

Evergreen Local Schools Educational Options

Evergreen's Educational Options Program is in response to the Ohio Senate Bill 311, which requires Ohio public school districts to offer the option of credit flexibility to all students. Under this law, students can pursue high school credit based upon his/her own unique experiences and interests. Students now have the option to complete his/her required course work by attending traditional high school classes or by gaining credit through a pre-approved alternative credit flexibility option. The Credit Flexibility Program shifts focus from evaluating student learning based on seat time to assessing students' demonstrated academic and skill level or performance. The program does not eliminate "seat time" requirements altogether; however, it retains traditional seat time as one option and expands the number of alternative options for earning credit toward a diploma.

With Evergreen's Educational Options, students can earn credit in two ways, or in a combination:

1) By completing traditional coursework in an Evergreen classroom.

2) By pursuing one or more non-traditional credit flexibility options:

- A) By testing out or otherwise demonstrating mastery of an existing Evergreen High School course.
- B) By gaining credit through an approved educational proposal in which coursework does not exist. In this option, the student designs his/her own course and sets benchmarks/standards in accordance with the Ohio Department of Education. The proposal may include: educational travel, independent study, internship experience, community service learning, and/or music and art programs, etc.
- C) By gaining credit through existing coursework in which the benchmarks/standards are already set by an outside source other than Evergreen High School. This option includes online courses, correspondence courses, and Post Secondary Enrollment.

Completing Traditional EHS Coursework:

EHS is a comprehensive high school offering college preparatory, general and vocational programs. Credit and grades are awarded for all courses after each term. The school year is broken down into two semesters with four 90-minute class periods each term. Students are in class from 8:00 am – 2:45 pm and take an average of eight classes per year. In order to meet the prescribed standards set forth by the Ohio State Department of Education, specific regulations and graduation requirements are mandatory. In order for a student to graduate from EHS, a minimum of 26 units of credit is required. Students who attend the Four County Career Center or a special education program housed at another high school, the graduation requirement is 21 units of credit. All guidelines for a traditional student and choosing coursework are outlined in the EHS Curriculum Guide.

Non-Traditional Credit-Flexibility:

In general, Credit Flexibility applies to any alternative coursework, assessment and/or performance that demonstrates proficiency and qualifies as graduation credit. This credit must be applied for and approved in advance by the Evergreen Local School District. Evergreen's Credit Flexibility Program is designed for students who demonstrate the ability, interest, and maturity to accept personal responsibility for his/her learning outside of the traditional classroom. With Credit Flexibility, students have the opportunity to pursue their education outside Evergreen High School while obtaining the necessary credits required to receive a diploma issued by the State of Ohio. Graduation requirements are the same as a traditional student's; a minimum of 26 credits from EHS, and a minimum of 21 credits for students attending the Four County Career or a special education program housed at another school. Grades for non-traditional credit flexibility will be reported at the completion of the program to the guidance office and will be recorded on the student's transcript. This grade will also be used to determine high school athletic eligibility.

Option A - "Testing Out/Demonstrating Mastery"

This option exists for a student who believes he/she is ready to demonstrate proficiency of all the Academic Content Standards required in an Evergreen Local School course. Students selecting this option must complete a Proposal for Credit Flexibility. The Credit Flexibility Proposal will outline the way the student plans to demonstrate proficiency. Arrangements will be made by the principal for the student to complete the necessary assessment(s) to show proficiency. This option could include a combination of tests, exams, portfolio, projects, demonstration of skills, presentations, and/or writings. Assessments developed by the district will be administered free of charge. See Appendix A for a complete listing of courses and requirements.

Option B - "Gaining Credit Through Non-Existent Coursework"

This option is for students who wish to develop a plan to study a topic of interest that is not offered at Evergreen High School. Students are required to complete a Proposal for Credit Flexibility and prior approval for the proposal is required; there will be no rewarding of retroactive credit. In the proposal, students must list the goals/objectives of their proposed course, list methods of instruction, timelines assessment measures. The EHS teacher of record will evaluate student work. All costs associated with the plan, proposed activities, materials, and assessments will be at the sole responsibility of the student and his/her parent(s).

Option C - "Gaining Credit Through An Outside Source"

This option provides outside coursework not offered by Evergreen Local Schools to help enrich a student's education. The benchmarks/standards are set by the outside provider/source. Students are required to complete a Proposal for Credit Flexibility and prior approval for the proposal is required. This option includes online courses, correspondence, and Post Secondary Enrollment* (PSEO). All costs associated with the plan, coursework, and materials will be at the sole responsibility of the student and his/her parent(s).

**Students who are interested in participating in PSEO will be required to attend a meeting with their parents and the guidance counselor by March 31, each year prior to PSEO participation. This mandatory meeting will provide information regarding the rules for PSEO participation, deadlines and applications. A separate Credit Flexibility Proposal is not required for PSEO.*

Credit Flexibility Requirements:

1. Any student enrolled in grades 8-12 is eligible to participate in the Credit Flexibility Program. The student must be enrolled full-time within the Evergreen Local School System during the previous and current year of participation in the credit-flexibility option.
2. Student must meet the established course prerequisites and be able to work independently.
3. Approved, written proposal and agreement between the student, high school guidance counselor, principal, parents, and a licensed, Highly Qualified Teacher employed by Evergreen Local Schools and licensed by the State of Ohio.
4. Proposals must include clearly defined goals, which are tied directly to Ohio's Academic Content Standards and clearly described activities which lead to successful attainment of described goals. Academic Content Standards are located on the Ohio Department of Education's webpage at www.ode.state.oh.us.
5. Grades will be reported to the guidance office and recorded on the student's transcript. The teacher of record will submit a grade at the conclusion of the program. This grade will be reported on the student's grade card and will be used to determine high school athletic eligibility.
6. All credit flex courses must be added and dropped within the same timelines of dropping and adding traditional classes – 2 days after the semester begins. Otherwise, the student will receive an F for the class if work is not completed.
7. All requests for credit flexibility must be made in advance. Credit Flexibility Proposals must be submitted by March 1 of the prior school year in order to be considered for credit. No credit will be awarded on a retroactive basis.
8. Support services may be requested by those students with an identified 504 Plan, or an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

How to Apply for a Credit Flexibility Program:

1. The student will obtain the necessary paperwork from the Guidance Office and complete the Credit Flexibility Application and Proposal. All required information must be provided. Students should return the proposal to the Guidance Office when complete. All Credit Flex Proposals must be submitted by March 1 in the school year preceding the proposed plan unless approved by the principal.
2. A conference must be scheduled to evaluate and finalize the proposal. The conference team consisting of the parent, student, high school principal, guidance counselor and teacher of record will review the plan, address any modifications and make suggestions to the plan.
3. Upon approval of a completed proposal, the student may then proceed with the learning activity as outlined in the proposal.
4. The student is responsible for completing all assignments agreed upon in the Credit Flexibility Proposal in order to receive grades and credits. A student who does not complete the requirements by the agreed upon dates will receive an F for the course which will be reported on the official transcript.
5. At the completion of activities and/or assessments for the proposed flexible credit, the student will meet with the teacher of record. The student will present the proposed evidence and will respond to any questions or requests for demonstration of skill and/or knowledge asked by the teacher of record. The teacher of record will grant or deny credit and issue a final grade for the proposed credit within 5 school days upon student demonstration of mastery.
6. Students may only attempt the credit flexibility option one time (1) for a particular course.
7. All appeals regarding denial of participation in the credit flexibility option or issuance of a contested grade in the credit flexibility program will be placed in writing by the student and parent and submitted to the high school principal within 10 school days. A review board will consult with the teacher of record regarding work submitted and rationale for grade earned. The decision of the review board will be the final determination in the appeal process.
8. Students will not receive academic credit for participating in Evergreen High School clubs, extra-curricular activities, band, choir, or athletics.

Awarding Credit:

1. The total number of credits that may be awarded is not limited, but must be defined in the proposal.
2. The successful completion of a pre-approved course may result in credit being designated as fulfilling either required or elective credit toward graduation requirements.
3. All courses, as applicable, must be aligned to the Ohio Academic Content and Technical Standards to receive credit.
4. Credits completed in another district before transfer to Evergreen Local Schools will count as credits toward fulfilling graduation requirements as awarded by the sending district. The high school principal will review the transfer credit to determine equivalency to specific courses offered by Evergreen Local Schools.
5. If a student transfers from another school district to Evergreen Local Schools and the student has not completed the proposed course requirements to receive credit as approved by the other district, the Flex Credits will be denied. Flex Credits that are “in process” will not be accepted. A new proposal must be submitted for these credits to be accepted.
6. There are NO weighted grades for credits earned through the Credit Flex Option.
7. The teacher of record reserves the right to withdraw the student from a course with a failing grade for issues involving plagiarism and copyright violation.
8. Final grades and credits will be recorded on the student’s transcript and calculated in the student’s GPA and class rank. Any student, using the Credit Flex Option who scores a 82% or below on the assessment will receive an F, will not be given credit for the course, and will need to enroll in the traditional course if credit for the class is required for graduation. A student will have one opportunity per course to test out of the course at Evergreen High School.
9. Test scores/final grades will be reported as follows on the transcript:

100-94%	=	A	89-85%	=	B
93-92%	=	A-	84-83%	=	B-
91-90%	=	B+	82% - Below	=	F
10. If a student receives a passing grade (83% and above) and does not wish to accept the outcome of the Credit Flexibility assessment, the student may enroll in the traditional class, and the final grade will be replaced by the grade earned in the traditional class on the transcript.
11. Testing out of Physical Education is not available under this option.

Athletic and Co-Curricular Eligibility

- **High School Athletics:** Credit Flexibility may impact a student's athletic eligibility just as any course taken under the traditional model. It is important to note that participation is tied to maintaining and monitoring regular attendance and good grades. To play interscholastic high school sports, a student must be currently enrolled in high school full-time and must have been enrolled during the immediately preceding academic quarter. A student enrolled in Credit Flex courses must, at the conclusion of the high school's quarterly grading period, be "passing" all Credit Flex courses used to establish athletic eligibility. The student may not yet have completed the Credit Flex courses, but it must be determined that the student is "passing" the course(s) at the time the quarterly grading period ends. If it is determined that the student is not passing, no credits required for eligibility can be awarded.
- **College Athletics:** Students who anticipate continuing participation in sports at the college level should carefully consider the possibility that the NCAA Initial Eligibility Center may not include some Credit Flexibility options as part of the qualifying core courses required for Division I and II eligibility. For potential college student athletes, NCAA eligibility requirements specifically address the types of learning opportunities available through the Credit Flexibility Program. If a student expects to play college sports, the student and parent(s) must ensure that any credits taken through Credit Flex will meet the NCAA Eligibility Center standards. Visit www.eligibilitycenter.org for more information.

Credit Flexibility Fees:

Any costs associated with student proposed activities, materials, online course fees, tests, travel, and assessments for credit flexibility will be the sole responsibility of the student and his/her parent(s).

Credit Flexibility – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: What is Credit Flexibility?

A: Credit Flexibility is a program that allows students to earn high school credits in the following ways:

- Completing coursework in the traditional setting
- Testing out or showing mastery of course content
- Pursuing Credit Flexibility options such as online courses, independent study, internships, service learning, research-based projects, PSEO programs, distance learning, educational travel, etc.

Q: Which courses are available through Credit Flexibility?

A: All high school credit-generating courses are eligible for credit flexibility but approval for each course will be dependent upon Evergreen Local School District's capacity to monitor and assess the plan and the student's ability to meet the academic requirements of the course. See Appendix A.

Q: What educational opportunities are available under Credit Flexibility?

A: Students may pursue educational options such as online courses, independent study, internships, service learning, research-based projects, distance learning, and educational travel in addition to testing out or demonstrating mastery learning in specific course content.

Q: How many credits can I earn through Credit Flexibility?

A: Under the provisions of Credit Flexibility, students are not limited in the number of courses or the number of credits earned through Credit Flexibility (PSEO courses/credits ARE limited). Students may also earn simultaneous credit (i.e. more than one academic content/course area, secondary and postsecondary) as proposed and approved. Approval of credit flexibility plans and credits earned will be dependent upon Evergreen Local School District's capacity to implement them.

Q: Where can students and parents go to find information about Credit Flexibility?

A: Information about Credit Flexibility can be found on Evergreen Local School District's website (www.evergreen.k12.oh.us), the Ohio Department of Education website (www.ode.state.oh.us) and from their school counselor.

Q: Where can I find the curriculum needed to write my Credit Flexibility proposal?

A: The curriculum can be found on the Ohio Department of Education's website (www.ode.state.oh.us).

Q: How do students test out of a course or demonstrate mastery of content?

A: Students who choose to test out of a class or demonstrate mastery of course content instead of taking the traditional coursework will be permitted to do so. In addition to a comprehensive examination, various types of assessments to document mastery of course content may also be used as defined in the individual student proposal and approved by the teacher of record.

Note: The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) has limitations for testing out of courses that apply to student athletes planning to play at the Division I and II levels. Student athletes should consult the NCAA website at www.eligibilitycenter.org for additional information on athletic eligibility.

Q: How do students apply for Credit Flexibility?

A: Students choosing to earn high school credit through a credit flexibility option must meet with their school counselor prior to completing a credit flexibility proposal. This session is designed to inform students of all aspects of credit flexibility as well as determine how the proposal aligns with the students' college and career readiness. During the session, students will receive a credit flexibility application and proposal, which they will complete under the supervision of their parents. The proposal will then be reviewed by the appropriate credit flexibility personnel. Credit flexibility personnel consist of a school counselor, high school principal, and the Evergreen Schools content teacher of record.

Q: What are the deadlines for applying for Credit Flexibility options?

A. Students must submit a Credit Flexibility Proposal by March 1 of the year prior to participating in the program.

Q: When does the Credit Flexibility course have to be completed?

A. For already existing coursework (ie, Online, PSEO, correspondence etc.) the same completion timelines will be in effect as those students taking traditional courses at EHS (EHS semester/term dates). All credit flexibility non-existing coursework plans proposed by students must include benchmarks for monitoring progress to ensure steady progress towards their academic learning goals. Included in the student's proposal will be benchmark deadlines and a completion deadline. If a student does not complete the credit flexibility plan by the predetermined deadline(s), a failing grade will be issued. No extensions allowed.

Q: If a student drops a Credit Flexibility option, does it turn into an F?

A. Students can drop a credit flexibility course the same as if they were taking a traditional course at EHS (by the second day of each term) without penalty. If a student drops a credit flexibility course after the drop deadline, a grade of F will be earned and placed on the student's transcript.

Q: Who reviews my Credit Flexibility Proposal?

A. The proposal for the credit flexibility option will be reviewed by the appropriate credit flexibility personnel. Credit flexibility personnel consist of the high school principal, school counselor, the teacher of record, and other qualified content teachers.

Q: Does the teacher of record for a Credit Flexibility option have to be an Evergreen teacher?

A. Yes, the teacher of record must be an Evergreen teacher who is a Highly Qualified Teacher and is licensed by the State of Ohio to teach the course being accessed through credit flexibility.

Q: Are there fees that accompany Credit Flexibility options?

A: Students and/or their families are responsible for all costs incurred with credit flexibility options that occur outside the normal student schedule.

Q: How will Credit Flexibility affect a student's GPA?

A: Credits for courses that students take through any of the credit flexibility options will be reported on students' transcripts as regular classes, complete with letter grades which will figure into the GPA. There will be no notation about the way in which the credit was earned.

Q: How will Credit Flexibility affect graduation?

A: Credit flexibility may allow some students to graduate early from high school. The Evergreen Local School District shall evaluate requests for early graduation in accordance with its policy on Early Graduation.

Q: Will Credit Flexibility impact a student's written educational plan (IEP or 504 Plan)?

A: Taking advantage of credit flexibility options requires careful consideration of both long-term and short-term academic goals. Students with any kind of written Individualized Education Plan or 504 Plan should meet with the teacher who facilitates the plan before any decisions are made regarding credit flexibility options.

Q: Can a student who participates in sports outside of the school day earn Physical Education credit for these activities?

A. Yes, for elective PE credit only. Simply being a member of a sports team -- whether sponsored by the school or by a community group -- in and of itself is not a basis for earning PE credit through the use of credit flexibility. Participation in a sports program not sponsored by the school could be a basis for creation of a credit flexibility option (i.e. competitive AAU swimmer at a school without a swimming team, private club gymnast at a school without gymnastics, private ballet dancer who practices under the direction of professional dance instructor and performs with a

dance troupe). In all instances, the credit flexibility option must be developed with components that address the Evergreen Graded Course of Study and the elements within the Physical Education Academic Content Standards.

Q: Will a student's participation in Credit Flexibility affect their college athletic eligibility or scholarship opportunities?

A: Students who plan to participate in athletics at the college level should be aware that some credit flexibility options may not be included as part of the NCAA Initial Eligibility Center's qualifying core courses required for Division I and II eligibility. For potential college student athletes, the NCAA eligibility requirements specifically address the types of learning opportunities available through the credit flexibility policy. The NCAA has limitations for testing out of courses and does not allow such courses to be applied to core course eligibility requirements. Again, student athletes should direct all questions regarding athletic eligibility to NCAA.

Q: Where can I find more information on NCAA eligibility?

A. Review the NCAA's website at: www.eligibilitycenter.org