



Minnesota
STATE COLLEGES
& UNIVERSITIES

Post-Secondary Enrollment Options Allow High School Students to Earn College Credits

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system remains firmly committed to helping Minnesota's P-12 students prepare for and successfully make the transition to college, regardless of when that transition begins.

Every year, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system provides thousands of high school students with access to quality higher education courses through the Post-Secondary Enrollment Options program (PSEO).

System leaders believe PSEO is a valuable and effective way to enhance student learning and are working with P-12 and higher education partners to support and enhance the quality of PSEO teaching and learning.

In fiscal year 2011, nearly 25,000 high school students earned college credits from the system's colleges and universities. The Minnesota Legislature created the program in 1985 to promote rigorous course taking and improve student transitions to postsecondary education.

Eligible high school students can enroll as PSEO students in college-level courses to earn credits simultaneously for their high school diploma and a college credential, such as an associate degree or a certificate. They are typically taught on the system's campuses by college or university faculty.

Concurrent enrollment courses – another kind of PSEO – are taught at high schools by qualified high school instructors who are mentored by college or university faculty. A smaller number of courses are taught in high schools by college or university faculty.

PSEO improves college graduation rates

PSEO and similar programs benefit students in Minnesota and nationally, research shows. Compared to peers who did not participate in dual credit programs, PSEO students:

- Have higher rates of enrolling in a college or university after high school graduation,
- Have lower rates of required remediation and
- Have higher rates of earning postsecondary degrees.

Tuition, fees and books for PSEO students who earn dual credits are paid by the Minnesota Department of Education to the colleges and universities in which PSEO students are enrolled. The formula is established in statute.

PSEO offers rigorous learning opportunities

Eligible PSEO students can take a range of courses, including liberal arts, and those in career and technical fields. Examples of liberal arts courses include English, calculus, biology, political science and psychology. Career and technical courses prepare students for specific occupations and can lead to a certificate, diploma or associate degree. Examples include nursing assistant, manufacturing, accounting and engineering.

More than half of the credits earned by PSEO students attending MnSCU colleges and universities have been in key academic disciplines, such as composition and literature, mathematics, natural sciences and social sciences.

High school students may take online courses offered by the state colleges and universities.

PSEO eligibility requirements

Students need to meet prerequisite requirements for the course. The college or university makes the final determination on a student's readiness.

- High school seniors must be in the upper one-half of their class or score at or above the 50th percentile on the ACT or SAT.
- Juniors must be in the upper one-third of their class or score at or above the 70th percentile on a test, such as the ACT or SAT.
- Sophomores may enroll in a career or technical education course at a MnSCU college or university if they have attained a passing score or met the 8th grade standard on the 8th grade Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment in reading and meet other course prerequisites or course enrollment standards established by the college. These standards include but are not limited to assessment test scores, program admission or other requirements.
- If a sophomore receives a grade of C or better in the course, the student shall be allowed to take additional career or technical education courses in subsequent terms.
- A student who first enrolls under this provision while in 10th grade and wishes to enroll in general education courses as an 11th or 12th grade student must take the system Assessment for Course Placement and achieve the required scores prior to enrollment.
- Campuses may require eligible 10th grade PSEO students who wish to enroll in a career and technical course to meet with a college counselor or advisor.

- Colleges and universities may admit students based on other documentation of ability to perform college-level work.

If a concurrent enrollment course cannot be filled with eligible 11th and 12th grade students, a 9th or 10th grade student may be able to enroll in that course if:

- The college or university president approves;
- The student has a score at or above the 90th percentile on a national test, such as ACT or SAT or ranks in the upper one-tenth of their class or has a favorable recommendation from a designated high school official to enroll in the course; and
- The student meets the prerequisite requirements of the course as determined by the college or university.

Professional growth for high school teachers

High school and college or university instructors build collegial relationships through periodic communications and develop a shared understanding of college and work readiness. The system is working to expand and enhance professional development opportunities for concurrent enrollment teachers and mentors to enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

Caveat for students

There is a risk for students in this program. If a class required for high school graduation is not successfully completed, the student may not be able to graduate with his or her class and a grade will be recorded on a permanent college or university transcript.

For more information, go to www.mnscu.edu/pseo or contact Melinda Voss, director of public relations, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities at (651) 201-1804 or melinda.voss@so.mnscu.edu.

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system, www.mnscu.edu, comprises 24 community and technical colleges and seven state universities serving the higher education needs of Minnesota. Each year, the system serves about 420,000 students.