

## Understanding Differences Between Designated Early College Programs and Dual Credit Enrollment in Massachusetts

	Designated Early College Programs	Dual Credit Enrollment
Definition	<p>Early College Programs in Massachusetts blend high school and college in a rigorous, supportive, and carefully structured program, whereby students earn a minimum of 12 transferable college credits.</p> <p>Early College Programs adhere to five guiding principles: Equitable Access, Guided Academic Pathways, Enhanced Student Support, Connection to Career, and Effective Partnerships</p>	<p>Traditional dual enrollment provides opportunities for qualified Massachusetts high school and home school students to take college-level courses and earn transferable college credits. Some students may receive college and high school credits for their coursework.</p> <p>The Commonwealth Dual Enrollment Program is offered through partner high schools and students receive high school and college credit for courses successfully completed.</p>
Who can participate?	<p>Early College programs prioritize students underrepresented in higher education enrollment and completion. By 10th grade, students will formally enroll in a cohorted Early College program and begin structured preparatory and/or credit-bearing academic work.</p>	<p>Participation in dual credit courses is available to all high school students who are in 11th and 12th grade, are at least 16 years old, and meet the eligibility requirements.</p>
Eligibility	<p>Early College program enrollment policies should be as broad as possible. Students should not be excluded from participation in the program based on prior or current GPA, test scores, or placement scores. Enrollments should not rely solely on teacher recommendations or other highly subjective processes. Whenever possible, students should not be excluded based on prior disciplinary records.</p>	<p>Students must meet all course prerequisites per the policies of the participating campus. Participation is at the discretion of the participating institution of higher education, subject to capacity constraints and state appropriation.</p>
Cost	<p>Early College programs are designed to be free of all costs for students and families.</p>	<p>Students and families pay for traditional dual credit coursework.</p> <p>Commonwealth Dual Enrollment Partnership (CDEP) is funded so that students take their first course free of charge or for a nominal fee. Subsequent course fees are set by the institution.</p>
Post-secondary Partnerships	<p>Early College programs establish strong partnerships with one (or more) nearby postsecondary institutions to enable students to accumulate transferable credits.</p>	<p>Courses are offered by the majority of Massachusetts community colleges, state universities and undergraduate University of Massachusetts campuses. Courses may be taught on the campuses of those institutions, on a high school campus, or online.</p>
College Experience	<p>Early College programs have structured plans to acculturate Early College participants to both the college experience broadly as well as at the partnered IHE campus.</p>	<p>Dual credit gives students a taste of college through coursework, although there may or may not be plans to acculturate students to the broader college experience on a college campus.</p>
Support Systems	<p>Designated programs should incorporate sufficient wraparound services to promote academic success and completion, taking into consideration the needs of diverse populations of students.</p>	<p>Dual credit courses often do not include additional supports outside of those offered with traditional courses.</p>