



College Profile

About

The Forest School is a learner-driven community that integrates learner-driven technology, Socratic discussions, hands-on projects, and real-world apprenticeships in an intentionally diverse and character-forging community.

Demographics

- Founded in 2018
- 180 learners grades preK4 through 12
- Graduating class size: 3
- 60% staff with MA+
- 60% staff of color
- 48% children of color

Curriculum

Students self-direct 100% of their learning, personalize their coursework, and advance levels at their own pace and through demonstrations of mastery. Forest School high schoolers earn mastery of credits at events called “Practicals” at which they select and showcase their best work, complete performance tasks, and answer questions from experts.

Unique course offerings

When taking Practicals to earn mastery credits, high schoolers can use any evidence from work they did from one or more of eight signature learning experiences at The Forest School.

Required experiences: Designed by Forest School staff	
Quests	Real world projects to master practical skills like creativity, entrepreneurship, and design thinking
Civilization challenges	Discussions, experiences, and challenges that guide learners to understand the story of the world, build the skills of a historian,

	develop critical consciousness, and form an opinion about and practice governance
Storytelling challenges	Driven by their curiosity learners write both for self-expression and for a real-world purpose, which is shared publicly, includes feedback, involves multiple iterations, and includes reflection
Custom experiences: Approved and overseen by Forest School staff	
Deep books	Driven by a combination of curiosity and purposeful expansion of their horizons, learners read, reflect, and share their learning
Apprenticeships	Deep, long term apprenticeships in high school that help learners build social capital, pursue interests, and expand horizons
Learner-designed courses	Based on interests and goals, learners design, pitch (for approval), and complete their own independent study of a set of skills, theories, and/or conceptual knowledge, including a culminating project where application and retention are emphasized
e-Learning courses	Learning utilizing electronic technologies to access educational curriculum that is responsive and adaptive to learner's learning needs.
Dual enrollment courses	In addition to being enrolled at The Forest School, high schoolers can enroll in college courses and earn college credit.

Like other Acton schools, Forest students structure their learning experiences in pursuit of various badges. These badges are awarded through peer review by other students, and the minimum and maximum requirements for badges and courses are below. Badges represent an interim step on the way to accumulating the evidence required for a mastery credit.

Learning experiences	Total offered	Graduation requirement	Maximum allowed	Total earned (example learner)
Quest badges	28	22	28	23
Civilization badges	28	22	28	22
Storytelling badges	28	22	28	26
Deep book badges	Unlimited	16	24	24
Apprenticeship badges	28	16	28	16
Learner-designed	Unlimited	2	Unlimited	5

courses				
E-learning courses	Unlimited	9.5	16	15
Dual enrollment courses	Unlimited	0	3	1

Honors/AP/IB

The Forest School offers 16 AP courses with a forced maximum of four courses. All non-AP courses are honors level. Forest also allows for dual enrollment, with a maximum of three dual enrollment courses.

Contact

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How do I read the transcript?

Interpreting credit profiles

Students are limited to a maximum of 10 advanced credits (ACs). We expect them to earn 3-5 advanced credits in the credit area that aligns most with their post-secondary pathway. Beyond that, they may elect to earn additional ACs in any credit areas they choose.

Potential credit profiles

Pathway	Focus area (3-5 ACs)	Expected credits
4 year university	Learn to learn	World languages
Workforce/ Entrepreneurism	Learn to do	N/A
Social impact	Learn to live together	N/A

Personal growth	Learn to be	N/A
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About mastery credits

Instead of traditional grades and Carnegie units, all Mastery Transcript Consortium schools measure student achievement using mastery credits. Each mastery credit represents a specific set of skills that may be discipline-specific or cross-disciplinary. To earn a credit, students build a portfolio of evidence from a variety of learning contexts, which is reviewed by school staff. Students are then either awarded the mastery credit or given feedback on how to advance their portfolio in order to demonstrate mastery. Mastery credits are divided into two levels--foundational and advanced--as explained below.

Foundational credits are graduation requirements

Students are required to earn all 20 foundational credits (FCs) to graduate. While the evidence for those credits may come from a variety of learning experiences, students must also take a minimum of 21 academic units to graduate, including 4 English, 3 math, 3 sciences, 3 social sciences and 1 physical education/health.

Advanced credits are optional

Any Forest student who completes all 20 foundational credits is ready for a college or career pathway. Advanced credits represent college or career level mastery of various skills, above and beyond what is expected for graduation. While there are 20 credits available, students are limited to a maximum of 10 advanced credits.

Full credit list

At the Forest School, mastery credits are grouped into four credit areas. Each credit area contains both foundational credits (FCs) and advanced credits (ACs). As mentioned previously, all FCs are required for graduation. ACs are optional, and students can earn a maximum of 10. Students will largely author their own ACs, and Forest staff will define the outcomes, developmental progressions, and assessment rubrics to be associated with each credit. This results not only in personalized pathways, but personalized outcomes as well. Below is a list of the mastery credits offered at the Forest School.

Foundational	Advanced
Learn to Be	
Flourishing	Student authored
Purpose	
Resourcefulness	
Gratitude	
Growth mindset	

Learn to Do	
Storytelling	Student authored
Creativity	
Entrepreneurship	
Design thinking	
Goal setting & reflection	
Learn to Learn	
The science of learning	Student authored
Math	
Civilization	
Science	
English	
Learn to Live Together	
Empathy	Student authored
Collaboration	
Trust	
Cross-cultural awareness	
Social capital	

Evidence

Students submit a portfolio of evidence to earn each mastery credit. The Featured Evidence displayed on the right side of the mastery transcript are individual pieces of evidence from a variety of portfolios that the student has chosen to feature. These provide an authentic snapshot of the breadth and quality of work indicative of this student.

Additionally, many credits on the mastery transcript have a single piece of evidence attached to them. This evidence was selected by the student from the portfolio of work used to earn that particular credit, and gives the reader a window into the type of work associated with the credit.

Mastery credits and courses

There is not a one-to-one relationship between mastery credits and courses. Students gather the evidence needed to earn a mastery credit from a combination of the eight Forest School learning experiences described above, including, but not limited to their academic coursework. While some mastery credits, such as Math, or Advanced Maths, tend to draw heavily on evidence from particular courses, other credits can be earned with evidence from a wide variety of learning experiences.