

**Early College/Commonwealth Dual Enrollment Partnership (CDEP)/Dual Enrollment
Frequently Asked Questions
Spring 2020**

Given the unique challenges COVID-19 has presented, students enrolled in dual enrollment coursework, whether in Early College programs, CDEP funded programs, or through other dual enrollment (EC/CDEP/DE) programming, need to be able to make informed decisions related to college course completion and related (EC/CDEP/DE) programming in general. This scenario is particularly challenging given that K-12 institutions are closed until at least May 4, inhibiting classroom instruction and formal grading of assignments. In addition, higher education institutions have transitioned, or are in the process of transitioning, their courses to online formats so they can continue to serve students virtually for the rest of the spring semester. To whatever extent possible, if Early College programs are able to continue to operate, they should do so in support of the ECJC guiding principles. And in general, EC/CDEP/DE programming should continue to prioritize the well-being of students during this particularly challenging time and ensure that we do no harm to them—emotionally or academically.

Please note that for students continuing with college coursework, both district and higher education partners must continue to monitor student performance. Given the disruption of the semester, monitoring student performance will continue to be especially vital to mitigate against negative consequences (particularly with regard to Pell eligibility) as a result of outcomes in college coursework.

1. What guidance should we give students whose EC/CDEP/DE courses have been suspended during the time of K-12 school closure (i.e. concurrent courses)?

Students should be reassured that the EC/CDEP/DE high school and higher education partners are actively planning how their college coursework will resume when the school reopens. By this point, partners will need to determine whether it is feasible for the course to continue being offered for college credit, or if the course will continue for high school credit only (and fulfill MassCore requirements as planned). The high school and higher education partners may decide to transition the rest of the college course to an online format and give students the opportunity to opt into continuing their college credit, but only if sufficient support continues to be available for students.

2. What guidance should we give students whose EC/CDEP/DE courses have already transitioned to an online format?

Students who wish to continue in a course for college credit and have the necessary support and resources should be allowed to do so. In this scenario, the high school and higher education partners should be counted upon to provide support to those students who elect to continue their courses. Partners should maintain outreach to EC/CDEP/DE students and monitor students' academic progress to the best of their ability.

Students unable, or uncomfortable, continuing their courses in a modified format should be given a withdrawal without consequence on their transcript, according to the guidance below in response #3.

3. What guidance should we give students on withdrawing from their EC/CDEP/DE courses this semester?

Campuses should allow students enrolled in spring EC/CDEP/DE courses to have the opportunity to withdraw in a way that will not appear on their transcript nor negatively impact their future academic record. (On some campuses, this may be referred to as an administrative withdrawal, but we defer to the terminology utilized by registrars on each campus). We also encourage partners to explore the option of offering the possibility of extended time for coursework, through an “in process” or similar notation, in consultation with course instructors and guidance counselors.

Fundamentally, these decisions should balance the constraints on students in this extraordinary time, and also allow space for those students who are able and willing to continue with college coursework should that be feasible either in the current semester or in the summer or future semesters.

The student’s counselor should confirm with the student the impact of their decisions on student transcripts, MassCore and graduation status. If a student withdraws from the college course, high schools and districts must ensure that the student may complete their high school credit with appropriate continued high school coursework. In the case of concurrent courses, partners may decide to allow the student cohort to continue the course for high school credit only. Documentation of withdrawals are required.

4. How should programs conduct outreach to families? With whom should programs be in communication?

Programs should have a formal communication plan to inform parents and students of the current status of EC/CDEP/DE courses and the choices available to students. This communication should be closely coordinated between the high school and the higher education partners. This plan should include ways by which to update students and their families when needed. When possible, communication regarding Early College program changes should be sent to Kristin Hunt (kristin.e.hunt@mass.gov). CDEP program changes should be sent to Keith Connors (kconnors@dhe.mass.edu).

5. Specific to Early College Designated programs: How will the disruption in educational services and necessary changes to Early College program impact Early College Designation status?

We assume that all determinations with regard to Early College Programs will be made in close communication and collaboration between the high school, district, and higher education

partners, keeping in mind the unique challenges for all parties and for students. Please also note that we understand that the determinations you make must be done so in light of extraordinary circumstances, and we trust that you will act in good faith. Therefore, necessary program adjustments for the Spring 2020 semester that you must make in response to this current crisis will not impact your Early College Program Designation status. However, we will require that you inform the agencies of any programmatic changes. Please do so by sending an email to Kristin Hunt at kristin.e.hunt@mass.gov.

6. Can FY20 funding be extended beyond June 30, 2020?

This would require legislation, and we have escalated this issue with our colleagues in the Administration and the Legislature, and we will be communicating with you as soon as we know anything further about the possibility of extending FY20 funding authority beyond June 30th.

7. Is it possible to use the DHE funds for technology (e.g. Chromebooks) since our advising/mentoring will be going remote?

Yes and, as always, any budget change requires preapproval. Please send your request regarding CDEP grant programs to Keith Connors at kconnors@dhe.mass.edu and regarding Early College program funding to cwilliams@dhe.mass.edu, and we will process those requests as quickly as possible.