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Accessing Online Postsecondary Courses Through Senior Year Plus Programs

The Iowa Department of Education has received inquiries regarding a student's use of online postsecondary coursework to meet high school graduation requirements delivered through concurrent enrollment and the postsecondary course enrollment options (PSEO) program. The Department offers the following guidance to school districts and accredited nonpublic schools contracting directly with a community college when handling student enrollments into online postsecondary coursework through these Senior Year Plus (SYP) programs.

What does this mean?

In practice, this means that eligible students may access online postsecondary coursework and be awarded credit (high school and college) under the same general provisions outlined in statute and administrative rule for concurrent enrollment and PSEO programs. The mode of course delivery, such as online, may not be used as a means of limiting participation or the conferral of credit within these SYP programs.

An eligible student enrolled in a postsecondary online course *must earn* both secondary and postsecondary credit for successful completion of any enrolled course and credit must be listed on the student's high school and college academic transcript.

...A school district shall grant high school credit to a student enrolled in a course if the student successfully completes the course...the school district shall determine the number of high school credits that shall be granted to a student who successfully completes a course. Students shall not "audit" a concurrent enrollment course; the student must take the course for credit (281 IAC 22.11(5)).

A school district *may not* place restrictions on the number of online courses a student is eligible to enroll.

...The institutions shall not require a minimum or a maximum number of postsecondary credits to be earned by a high school student (281 IAC 22.4 (1)(g)).

A school district *may not* put in place additional policies or restrictions specifically for students enrolling into SYP programs, such as, requiring special approval or teacher recommendations; exhausting the school district's curriculum prior to enrollment in a SYP course or requiring a certain grade point average (GPA). If the student is on track to graduate, has met the eligibility requirements of the postsecondary institution and has met proficiency requirements, the eligible student may enroll in the online postsecondary course.

...The institutions shall not place restrictions on participation in senior year plus programming beyond that which is specified in statute or administrative rule (281 IAC 22.4(1)(h)).

A postsecondary institution maintains the authority and responsibility to carry out institutional policies regarding limits on enrollment and course eligibility for all students.

A student who completed district requirements to earn a high school diploma and whose class has graduated is *not* eligible to continue enrollment in the district for the purpose of continuing enrollment in concurrent enrollment courses (Iowa Code 257.6(6)).

Contracted Courses and Course Modality

Once a district-to-community college sharing agreement has been established, outlining contracted course offerings, those courses become available in all delivery modes for a student to enroll (e.g., online, face-to-face in the high school, face-to-face on campus). A district may encourage enrollment through one delivery mode over another (a high school location rather than online, for example), but a student may access the course through any available option.

...The school board shall annually approve courses to be made available for high school credit using locally developed criteria (281 IAC 22.11(3)).

Who is responsible for the cost of enrollment?

Provided the student enrolls through the school district, the district remains responsible for the cost of enrollment for all online courses. SYP provisions require that neither the secondary or postsecondary institution, under any circumstances, pass along the cost of tuition to a student and/or the student's family or to charge a student who fails to successfully complete or pass a concurrent enrollment course (281 IAC 22.11(6)).

Please note that failure of a student to successfully complete a PSEO course is the only exception to this provision and the amount of tuition reimbursement for each separate course under PSEO shall equal the lesser of the actual and customary costs of tuition, textbooks, materials and fees directly related to the course taken by the eligible student or two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) (281 IAC 22.22).

Lastly, this guidance impacts only those online program opportunities that fall within Senior Year Plus (SYP) programs. Online opportunities provided to students outside of SYP do not apply.

Contact:

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