. scaffolding of curricula and student learning outcomes.
3. Program design includes an outline of potential academic supports, including but not limited to counseling/advising and tutoring, both at the high school and college levels.
4. An appropriate contact for student support is named in the application. Contact information for this individual is provided, along with a description of the role. If the role requires staff to be hired, a proposed job description is included.
5. Appropriate behavior, health and safety procedures for students on college campuses are addressed.

Final Designation Criteria to demonstrate Enhanced Student Support:

The applicant shall continue to meet all criteria requisite for Preliminary Designation. In addition, the applicant must provide:



1. Comprehensive plan for ongoing academic and non-academic support so students will be on a pathway to take college courses in high school; the plan must address supports for English Language Learners, students with disabilities, and first generation college students.
2. Student schedules evidencing advisory/or college access/ readiness and support time built into the program.
3. If the proposed schedule for students is likely not to meet the minimum 180 days/990 hours of instruction, applicant shall include a description as to how the proposed schedule will ensure that students will have sufficient access to learning supports to successfully complete program requirements.¹
4. Advisory/study skills curriculum material and tutoring schedules.
5. Detailed calendar of awareness activities for current and prospective students, including application assistance, financial aid counseling, and college and career advising.
6. Policy on communicating to students that they are at risk for failing a course, supports for helping the student get back on track, and actions that may or may not be taken if a student fails a course or multiple courses.

[Download the complete Early College Toolkit here.](#)

¹Final designation of an Early College design will also serve as a waiver of the Student Learning Time (SLT) regulations, if needed.