cms Advanced Studies

Frequently Asked Questions for Students

1. **What is Credit by Demonstrated Mastery?** "Credit by demonstrated mastery" is the process by which LEAs shall, based upon a body-of-evidence, award a student credit in a particular course without requiring the student to complete classroom instruction for a certain amount of seat time. This option allows students to demonstrate mastery of a course's content, getting credit and for the course by taking an assessment and completing an artifact if successful. In 2013 the NC Dept. of Public Instruction instituted State Board Policy *GCS-M-001-13: Credit by Demonstrated Mastery* in order to ensure students grow optimally in our public schools and have effective seat time. Transitioning away from seat time, in favor of a structure that creates flexibility, allows students to progress as they demonstrate mastery of academic content, regardless of time, place, or pace of learning. Failed attempts at CDM are not reflected on a student's transcript.

2. **Is a credit earned through the CDM policy intended to be "different" than a credit earned in the traditional manner (completing the course)?** No, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools will assess students and evaluate artifacts based upon the same standards that are applied to students earning course credit in the traditional sense. The achievement levels required to earn a CDM credit (i.e., assessment scores meeting the criteria set by NCDPI plus a required artifact) already reflect a more rigorous expectation of students who want to earn credit in this manner than those of students who complete the course with seat-time.

3. **Who is eligible to request an opportunity to earn credit by demonstrating mastery?** Credit by Demonstrated Mastery shall be available for all NC students in grades 9-12 for high school courses and in grades 6-8 for high school courses offered in middle school, who are able to show a deep understanding of the content without seat-time and classroom learning experience.

4. **Is there a limit to the number of courses for which a student may earn credit using the CDM policy?** No, students may earn credit using CDM for as many courses as they wish. However, students may only make one attempt **per course**. Students who are unsuccessful after one attempt must register for and complete the course to receive credit.

5. **Can the school or district deny a student the opportunity to attempt to earn CDM credit?** No, the NC State Board Policy prohibits this. However, there are courses which are excluded from CDM by the State. Honors, AP, and IB courses are excluded, as are CTE work-based learning courses (co-op, internship, and apprenticeship), CTE courses that have a clinical setting as a requirement of the course, CTE Advanced Studies courses, English Language Learner (ELL) courses, and Healthful Living required courses.

6. **What happens if a student is unsuccessful in attempting CDM?**
   If a student unsuccessfully attempts to earn credit by demonstrated mastery, s/he does not receive credit for the course. To receive credit after an unsuccessful attempt to demonstrate mastery, a student is required to: enroll in and complete the course, receive a passing grade for the course, AND re-take the EOC (if applicable) according to existing State policies and procedures. Students ***shall not*** be penalized for an unsuccessful attempt and such attempts shall never, under any circumstances, affect the student's grades or transcript.

7. **May students earn CDM credit for honors courses?** No, CDM is only available for some standard-level courses. CDM credits are awarded as a Met/Not Met and therefore do not impact a student's grade point

average. Please note: World Language courses above Level II are labeled as Honors.

8. **Does CDM replace differentiation in meeting the learning needs of students?** No, CDM is not a replacement for differentiated services to meet the learning needs of all students.

9. **May a student receive credit through CDM for a course not offered at his/her school?** Yes, but only for those courses offered at other high schools within CMS.

10. **How does CDM credit impact course prerequisites and sequencing?** When courses are taught in a predetermined sequence, a student may only apply for CDM for the next course in the sequence. For example, a student who has not taken NC Math 1 would not be permitted to obtain CDM credit for NC Math 2. If middle school students want to CDM high school courses, students would attempt to earn CDM for the next course in the high school content sequence, which is determined locally based on district scheduling. Based on SBE policy, middle school students are not eligible to take the high school courses English II, III or IV, and therefore cannot attempt CDM for these courses.

11. **Are credits earned through this policy accepted by outside organizations such as the NCHSAA, NCCCS, UNC-GA, and NCAA?** No. Students considering collegiate athletics should be advised that NCAA Division I and Division II colleges and universities do not recognize test-out credits in terms of meeting college entrance credit requirements, and therefore CDM is strongly discouraged for potential collegiate athletics. Credits earned through CDM shall be used to count toward minimum credits for the purpose of high school athletic eligibility.

12. **May students earn credit by demonstrated mastery for Career and Technical Education (CTE) Courses?** Yes, with the exception of specific courses excluded by the NCSBE policy (work-based learning courses such as co-ops, internships and apprenticeships; courses that have a clinical setting as a requirement such as ProStart, Early Childhood Education I/II and Nursing Fundamentals; Advanced Studies courses).

13. **How do the changes in Career and Technical Education (CTE) affect CDM requirements?** States across the country have made significant changes to Career and Technical Education (CTE) business operations under the new Perkins V federal legislation. For decades in North Carolina, technical attainment was reported using credential attainment or proficiency on CTE post-assessments. In an effort to move away from standardized testing and to encourage a more authentic assessment of student learning, NC CTE has chosen to report proofs of learning (POLs) as indicators of program quality measure in our new state plan. Beginning Fall 2020, CTE courses are categorized into three Proof of Learning (POL) types:
    - Performance-based Measurements (PBM),
    - Credentials, and
    - CTE State Assessments or Third-Party Assessments

    Please review this link for more information on the CDM and CTE process.

14. **May a student earn the CPR credit through CDM?** No. CPR is part of the Healthful Living requirement and NC State Board of Education policy specifically excludes CPR from CDM.

15. **When a student earns credit by demonstrated mastery for a course, what should schools use to replace the course in the student's schedule?** Generally, students should replace the course with the next course in the sequence, i.e. a student using CDM to earn a Math I credit should schedule Math II in its place. High school students might also use CDM credit to create space in their schedule that can be filled with a community college course available through Career & College Promise or other advanced courses, such AP and IB. The NC Virtual Public School is also a source of courses for students who need to replace a course for which they have earned a CDM credit.

16. **If a student chooses to earn credit by demonstrated mastery, will the student have to take that EOC for the course they passed through CDM?** Yes, students attempting to earn a CDM credit for a course with an EOC must take the EOC as the assessment component of the CDM attempt.

17. **Can students graduate early based upon credits earned through this policy?** Yes. CMS recommends that early graduation decisions be made through discussion between parents, students, counselors, and school administrators.

18. **Can students enrolled in a course decide to earn CDM partway through the course?** No, the CDM policy is for students who wish to accelerate without enrolling in a course.

19. **Can a student take a course after receiving credit by demonstrated mastery for that course?** No, CMS policy does not allow this.

20. **Can students potentially stay at home and graduate?** No, the CDM policy does not relieve schools, parents or students of the requirement that students attend school until age 16. CMS rules for high school students require a full course load except for seniors on track to graduate with their class. "On track" seniors are still required to take at least two courses (CMS regulation IKF-R). Earning credit by demonstrated mastery does not count in student attendance.

21. **What changes have been made with CDM and World Languages?** Students who want to demonstrate mastery of a world language may use a proficiency based exam from the NCDPI approved assessment list for the Global Language Endorsement, North Carolina's Seal of Biliteracy, for Phase 1 of the CDM process. The score they receive can be applied to the highest-level language course proficiency outcomes as specified in the World Languages Course Codes for CDM Proficiency Levels document. This will allow the student to continue to Phase 2 for the most appropriate level course. If a student is successful with the Phase 2 assessment for this course, the student would earn credit for this course, and then be placed in the next level course.

22. **Do you provide or suggest studying materials?**
No. Per State guidance, families should review the NC Standard Course of Study for the course to determine if the student possesses mastery of the content. The student should have strong foundational knowledge (Phase I) and application/conceptual understanding (Phase II).

23. **Can you provide more information about Phase II assessments?**
If successful with Phase I, more specific information about Phase II for that course will be provided prior to

testing.

24. If I pass Phase I, then can I get credit for the course even if I don't pass Phase II?

In order to get credit for the course, you must get the minimum required score for both phases.

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Frequently Asked Questions for Summer

1. **What are the testing dates for summer?**
   The window for testing is in July (last 10 days). We try to get through both phases in this timeframe, so the District Team has ample time to score Phase II assessments and calibrate. This also ensures that families and schools are prepared for any specific schedule adjustments that might need to be made.

2. **What if I am out of town during the scheduled day to test?**
   You must be present on the scheduled testing days. Due to the short summer timeframe and small testing team, there aren't any makeup sessions.

3. **When will I find out the testing schedule?**
   You will receive communication from the testing team this summer regarding scheduled days to test and other information. This team is not necessarily your school team during the school year.

4. **How does this work if I am a current 8th grader?**
   At the time of testing you will be considered a 9th grader. We will ensure that all information is sent to the receiving school for scheduling purposes.

5. **Are the testing sessions in person?**
   Both Phase I and Phase II sessions are in person.

6. **Where are the testing sessions?**
   The location for summer is scheduled and provided the testing information over the summer. It may not be at your home school as we use one site for summer testing. The testing site for Summer 2026 is Ardrey Kell High School.

7. **Can I request a different testing day/time?**
   No. The testing schedule is set to ensure that the district team can complete the entire process for all applicants. Sessions will not be rescheduled for personal scheduling conflicts (i.e. wedding, internship, etc.)

8. **Are there any makeup sessions?**
   There are not any makeup sessions for testing.

9. **What happens with scheduling?**
   Most schools schedule you in the class in which you are applying to CDM to ensure it is on your schedule. If successful with the process, schools will review your schedule and support you with adjustments. Many schools have designated days near the beginning of the year for schedule changes. Please review your school's website information.