



## **CREDIT BY DEMONSTRATED MASTERY (CDM) Frequently Asked Questions**

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### **What is Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM)?**

This is an option which allows students to demonstrate mastery of a course's content, getting credit and a pass/fail grade for the course by taking an assessment and completing an artifact. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction introduced Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM) 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.

### **Who is eligible to request an opportunity to earn credit by demonstrating mastery?**

Any MGSD high school student or a middle school student who is considering taking a high school course is eligible. Students wishing to earn CDM must demonstrate a deep understanding of the content without seat-time and the classroom learning experience.

### **What courses ARE eligible for CDM?**

Students may earn CDM for all standard-level high school courses in grades 9-12 and those high school courses offered at the middle school level.

### **What courses are eligible for CDM at the middle school level?**

Students in 7th grade may apply for CDM for Math 1 or Spanish 1. Students in 8th grade may apply for CDM for any high school course during the Spring semester of their 8th grade year. Typically these classes include English 1, Math 1, Math 2, Environmental Earth Science, World History, world languages, and CTE courses.

### **What courses are NOT eligible for CDM?**

The following courses are excluded from the CDM process per state regulations:

- Career and Technical Education (CTE) work-based learning courses (co-op, internship, apprenticeship)
- CTE courses that have a clinical setting as a requirement of the course, such as ProStart, Early Childhood Education I/II and Nursing Fundamentals
- CTE Advanced Studies courses or any course without state technical standards
- English Language Learner (ELL) courses
- Healthful Living required courses
- AP/IB Courses

### **May students earn credit by demonstrated mastery for Career and Technical Education (CTE) Courses?**

**Yes**, with the exception of specific courses excluded by SBE 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). For CTE courses, an industry credential may be accepted as the required artifact component. Students will still be expected to complete the post-assessment, if one is available, or a teacher made exam if the state does not provide a post-assessment. If the student earns credit, the post-assessment score would be reported in the technical attainment performance measure.

**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.

**May students earn CDM credit for honors courses?**

**No.** CDM is only available for standard-level courses. CDM credits will be indicated on the transcript similar to a 'pass' and therefore do not impact a student's grade point average. Once data becomes available long-term in this process, this may be revisited.

**May a student receive credit through CDM for a course not offered at their school?**

**No.** CDM will only be available if the course is offered in the district.

**Is a credit earned through the CDM policy intended to be "different" than a credit earned in the traditional manner (completing the course)?**

**No.** We 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 CDM through a two-phase assessment 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 the traditional seat-time.

**How do CDM courses impact a student's grade point average (GPA) and quality points?**

Students simply earn a credit and it appears as "CDM Pass" on the student's transcript. No course grade is received and the course is not included in the GPA calculation. CDM courses do not quality points towards a student's GPA. CDM courses do count as credit towards high school graduation requirements. Failed attempts will not be reflected on a student's transcript.

**May students earn honors weight for CDM credit?**

**No.** CDM credits are awarded as a pass/fail grade and therefore do not impact a student's grade point average.

**How will credits appear on transcripts?**

Students will not receive a letter grade for the course. Students who successfully complete the process will receive a "pass" result on their transcripts for the course, and will be eligible to enroll in the next level course in that subject area. Students who do not earn the course credit will not be penalized. Results of the assessment process will not be reflected in the student's grades or school transcript. Students may make one attempt to earn credit per course. Retests are not offered.

**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 that are offered by the district; however, students may only make one attempt per course. Students who are unsuccessful after one attempt must register for and complete the course in the traditional manner to receive credit. Students must complete one application for each course for which they wish to pursue CDM credit.

**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 Math 1 would not be permitted to obtain CDM credit for Math II.

**Can the school or district deny a student the opportunity to attempt to earn CDM credit?**

**No.** Students who complete an application by the deadline and are eligible to attempt the course requested will have the opportunity to attempt to earn CDM credit. 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

**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 students. CDM is in fact a way to differentiate and personalize learning based on individual student needs of content replacement. CDM does not replace the typical accelerated pathways of learning compacted curriculum by groups of advanced students, which are quite common in many LEAs.

**What measures are in place to ensure consistency between LEAs across the state with the CDM process?**

State Board of Education policy GCS-M-001 Course for Credit, Section 13, specifies required parameters. Additionally, NCDPI has developed Guidelines and a CDM Toolkit for districts to use to develop and implement the local CDM process. As always, the SBE does want to respect an individual district's context and needs, thus the CDM policy does allow local decisions among some components. The guidelines specify additional requirements of the policy as well as components that are under the oversight of the local school district.

**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 course, such as AP and IB. The NC Virtual Public School is also a source of courses for middle school and high school students who need to replace a course for which they have earned a CDM credit.

**Can students graduate early based upon credits earned through this policy?**

**Yes.** CDM credits work like traditional credits towards graduation. DPI recommends that early graduation decisions be made through deep discussion between families, students, and appropriate educational staff.

**If a student chooses to earn credit by demonstrated mastery for an EOC course, 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 Phase 1 assessment component of the CDM attempt.

**Can students enrolled in a course decide to earn CDM partway through the course?**

**No.** The CDM policy is being phased in beginning with students who wish to accelerate without enrolling in a course.

**Because classroom situations (science labs, conversation in world languages, etc.) cannot be replicated on a standardized assessment, how will these situations be assessed?**

Districts and schools may choose to require, as part of an artifact or as an additional requirement, student performance tasks that replicate these situations. For example, for world languages, the

school may require a student to demonstrate conversational ability as part of earning the CDM credit as part of the Phase 2 assessment of the CDM process.

**Are credits earned through this policy accepted by outside organizations such as the NCHSAA, NCCCS, UNC-GA, and NCAA?**

**It depends.** Each organization will handle CDM within its own parameters. Parents should contact organizations independently with their questions. If a student is interested in continuing to pursue athletics beyond high school, families are highly encouraged to review the policies of athletic organizations to determine how CDM would impact the student's athletic pathway.

**How will CDM impact potential athletic eligibility?**

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. Therefore, CDM is strongly discouraged for potential collegiate athletes.

**How will CDM impact students applying for Community Colleges or Colleges within the University of North Carolina College System?**

Like community colleges, University of North Carolina member universities have traditionally accepted the State Board of Education's authority to determine how students earn high school credit toward graduation. Based upon discussions during the summer of 2013 with UNC-GA staff as well as enrollment managers across the system, the credit by demonstrated mastery policy does not change that. Students with a diploma from a North Carolina high school will be recognized as high school graduates regardless of the credits earned via the CDM policy, thus ensuring students' ability to enroll in a UNC system university following graduation. As always, minimum admission requirements must be satisfied.

**If students transfer between districts, how will the school/district know if the student has gone through the CDM process?**

CDM will be apparent on the student's official transcript.

**In a sequence of courses, such as English I, II, III, IV, could a student theoretically receive credit for all four courses?**

Yes. A student may earn CDM for all courses. If a student did earn CDM for all four courses through the multi-phase assessments, this indicates a clear need for a personalized learning plan. DPI would strongly recommend that the CDM team closely work with students/families and other educators, such as counselors and AIG staff, to ensure appropriate programming is in place for students with this high ability and long-term needs and implications are addressed.

**Who provides the assessments students will use to meet the foundational knowledge component and progress to the artifact stage?**

For EOC courses, the EOC will be given during an early testing window to provide the information needed for the Phase 1 assessment. For non-EOC courses, districts determine the appropriate examination to use.

**Can students potentially stay at home and graduate?**

**No.** CDM policy does not relieve schools, parents or students of the requirement that students attend school until age 16.

**Could this be used to accelerate students that know content, are very bright but are at risk?**

**Yes.** CDM may be used for any student who would benefit from earning CDM and is able to meet the requirements. CDM may support a pathway towards graduation that was not available before and can provide students other options to pursue before graduating.