

Early College Program Handbook

Fall 2026 - Spring 2027



● ● ● **Welcome!**

With the generous support of the State of Massachusetts and the City of Cambridge, the Early College Program is a collaboration between Lesley University and the Cambridge Public Schools. This is an exciting new partnership that aims to increase college access for CRLS students and we are delighted to welcome you as part of the program.

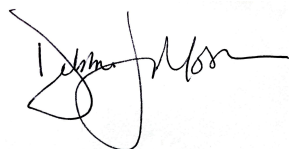
This program is administered jointly by Lesley University and Cambridge Public Schools and furthers the partners' commitment to each other and the future of young people in Cambridge. The Early College Program seeks to serve as a model that will enrich the classroom and campus experience for a diverse body of students, many of whom are typically underrepresented in higher education.

Please review the following pages, including information on vaccination. Congratulations again and let us know if you have any questions!

Sincerely,



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Expectations for Early College Students at Lesley University

This Early College Program supports students from priority populations in completing Early College coursework via in-person classes at Lesley University. The Program will provide students with the assistance needed to be successful in their coursework, utilizing the same academic support and coaching model developed for the Lesley undergraduate student body.

This will include:

- A full program orientation
- Training on the learning management system used by the college (Blackboard)
- Coaching on connecting to and with faculty, and assistance navigating college life
- Trained tutors will work with students to make sure that they are attending class and completing their assignments
- Workshops on navigating the college classroom, connecting to careers, and mental wellness will be used to enrich the student experience
- Representatives from across the university will offer assistance and support including advising, career resources, internships, and the center for academic achievement
- Professors will be in constant contact with support personnel to make sure that students do not fall behind in their courses
- Connection with school personnel will be used to leverage existing relationships and to make more meaningful connections to students and to families

Early College Calendar

A semester calendar is found on the Early College Blackboard Site. Students are responsible to check this calendar for information on class attendance during vacation weeks, both CRLS and Lesley.

Attendance

- Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and First Friday seminars (first Friday of the month) during 4th Block unless otherwise excused.
- All courses take place at the Lesley University campus. Check your schedule, your professor, or with Early College Program Manager if are unsure where to report for class: earlycollege@cpsd.us
- Students are expected to follow the **Early College Attendance Policy** found on the Early College Blackboard Site and at the end of this Handbook. Consistent absence/tardiness will not be accepted and will impact a student's grade.
- If a student needs to miss a class for any reason, they must notify their Lesley University professor and send an email to the Early College Program Manager: earlycollege@cpsd.us

Religious Observance Policy

Students who are unable, because of their religious beliefs, to attend classes or to participate in any examination, study, or work requirement on a particular day shall be excused from any such examination, study, or work requirement. As a result of absence due to religious observance, students shall have the opportunity to make up the examination, study, or work requirement they may have missed, provided that such make-up examination or work shall not create an unreasonable burden upon Lesley University. The University will not charge any fee for providing students the opportunity to make up examinations or work. No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to students who avail themselves of the provisions of this policy.

Grading

Please review information about the official Lesley University [grading](#) policies.

Grade Grievance Policy

The Lesley University [Grade Grievance Policy](#) provides students with a mechanism to appeal grades which they believe constitute an unfair or incorrect application of the grading policy as outlined by the faculty member in their syllabus, or are the result of a perceived lack of requested reasonable accommodation for a documented disability.

Classroom Etiquette

All students enrolled at Lesley University are expected to present themselves and act responsibly inside and outside of the classroom (whether virtual or in-person.) Proper college etiquette enables the Lesley University community to maintain a safe and educational environment in line with academic success. In addition, classroom protocol requires that students respect themselves, fellow students, professors, and staff by following simple rules such as:

- Keep background noise levels down
- Silence cell phones and other devices while in class; do not check them during class
- Arrive to class on time
- Participate as much as possible in class and group discussion
- Seek the proper venue for resolving conflict when problems occur between members of the Lesley Community

Add/Drop

- Students are expected to adhere to all add/drop/withdrawal dates of the college.
- Students will learn how to navigate Lesley systems and will be expected to register for courses after advice from early college staff.
- Students experiencing academic difficulties in their classes will be contacted by Lesley staff, CRLS Early College Coordinator, or CRLS guidance counselor to address these issues and plan for success in future college classes. *Students are primarily responsible for seeking assistance if they are struggling in classes and for going to their registered classes.*

Office Hours

- Professors and Student Support Staff at Lesley University all hold office hours to provide additional support for students. These office hours are critical for receiving help and for building positive relationships with faculty. Office hours are listed on each professors' syllabi and may be offered in person or remotely via Zoom.

Academic Integrity

As stated in [Lesley's Academic Integrity Policy](#):

"Academic honesty and integrity are essential to the existence and growth of an academic community. Every member of the Lesley community is responsible for fostering a culture of academic honesty, and for maintaining the integrity and academic reputation of Lesley University."

Plagiarism, known as intellectual theft, violates the academic code at Lesley University. Students will be held responsible for such violations, even when unintentional. To avoid unintended plagiarism, students should utilize on-campus resources, professor assistance, and existing CRLS resources (e.g. peer tutoring at the Center for Academic Achievement.). The [Lesley University Library](#) also has an abundance of resources to use when needing more structured assistance, along with a team of dedicated individuals.

Plagiarism carries a range of penalties depending upon the severity of the infraction. The professor may require the work to be redone, assign a failing grade for the assignment, reduce the course grade, or assign a failing grade for the entire class. Decisions may also be made by the Academic Review Board at Lesley University.

The academic integrity policy and procedures can also be found [on Lesley's website](#).



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Parents/Guardians: How to Help Your Student Succeed

Your home life plays a key role in helping ensure your student's success in the Early College Program.

The following steps are strongly encouraged:

1. Ensure that your student attends all classes as scheduled. Attendance plays a major role in creating a successful student. This allows them to know their full potential and gain the appropriate skills needed from attending classes.
2. Help your student determine clear and realistic goals for each course. This helps set expectations and will provide positive encouragement.
3. Regularly check in with your student about their performance in school and with their assignments. Make sure to discuss all midterms and final grades. Final exams or projects often carry a lot of weight in grading and are crucial for success.
4. Encourage your student to develop good time management skills. For example, create a daily study plan with them.
5. Be sure that you and your student have an open line of communication. With open communication comes trust and with trust comes truth. This way, you both are able to understand where the positives and negatives may lie in their education.
6. Encourage them to seek the appropriate assistance needed. It is okay for your student to struggle, but it is important that they know where to go when they need help handling it.

Lesley University strives to make sure students are equipped with all of the necessary skills and resources needed to excel to their highest potential. We are able to accomplish this more easily by having your support when your student is not at school.



Support for Students at the College

One of the benefits of participating in the Early College Program is that students have access to an extensive academic support network to help ensure success in their college classes. Lesley University provides numerous areas of support **free of charge** to all students. It is the student's responsibility to seek out and take full advantage of these opportunities to maximize to their benefit.

The following is a partial list of supports available to Early College Program students:

- Academic advising offered one day each week as part of student's schedule
- One-on-one peer tutoring through the Lesley University (LU) Center for Student Success and Advising. Students can schedule appointments with Lesley's Early College Program tutor using [Microsoft Bookings](#). They can help you with any questions you have about your Lesley course assignments, academic writing, study strategies, time management, using the library databases, evaluating sources, and much more. Please email tutoring@lesley.edu if you need any help or additional information.
- Access to Brainfuse through the Tools tab on your myLesley homepage. Live Help virtual tutoring is available 24/7 for writing support and other content.
- Access to asynchronous paper writing support by emailing drafts of assignments as Word document file attachments to email to onlinetutoring@lesley.edu. Students will receive feedback on that draft from an experienced writing tutor after two days. You can then revise your paper in your own time. You do not need an appointment!
- After-school tutoring through the CRLS Volunteer Center at CRLS on Wednesdays
- Office Hours with Professors
- Research support offered through LU Library. Individual sessions with librarians available via Zoom, weekly 9AM-5PM.
- Lesley University Information Technology portal for Blackboard and LU account support

Services for Students with Disabilities/Accessibility Services

According to the Lesley University Disability Services website:

"...Lesley University [is] committed to providing equal or equally effective alternative access to academic, social, cultural, and recreational programs for all qualified individuals with disabilities. [The] Disability Support Services team works with faculty, staff, and students to make appropriate adjustments to provide this access. Educational access includes the provision of classroom accommodations, auxiliary aids, and services. Accommodations allow all students equal opportunities inside the classroom, around campus, and at university-sponsored events off campus."

The Early College staff will assist students with this process and any needs that they may have. This includes, but is not limited to classroom accommodations. Please [visit Lesley University's website](#) for answers to more specific questions or locations to find the best resources.



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Lesley University 101: FAQ

Q: What if my technology (login, etc.) is not working?

A: If you are having trouble with technology (Lesley University credentials), please submit a ticket to our [Support Hub](#). If your technological issues are impeding your from completing classwork, it is crucial that you communicate that with your professor at Lesley and with someone from the Early College Program at earlycollege@cpsd.us.

Q: Who should I contact if I am having general difficulty at Lesley?

A: You should always contact earlycollege@cpsd.us with questions. If you have a specific concern, also consider reaching out to your professor. We suggest that you do this as soon as possible to help to handle the concern before it intensifies. We will help guide you in the appropriate direction.

Q: What are office hours?

A: Office hours are times that professors set aside to assist students with questions about a class or the material they are learning. Office hours are not mandatory but tend to be beneficial for a student. Professors will list their office hours and how to reach them on the course syllabus. We recommend you take advantage of these opportunities, and be sure to reach out to your professors if you have questions.

Q: What should I do if I cannot figure out how to utilize the library services?

A: If you go to the Lesley library website, there is a [chat box](#) where you have easy access to the librarians at Lesley University. They would be more than happy to assist you in navigating the library services remotely.

Q: Should I hold on to my coursework from program courses?

A: YES! When it comes time to apply for colleges and a review of the credits you would like to transfer in, these documents (such as syllabi & lab notebooks) may be required, and you may not be allowed to transfer in credits without them.

Q: Are vaccinations against COVID-19 and/or influenza required?

A: No, they are not required.

- All students are strongly encouraged to protect themselves and our community by receiving the influenza vaccine as soon as it is available in the Fall.
- Based on your personal risk assessment, we strongly encourage all students to be up to date on their COVID vaccination.

Q: What other vaccination requirements does Lesley have?

A: Early College students from CRLS are required to meet Massachusetts school immunization requirements for Grades 7-12 (see below) unless there is a medical or religious exemption:

- Medical exemption – if a physician submits documentation attesting that an immunization is medically contraindicated
- Religious exemption – if a student submits a written statement that immunizations conflict with their sincere religious beliefs.

MA Immunization Requirements Grades 7-12

Requirements apply to all students including individuals from another country attending or visiting classes or educational programs as part of an academic visitation or exchange program.

Requirements apply to all students, even if over 18 years of age.

Grades 7 –12†

In ungraded classrooms, Grade 7 requirements apply to all students ≥ 12 years.

Tdap	1 dose; and history of DTaP primary series or age-appropriate catch-up vaccination. Tdap given at ≥ 7 years may be counted, but a dose at age 11-12 is recommended if Tdap was given earlier as part of a catch-up schedule. Td or Tdap should be given if it has been ≥ 10 years since last Tdap
Polio	4 doses; fourth dose must be given on or after the 4 th birthday and ≥ 6 months after the previous dose, or a fifth dose is required. 3 doses are acceptable if the third dose is given on or after the 4 th birthday and ≥ 6 months after the previous dose
Hepatitis B	3 doses; laboratory evidence of immunity acceptable. 2 doses of Heplisav-B given on or after 18 years of age are acceptable
MMR	2 doses; first dose must be given on or after the 1 st birthday and second dose must be given ≥ 28 days after first dose; laboratory evidence of immunity acceptable
Varicella	2 doses; first dose must be given on or after the 1 st birthday and second dose must be given ≥ 28 days after first dose; a reliable history of chickenpox* or laboratory evidence of immunity acceptable

Meningococcal Requirements

Grade 7-10	1 dose; 1 dose MenACWY (formerly MCV4) required. Meningococcal B vaccine is not required and does not meet this requirement
Grade 11-12‡	2 doses; second dose MenACWY (formerly MCV4) must be given on or after the 16th birthday and ≥ 8 weeks after the previous dose. 1 dose is acceptable if it was given on or after the 16th birthday. Meningococcal B vaccine is not required and does not meet this requirement

§ Address questions about enforcement with your legal counsel. School requirements are enforced at the local level.

† Medical exemptions (statement from a physician stating that a vaccine is medically contraindicated for a student) must be renewed annually at the start of the school year and religious exemptions (statement from a student, or parent/guardian if the student is < 18 years of age, stating that a vaccine is against sincerely held religious beliefs) should be renewed annually at the start of the school year.

* A reliable history of chickenpox includes a diagnosis of chickenpox, or interpretation of parent/guardian description of chickenpox, by a physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or designee.

‡ Students who are 15 years old in Grade 11 are in compliance until they turn 16 years old.



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Early College Attendance Policy

CLASS ATTENDANCE

Attendance is **required** in every class session, unless you have an excused absence verified by Cambridge Rindge and Latin School. If you are sick, please don't come to class. We assume you will also be absent from CRLS and will check if this absence is excused or unexcused. Arriving **more than 10 minutes late to class** is very distracting and will count as a ½ unexcused absence.

Beginning with your 3rd unexcused absence, your final grade will drop by one partial letter grade (e.g, A→A- or B+→B). The 4th unexcused absence will result in another drop, as will each absence after that. You are still expected to turn in any assignments that are due on time and you will be unable to make up the participation points of that day.

We understand that many students are scholar athletes, involved in a **high school sport**. Students should communicate proactively with their high school coach to let them know they may be a few minutes late to practice on days they have class. **Given that Early College is not held every day, students must prioritize their Early College class.** Students with away games will be excused, but should inform Early College ahead of time the dates of these away games.

If you miss a session, **it is your responsibility to get the missed information** or assignment from a classmate. Check My Lesley for any assignments you missed. They are still due on the date assigned even if you were not in class the day it was discussed.

If you are facing an **extraordinary** personal situation that could result in several days of absences, please contact Michael O'Shea, Early College Program Manager at CRLS, and a message will be sent to all your professors to let them know.

FRIDAY SEMINARS

Students are required to attend scheduled monthly "First Friday" Early College seminars as part of the Early College program. Light refreshments will be served and guest speakers will guide you on aspects of college life, applying to college, and career development. These seminars may also feature activities in the Lesley student recreation area. **These Friday seminars take place during 4th Block (starting at 2PM) and a bus will take you to Lesley from CRLS.** The dates (subject to change) for the seminars this year are:

- October 2, 2026
- November 6, 2026
- December 4, 2026
- February 5, 2027
- March 5, 2027
- April 2, 2027
- May 7, 2027



Photo: An Early College student enjoys Lesley student recreation room on South Campus after a First Friday seminar, May 2026.



• • • Tutoring & Academic Success

Tutoring and Academic Success encourages students to become independent, successful, and confident learners. Central to Tutoring and Academic Success's mission is the belief that students have diverse ways of learning related to their cognitive, experiential, and cultural differences and, with support, can reach their academic goals. The Center's professional staff specialize in supporting students' academic skill development.

Tutoring and Academic Success hires, trains, and supervises current Lesley students from graduate and undergraduate programs to provide peer tutoring, tutors, academic coaches, and studio guides to all Lesley students. Peer tutoring, studio guidance, and coaching promote a collaborative learning environment in which students work as partners with their peers to gain a deeper educational experience at Lesley.

- Peer tutors provide content tutoring across many fields as well as guidance to develop better writing, reading, math, research, study, and organizational skills. Students can work on specific Lesley course requirements such as papers, projects, presentations, and exam preparation.
- LA+D studio guides support students in studio classes by supporting the development of project management, developing insight into the creative process, and preparing for critiques. Peer studio guides also support students with course work, from writing their first papers and artist statements, to excelling in content sequences, such as art history.
- Peer academic coaches build relationships with students to promote their agency, self-understanding, growth, effectiveness, and persistence at Lesley and beyond.

How to Access Peer Tutoring

Peer tutoring is FREE OF CHARGE and is available to all Lesley students to provide guidance for completing Lesley course assignments. Peer support is offered by appointment during weekdays. Early College Program students can schedule their own appointments on [Bookings](#).

In addition to peer tutoring:

- Tutoring and Academic Success also partners with Brainfuse, an online tutoring platform, to deliver online content supported by professional tutors to supplement its tutoring services. Live tutors are also available to students through Brainfuse via Live Help for content tutoring in a variety of college level subjects. An SSO link to access Brainfuse is available on every student's myLesley homepage via the Tools tab on the left side menu.

- All Lesley students can submit drafts of writing assignments for Lesley courses to onlinetutoring@lesley.edu for asynchronous review. Send the draft as a Word document file attachment to this email address together with some information about the requirements of the assignment. This service is also available through Brainfuse via their Writing Lab.

Connect With Us

University Hall, 2nd Floor
617.349.8459 | tutoring@lesley.edu

More information about Tutoring and Academic Success can be found on [this webpage](#).

All further inquiries about tutoring and academic coaching should be sent via email to:
Adam Mooney | amooney2@lesley.edu or tutoring@lesley.edu





Disability Support Services

Lesley University is committed to creating an accessible campus environment where all qualified students with disabilities are afforded an equal opportunity to participate, learn, and grow.

Guided by disability rights law and institutional policy, Disability Support Services prioritizes access to a fully inclusive educational experience. The office promotes equity and excellence in education, maximizing each student's educational potential while helping to develop and maintain independence. The philosophy is one that encourages self-awareness, self-determination, and self-advocacy while providing a safe, caring, respectful environment that cultivates growth and positive learning.

The [website](#) provides further information about eligibility for disability services, policies and procedures for requesting accommodations and modifications.

What Can I Expect from Disability Support Services?

Lesley University provides support services & reasonable accommodations to qualified students with:

- Attention disorders
- Autism Spectrum Disorders / Asperger Syndrome
- Brain injuries
- Chronic pain conditions
- Mental health conditions
- Mobility impairments
- Physical disabilities
- Temporary medical conditions
- Vision impairment
- Food-related disabilities
- Hearing impairments
- Learning differences
- Medical condition

To receive accommodations, you must provide documentation of your disability from a physician or a qualified professional in the field. For more information regarding documentation guidelines, refer to the website. Please keep in mind that some accommodations take time to arrange. You should request services in advance of when they are needed.

Types of Services

What services can I expect to receive?

Supports can include:

- Extended time and/or a distraction-free environment for exams and quizzes
- Extended time on papers and course requirements
- Note takers
- Assistance with arranging interpreter services and CART services
- Relocation of classrooms
- Assistive technology
- Alternative format materials
- Meal plan or housing accommodations
- Check-in meetings, time management strategies, and resource groups
- Specialized tutoring sessions

How are reasonable accommodations determined?

Disability Support Services works closely with you to review documentation and to gain an understanding of disability-related issues that interfere with learning. The following factors are used to determine appropriate accommodations:

- the purpose and nature of the program, course or activity.
- the functional limitations of your disability.
- the impact of your disability on your ability to participate in the course.
- the impact of the accommodation on the program, course or activity.

Receiving Support Services

What are my responsibilities as a student for receiving support?

The steps suggested below will help students take full advantage of support services:

- CRLS will provide IEPs and 504 plans to Lesley Disability Support Services **upon request from the student**
- If you have documentation other than an IEP or 504 plan, please provide appropriate documentation to Disability Support Services in a timely manner.
- Work with support staff each semester to update your information and renew requests for services.
- Deliver accommodation letters to faculty early each semester and discuss the implementation of accommodations in each course.
- Follow up with Disability Support Services staff as needed.

What do I need to know about accommodation letters?

- Post-secondary (college) students with disabilities use individualized letters to communicate with faculty regarding accommodations rather than IEPs or 504 Plans.
- You are eligible for accommodations once the letter has been presented and discussed with the faculty member.
- Accommodation letters include the approved supports and services.
- Accommodation letters do not include diagnostic information. You determine what to disclose to your faculty regarding the specifics of your disability.
- You should request letters for all courses in which you want to have accommodations.
- Communication and mutual agreement between you and your faculty is critical to successfully implement accommodations.

How can I be proactive in college?

- Have a good understanding of your disability and how it affects your academic experience.
- Be accountable for your learning by exploring supports and resources on campus.
- Meet with your faculty to discuss any questions or concerns.
- Be open to the possibility of discussing your disability and how it affects your learning with your faculty.
- Stay organized, plan ahead, and communicate proactively.

- Become familiar with campus staff, policies, and procedures.
- Schedule an appointment with Disability Support Services to build self-advocacy skills and techniques.

Whom do I contact to initiate services?

- Contact for all Disability Support Services is Holly Aldrich: haldric2@lesley.edu | 617.349.8655

Here is a helpful graphic that explains how accommodations work at the college level:

