

Graduation Policy: Credit Requirements and Procedures

Venture Academy seeks to ensure all students have the opportunity to progress academically toward graduation. The purpose of this policy is to specify credit requirements and stipulations for graduation from Venture Academy High School. [Current requirements](#) for the State of Utah and Venture are updated and posted on the Venture website under our high school and career planning program page. This policy is subject to any changes to Utah State Law.

I. DEFINITIONS

- A. “Comparable Courses” means a course a student may take to replace a grade in a course previously taken, as part of the course grade forgiveness provision of this Policy. The course must be similar in standards, workload and rigor, and must meet all other requirements of this Policy. “Comparable course” does not include a course a student completes through the packet method.¹
- B. "Concurrent enrollment" means enrollment in a course offered through the concurrent enrollment program that:²
1. provides an eligible student the opportunity to enroll in a course that allows the eligible student to earn credit concurrently:
 - i. toward high school graduation; and
 - ii. at an eligible institution;
 2. includes only a course that:
 - i. leads to a degree or certificate offered by an eligible institution; and
 - ii. is one of the following:
 - a. a general education course;
 - b. a career and technical education course;
 - c. a pre-major college level course;
 - d. a foreign language concurrent enrollment course described in Utah Code §53E-10-307; or
 - e. an upper divisions course that the Utah Board of Higher Education approves; and
 3. requires that the instructor of a concurrent enrollment course is an eligible instructor
- C. “Essential Elements” means specific statements and skills linked to grade-level expectations identified in college-and-career readiness standards, each with a respective learning map with linkage levels that identify based skills within the standard to set an appropriate challenge for students with significant cognitive disabilities, no matter their ability level.

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- D. "Grade replacement" means credit a student earns by retaking a teacher-led course for a letter grade to improve a previous grade, which:
 - 1. may raise the student's grade point average if the new grade is higher; and
 - 2. replaces the lower grade on the student's transcript.
- E. "Packet" means a collection of instructional materials and assessments used to receive credit through the packet method.³
- F. "Packet method" means an educational approach where:
 - 1. a high school student receives a collection of instructional materials from an institution, organization, or Venture Academy;
 - 2. the high school student works through the materials independently with minimal or no direct instruction from a teacher; and
 - 3. assessment is primarily based on completion of assignments within the instructional materials.⁴
- G. "Flight Plan" (Plan for College and Career Readiness [PCCR]) means a four-year plan towards graduating and preparing for college and/or a career, to which a student's course registration and class schedule throughout high school should conform.
- H. "Replacement credit" means a pass-fail credit a student earns for a course the student did not pass or complete, which:
 - 1. does not affect the student's grade point average; and
 - 2. allows the student to fulfill high school graduation requirements.⁵

II. PROCEDURES

- A. Required Courses, Elective Courses, and Career Goal:
 - 1. The Utah State Board of Education (USBE) has established minimum academic credit requirements for high school completion in courses approved by the State Board and additionally, Venture Academy has set specific graduation requirements for the institution.
 - 2. Upon parental or student request, graduation requirements may be modified for individual students to achieve an appropriate route to student success when such modifications:
 - i. are consistent with an IEP or PCCR or both;
 - ii. are maintained in the student's file and include the school principal and parent/guardian signatures; and
 - iii. maintain the integrity and rigor expected for high school graduation, as determined by the Utah State Board of Education.
 - 3. Students who fail classes are able to make up credit through any accredited provider.

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B. Residency Requirement

1. Venture Academy shall award a diploma to a student moving in from outside of Venture Academy who attends school during the semester immediately preceding graduation and who also meets the Venture Academy graduation requirements.
2. The school principal has final decision-making authority regarding graduation requirements within the guidelines of this policy.

C. Flight Plan (PCCR)

1. The school counselor collaborates with individual students and their parents to form a plan of action, reviewed annually, which serves the needs and goals of the student through the instructional process. The Flight Plan is essential as a planning process which guides students through their education and ensures that their education goals are achieved, culminating in graduation. Besides academics, Flight Plans include college and career planning.[6](#)

III. CREDIT OPTIONS

A. Credit may be granted in the Venture Academy from among the following:

1. Courses
 - i. Approved course offered by the school.
 - ii. Approved course offered by an accredited institution.
2. College courses (not remedial) from fully accredited institutions
 - i. Concurrent Enrollment courses do not dictate how many high school units equate to a college/university semester credit hour or whether different numbers of high school credits are awarded when the CE course is taught for one semester or for the full school year. These determinations, based on how best to cover learning outcomes for the secondary curriculum, are made and approved by Venture Academy before offering a CE course. Conversely, USHE institutions should not rely on the high school transcript to award college/university credit hours.
 - ii. The grade or grades posted on the high school transcript must align with the single course grade posted on the college transcript.
3. Ogden-Weber Technical College credit:
 - i. 1.0 credit hour earned at Ogden-Weber Technical College = .25 high school elective credit.

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- ii. “Pass” or “No Credit” grades issued by Ogden-Weber Technical College.
4. Approved high school or college level online or correspondence courses.
5. [Approved credits as determined by the Venture Academy’s Credit Evaluation Committee.](#) (see below)
 - i. The Credit Evaluation Committee has final decision-making authority for the awarding of credit from non-accredited sources consistent with state law, including credit for home-school instruction.
6. [Successful completion or demonstrated proficiency approved by the school administration.](#) (see below)
7. Successful completion of a predetermined course or experience developed by an IEP or 504 team to meet an identified need.

IV. COURSE RETAKE FOR GRADE REPLACEMENT

A. General information

1. In accordance with Utah Administrative Code R277-717, a student in 9th, 10th, 11th, or 12th grade who desires to improve a course grade received by the student may:
 - i. repeat the course one or more times; or
 - ii. enroll in and complete a comparable course.
2. A grade for an additional credit of a recurring course does not change a student’s original course grade.
3. A student may not earn additional graduation credit for a replacement course if the student has already earned graduation credit for the original grade.
4. Only courses taken from a Utah public education institution are eligible for course grade replacement.
5. Concurrent Enrollment courses are college courses and high school students may not repeat a college course through CE. The course can only be repeated after applying to an institution and paying tuition. If a student receives a “W” grade on a college transcript, which is neither earned credit nor a failing grade, the student may request approval to re-enroll in the CE class. Such requests are subject to institution and Venture Academy approval.
6. Grade replacement may not be obtained through a packet.

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B. Comparable Courses

1. As a general rule, the courses specified in the catalog for meeting credit requirements are the ones students must complete. On *rare* occasions, there may be a comparable course that could be approved for credit under special circumstances.
2. Comparable courses must fill the same graduation course requirements as the original course. The course must be similar in standards, workload, and rigor.
3. School-based paper packets and other credit recovery options cannot be used to improve a course grade.
4. The principal of the school, in consultation with the Credit Evaluation Committee, shall determine if a course is comparable based on standards, commensurate workload, comparable rigor, and if competency in the subject matter can be demonstrated.
5. A student seeking to replace a course grade with one from a comparable course, prior to repeating the course or enrolling in a comparable course, must first contact the counselor.

V. DEMONSTRATED COMPETENCY

- A. Demonstrated Competency Assessments allow students to demonstrate knowledge and skills they have acquired in various subject areas without necessarily taking a specific class or course. Such assessments are available to all high school students and can be completed any time in their high school career. Students earn required or elective credits towards high school graduation for successful completion of Demonstrated Competency Assessments.
- B. Important Facts About Demonstrated Competency Assessments
 1. Students can earn required or elective credit depending on the course to which the assessment is tied.
 2. Students may use Demonstrated Competency Assessments to accelerate their education.
 3. The student is responsible for acquiring and retaining the content knowledge and skills required to pass any Demonstrated Competency Assessment.
 4. Demonstrated Competency Assessments will generate either .5 or 1.0 credit depending on the content and standards the assessment covers.

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5. A modest non-refundable fee will be charged for each assessment (see Fee Schedule).
6. Each assessment may be taken only **once per school year**. Math assessments allow one additional attempt if the initial score was in the allowable range (see Secondary I).
7. If a student doesn't turn in the work requested on time for a given assessment or misses an assigned testing window, the student's assessment will be closed and no credit will be issued, except for unusual circumstances.
8. **No habits grades** will be awarded for passing a Demonstrated Competency Assessment
9. **No letter grades** will be awarded to students for passing a Demonstrated Competency Assessment. Students will receive a "P" (pass) only.
10. Students must request to take a demonstrated competency assessment or engage in acceleration that impacts course schedules **at least 40 days prior** to the beginning of the impacted semester.
 - a. Assessments must be scheduled far enough in advance of high school graduation that they can be completed, scored and credit verified **no later than 90 days before graduation**.
11. **Parents must be informed** of the student's plan to pursue demonstrated competency credit.

See school counselor for a list of currently available options for demonstrated competency. These include both Venture and State offered assessments.

VI. TRANSFER STUDENTS & TRANSFER CREDITS

A. Schools within Venture Academy will accept:

1. Credits and grades awarded to a student by a school accredited or approved by the Utah State Board of Education without alterations.
2. Credits and grades awarded to a student by a school recognized by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges as issued by the school without alterations.
 - i. Venture Academy schools shall accept student credit at face value from a non-public school if the school was evaluated by Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges consistent with credit approval criteria as outlined by Utah Administrative Rule R277-410-9.

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VII. CREDIT EVALUATION COMMITTEE

- A. The Credit Evaluation Committee (“Committee”) will evaluate credit earned at institutions not falling under the direct supervision of Venture Academy.
- B. The Credit Evaluation Team shall be composed of the high school principal (or designee) and a secondary teacher who teaches each of the courses in question.
- C. Credit Evaluation Team findings will be based on a preponderance of evidence gathered from sources such as the following:
 - 1. Course title and description
 - 2. List of instructional materials used
 - 3. Student achievement (progress) or
 - i. Formative evaluations
 - ii. Summative evaluations
 - 4. Correlation of course objectives with the Utah State Core Curriculum standards and objectives
 - 5. Course length and student attendance
 - i. Number of days the class met
 - ii. Normal class length
 - iii. Number of classes attended by the student
 - iv. Grading criteria used
 - 6. Teacher name, qualifications, certifications, endorsements, etc.
 - 7. Course requirements for credit (representative sample of student work)
 - 8. Copy of student records
- D. It shall be the responsibility of the student seeking credit to provide appropriate evidence. A preliminary meeting with one of the evaluation team members may be requested to get direction on what evidence will be most salient for a given situation.
- E. In addition to the forms of evidence listed above, students seeking credit may be required to demonstrate competency through an end-of-level test approved by the Credit Evaluation Team.
- F. Costs associated with the determination of credit, including competency level testing, will be borne by the parent/guardian of the student requesting credit consideration.
- G. The submission deadline for graduation credits must be submitted prior to the first day of the third quarter of the student's anticipated graduation date.
- H. The Credit Evaluation Team will meet as needed throughout the year.

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- I. The student requesting credit consideration will be notified of the team's decision in writing no later than seven (7) working days following the date the team meets to review the application (provided that the student turns in all requested items prior to the meeting).
- J. Approved credit from non-accredited institutions will be recorded on the student transcript as a P, pass. Standard grades (A,B,C,D) will NOT be recorded and will therefore NOT be considered in the student GPA (Grade Point Average).

VIII. DIPLOMA OPTIONS

A. High School Diploma

1. A school diploma may be awarded to a student who has:
 - i. completed the academic requirements established by the Utah State Board of Education (State Board) in Utah Administrative Code R277-700; and
 - ii. completed the additional academic credit requirements as determined by Venture Academy Board of Education and enumerated in the Course Requirements and Criteria for Graduation in this policy.
2. A student must complete all requirements prior to July 1st (or on the final business day preceding this date) immediately following their cohort's graduation.
3. A student scheduled to earn a school Diploma after their cohort's graduation shall not be allowed to participate in graduation ceremonies.

B. Alternate High School Diploma for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

1. An alternate high school diploma may be awarded to a student who has:
 - i. A significant cognitive disability as defined by R277-705-2(8);
 - ii. Accessed grade-level Core standards through the Essential Elements;
 - iii. Completed all the academic requirements established by the Utah State Board of Education in Utah Administrative Code R277-705-5 or substitutions for graduation in the same content area from a list of alternative courses approved by Utah State Board of Education in R277-705(1)(b) (these substitutions must be made by the student's IEP team); and
 - iv. Met all graduation requirements prior to exiting school at or before age 22.

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C. Certificate of Completion

1. This does not award a high school diploma until all requirements for the High School Diploma are met.
2. Certificate of Completion may be awarded to a student who has:
 - i. An active IEP for a student with a disability;
 - ii. been enrolled, at least one term prior to graduation;
 - iii. Has a written path approved by the student's administrative and IEP team that will satisfy the requirements to earn a high school diploma and will meet all graduation requirements prior to exiting school at or before age 22;
3. A student with an approved Certificate of Completion plan shall be allowed to participate in graduation ceremonies.
4. A high school diploma will be awarded after all academic requirements are satisfied prior to age 22.

IX. EARLY GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

A. Early graduation is available to students who complete all academic requirements established by the Utah State Board of Education and Venture Academy prior to the completion of their 12th-grade year. Students must complete the following requirements:

1. Must satisfy all existing graduation requirements of Venture Academy.
2. The student, a parent/guardian and counselor will review the Flight Plan and develop an outline of the coursework needed to satisfy the early graduation goal.
3. Notification of the intention to graduate early must be submitted in writing prior to the first day of the third quarter of the student's desired graduation year.

B. Diploma Awarding & Graduation Ceremony Participation

1. Students who complete all academic requirements established by the Utah State Board of Education and Venture Academy will be awarded the high school diploma at the next official diploma recording cycle (December or June).
2. The early graduate may participate in the graduation ceremony that directly follows their completion of all requirements.

X. GRADUATION POLICY FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS & STUDENTS ON EDUCATIONAL VISAS

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- A. The following are Venture Academy standards concerning participation in graduation ceremonies and the receipt of high school diplomas for foreign students on J-1 and visas.
1. Venture will only allow foreign exchange students to enroll for a full school year. No semester long enrollment or enrollment longer than one year.
 2. In addition to state sponsored J-1 foreign exchange students, Venture Academy will allow one F-1 Foreign Exchange student for every 175 students enrolled in grades 9-12.
 - i. Additional students, who are hosted by existing Venture families, may be considered by the board on a case by case basis.
 - ii. Students will only be placed based on available room.
 3. Foreign exchange students must be between the ages of 15 and 18 and a half.
 4. No Foreign Exchange student will receive a High School Diploma as they are only here for one school year. This year is meant to be a cultural opportunity, not a graduation opportunity.
 5. They will not be allowed to participate in the graduation ceremony as they are not earning a diploma but will be allowed to participate in graduation activities leading up to the ceremony.
 6. Agency and Venture Academy policies require foreign students to provide transcripts or materials in English. Transcripts must include course titles, course descriptions, grades and credit issued, course length or duration, date credits were issued, grade levels completed, and credit equivalences.
 7. Additional requirements governing foreign exchange students can be found [here](#).

1 Utah Code §53E-3-501

2 Utah Code §53E-10-302

3 Utah Code §53E-3-501(7)(iv)

4 Utah Code §53E-3-501(7)(v)

5 Utah Code §53E-3-501(7)(vi)

6 Utah Code 53A-1a-106