

● *Academic Year*
2026-2027

QCC Early College Pathways Procedures & Practice Guide



Early College Pathways Mission & Vision

Offering dual credit programs to empower high school students with the skills, vision, and confidence to pursue higher education.

Quinsigamond Community College Early College Pathways and its high school partners will offer concurrent enrollment courses and support programs that allow all students to grow as individuals, explore their interests, start to plan their future, and see themselves as responsible leaders in their community.

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Welcome

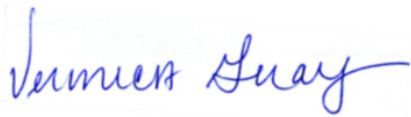
Hello and Welcome to Quinsigamond Community College's Policies and Practice Guide for Concurrent Enrollment. This Guide is designed to orient you through the steps necessary to ensure quality instruction for students and access to necessary supports for both students and instructors. It is not intended to replace regular communication with QCC's Early College Program staff and team of Faculty Liaisons. We value your feedback and recommendations and look forward to many discussions along the way.

Concurrent Enrollment is a space where high school teachers and administrators can introduce and accompany students on an early journey to college. It is an exciting time! When the high school classroom becomes a college space, students immediately benefit from the transformation. Topics such as academic rigor, transferrable credits, satisfactory academic progress, the importance of a syllabus, adhering to deadlines, and the use of a learning management system such as Blackboard all come into play and are introduced to students.

Thank you all for being on this journey with us!



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Overview

Quinsigamond Community College Early College Pathways is a partnership between QCC and a school district, which allows high school students to take QCC courses while still in high school. Founded in 2015, Early College Pathways works with interested partner high schools to offer high-quality academic experiences to students, faculty, and administrators.

Quinsigamond Community College adheres to the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) definition of “concurrent enrollment.” Concurrent enrollment courses are taught by high school instructors who are certified by QCC academic deans, based on their credentials to teach the QCC course. The courses are identical in content and rigor to those offered at Quinsigamond Community College. As a concurrent enrollment program, QCC Early College Pathways enables students to earn both high school and college credit simultaneously.

The National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) is the nation's first and only national organization for concurrent and dual enrollment programs. Founded in 1999, NACEP is an accreditation organization and a community of practice. Quinsigamond Community College is a NACEP Member, aligned with all NACEP standards, and is seeking full accreditation for the 2026-2027 cycle. For more information on NACEP, visit: <https://www.nacep.org/>

Program Types

QCC offers two types of concurrent enrollment partnerships.

Designated Early College Partnerships are part of the Massachusetts Early College Initiative, which seeks to address systemic inequalities by supporting students who are traditionally underrepresented in higher education by offering not only dual credit programs, but also academic, non-academic, pathway, and career supports. Designated Early College programs are a special partnership between a high school and a college, and students may take courses using the dual and/or concurrent enrollment modality. Dual enrollment is the model where a college professor teaches the course at the high school or at the college and students earn both high school and college credit for the course. Concurrent enrollment is when the high school teacher is certified by the college to teach the course at the high school and the student earns both high school and college credit. Concurrent enrollment programs within Designated Early College Partnerships adhere to the procedures and practices described in this guide. These partnerships are funded by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and are completely free to students. QCC has three designated Early College Partnerships – Early College Worcester, Early College Marlborough, and Early College Southbridge. Early College Worcester is a one-of-a-kind partnership in Massachusetts that includes all seven of the Worcester’s public high schools as well as a second higher education partner, Worcester State University.

High School Partners are traditional concurrent enrollment partnerships, whereby a high school instructor is certified by a QCC department, based on their academic and professional background, to teach a QCC course at the high school for QCC credit. These high school partners follow the same concurrent enrollment procedures and practices described in this guide. The courses are paid for by the high school. The high school may decide to charge the students. For prices, please contact the Executive Director of High School Dual Enrollment Programs and Partnerships.

Benefits of QCC Early College Pathways

Early Exposure to College Academics – Experience college-level coursework in a familiar setting.

Cost Savings – Earn college credits at a fraction of the cost.

Academic Head Start – Use earned credits to advance toward a certificate or college degree.

Expanded Opportunities – Alumni may have more flexibility for study abroad programs, double majors, internships, or early graduation.

Transferable Credits – Earn official QCC credits that transfer to all Massachusetts public colleges and universities, and many outside the Commonwealth too.

College Resources – Access online classrooms, library databases, and other academic tools.

Faculty Collaboration – High school and university educators collaborate for an enhanced teaching and learning experience and collaborative network.

Professional Development – High school instructors attend discipline-specific professional development, which supports the QCC class and engages the high school instructor.

QCC Early College Pathways serves students across Massachusetts, providing a solid foundation in college coursework, credit accumulation, and academic skill development – all while in high school.

The Role of Partner High Schools

QCC Early College Pathways is a partnership program whereby the high school and QCC commit to the principles of cooperation, collaboration, and ensuring the students have the best experience possible. It is best to think of the high school as an extension of QCC, like a mini regional campus. This is an accurate conception, because we are all colleagues with shared responsibilities and a shared mission.

The following program design creates a supportive environment at the high school and is aligned with NACEP standards.

Early College Coordinator

The early college coordinator serves a vital role at the high school as someone who helps students understand the program, describes the benefits and responsibilities of taking a QCC course, and communicates the program's needs and impacts to other high school staff. The early college coordinator is usually part of the high school guidance team (school counselor, early college counselor) or an assistant principal (usually someone who oversees scheduling). Specific responsibilities for the early college coordinator include:

- Serving as the point person at the high school for communication, student registration, general program development, and day-to-day problem solving.
- Assuring appropriate documentation of the program in the high school catalog/program of studies.
- Ensuring students are acknowledged during school awards ceremonies.
- Supporting the culture of QCC in the high school.

Principal/School Administrator

The success of a concurrent enrollment program often depends on whether the principal and/or school administrators are invested and openly support the program. In terms of a concurrent enrollment program, they “clear a path” for their early college coordinator and instructors to be successful in their role and promote the program to families and students. Specific responsibilities for the principal and/or administrator include:

- Serving as the strategic leader of the program at the high school.
- Supporting the program and ensuring release time for their instructors to attend QCC professional development.
- Supporting the culture of QCC in the high school.
- Assuring community awareness of the program and reporting out to school committees and other community stakeholders.

We are a team and communication is the key to success. Knowing who to contact makes the job easier and more enjoyable.

Concurrent Enrollment Instructor and Certification

QCC Early College Pathway Instructors, our Concurrent Enrollment Instructors (CEIs), play an integral role in the program, as they teach the QCC course at the high school in accordance with the QCC requirements. CEIs are certified by the College's academic deans, following the same criteria used to hire adjunct faculty for the same course at QCC.

Instructor Certification Requirements

Earning certification as a QCC Early College Pathways Instructor is a scholarly accomplishment that often involves multiple steps. Secondary and post-secondary education systems differ significantly in their academic cultures, which is why we take this process seriously.

High school instructors are applying for certification to teach a specific course. Certification is based on an instructor's credentials and background, using the minimum requirements to hire adjuncts for the class at QCC. High school instructors may apply for certification to teach in the upcoming academic year between January 2nd and February 28th. For example, to teach a QCC course through ECP in Fall 2027, instructors must apply between January 2nd and February 28th, 2027. Emergency certifications to fill an unexpected leave of absence are an exception to this rule.

Instructor Certification Process

Applying for concurrent enrollment instructor certification is a multi-step process and a serious endeavor. Many of these steps involve working together to support your application before it is reviewed by the academic dean.

STEP ONE

Review the instructor certification guidelines detailed in the QCC Early College Pathways Course Catalog and Certification Guide. If your background aligns with the standards for the course, please consider applying.

STEP TWO

Assemble the information list in this step and present it to your principal and early college coordinator. The early college coordinator will be the primary communicator of the application with QCC. Package includes: 1.) up-to-date resume, 2.) cover letter, and 3.) unofficial undergraduate and graduate transcripts. The early college coordinator will share this information with QCC Early College Pathways.

STEP THREE

The early college coordinator and QCC Executive Director of High School Dual Enrollment Programs & Partnerships will review the application package within the context of the certification guidelines. An applicant whose resume addresses current program needs and goals will be scheduled for an initial virtual meeting with the administrators from the high school and QCC. The virtual meeting is an opportunity to learn more about Early College Pathways and for applicants to ask as many questions as they would like to ask!

If all agree, the application package will be shared with the QCC Academic Dean. Based on the Dean's feedback, applicants may be encouraged to apply to QCC's Open Pool Position for CEI adjunct faculty.

STEP FOUR

Once the applicant has successfully completed the online application process through Human Resources, an interview will be scheduled with the Academic Dean and/or the Dean's designee along with the Executive Director of High School Dual Enrollment Programs & Partnerships. Applicants should be prepared to have an in-depth discussion regarding discipline-specific curriculum and instructional methods discipline-specific curriculum, instructional methods, and teaching philosophy.

STEP FIVE

Instructors will learn whether they have become certified as a QCC Early College Pathways instructor from the Early College Pathways Office. A formal letter will be sent to the instructor and copied to the superintendent, principal, early college coordinator, QCC academic dean, and faculty liaison. Instructors are not eligible to teach until they complete a new instructor orientation and discipline-specific onboarding from their faculty liaison.

GENERAL INFORMATION

QCC Human Resources will list a concurrent enrollment open pool position on their website, Interview Exchange. The posting is open for all disciplines and should be used by high school instructors applying for any of the courses offered through QCC Early College Pathways. High school instructors apply through the portal must submit a cover letter, resume, and unofficial undergraduate and graduate transcripts. The academic deans review the applications on a rolling basis.

Applicants who receive a letter of certification will need to complete additional documentation and submit official undergraduate and graduate transcripts.

Certain disciplines require a master's degree or significant graduate coursework in the subject area to qualify for certification. In other cases, a master's degree in education may be accepted, provided the instructor has a bachelor's degree in the subject area and has completed at least two graduate-level courses in the discipline. It is highly unlikely that a first-year teacher would meet the requirements for certification due to a lack of experience in classroom management. Additional requirements include compliance with class enrollment caps and textbook requirements.

Specific academic requirements for each course can be found in the QCC Early College Pathways Course Catalog and Certification Guide.

<https://www.qcc.edu/learn-qcc/take-classes-while-high-school/early-college-pathways>

Maintaining Instructor Certification

After an instructor is certified, they must attend a New Instructor Orientation which onboards the instructor to the program as well as to their discipline. This is a requirement before being able to teach the course.

To maintain certification, CEIs must adhere to the following requirements:

- Ensure that the QCC course is fulfilling the learning objectives, rigor, and required instructional hours.
- Communicate with their discipline-specific Faculty Liaison.
- Share their QCC syllabus with QCC prior to the start of each semester.
- Make their class available for QCC site visits.
- Use Blackboard in their courses, as it is used in your QCC department.
- Attend annual discipline-specific professional development meetings.
- Support the culture of QCC in the high school and notify QCC Program Staff and Faculty Liaisons when challenges arise outside of their control.
- Work with QCC central office staff to ensure a college-going mindset.
- Submit grades by or before the deadline given.

Certification Expiration

Instructor certification will expire if a CEI does not attend annual professional development workshops without communicating the need for an exemption in advance of the workshop. Expiration is not a formal revoking of certification; it is a means of pausing a certification until there is clarification (in person or via email) on why a CEI could not attend without advanced notice. Clarification of the absence and a plan forward will include the CEI, the high school principal, the early college coordinator, the faculty liaison, and the Executive Director of High School Dual Enrollment Programs and Partnerships. A CEI will be excused from an annual professional development workshop for medical or other extenuating circumstances beyond their control.

Annual professional development workshops are seen as sacred; they are a time when the entire academic community is together to ensure that the community is thriving. Choosing not to attend (unless it is really impossible) weakens one's connection and the community itself.

Revoking Certification

Although rare, CEIs may have their certification revoked for the following reasons:

- Choosing not to comply with the conditions of their certification.
- Repeated and intentional failure to adhere to the QCC department's guidelines for QCC courses offered through the partnership.

The decision to revoke certification would occur after written warnings to remedy the situation and would be handled by the QCC Early College Pathways Program Office (Dean and Executive Director) in coordination with the QCC Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs, the academic dean, the Early College Pathways Instructor, high school principal, and faculty liaison. Any extenuating circumstances are considered. A formal letter of decertification would document the issue, the process, and the decision. If decertification occurs, the instructor has the right to appeal within 30 days, in writing, to an impartial review board. The appeal would contest the reasons listed for revoking certification. Once certification is revoked, it cannot be reinstated.

Faculty Liaison

The Early College Faculty Liaison is a faculty member at Quinsigamond Community College appointed by academic dean, dean of college and career pathways, and executive director of high school dual enrollment programs and partnerships to be the primary coordinator of an academic discipline. The faculty liaison, who will be discipline-specific, will ensure the comparability of courses taught at the high schools, extend the resources of the department and College to the partner high schools, mentor CEIs, provide discipline-specific professional development, and otherwise assure that the courses at the high schools are equivalent to the same courses taught at QCC.

The role involves supporting and enhancing the Early College program through mentorship, collaboration, and quality assurance. Responsibilities include:

- Providing new instructor orientations, professional development, and faculty learning communities while ensuring concurrent enrollment courses align with college-level expectations.
- Communicating regularly with CEIs to grow the spirit of a community of educators.
- Conducting classroom visits.
- Reviewing syllabi and providing documented feedback to improve teaching effectiveness.
- Hosting norming sessions to standardize grading, working with assessment fellows to evaluate learning artifacts, and contributing to accreditation efforts.
- Maintaining an Early College Pathways discipline-specific Blackboard site, which serves as a resource for CEIs, contains past professional development workshop materials, and provides rubrics, example graded assignments, and additional relevant information.
- Providing regular communication with deans, faculty, and the Executive Director is essential for reporting on program developments, compliance, and improvement strategies, fostering a strong academic community focused on student success.

Student Eligibility & Registration

QCC Early College Pathway partner high schools are responsible for providing program information and guidance to their students and teaching them about the value as well as the responsibilities of taking a college class while still in high school. QCC staff are available to visit the high school and provide a similar overview for the students and high school staff.

QCC Early College Pathways is intended to be a program for 11th and 12th grade students. Some 10th graders may be ready to take specific courses, and there should be appropriate counseling to make sure students are prepared for such an effort.

Students who participate in the QCC Early College Pathways program are required to meet the below listed qualifications. In addition, each course may have specific student eligibility requirements. Please make sure you read and understand student eligibility for the program as well as for the class. Student eligibility guidelines for individual courses are located in the Course Catalog and Certification Guide. [LINK](#)

Student eligibility for all courses includes:

- Having passed 9th grade English and math,
- A minimum 2.7 GPA, and
- Meeting the specific criteria established by your high school.

Student Registration Process and Deadlines

Applying to ECP

Before students can register for college courses through ECP, they must first apply to the program and be admitted. Students should first meet with their school counselor to discuss the benefits and responsibilities of being in the program. Applying requires students to complete a high school-specific ECP form as well as students and a parent/guardian to complete a QCC residency form, available in your school counselor's office and on the QCC Early College Pathways website.

Register for Courses

Once students have completed the application process and they meet the student eligibility requirements, they can start taking courses after they register for the course. Students can take one or more courses every semester depending on the high school. Course offerings vary from semester to semester.

Students register for the CE course with their school counselor, and the early college coordinator sends the student roster to QCC using their live shared registration document. Student registration is discussed between partners during regular weekly meetings.

The student enrollment cap for QCC courses is 22 students, with the exception of FYE 101, which has a cap of 20 students.

**It is important for students to register during the appropriate registration periods. If students sit for the course and discover that they are not registered for QCC credit after the add/drop deadline, they will not receive QCC credits and will not be allowed to register for QCC credits retroactively.

Registration Deadlines:

Fall classes, June 1

Spring classes, December 1

Retroactive Registration

Quinsigamond Community College has a strict policy of no retroactive registration. This means that after the add/drop deadline, even if a student has been sitting in the class the entire time, if they were not registered for the class, they cannot be added afterwards. The student will not be awarded QCC credit if they did not register.

It is the student's and the high school's responsibility to register for the QCC course.

Grading Policies

When QCC courses have concluded, CEIs are responsible for submitting grades. CEIs submit their grades on the Q. Grades are due within 48 hours of the final exam or last course, whichever is latest. Student grades will appear on an official QCC transcript. On the transcript, students in Early College Pathways are classified as Non-degree, NP (No Program).

QCC uses the traditional scale of A to F. If the student drops a course before the drop deadline, the course will not appear on the QCC transcript. If a student drops a course after the drop deadline, a W (Withdraw) will appear on the transcript.

At QCC the grade of X is entered for students who have left the class without formally withdrawing from the class. It signifies that the student has not officially withdrawn from the learning experience, and the instructor has judged there is insufficient basis for evaluation. The X grade is considered an indication for unsatisfactory academic progress for financial aid purposes (credits attempted/credits earned).

It is important to remind your students that their college transcript starts with QCC Early College Pathways and is a permanent record. Students must have as few D's, F's, and W's on their transcript as possible, as many such grades will negatively affect their ability to get scholarships and other student financial aid in the future. D's, F's, and W's may also make it more difficult to pursue certain degrees in the future, for example, law and medicine.

Prerequisite courses are the first course in a sequence. ECW students must earn the grade of C- or better to advance to the next course in the sequence. This policy aligns with [MassTransfer](#) policies, which assure credit transfer within Massachusetts between public colleges and universities. These courses include Art 131/132, English 101/102, and Spanish 111/112.

Students can retake a class if they earn a grade that they determine is unsatisfactory. This option is reserved for special circumstances, and they should talk to their early college coordinator to determine if this is right for them.

If students earn the grades of D, F, or W in two courses they must meet with their early college coordinator to develop an action/success plan before taking additional courses.

QCC Policies that Extend to the High School

QCC Code of Conduct

All QCC faculty and staff, as well as all QCC Early College Pathway partners, including students in the program as bound by the QCC Code of Conduct.

QCC Early College Partnerships has a standard Student Handbook for their students. <https://www.qcc.edu/learn-qcc/take-classes-while-high-school/early-college-pathways>

Students that participate in a Designated Early College partnership are required to read the Student Handbook for their partnership, which has specific policies and practices for their partnership.

Early College Marlborough Student Handbook (*in development*)

[Early College Southbridge Student Handbook](#)

[Early College Worcester Student Handbook](#)

Behavior & Attendance

Students are expected to behave with personal dignity and to treat others with the same respect. Students in concurrent enrollment courses are required to follow the student code of conduct required by their high school as well as QCC. Please see the [QCC Student Handbook](#).

Instances of academic misconduct are also assessed by both the high school and QCC. If CEIs find issues of student cheating, plagiarism, or other issues of academic misconduct, they should be reported to the Executive Director, who will work with the high school and appropriate QCC offices to address the issue.

Students are expected to attend their scheduled classes. Instructors will disseminate attendance requirements in writing to their students during the first week of class as part of the syllabus.

FERPA

FERPA, the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#), is a U.S. federal law that protects the privacy of student educational records. Student grades for the concurrent enrollment course are recorded by the instructor on the high school report card as well as on the QCC transcript. Students are expected to communicate with their instructors on grade issues.

Accessibility Services

Students seeking an accommodation for their QCC course are encouraged to apply with QCC Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Students with a 504 or IEP accommodation at the high school are not automatically granted an accommodation for their QCC course and it is also possible that the accommodation that the student has at the high school will not be the same one granted by the College. SAS collaborates with students, faculty, and staff to create a barrier-free campus environment that is accessible, equitable, and inclusive of all members of the college community. As a student and faculty resource, SAS offers several services to facilitate access.

Connect with Student Accessibility Services early, as it may take time to process your application. Applications can take up to two weeks to process.

<https://www.qcc.edu/support/specialized-support/student-accessibility-services>

Syllabus

A syllabus will be provided to students for each course. The syllabus will follow the QCC requirements for each department and will include the following information.

- QCC course title
- QCC course number
- QCC course description
- Learning objectives
- Grading standards/rigor
- Textbooks/materials
- Assessment and assignments
- Weekly outline of the course
- Attendance and Behavior Policies

The syllabus will also include important high school information, such as the high school title, how the course is weighted and other essentials which are determined by the high school and the CEI.

Conclusion

The Early College Pathways Procedures and Practices Guide is a tool to help all partners understand the program and solve problems when issues arise. When in doubt, reach out to us! We have regular meetings with all of our partners and questions and concerns should be addressed right away, before they become an issue. We are in partnership! It is our duty to communicate the standards of the program and support their implementation. It is your duty to implement the standards and communicate with our office and the faculty liaison for clarifications and support.

Please make sure that you are using the most current edition of the Policies and Practices Guide, as policies are annually updated.