

## College Academy FAQ's (Updated Fall 2021)

### **1. Are dual credit students in College Academy still required to take the high school end-of-course (EOC) exams?**

All high school students are still required to complete all EOC exams in Algebra I, English I, English II, Biology, and US History. US History is the only subject area with an EOC exam that is also a dual credit course. Dual credit students enrolled in History 1301 and History 1302 will be required to complete the US History EOC for high school requirements. Nothing about the high school requirements will change.

### **2. How are college credits earned in Advanced Placement (AP) and dual credit (DC) courses?**

For Advanced Placement, students may earn college credit by taking an Advanced Placement examination. Each college has its own requirements regarding the exams and scores they may accept. Students must send their College Board score report to their intended college or university in order to request college credit. Typically, a score of 3 or higher is traditionally required to earn credit. For more information about AP Scores at your intended college or university, please visit the College Board website.

The student will start a college transcript by enrolling in the college course for dual credit and will receive a grade upon completion of the coursework. Generally, a successful grade of A, B, or C is required to transfer the college course credit from one college to another college or university.

### **3. Do students have to enroll in advanced placement (AP) courses?**

No. Many of the courses align with the AP curriculum and the student may take the exam. However, enrollment in AP coursework is not required for dual credit.

### **4. What is the difference between advanced placement (AP) and dual credit (DC) courses?**

In the AP environment, a student sits for an exam to earn a score for assigning college credit. Each college has its own requirements regarding the exams and scores they may accept. In the dual credit environment, credit is awarded based upon successful completion of course work in the class. Each college has its own requirements regarding the coursework and number of hours in specific content areas as required for the degree. Credits transfer respective to the degree plan the student is pursuing and the college he/she is planning to attend. (Refer to question # 2 above.)

**5. If the student is enrolled in dual credit, may the student still take the AP exam?**

Yes, students have the option to elect to take the AP exam while enrolled in dual credit courses. The high school course will show Advanced Placement and dual credit (AP/DC) on the class schedule, while the college will show enrollment in the college course subject and number. The composition of the students in a high school class period enrolled in AP/DC classes will be primarily all dual credit students. A few mixed class exceptions are allowed by state law.

**6. If accepted to the College Academy, may students change their 4-yr plan?**

Students who qualify for College Academy will adjust their four-year plan accordingly in the Fall College Academy PACE class.

Students should select dual credit courses for College Academy based upon their individual circumstances such as outside activities, summer availability, academic load, and intended major.

**7. What is the performance rate for students who enroll in early college programs compared to students who enter upon completion of high school? (And how did the first cohort do?)**

Since the district initiated a pilot program at Cypress Lakes in 2017-18, there is no longitudinal data to reflect this initiative. However, the research from similar programs which offer students the opportunity to pursue college credit shows that students who earn college credits in high school are more likely to enroll in college full time, persist in college, and complete a 4-year college degree. In addition, students who complete at least six college courses prior to graduating high school will be more likely to complete college (Berger et al., 2010).

The first cohort at Cypress Lakes had 134 CA students. 85 completed the Associate Degree. By the beginning of 12<sup>th</sup> grade Cypress Lakes had 109 active students pursuing the degree. Between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year, 26 students had moved out of district, to another high school, or willingly dropped the program.

Almost 78% of College Academy seniors at Cypress Lakes achieved the Associate Degree in 2021.

Data on these students will be tracked to measure progress at their universities. However, this data is always 2 years retroactive.

**8. Do students still need to take SAT (national college entry tests), ACT (national college entry tests, or TSI (Texas Success Initiative, state college entry test?)**

In order to enroll in dual credit courses, students must present themselves college ready. This may be determined through a variety of assessments including SAT, ACT, PSAT, Aspire, TSIA2, EOC, etc. Once a student is identified as “college ready” and enrolled in DC coursework, the student would not need to assess again for dual credit eligibility requirements. However, some additional testing may be required for prerequisite placement in higher college level math courses.

### **9. What makes up the Texas General Education Core Curriculum (42 hours) of college coursework?**

The Core Curriculum consists of nine component areas.

Communication (6 hours)

Mathematics (3 hours)

Life and Physical Sciences (8 hours)

Creative Arts (3 hours)

Language, Philosophy, Culture (3 hours)

History (6 hours)

Government (6 hours)

Social and Behavioral Science (3 hours)

Component Area Option (4 hours)

Each College and University in Texas may adopt different courses under each component area. Please check the

institution's website or click on this link if you have questions <http://www.theccb.state.tx.us/apps/tcc>

### **10. Can students join the Academy later?**

No. The Academy is currently designed with a cohort model that allows for support beginning in the student's freshman year to best ensure a path to success. Students who join after the Freshman year, would miss checkpoints and support systems needed for the 10<sup>th</sup> grade year.

However, students may still pursue completion of an Associate Degree through enrollment in dual credit and AP scores outside of the College Academy.

### **11. How many electives can students keep in their schedule?**

The program is designed so that students may enjoy a rich and full high school experience and does allow some flexibility to the schedule to accommodate those electives. Depending upon the number of electives, students may need to explore the option of summer course work.

Students pursuing an endorsement with a required sequence of classes or double blocked courses may not have enough space for the courses needed to satisfy the requirements of the Associate Degree.

Students will not be penalized for not remaining "on track" for the degree.

### **12. Are students able to enroll in dual credit courses without qualifying for the College Academy?**

Yes, courses offered for Dual Credit are available to students who meet college readiness standards regardless of whether they are enrolled in the College Academy.

**13. Are students allowed to enroll in courses for college credit only?**

Yes. However, the student will not receive a tuition waiver. The student will be required to pay full tuition and fees as assessed by Lone Star College. Additionally, the college class will not be calculated in the student's high school gpa.

**14. Are students identified as transfer or First Time Incoming College (FTIC) students?**

Students are identified as FTIC students upon enrolling the first semester after high school graduation, including students with advanced standing college credits earned before high school graduation.

This means students will apply under Freshman application criteria and will also be eligible for Freshman scholarships.

**15. When will students begin their first college course?**

Students who present college ready through the PSAT or TISA2 in their Freshman year may register for US History AP/DC for their 10<sup>th</sup> grade year. (US History AP/DC is normally a 11<sup>th</sup> grade class, but to keep CA students together in a supportive environment they will have their own US History AP/DC class)

This registration will take place in the Spring of the Freshman year. The fees will be paid to Lone Star college through the students' Lone Star account before the Fall semester of 10<sup>th</sup> grade.

**16. Will students still be able to pursue scholarships after earning an Associate degree?**

Students may still pursue scholarship opportunities for which they meet requirements.

**17. Can excessive dual credit hours limit participation in alternative admissions programs? (Example: Blinn Team, TAMU PSA Program for System Admission)**

Completion of 24-60 credits may limit participation in alternative admission programs. Parents and students should seek guidance from the college or university where they plan to apply for specific information.

**18. Will dual credit courses completed in high school affect a student's entrance into graduate programs, i.e. medical school, law school, etc?**

Students interested in pursuing professional school after college graduation should be aware of how the credits factor into the grade point average. Parents and students should seek guidance from the college or university where they plan to apply/transfer for specific information.

**19. Can a student pursue the Associate Degree without being part of the College Academy?**

Yes!

The cohort model is designed to offer guidance and support to students pursuing the associate degree by placing the students in common courses during a common timeline for the purpose of college readiness testing, dissemination of information, etc. However, any student may pursue the Associate Degree or Core 42 by completion of college courses through dual credit or advanced placement.

**20. Are College Academy students required to achieve the Associate Degree from Lone Star College?**

The program goal is for students to receive an Associate Degree and HS diploma by the end of 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

However, a student may decide at a later point that the Associate degree does not align/support the degree plan or major that he/she intends to pursue at a university. Students can opt out of the College Academy and continue to enroll in relevant AP and DC classes.