

## RUNNING START FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**DATE:** August 2022

**TO:** *Interested Parties*

**FROM:** Council of Presidents  
Independent Colleges of Washington  
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)  
State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC)  
State Board of Education (SBE)

**SUBJECT:** *Running Start Program – Questions and Answers*

The Legislature initiated the Running Start Program as a component of the 1990 parent and student “Choice Act” (Chapter 9, Laws of 1990, 1st Ex. Session, [RCW 28A.600.300](#) to [RCW 28A.600.400](#)). Running Start provides students an opportunity to enroll at certain institutions of higher education and earn high school and college/university credit. Running Start is offered through Washington’s 34 community and technical colleges and the following public, four-year universities:

- Washington State University
- Central Washington University
- Eastern Washington University

And the following public tribal colleges:

- Northwest Indian College
- Spokane Tribal College

Junior- and senior-year students, as determined by the local public school district, charter school or tribal compact school, have a right granted by the Legislature to participate in Running Start. The exercise of that right is subject only to minimal eligibility and procedural requirements as described in state administrative rules.

**The Washington Legislature has charged OSPI with adopting rules to fund students’ participation in summer quarter Running Start through Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5693(504)(18). When available, OSPI will provide guidance on summer quarter Running Start in the FAQ and independent of the FAQ through bulletins and the RS listserv.**

A variety of K-12 and higher education representatives and the Office of the Attorney General develop this document. The answers reflect how high schools, including private schools, homeschools and tribal compact schools, school districts, community and technical colleges and baccalaureate colleges and universities need to implement or administer various elements of Running Start to maintain compliance with state statutes. For use in this document, the term “college” refers to Washington’s community and technical colleges and public, four-year universities.

This document does not provide legal guidance. If there are legal questions, an institution should reach out to the appropriate institutional legal contacts.

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## GENERAL QUESTIONS

### 1. What is a Running Start program?

Running Start is a concurrent enrollment dual credit program. Students enroll in college courses at a community or technical college or public, four-year university. The course is taught by college faculty. Students earn college and high school credit when they complete the course. The credit and grades students earn will be transcribed on their permanent college transcript. All of Washington's public four-year colleges and universities accept Running Start credit.

### 2. What is the difference between Running Start and College in the High School?

There are three main differences between Running Start and College in the High School.

- *Where the course is offered and who teaches the course.* Running Start is taught on a college campus by a college faculty member. College in the High School is taught on a high school campus by a college approved high school teacher.
- *Who is eligible to enroll in the course.* Students in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades are eligible to enroll in Running Start. Students in the 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grades are eligible to enroll in College in the High School.
- *Funding.* Running Start students may enroll tuition-free up to the equivalent of a full-time student each term, and for a maximum of the equivalent of two years of full-time enrollment. College in the High School students wanting to earn the available college credit may be responsible for paying a fee to the college. For the 2022-23 school year, the maximum per college credit tuition fee is \$69.95 per college credit adjusted annually for inflation. State-funded subsidies are available for rural and small public schools.

### 3. Is Running Start considered dual credit or dual enrollment?

In Washington, the term dual credit broadly refers to programs where students have the potential to earn high school and college credit for the same course. Running Start is dual credit. Students enroll in college courses at a community or technical college or public, four-year university. Students earn college and high school credit when they complete the course. The credit and grades students earn will be transcribed on their permanent college transcript.

Dual enrollment, in Washington, is generally defined as a student enrolled concurrently in two different institutions of higher education.

Concurrent enrollment, in Washington, is a partnership between K-12 schools and postsecondary education institutions through which credit-bearing college courses offered by a public or private institution of higher education and taught by higher

education faculty or college-approved high school teachers, are taken by high school students who have not yet received the credits required for the award of a high school diploma. Courses may be offered either in high school or at a public or private institution of higher education, and earned credits are recorded on a college or university transcript.

Dual credit, in Washington, is credit awarded through one of the six dual credit programs in Washington. These include Advanced Placement (AP), Cambridge International (CI), College in the High School (CiHS), Career and Technical Education (CTE) Dual Credit, International Baccalaureate (IB), and Running Start.

**4. Do students travel for Running Start courses?**

Maybe. Running Start courses are taught on a college campus but may also be offered online. Travel may be required of students to attend the course on the college campus.

**5. If I want to compare Running Start with other dual credit programs in Washington is there a handout or information?**

The Washington Student Achievement Council created a document that described each dual credit program offered in Washington, which can be found on the WSAC's dual credit [webpage](#).

## ATTENDANCE

**6. May a high school or school district require that one of its public high school students attend the high school for the purpose of completing non-credit requirements such as a High School & Beyond Plan or other local district non-credit graduation requirement?**

It depends. Students who are seeking a high school diploma from a public school district, charter school or tribal compact school must meet all requirements of the state and the requirements of the local district/school. The intent of Running Start law is to encourage maximum student access to the Running Start program.

District/schools cannot adopt policies and procedures that intentionally create barriers to student participation in the program. For example, requiring daily or weekly attendance in a High School and Beyond Plan class would logically hinder Running Start participation. Districts that have such requirements are strongly encouraged to offer accommodations to students participating in Running Start.

Students who are not specifically seeking a high school diploma from a public school district, charter school or tribal compact school may choose to refrain from completing the district's/school's specific graduation requirements and focus on earning the credits needed to receive a diploma through the college. Also see Graduation Requirements section.

**7. If a student is full-time at the college and not taking any courses at the high school, but qualifies for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch, can the student come to the high school for breakfast and/or lunch even though they are not attending any classes at the high school?**

Within the context and based on the federal Food and Nutrition Service rules and OSPI's Child Nutrition Program to be eligible to receive a school meal, the student must be enrolled in a school and participate in an integral part of the high school curriculum at a time that requires the student to be in the school when meal service is provided. (See federal legal citation [7 CFR 210](#).) A student must attend a class at the high school before and/or after the high school's meal service period to have access to the meal service.

However, some schools have worked through local avenues, such as AVID classes or bus systems to provide sack lunches before or after school. Districts are encouraged to work with colleges and universities offering Running Start to identify opportunities to address this issue.

**8. If a student has completed state graduation requirements, but has not yet graduated, and drops out of any courses being taken through Running Start, is the student considered truant?**

No. Technically, meeting state graduation requirements with or without a diploma satisfies the compulsory attendance requirement in accordance with [RCW 28A.225.010](#). Also see Eligibility and Limitations section.

**9. Can a student withdraw from a class taken through Running Start without the permission of the high school or school district?**

Yes. However, the student is responsible for following the college's Add/Drop policies and should let the high school know to ensure they remain on track for graduation. School districts and/or high schools should closely coordinate with colleges to ensure that the student does not become truant due to the withdrawal from a Running Start class. Colleges may only claim students who are enrolled in the college classes on the monthly count day (first instructional day of the month) and participated in instructional activity sometime during the prior month. The high school or district's notification of a student's withdrawal from the Running Start class ensures that the college does not incorrectly over-claim these students.

**10. Can a student taking an online course through Running Start access the course via the high school campus?**

Possibly. A local high school, charter school or tribal compact school could choose to offer students the opportunity to access their online Running Start class(es) on the high school campus. However, the time the student spends accessing their Running Start instruction on the high school campus cannot be claimed as a high school FTE. Allowing Running Start students to access computers on a high school campus without having them enrolled and supervised presents a liability risk.

## CREDIT AND FINANCIAL AID ELIGIBILITY

**11. May a high school or district elect to reduce the rate of credit granted a Running Start student for five-quarter (credit) hours of college work to less than one high school credit?**

No. [RCW 28A.230.090](#) established that five quarter or three semester college credit hours shall equal 1.0 high school credit. School districts and high schools are required to grant a full 1.0 high school credit for every five quarter, or three semester credit hours of work successfully completed by a Running Start student.

**12. Can a high school or school district impose a sequence requirement on Running Start students?**

Yes. A rational course sequence requirement could be imposed if it applies to all high school students.

**13. May high schools or school districts split the corresponding high school credits between required and elective courses?**

Yes. However, based on a case-by-case evaluation of the extent to which a college course is the equivalent of required high school coursework, an arbitrary uniform rate is squarely at odds with the course-by-course comparison and judgment required by [WAC 392-169-050](#).

It is permissible for the common school district superintendent or similar administrator in a private school, or tribal compact school, on an individual course basis, to split the credit for a course that is not comparable, following consultation with a college representative. The total credit awarded must still equate to the five-quarter or three-semester college credits equals 1.0 high school credit.

**14. Can a district refuse to establish dual credit equivalencies in particular subject areas?**

Yes. School district administrators and boards of directors have the authority to adopt course equivalencies for Running Start courses offered to students. However, while decisions about Career and Technical/Occupational Education and Arts equivalencies are made locally, the Legislature has made it clear that its intent “is to encourage maximum student access” to the Running Start program. School district administrators, boards and/or other staff leaders in charter and tribal compact schools are encouraged to establish all appropriate equivalencies, reflecting legislative intent for this program.

**15. May a high school restrict Running Start students from taking two like subjects in the same academic year? (Example: English 101 and 102).**

No.

**16. Are Running Start students allowed to take online college classes for dual credit? Yes.**

However, in order to claim Running Start funds, the college must be considered an eligible institute of higher education as described in [WAC 392-169-033](#).

**17. May a Running Start student "challenge" a course and be claimed for full state funding?**

No. State funding for Running Start is based on monthly enrollment counts. To challenge a course would require a student to challenge the outcomes of a course by participating in a formal assessment process, rather than taking the course. Students can only be claimed for state funding if they are enrolled in the college course on the monthly count day, had participated in instructional activities during the month prior to the count day, and will not exceed the 1.2 FTE monthly limitation.

Accelerated completion of a course is likely to exceed a student’s monthly enrollment limits and could result in a tuition charge by the college for the student. Students are also responsible for paying fees associated with the “challenge” course.

**18. May a student audit a Running Start course?**

No. The FTE claimed for a Running Start course is based on the number of college credits that would be awarded after successfully completing the class. If a student is auditing a college course with no intention of earning a college credit, then the enrollment in this class would not be eligible to be claimed for Running Start funding.

**19. Which college courses may a Running Start student take?**

The entire college catalog is available to Running Start students if they have met any pre-requisites that the college requires of all students. Running Start courses may include both academic and professional technical courses.

**20. Do Washington Running Start credits transfer to out-of-state colleges or universities?**

Studies and surveys consistently indicate that most students can successfully transfer credits earned through Running Start programs, both in-state and around the country. Parents and students are encouraged to educate themselves about the transferability of

college credits to another college. The receiving institution has the right to determine which college credits it will accept.

Most Washington colleges have transfer credit equivalencies listed on their “Transfer Credit” webpages to assist students with determining how college credits and exam scores will transfer.

**21. Could a statewide high school equivalency guide for Running Start be developed?**

Each school district develops their own graduation requirements within the larger OSPI graduation framework. If a school district is struggling with what might work as an equivalent, they can reach out to the OSPI Graduation and Pathway Preparation Office or Dual Credit Program Supervisor to ask for example equivalency guides that have already been established which may guide local discussions about appropriate equivalent courses.

**22. Do credits earned through dual enrollment programs like Running Start affect a student’s NCAA eligibility?**

No. [NCAA Bylaw 12.8.2.3](#) Joint College/High School Program states: “A student-athlete’s eligibility under the five-year rule does not begin while a student is enrolled in a collegiate institution in a joint high school/college academic program for high school students in which the courses count as both high school graduation credit and college credit, provided the student has not officially graduated from high school and does not participate in intercollegiate athletics while enrolled in the joint program.” (Revised: 11/01/2001 effective 8/01/2002, 7/31/2014)

College courses may be used to satisfy NCAA core-curriculum requirements if the courses are accepted and awarded credit by the high school for any student and meet all other requirements for core courses. College courses must be placed on the student’s high school transcript.

**23. How do credits earned through concurrent enrollment programs impact a student’s financial aid eligibility?**

Students with questions about the effect of Running Start on their student aid or scholarship packages should always check directly with the college’s admissions, financial aid, and scholarship offices.

Washington College Grant

*Dual credit courses do not apply to the WCG maximum usage timeframe unless the student completes a bachelor’s degree before the limit is up.* Some types of financial aid have a maximum timeframe for eligibility that limits the length of time students can receive aid. The limit depends on the state, federal, and/or institutional policy. While there are some ways that dual credit participation can affect a student’s access to financial aid, due to recent changes to Washington’s [maximum timeframe rules](#) with the Washington College Grant (WCG) expansion (formerly State Need Grant, SNG), student accumulation of college credit through dual credit programs will NOT impact their ability to access state financial

aid. The new rules for the Washington College Grant (WCG) expansion eliminate the SNG [maximum timeframe](#) of 125% of the length of a program and replace it with maximum terms of eligibility. A maximum timeframe policy limits the length of time students are eligible to receive aid. This policy depends on the policies and practices for state, federal, and/or institutional aid.

The WCG maximum is attending a full time for a maximum of five-years limit (15 quarters/10 semesters or the equivalent of full-time enrollment). The WCG maximum This fulltime limit only applies to the quarters in which a student received the WCG.

Because dual credit students cannot receive state financial aid to pay for college credits earned through dual credit, no coursework taken in dual credit programs will apply to the WCG full-time limit.

*Students who earn an associate degree through dual credit programs can use WCG toward another associate degree.*

Students who already have an associate degree can use WCG toward a second associate degree if they are enrolled in an aid-eligible program. *This means students who earn an associate degree or who earn college credit toward an associate degree through dual credit programs may apply for WCG to pursue a second aid-eligible associate degree.*

### College Bound Scholarship

The College Bound Scholarship (CBS) differs from the WCG's maximum timeframe policy and has a different length of eligibility requirement than the WCG. CBS recipients may be eligible to receive four years of funding to use within five years of high school graduation. Students must enroll in a college or university within one year of high school graduation. The four-year limit (12 quarters/8 semesters or the equivalent of full-time enrollment) applies regardless of whether students choose to enroll part- or full-time, or if they choose to take time off from school. The CBS maximum terms of eligibility are 12 quarters/8 semesters or the equivalent of full-time enrollment (15 quarters/10 semesters or the equivalent of full-time enrollment). Like WCG, this full-time limit only applies to the quarters in which a student received the CBS. In other words, no coursework taken in dual credit programs will apply to the CBS full time limit.

CBS Scholars must also enroll in college or university within one academic year following their high school graduation to be eligible for CBS consideration. For example, a CBS Scholar who graduated high school in the spring of 2021 is required to enroll in college or university by the fall term of 2022. CBS Scholars who do not enroll in college within a year of high school graduation are not eligible to receive the scholarship – unless they completed transcribed college credit prior to high school graduation through a dual credit program such as CTE Dual Credit, College in the High School (CiHS), or Running Start (RS).

In this case, dual credit participation helps students access state financial aid because it fulfills the CBS enrollment deadline. For example:

- A CBS student completes a Running Start (RS) course their senior year.
- The student graduates in the spring of 2021 having already met the CBS enrollment deadline because they were enrolled at a college for their RS course.
- The student does not enroll in college until the fall term of 2023.
- The student is still eligible for CBS consideration because they met the enrollment deadline through RS participation.
- However, the student still only has five years after high school graduation to use CBS funding, meaning they would only have three years of remaining funding left.

### Federal and Institutional Aid

For federal financial aid, including the Pell Grant, the maximum timeframe policy limit is 150% of the published length of the student's program. Every credit on a student's college transcript is eligible to be counted towards the federal 150% maximum timeframe. This includes credits earned through dual credit programs.

Federal policies do allow for exceptions to be granted in the calculation of the limit and provide grant college/universities flexibility in determining which credits are to be applied to an individual student's maximum timeframe.

The term "published length of program" is an important one. It allows registrars and financial aid offices to implement a policy that counts only those credits that apply to the student's current program of study. However, how credits are applied is entirely at the discretion of the college/university's credit transfer policy.

Specific institutional aid may also have differing maximum timeframe policy rules. Students who get close to the maximum timeframe will need to work closely with the financial aid representative at their college/university to maintain eligibility for federal and institutional aid. This issue is most likely to occur for students who graduate with a high number of college credits.

### Satisfactory Academic Progress

For both state and federal and institutional financial aid, it is important to note that there is a requirement that students maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). SAP is a measurement of academic performance in terms of GPA and completed credits. It differs slightly for state and federal aid.

Washington requires a per term SAP review. Recipients of state financial aid must earn at least one-half of the credits enrolled that they received aid for to demonstrate academic progress. This is known as the cumulative academic progress percentage. The federal SAP has a “pace” requirement instead where students must earn 67% of the credits attempted.

Though specific SAP review standards may vary by institution, all SAP policies consider the maximum timeframe rules and evaluate the successful completion of a minimum number of credits or clock hours. For example, full time enrollment is successfully completing 12 credits or 300 clock hours.

It is critical for dual credit students to understand all prior postsecondary coursework that generated a college transcript, including that taken through dual credit, will potentially be evaluated for SAP. Depending on the college/university’s SAP policy, they may apply prior credits, including those earned through dual credit, towards the cumulative academic progress percentage.

The SAP evaluation may find that students are not meeting the Satisfactory Academic Progress standards. Depending on the student’s cumulative academic progress percentage the student may be placed on:

- Warning Status: The student can continue to receive state aid.
- Unsatisfactory or Denied Status: The student can no longer receive any state aid. This status is often given to students who remain in warning status for more terms than the college’s policies allow.

If a student struggled in their dual credit coursework and it hurts their SAP evaluation, all 100% of Washington’s colleges and universities have an SAP appeals process in place. Appeals and reinstatement policies vary by institution.

#### Private Donor and Institutional Scholarships

Policies surrounding private scholarships rest with the donor. How institutional scholarships are awarded is controlled by each college.

It is up to each private donor or each college to determine how CIHS college credits impact consideration for scholarships that are reserved for first-year students.

Many four-year colleges and universities allow Running Start students to apply for scholarships. Students should check with the scholarship office of the institution in which they are enrolling to understand the college or university policy.

**24. Are Running Start students able to take college success courses without an impact to their overall FTE and ability to complete an associate degree?**

If the college success course is numbered 100 or higher, Running Start students would be eligible for the tuition to be covered by the Running Start program. Eligibility for enrollment is decided by the prerequisites, if any, on the course. Impact to FTE would be the same as any other course the student enrolls in.

**25. If a college created a college success course for Running Start students, would the institution of higher education offer the course to 10th graders to prepare them for Running Start?**

Access to Running Start is for students enrolled in grades 11 and 12 only. An institution of higher education could offer the course to students enrolled in the 10th grade, but the student's enrollment could not be claimed for Running Start funding.

## DISABILITY SERVICES

**26. What should a high school student with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 plan do to seek accommodations from the college as part of their participation in Running Start?**

Unlike students in K-12 schools, Running Start students have a responsibility to request any necessary accommodations from their college directly. The student should contact the college's disability services office well in advance of any published deadlines to make the request. The college may require documentation in support of a request for accommodations.

For students with an IEP: If Running Start has not previously been contemplated in the formulation of your IEP, parents/students may wish to discuss with their school district whether the IEP should be modified to reflect Running Start enrollment.

*Note: Institutions of higher education are required to make all programs and services physically accessible to all students, and to accommodate the academic participation of students with disabilities in college classes and activities. This does not include modifications to admission nor academic requirements if the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the course or program.*

**27. Who is responsible for covering the costs associated with ADA or Section 504 accommodations for Running Start students?**

Institutions of higher education are responsible for providing reasonable accommodations to qualified students under the ADA and Section 504. As with any other enrolled qualified student, colleges must cover the costs of complying with ADA or Section 504 for Running Start students who are enrolled in classes located at the college.

**28. Who is responsible for covering the costs associated with special education services outlined in a student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP)?**

School districts, charter schools, and tribal compact schools are responsible for providing the services outlined in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for an eligible student. Colleges and high schools should work together to ensure that a student’s needs are being met, including, where appropriate, entering into an interagency agreement to assure that each agency is complying with its respective duties to provide appropriate accommodations to the eligible student under state and federal law. See [WAC 392-169-080 for more information](#).

Schools providing special education services to a student can claim eligible students on the P223H for special education funding. The enrolled hours of special education services that are part of a high school program may be claimed as a partial FTE on the P223 for basic education funding, provided that the combined high school and Running Start FTE does not exceed 1.20 FTE.

**29. How long is a student with an IEP or Section 504 plan eligible for Running Start?** Running Start may provide the equivalent of two academic years of full-time eligibility for dual credit. An IEP or Section 504 plan, however, may indicate a student’s need to extend the length of time required to complete their secondary education program. The academic and calendar year may not coincide under the IEP or Section 504 plan.

Eligibility for Running Start may continue, if appropriate to the IEP or Section 504 plan, while the student continues work toward completing the district’s graduation requirements so long as the courses being taken continue to address specific credit requirements necessary for high school graduation and the student is otherwise eligible.

**30. Does an IEP automatically qualify a student for Running Start if identified in the student’s transition plan?**

No. The student must be eligible for Running Start to be claimed as a Running Start student. The IEP does not override the eligibility requirements. Under the law, a transition plan is simply a course of instruction that is part of a student’s IEP.

**31. Is a school district required to provide transportation to a student with disabilities who wants to take classes through Running Start?**

A school district would be responsible for necessary transportation of a Running Start student to and from college if the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) provides for Running Start enrollment in an institution of higher education.

## ELIGIBILITY and LIMITATIONS

**32. What are the definitions of a Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) and Annual Average Full-Time Equivalent (AAFTE)?**

Full Time Equivalent is the measurement of a student's instructional enrollment. For high school and skill center classes, 1.0 FTE is equal to 27 hours and 45 minutes of instruction per week or 1,665 weekly minutes. For part-time enrollment, FTE is calculated by dividing the student's enrolled high school and/or skill center weekly minutes by 1,665. For Running Start college courses, FTE is based on the number of enrolled college credits. 1.0 FTE is equal to 15 quarter or semester college credits. The formula to calculate a student's Running Start FTE is ( $\#$  of enrolled credits  $\div$  15) is in accordance with [WAC 392-169-025](#). *Annual Average Full Time Equivalent* is the annual average of the monthly FTE. For high school and skill center classes, AAFTE is the 10-month average of reported enrollment from September through June. For Running Start courses, AAFTE is the 9-month average of reported enrollment from October through June.

**33. Why do high schools operate on a 10-month count and Running Start on a 9-month count?**

High school enrollment is counted for 10 months - from September through June. Since most colleges start later in September, Running Start enrollment is a count for the months October through June which is a total of nine months.

**34. Can a school district limit access to Running Start for Free and Reduced-Price Lunch (FRPL) eligible students?**

No, school districts are not allowed to limit access to Running Start for Free and Reduced-Price Lunch (FRPL) eligible students.

Qualifying for FRPL provides students with additional support and financial resources to help remove barriers to post-secondary attainment. It is not designed to limit students' opportunities to participate in the Running Start Program.

Colleges/universities and high schools should make every attempt to ensure all qualified students access fee waivers. Fee waivers cover most fees and depending on the college/university and may cover tuition that extends beyond the 1.2 FTE limit. Additionally, many colleges/universities also offer funds to cover books in addition to bus passes and food pantry items when needed.

While FRPL does provide additional resources, students must consider how to access lunch when they are not on their high school campus. Based on the federal Food and Nutrition Service rules ([7 CFR 210](#)) and the Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) Child Nutrition [Program](#), to be eligible to receive a school meal, the student must be enrolled in a school and must participate in an integral part of the high school curriculum at a time that requires the student to be in the school when meal service is provided. In other words, a student must attend a class at the high school before and/or after the high school's meal service period to have access to the meal service.

However, some schools have worked through local avenues, such as AVID classes or bus systems to provide sack lunches before or after school. Additionally, some colleges/universities are partnering with school districts to figure out how to provide this necessary service for full-time RS students.

**35. Must a high school disclose FRPL status for eligible students participating in Running Start?**

Yes. Per [28A.600.310](#), school districts, upon knowledge of a low-income student's enrollment in Running Start, must provide documentation of the student's low-income status, under (a) of this subsection, directly to institutions of higher education.

*Note: School counselors or other staff who verify Running Start enrollment will need access to students' FRPL status to complete the RSEVF.*

**36. Are there other options that colleges can use to qualify Running Start students for waivers?**

Although receiving FRPL documentation from the high school is the most seamless way to qualify for waivers there are other options that colleges can use for qualifying students. Please see below:

A Running Start student is considered low income and eligible for a fee waiver upon proof that the student is currently qualified to receive free or reduced-price lunch. Acceptable documentation of low-income status may also include:

- a) Student has been deemed eligible for free-reduced-price lunches in the past five years.
- b) Family income is equal to or less than 50 percent of the state median.
- c) Family income is less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level.
- d) Student receiving any state or federal assistance funds.
- e) Youth in Care

Consumable supplies, textbooks, and other materials retained by the student are not within the definition of fees and therefore not subject to the mandatory low-income waiver provisions.

**37. Are Running Start students required to follow the same academic policies as the general college student population?**

Yes. Except for financial aid, Running Start students are required to follow the same policies as the general student population. Once a student is admitted, registered and enrolled, they are a college student and must meet all college requirements as stated in [RCW 28A.600.310 \(1\)\(b\)](#).

**38. May a Running Start student be enrolled full-time at a participating college and enroll in a class at the high school?**

Yes. A Running Start student may be claimed up to a combined 1.20 FTE between the high school and the participating college with a maximum of 1.00 FTE at each entity. A student attending Running Start full-time and taking up to 15 credits can also attend the high school and be claimed for up to a 0.20 FTE at no cost to the student. A student enrolling for more than the combined 1.20 FTE may be required to pay tuition to the college for the additional college credits or may qualify to receive a low-income tuition waiver from the college.

**39. Can a student complete both Running Start and a skills center program?**

Yes. Students enrolled at skills centers can participate in Running Start. The key is to track the overall FTE if a student is also enrolled in a regular public high school in addition to the skills center. Total enrollment between the high school, skills center and the college cannot exceed the 1.20 FTE limitation. See Question #75.

**40. If a student takes a "college orientation" class or any course in August, will it be funded through Running Start?**

No. Running Start enrollment is limited to the standard K-12 school year funding months (September through June). Enrollment in August is outside this funding period and cannot be claimed for state funding.

**41. Can the college claim and bill for a compressed class completed prior to the October “count” date?**

Running Start FTE is based on the student’s enrolled credits on the monthly “count” day. Compressed classes that occur in September and end before the October monthly count day cannot be claimed for October, since the student is not enrolled in this class on the October count day.

**42. Can school districts or high schools limit a student’s enrollment in Running Start?** No. A school district cannot limit a student’s enrollment in Running Start by requiring the student to be enrolled full-time in high school classes and restricting the student’s enrollment at the college to 0.20 FTE. Students who qualify for Running Start can enroll up to 15 college credits, provided that they satisfy the college’s prerequisite requirements and do not surpass the combined 1.20 FTE and AAFTE limitations.

**43. May a school district or high school condition a student’s eligibility for enrollment as a student in the Running Start program upon a determination by school district or building personnel that the student is academically qualified to take college or university course work?**

No. The determination of whether a student meets the requirements to enroll in Running Start is within the jurisdiction and authority of the college or university. The college or university is to establish eligibility requirements for Running Start students that are the same as the requirements applied to other students enrolling in the college in accordance with [WAC 392-169-045](#).

**44. May a school district or high school condition a student’s eligibility for enrollment in the Running Start program upon the maintenance of a particular grade point average?**

No. The eligibility requirements for participation in the Running Start program are set forth in statute and rule to the exclusion of any GPA requirement. Nothing in statute or rule implies any authority for school districts or high schools to impose additional requirements or conditions upon a student who meets the minimum requirements established by the college and imposed by current Running Start statute.

**45. How is junior/senior standing determined?**

It is the responsibility of the school district, charter school or tribal compact school to establish junior/senior standing. Any criteria used to establish grade placement must be applied uniformly in accordance with district policy to students irrespective of their status as Running Start students in accordance with [WAC 180-51-035](#). Also see Graduate Requirements and Home School/Private School/Choice Transfer/Online Academy Students sections.

**46. May a student start the Running Start Program mid-year?**

Yes. Students may begin to take Running Start classes at the start of any term during their junior or senior academic year excluding summer college quarter.

Note: To receive the full benefit of the Running Start program allowable in statute, students should start at the beginning of the first term of their junior year in high school in accordance with [WAC 392-169-055](#). Also see Eligibility and Limitations section.

**47. May a second-year senior enroll in the Running Start program?**

A second-year senior may enroll in the Running Start program **if they have been enrolled previously as a junior or a senior** but may **only take** those specific courses needed to meet the school district, charter school or tribal compact school graduation requirements. Additionally, a student enrolled in Running Start for more than one senior school year is limited to 45 total college credits for their senior years. A second-year senior is generally understood as being a student who has failed to meet high school graduation requirements by the end of the student's 12<sup>th</sup> grade academic year in accordance with [WAC 392-169-055](#).

Homeschool students wishing to extend Running Start eligibility into a third year may only do so if accessing Running Start through a school district or public high school, whereby their outstanding graduation requirements may be identified. They, too, may take only those courses needed to satisfy the district's graduation requirements and are limited to 45 total credits in their senior years. This limitation applies even if the student does not intend to graduate from the public high school.

**48. Can a student who has met the district, charter school or tribal compact school's high school graduation requirements still attend Running Start if they do not take the step of graduating?**

It would depend. A student who, at the **beginning** of their senior academic year, has not met the district's high school graduation requirements for total **credits** is eligible to attend Running Start until the end of the school year. Students who have completed all the credits needed for high school graduation before the beginning of a school year but still need to complete a High School and Beyond Plan are **not** eligible to participate in Running Start in accordance with [WAC 392-169-020](#). Also see Eligibility and Limitations and Graduation Requirements.

**49. Can a student with a GED participate in Running Start?**

Yes, provided the student is still enrolled through a district, charter school, or tribal compact school; has not met high school graduation requirements; and is otherwise eligible by age, grade level, and enrollment limits pursuant to [RCW 28A.600.330](#) and [WAC 392-169-020](#), which reads, "A general education development certificate is not considered to be the equivalent of a high school diploma for purposes of this subsection."

**50. Can a student in second-year senior status stay in Running Start just to complete an associate degree?**

No. The pursuit of an associate degree is not the intent of the Running Start program. Running Start is intended to advance students toward completing a district's high school graduation requirements as stated in [RCW 28A.600.360](#) and [WAC 392-169-015](#).

**51. Can a sophomore who has completed junior level courses start Running Start as a sophomore?**

No. It is required in [statute](#) that students have junior/senior class standing as defined by the high school to participate in Running Start.

**52. Can a student apply junior eligibility to a senior year by taking fewer than 45 credits as a junior and more than 45 as a senior?**

No. Junior year eligibility would be complete. However, the student would still be eligible for the three quarters of 12th grade. An additional year of Running Start as a second-year senior is restricted to only the courses that will meet the district, charter school, or tribal compact school's graduation requirements in accordance with [WAC 392-169-055\(4\)](#) and is limited to 45 total college credits for the senior academic year(s). Running Start eligibility is not based on six quarters. It is based on two academic years for junior and senior standing only.

**53. May a high school deny Running Start participation to students under the age of 21?**

No. A student who is under the age 21 as of September 1<sup>st</sup> of the new school year is eligible to participate in Running Start for that school year, provided they are a junior or senior and have not met their district's credit requirements for graduation. As a second-year senior, a student would be limited to no more than 45 total college credits for both senior academic years. An eligible student who turns 21 during the school year, may continue to participate for the remainder of that school year. However, they may only enroll in classes specifically needed for high school graduation and cannot exceed the maximum allowable Running Start enrollment in accordance with [WAC 392-169-020](#) and [RCW 28A.600.330](#). After a student turns 21, they cannot access college courses through Running Start during the next school year.

**54. Can a Running Start student retake a course to improve their grade?**

Yes. If both a local high school or school district and a local college allow repeating the course. Both the original course and the retaken course, as well as the corresponding grades earned, will still show on both the college and high school transcripts. Whether or not the original grade is removed from the grade point average calculation for the high school is determined by the local school district policy regarding grade replacement. Grade replacement on the college transcript is determined by the college's policy.

**55. Are Running Start students subject to the compulsory attendance laws? Yes.**

Running Start students are subject to the compulsory attendance statute in accordance with [RCW 28A.225.010](#).

**56. May a student expelled from high school for a serious offense continue to be enrolled in Running Start?**

Yes. Students who have been suspended or expelled from their high school for a violation of school district policies may continue to participate in college classes through the end of the academic term. Colleges may not discipline Running Start students who have been suspended or expelled from high school unless the college determines that the student has violated the college's own student conduct code. Districts and colleges should address the applicability of their respective discipline policies in contractual agreements or memoranda of understanding.

**57. May a student who has been previously expelled from high school enroll in a college course through Running Start?**

Yes. Contingent upon being re-enrolled in a high school and meeting all other eligibility requirements.

**58. If a currently enrolled Running Start student moves out of the high school district, can the student continue Running Start through the original district?**

Yes. A student who moves to a new school district in Washington after enrolling in Running Start and takes no classes at any high school in the new district, shall be deemed to have retained his or her residence in the school district in which they originally enrolled in Running Start. This retention is for high school graduation, funding, and other purposes under the Running Start Program in accordance with [WAC 392-169-020\(2\)](#).

**59. Is a student who completes Grade 12 in one district, then transfers the following year to another district where the student is placed as a 12th grader, not as a second-year senior eligible to be coded as a first-year senior in Running Start? No.** The student is limited to second-year senior standards in accordance with [RCW 28A.600.330](#). Also see *Eligibility and Limitations* section.

**60. Do Running Start students need to meet all district and state graduation requirements to earn a high school diploma from a district, charter school or tribal compact school?**

Yes. However, students do have the option of seeking a high school diploma issued through their local community and technical college. They do not need to meet district and state requirements but must graduate with an Associate's Degree to obtain a high school diploma through their local community and technical college.

**61. May Running Start students earning a high school diploma be excused from the required statewide proficiency tests because the testing conflicts with college classes?**

No. Running Start students who have not yet met standard on their 10<sup>th</sup> grade ELA and/or Math assessments should check with their home high school to see what options are available for retaking one or both exams or using an alternative assessment option. For the 11<sup>th</sup> grade Science exam, arrangements should be made at the college or high school to accommodate the student who is taking the high school test required by the state.

**62. If a student who resides outside of the district but attends through a Choice Transfer and enrolls in Running Start, but later withdraws from the college, can the high school prohibit the student from enrolling in classes in the high school?**

No. It is the duty of the district who has accepted the student through a Choice Transfer to provide them all the educational services they require as provided by law until the Choice Transfer has been rescinded.

**63. What is the responsibility of the school district to inform potential Running Start students about the Running Start program?**

A school district shall provide general information about Running Start and how to become eligible to all students in grades ten, eleven, and twelve, and to the parents/guardians of those students. The district must share information about the opportunity to enroll in the program through online courses available at state institutions of higher education and including the college high school diploma options in accordance with [RCW 28B.50.535](#).

To assist the high school in planning, a student shall inform the high school of their intent to enroll in courses at an institution of higher education for credit. Students are responsible for applying for admission to the institution of higher education in accordance with [RCW 28A.600.320](#).

**64. Who determines which college the student will attend?**

The students and their families. Although students will generally attend the college closest to their high school or district, they may attend any eligible state institution of higher education. Running Start is offered through Washington's 34 community and technical colleges, the following public, four-year universities: Washington State University, Central Washington University and Eastern Washington University, and two tribal colleges— Northwest Indian College and Spokane Tribal College in accordance with [WAC 392-169- 033](#).

**65. Can a high school or district deny a student's application to enroll in Running Start if the student does not want a diploma from the district or the high school?**

No. If the student meets all eligibility requirements, the high school or district cannot keep a student from participating in Running Start.

**66. Can a college limit the proportion of Running Start students in any individual class?** No. A college cannot deny access to Running Start students for participation in any single course or program. Under the law, any policy adopted to limit Running Start enrollment must be generally applicable and related to physical facility limitations, operating funds limitations, academically appropriate class size, or a student's ability to benefit from a particular class, course or program.

**67. Can a high school impose a registration deadline or otherwise limit registration times for Running Start?**

No. If a student meets the eligibility requirements and can register for college classes within a college's registration deadline, they should be allowed to enroll. However, the college can impose a registration deadline. It is recommended that high schools and colleges work together to define a mutually understood process for registration.

Schedules must include enough flexibility not to impose barriers on students' Running Start participation. Each term, a complete Running Start Verification Form (RSEVF) must be in place prior to the start of the Running Start class.

**68. Must students disclose their social security or Individual Tax Identification Number (ITIN) on Running Start application forms?**

No. However, colleges may ask all students, including Running Start students, to provide their social security numbers or ITIN for federal tax reporting purposes. Under federal law, colleges must have a legally permissible need to collect this information, must inform individuals that disclosure is voluntary, and must explain the legal basis for seeking the numbers and how the college intends to use them.

**69. Can a student at a charter or tribal compact school enroll in Running Start?**

Yes. Students enrolled in a charter or tribal compact school can enroll in Running Start without enrolling in a public high school. The charter or tribal compact school would complete the Running Start Enrollment Verification Form (RSEVF) each term for their students.

The monthly enrollment report (P223RS) completed by the college should be sent to the charter or tribal compact school, the school should include this Running Start enrollment on their electronic P223, and the state funding generated by their student(s) would be paid directly to the charter or tribal compact school. Based on the appropriate monthly enrollment reports, the charter or tribal compact school would then remit up to 93% of the funds for the Running Start students to the college.

**70. Can a student residing outside of Washington take online courses with Washington colleges through Running Start?**

No. To meet the definition of an enrolled student, the student must be a resident of a Washington district in accordance with [WAC 392-121-106](#). Running Start funding is only available to Washington residents enrolled in a Washington public high school, charter school or tribal compact school and living a majority (+50%) of their time in Washington. Establishing residency is also based on the expectation that the student will have resided in Washington on the monthly count day for a minimum of 20 consecutive days in accordance with [WAC 392-137-115](#).

**71. When do residency determinations need to be made for Running Start Students?**

Residency determinations must be made for students who exceed the 1.2 FTE, enroll in non-college level courses during the regular term, or enroll in any course(s) during the summer term between junior and senior years of high school. These situations would not be covered under the Running Start reimbursement and would be subject to residency for tuition determination in accordance with RCW 28B.15.012.

**72. Must students disclose their immigration status on Running Start application forms?**

No. Provided that the student meets the definition of an enrolled student in accordance with [WAC 392-121-106](#), a student's immigration status does not impact their eligibility nor prohibit them from enrolling in classes that receive basic education funding, including Running Start in accordance with [WAC 392-137-115](#).

However, residency determinations must be made for students who exceed the 1.2 FTE, enroll in non-college level courses during the regular term, or enroll in any course(s) during the summer term between junior and senior years of high school. These situations would not be covered under the Running Start reimbursement and would be subject to residency for tuition determination in accordance with [RCW 28B.15.012](#).

## 1.2 FTE RUNNING START and RSEVF

**73. What is the Running Start Enrollment Verification Form (RSEVF)?**

The RSEVF is an OSPI form that must be completed for each student enrolling in Running Start and for each college term. It is a communication tool that outlines how the student's 1.20 FTE will be split between the high school and the college, provides the free and reduced-price lunch status of a student to the college, informs the high school of the classes the student will be taking at the college, and explains the 1.20 FTE limitation to the student and parents and why tuition may be due to the college.

#### **74. What is the Full-Time Equivalent for high school courses and Running Start courses?**

The Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) is the measurement of a student's instructional enrollment.

For high school classes:

- 1.00 FTE is equal to 27 weekly hours and 45 minutes or 1,665 weekly minutes. For part-time high school enrollment, FTE is calculated by dividing the student's enrolled weekly minutes by 1,665.
- The Annual Average FTE (AAFTE) for high school classes is the 10-month average of reported enrollment from September through June.

For Running Start college courses:

- 1.00 FTE equals 15 enrolled college credits. For part-time Running Start enrollment, FTE is calculated by dividing the student's enrolled college credits by 15.
- The AAFTE is the nine-month average of reported enrollment from October through June.

#### **75. What is the FTE Limitation for Running Start?**

The FTE limitation for Running Start is 1.20. A student enrolled in high school and RS classes can be claimed up to a combined 1.20 FTE in any month but neither the high school nor college/university can exceed 1.0 FTE.

- An exception is allowed for December and January but only when the following occurs:
  - For December, when the high school's second trimester overlaps with the college's fall quarter.
  - For January, when the high school's first semester overlaps with the college's winter quarter.

When a student exceeds the 1.20 FTE for these months, they may be at risk of exceeding the 1.20 AAFTE and may need to have their spring quarter available RS FTE reduced.

#### **76. May a student elect to take more than a combined 1.20 FTE of high school and college classes in a college quarter/semester?**

Yes. A student may elect to take additional college classes above the 1.20 FTE but must pay for the additional college credits. See Fees and Tuition section.

**77. Students enrolled in a high school and skill center can be claimed for up to a 1.60 FTE. Can a student taking high school and skill center classes attend Running Start?**

Yes, a student enrolled in high school and skill centers classes can attend Running Start. There are two distinct and separate times when a student can exceed 1.0 FTE. Often these are called Super FTEs.

a. A student enrolled in high school and skill center can be claimed in any month up to a 1.60 FTE. And for the school year, up to a 1.60 annual average (AAFTE). Neither the high school nor skill center can exceed 1.0 FTE/AAFTE.

b. A student enrolled in a high school and Running Start can be claimed in any month up to a 1.20 FTE. And for the school year, up to a 1.20 AAFTE. Neither the high school nor skill center can exceed 1.0 FTE/AAFTE.

When a student who is attending a high school and skill center and wishes to attend Running Start,

- First determine what the combined high school/skill center FTE is.
- If the number is over 1.0, then the student has a 0.20 FTE available for Running Start.
- If the number is less than 1.0, subtract the combined high school/skill center FTE from 1.20 to determine the FTE available for Running Start.

**78. If a student is only taking one skills center course and no courses at the high school, is the student eligible for 1.0 (15 credits) at the college?**

Most likely the skill center is claiming a 0.54 FTE for the skill center class. Based on this, since the number is less than 1.0, you would subtract the skill center FTE from 1.20. In this case, the student would have a 0.66 FTE available for Running Start or 9 credits.

**79. What happens if a student exceeds the 1.20 FTE?**

If the student exceeds 1.20 FTE, the college will charge tuition for any FTE that they cannot claim. High schools are unable to charge student's tuition. Accordingly, the high school FTE is claimed and then any remaining FTE is available for Running Start. A student exceeding 1.20 FTE would pay the tuition to the college.

**80. Who is responsible for communicating to students and families about the charges associated with going over 1.2 FTE? The Running Start Enrollment Verification Form (RSEVF) is the communication tool used to inform students and their families when the student's FTE will exceed 1.20 and when tuition may be due to the college.**

**81. What data exists about which students fully take advantage of 1.2 FTE, which students exceed the 1.2 FTE and able to pay for the additional credits, and if it is equitable across districts and demographics?**

The state does not have this information. Each college may have information on the students that they serve and when tuition was paid.

**82. Who is responsible for monitoring the AAFTE?**

Provided the student does not exceed the 1.20 FTE in any month, they will not exceed the 1.20 AAFTE for the school year. When a student exceeds the 1.20 FTE in either the month of December or January, a student could be at risk of exceeding the 1.20 AAFTE. The high school registrar or district business office should complete the SQEAF form after the beginning of the winter college quarter. This form will calculate whether the student spring quarter Running Start FTE will need to be reduced. This form should be provided to the student and parents explaining why there is a reduction of their Running Start FTE for the spring quarter.

**83. If a student retakes a course, or requires a 5th year, are they eligible for an additional 1.20 FTE for the 5th year?**

No, they would only be eligible to take the courses needed to meet their district's graduation requirements. For example, if there is one class that the student needs to retake to meet their district graduation requirement, they would be limited to take that one class as a 5th year senior.

**84. Must the high schools/districts and colleges use the RSEVF?**

Yes. A RSEVF must be completed prior to the beginning of the Running Start class for each Running Start student including those who attend private schools and are home-based, for each term, and for each college. Completion would include the student, parent/guardian, high school, and college signatures. Copies of each student's completed form should be retained at the high school and college, as well as a copy given to the student.

**85. How frequently will the RSEVF be updated by OSPI?**

The RSEVF is updated by OSPI at least annually. Click here for the [2022-23 RSEVF](#).

**86. May a student change their high school or college course schedule after the RSEVF has been signed?**

Yes. If a student changes their high school or college schedule after the RSEVF has been signed, a new RSEVF must be completed and submitted immediately, reflecting the revised Running Start FTE eligibility. This informs all parties of the effect of the schedule change on the claimable FTE and gives the college the opportunity to contact the parents/student for tuition.

**87. Would an electronic signature from a Running Start advisor be acceptable for the RSEVF?**

There is no legal requirement that prohibits colleges from using digital signatures on enrollment verification forms. However, colleges are responsible for ensuring the validity and authenticity of any electronic signatures used in accordance with [RCW 19.34.310](#).

**88. Is the college supposed to give a copy of the RSEVF back to the high school after the college counselor meets with the student and the student selects classes?**

Yes. A completed RSEVF should be sent back to the high school and copies to the student/parents, too. By doing so, the high school is aware of the classes that the student will be enrolling in at the college and knows the FTE that the college will claim.

**89. Are the institutions of higher education and high school required to keep physical/hard copies of the RSEVF or any other documents?**

It would be best practice to keep a hard copy of the RSEVF to support the FTE that you are reporting for that student. Should there be any dispute on how the student's FTE will be split, the retained RSEVF can provide this information.

## FEES & TUITION

**90. May a high school or college seek reimbursement from a Running Start student for failure of a course?**

No.

**91. May colleges charge fees to Running Start students?**

Yes. Running Start students shall pay mandatory fees up to 10% of tuition costs, including course and placement testing fees, as established by each college, and potentially technology and other fees in accordance with [RCW 28B.15.020](#) and [RCW 28B.15.041](#). Washington colleges and universities must make available fee waivers for low-income Running Start students in accordance with [RCW 28A.600.310\(2\)](#).

A Running Start student shall be considered low income and eligible for a fee waiver upon proof that the student is currently qualified to receive free or reduced-price lunch.

Acceptable documentation of low-income status may also include:

- Student has been deemed eligible for free-reduced-price lunches in the past five years.
- Family income is equal to or less than 50 percent of the state median.
- Family income is less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level.
- Student receiving any state or federal assistance funds.
- A youth in care.

Consumable supplies, textbooks, and other materials retained by the student are not within the definition of fees and therefore not subject to the mandatory low-income waiver provisions.”

**92. What are the maximum credits a student can enroll in and receive state funding, and when do colleges charge tuition?**

Running Start students may enroll tuition-free for a maximum of 15 college credits but are limited to a combined 1.20 FTE when enrolled in both high school and Running Start courses. When a Running Start student seeks more credits, colleges should charge appropriate per-credit rates for any credits beyond the 15-credit maximum or beyond 1.20 FTE, up to the maximum credits allowed for all enrolled students by institutional policy.

**93. Can school districts assess a fine or fee against students for failing Running Start courses, withdrawing from Running Start courses, or never showing up for Running Start courses?**

No. Also see Eligibility and Limitations section. Can GET (Guaranteed Education Tuition) credits be used to pay for unsubsidized college tuition?

If enrolled in credits above and beyond those authorized for Running Start funding, Guaranteed Education Tuition (GET) funds may be used to cover qualified expenses such as tuition charges, fees, and books/supplies. However, it may be more advantageous to use GET units for qualified expenses following Running Start enrollment in accordance with [RCW 28A.600.310\(2\)\(c\)](#).

**94. Are low-income tuition waivers available for Running Start students who want to take additional credits above the combined 1.20 FTE limit?**

Yes. However, there is no requirement for institutions of higher education to make available tuition or fee waivers for credits taken beyond the maximum allowable through Running Start in accordance with [WAC 392-169-060](#). Students are always encouraged to check with their high school, and the institution of higher education in which they are taking courses through Running Start, to see what additional financial assistance may be available.

**95. Are Running Start students able to receive a tuition waiver for one additional college credit if they are taking 9 RS tuition-free college credits (0.60 FTE)?**

Yes. The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges approved an additional tuition waiver for one college credit. This waiver applies to Running Start students with eligibility per the Running Start Enrollment Verification Form (RSEVF) for **exactly** 9 Running Start tuition-free college credits (0.60 FTE) who enroll in **exactly** 10 college credits. The 10th credit of tuition will be waived in cashiering using Financial Aid Program Code (FAPC) of W8A. The waiver is only for tuition. If the Running Start student registers for anything other than 10 credits **exactly**, they will not be eligible for this waiver. Also see Eligibility and Limitations.

**96. Are school districts allocated any additional state funds to assist students with the costs of transportation, books and fees?**

Sometimes. Through OSPI's Consolidated Equity and Sustainability Grant (FP 154), school districts may apply for funding to support initiatives aimed at expanding access to Running Start and other dual credit programs, which may include subsidies and other strategies to eliminate barriers for students. State funding appropriated by the legislature and/or not allocated through the CES Grant may be provided to districts through an annual academic acceleration apportionment; however, such support is not guaranteed and may be prioritized to respond to various needs identified by the agency.

## FOREIGN EXCHANGE/INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS/STUDY ABROAD

### **97. Are foreign exchange students eligible to participate in Running Start?**

It depends on the type of student visa. Foreign exchange students with an F-1 visa are required to pay tuition to the high school they plan to attend in the United States. Evidence of this payment must be provided prior to the issuance of the visa. A student with an F-1 visa who chooses to enroll in Running Start cannot be claimed for state funding by the school district or the college.

Foreign exchange students with a J-1 visa or students with visas in other categories who are enrolled as an eleventh or twelfth grader are eligible to participate in Running Start. J-1 visa students must comply with all eligibility requirements, be mindful of any restrictions on enrollment established by the student's exchange program sponsor and comply with all federal requirements.

### **98. Can Running Start students participate in Study Abroad programs offered by their college?**

Yes. Running Start students have access to all the classes offered in the college catalog and may participate in Study Abroad. Each college has specific policies and procedures governing Study Abroad experiences. Students must follow the institutional policies regarding student participation in Study Abroad programs as well as the policy and procedures within the institution's Study Abroad Office. These policies may or may not impact the Running Start student's ability to participate in these programs.

When the student is abroad, the college can claim them for the standard Running Start reimbursement rate. Students are responsible for any additional costs.

While the allowance for study abroad programs permit a student who is resident of a Washington school district to attend that college's student abroad program, it does not permit a student who is not ordinarily a resident of Washington to participate in a college's online program while living outside of Washington.

## GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

**99. Can the high school or district require progress toward the district’s diploma and require that students not only earn credits, but complete other requirements for graduation, including meeting state assessment requirements and completing the High School and Beyond Plan?**

It depends. Students who are seeking a high school diploma from a public school district, charter school or tribal compact school must meet all requirements of the state and the local requirements of the district or school.

The intent of Running Start law is to encourage maximum student access to the Running Start program. Districts/Schools should not adopt policies and procedures that intentionally create barriers to student participation in the program. For example, requiring daily or weekly attendance in a High School and Beyond Plan class would logically hinder Running Start participation. Districts that have such requirements are strongly encouraged to offer accommodations to students participating in Running Start.

Students who are not specifically seeking a high school diploma from a public school district, charter school or tribal compact school may choose to refrain from completing the district’s/school’s specific graduation requirements and focus on earning the credits needed to receive a diploma through the college. Also see *Attendance, Graduation Requirements and Eligibility and Limitations* sections.

**100. Does a student seeking a Washington high school diploma through an associate degree at the college need to complete local high school and/or district requirements?**

No. Running Start students who earn an associate degree may request a Washington high school diploma from the college. If a student fails to earn an associate degree, they would need to meet the requirements of the district to be awarded a high school diploma through the district in accordance with [RCW 28B.50.535](#).

**101. Can a student who has met the district, charter school or tribal compact school’s high school graduation requirements still attend Running Start if they do not take the step of graduating?**

It would depend. A student who, at the **beginning** of their senior academic year, has not met the district’s high school graduation requirements for total **credits** is eligible to attend Running Start until the end of the school year. Students who have completed all the credits needed for high school graduation before the beginning of a school year but still need to complete a High School and Beyond Plan are **not** eligible to participate in Running Start in accordance with [WAC 392-169-020](#). Also see Eligibility and Limitations section.

**102. Can a Running Start student who earns an associate degree from a college receive a high school diploma from that college?**

Yes. The community and technical colleges are authorized to issue high school diplomas for Running Start students who enroll in the college and complete an associate of arts degree, associate of science degree, associate of technology degree or an associate in applied science degree. Students must provide a written request to the college registrar's office or designee to receive a Washington high school diploma from the college in accordance with [RCW 28B.50.535](#). Also see *Admissions, Eligibility and Limitations* and *Home School/Private School/Choice Transfer/Online Academy Schools* sections.

**103. When can Running Start students who have completed their associate degree request the college-based high school diploma?**

A Running Start student may request the college-based high school diploma when they apply for graduation with their associate degree or anytime thereafter.

**104. Should high schools or districts continue to track a student's graduation status if the student has indicated intent to pursue his or her high school diploma through a college?**

Yes. All Running Start students are considered public high school students and as such should be served and treated like all other high school students. Providing all enrolled students with guidance as to graduation requirements and status is consistent with the guidance role of the high school, regardless of student intent relative to possible alternative graduation options.

For purposes of graduation rates, students who are successful in earning their high school diploma in accordance with [RCW 28B.50.535](#) will count as graduates of the home high school. Students who are unsuccessful in completing graduation requirements, either through the school district or in accordance with [RCW 28B.50.535](#), will be considered non-graduates.

**105. If a student earns a high school diploma through the college, how would the high school document the student as a graduate of the school district for the purposes of graduation rates?**

When the high school is informed by the college that the student has earned a high school diploma issued by the college in accordance with [RCW 28B.50.535](#), the high school may withdraw the student using the state withdrawal code "GA" – graduated through associate degree.

**106. If Running Start students earn associate degrees after their expected graduation dates, can they be documented in their student records as an extended graduation student so they can count in the high school's extended graduation rate?**

Yes. If students retain Running Start eligibility as a second-year senior student - enrolling only in classes that will meet the district's graduation requirements - and complete remaining requirements for an associate degree, the high school, if informed by the college, could code such students "GA" and include that student in the school's extended graduation rate for that school year.

**107. Can Running Start courses count as a course-based dual credit graduation pathway?** Yes. For Running Start courses, students must earn at least 1.0 high school credit and be eligible to earn college credit at a 100 level or higher by meeting the course or program criteria established by the local school district and the institute of higher education. The high school must approve the dual credit course as an ELA or math option.

**108. If a student has not passed the Smarter Balanced Math and/or ELA high school assessments and are enrolled in Running Start, do high schools accept credit from either a college level Math and/or ELA course as meeting the graduation pathway requirement?**

Yes. SBA is one of eight pathways to graduation as well as completion of a college level math or English course. This should meet graduation pathway requirements.

**109. If students can prove their readiness for college and the college agrees to take them as an 'underage' student, is it the responsibility of the school district to determine a policy for accepting college credits/courses as meeting high school requirements?**

Under this scenario, students are not considered RS and are considered an "underage student". Colleges and universities have institutional policies to address this. Generally, a "release form" is completed by the student and the high school allowing the student to take courses at the college that will meet high school requirements. The student is responsible for tuition and fees.

## HOME SCHOOL/PRIVATE SCHOOL/CHOICE TRANSFER/ALTERNATIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCE/ONLINE SCHOOL PROGRAM STUDENTS

### **110. May home school and private school students enroll in the Running Start Program? Yes.**

Any student seeking college credit through Running Start must enroll through the local public school district or high school, have a completed Running Start Verification Form (RSEVF) in place for each term and each college, and been granted junior or senior standing by the public-school district's grade placement policy in accordance with [WAC 180-51-035](#). Also see *Eligibility and Limitations* section.

A private or home school student is not required to attend classes in the public high school to participate in Running Start. Students receiving home-based instruction in accordance with [RCW 28A.200](#) and students attending private schools approved in accordance with [RCW 28A.195](#) are not required to meet the student learning goals, obtain a certificate of academic achievement or a certificate of individual achievement to graduate from high school, or to master the essential academic learning requirements in accordance with [RCW 28A.600.310](#)(1)(c).

For state and federal accountability reporting purposes: A student receiving home-based instruction enrolling in a public high school for the sole purpose of participating in courses at the college shall not be counted by the school district if the student's parents or guardians filed a declaration of intent to provide home-based instruction and the student received home-based instruction during the school year before the school year in which the student intends to participate in Running Start.

Enrolling any student in the Running Start program means that the student is also enrolled as a public high school student to access state funding allocated for the Running Start program.

### **111. Do homeschool families need to have a Declaration of Intent on file for the year preceding Running Start participation?**

No. Families may choose to move to home-based instruction after beginning Running Start and not lose their eligibility. For information on Home-based Instruction, refer to this [OSPI website](#).

### **112. Do homeschool students enrolled in Running Start need to complete local district graduation requirements if seeking a diploma through the associate degree?**

No, in accordance with [RCW 28B.50.535](#)(2). Also see *Graduation Requirements* section.

**113. How is junior/senior standing determined for private school and home school students who wish to participate in Running Start?**

It is the responsibility of the school district, charter school or tribal compact school to establish junior/senior standing. Any criteria used to establish grade placement must be applied uniformly in accordance with district policy to students irrespective of their status as Running Start students in accordance with [WAC 180-51-035](#).

Once a grade placement is made and the student's eligibility is determined, a change to another school district, should the student move or a choice transfer is in place, does not alter the initial grade placement, consistent with [WAC 392-169-020\(2\)](#). Some schools consider age appropriateness; others review credits and prior learning: In other cases, a standardized achievement test may be used in the absence of adequate documentation of a student's home-based education.

Any district criteria used to establish grade placement must be applied uniformly to all students, regardless of intent to enroll in Running Start or intent to graduate from the high school. Also see Eligibility and Limitations.

**114. Can parents appeal local school district grade placement eligibility decisions?**

This is a local decision. Parents may appeal only if the district has a policy and procedure for such an appeal.

**115. A home school Running Start student is in 11th grade but wants to take a year off from Running Start next year. Would this student be able to return after one year off and do Running Start as a 12th grader?**

It is up to the resident district to establish and interpret grade placement to students who enroll. In this case, the student could potentially be a second-year senior, which would limit Running Start enrollment to only those courses needed to meet specific high school graduation credit requirements in accordance with [WAC 392-169-020\(3\)](#) (Laws defining student eligibility, section 3) and no more than 45 college credits for all senior years. Also see Eligibility and Limitations and Graduation Requirements.

**116. A homeschool student chooses not to utilize the third quarter (spring) of Grade 11 eligibility. Can that third quarter be carried over so that the student can utilize the maximum six quarters of enrollment?**

No. Junior year eligibility would be complete. Running Start eligibility is based on the equivalent of full-time enrollment for two academic years for junior and senior standing only. However, the student would still be eligible for the three quarters of 12th grade and could also be eligible for the second-year senior year in accordance with [WAC 392-169-055\(4\)](#).

**117. Does a school district have to post Running Start course grades in the grade history file of a homeschool student who is only enrolled for the purpose of taking Running Start classes?**

Yes. All earned credit must be recorded on an official high school transcript.

**118. May a school district or high school award a diploma to a private school student who enrolls in the public district, but takes classes only through Running Start? Yes, only if all state and local school district graduation requirements are met.**

**119. How does the 1.20 FTE limitation apply to private school and home-based instruction students who are also enrolled in Running Start?**

All students are eligible for up to a maximum of 1.0 FTE or 15 credits at the college and a combined public high school and college FTE of 1.20. A Running Start Enrollment Verification Form (RSEVF) should be completed for all students wishing to enroll in Running Start. A private school or home-based instruction student who is also taking courses in a public high school, charter school or tribal compact school must adhere to the 1.20 FTE limitation.

For a private school or home-based student who is **not** enrolled in a public high school, charter school or tribal compact school **for any classes**, the RSEVF should show that there is no FTE claimed by the high school. The student would be eligible for 15 credits of Running Start in addition to the courses being taken through their home school or private school.

**120. Can a student who is attending a non-resident district pursuant to a Choice Transfer participate in Running Start at a college near their home district?**

Yes. This can be accomplished in two ways. The choice district can complete a RSEVF with the college in the student's home district and the college would report the student's enrollment to the choice district. Or the choice district can enter into an inter-district agreement with the home district, releasing a portion of the student's FTE for the home district to use for the student's Running Start enrollment. Refer to OSPI's [Bulletin #035- 18](#) for more information on Choice Transfers and inter-district agreements.

**121. Can a student who is attending a non-resident district pursuant to a Choice Transfer be required to return to their home district and/or to take a course in the non-resident high school if they choose to enroll full-time in Running Start?** Districts are required to have policies in place that establish rational, fair and equitable standards for acceptance and rejection of choice requests, as well as the conditions for which a Choice Transfer would be rescinded. Students and parents or guardians must be given written notification of the specific reason(s) for the rescindment as per the school district's policy and their right to appeal the rescindment to OSPI.

Districts should ensure that their Choice Transfer policies adhere to the Legislature’s intent that districts provide maximum access to Running Start for interested and ready students.

Students and parent(s) or guardian(s) must also be notified of their right to appeal district decisions that reject choice requests or terminate existing Choice Transfers. Appeals can be made both to the district and to OSPI in accordance with [RCW 28A.225.220](#) – [28A.225.225](#) and [RCW 28A.225.230](#) . Also see OSPI [Bulletin 035-18](#) for additional information on choice transfers and inter-district agreements.

**122. Can students who attend one of Washington’s public online school programs participate in Running Start?**

Yes. Public online school programs must be approved and supported by a Washington school district. As such, they are required to follow the same rules that apply to traditional, in-person high schools. This includes distributing information on the Running Start program and allowing students to choose to take Running Start courses.

**123. Can a district hosting an Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) or approved online school program where nonresident students attend through a Choice Transfer refuse to process these students’ Running Start requests or redirect them to their home districts for Running Start support?**

No. Districts choosing to host ALE or online school programs accept all responsibilities associated with students that live outside of the district but attend through a Choice Transfer. These students remain the responsibility of the Choice district until their Choice Transfers are completed or rescinded. Accordingly, there should be no restrictions on or barriers to allow these students to access Running Start like any other high school student in the district.

Students attending the non-resident district through an interdistrict agreement remain the responsibility of the student’s resident district. In these cases, the student should access Running Start through their resident district.

ALE schools with interdisciplinary and mastery-based approaches that would make Running Start a more challenging fit are encouraged to consult with OSPI to determine how a student can make Running Start work within their programs.

## PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**124. Is the parent of a Running Start student entitled to review attendance and grade information held by the college or university?**

Under federal law, students who attend postsecondary educational institutions hold the confidentiality rights to their education records. They have the right to consent prior to any disclosure of information from education records held by the postsecondary institution.

However, an exception to the consent requirement allows the parents of dependent students to review their student’s education records without the consent of the

student. Proof of dependency is usually verified via a copy of the most recent year's federal tax form showing that the parent claims the student as a dependent. Neither the age of the student nor the parent's status as a custodial parent is relevant. If a student is claimed as a dependent by either parent for tax purposes, then either parent may have access under this provision. In accordance with [34 CFR § 99.31\(a\)\(8\)](#).

**125. Must students waive their FERPA rights to participate in Running Start?**

No. While the RSEVF does include a checkbox that permits student records to be shared between educational institutions, the student or parent/guardian is not required to check it to participate in Running Start; however, it is highly recommended. Withholding permission for institutions to communicate Running Start progress and completion may delay or preclude information from being reflected on the student's high school and/or college transcripts.

**126. May Running Start students participate in field trips that are scheduled as a part of the college course?**

Yes. However, written parental permission should be obtained for all field trips for Running Start students under the age of 18. If parents do not give permission, faculty should consider providing alternative options to that student. Most Running Start Coordinators collect a blanket permission form early in the enrollment process.

## STUDENT ACTIVITIES AND RECOGNITIONS

**127. May Running Start students participate in college or university campus activities, such as student government, organizations, and clubs?**

Yes. Except for intercollegiate sports, Running Start students may participate in any activities on the college/university campus, consistent with the institution's general requirements for participation in extracurricular activities.

**128. May Running Start students participate in high school activities including sports? Yes.**

Running Start students may participate in any high school activities, including sports, consistent with the high school and school district's own eligibility requirements and [Washington Intercollegiate Activities Association \(WIAA\) Handbook](#).

WIAA guidelines allow participation by Running Start students. Students should work with their high school counselor to ensure they are taking the equivalent of a full course load to maintain eligibility with the WIAA.

**129. Can a high school prohibit a student from participating in the high school graduation ceremony, taking classes at the high school, or participating in extracurricular activities if the student is choosing to receive a high school diploma from the college?**

Running Start students and parents should be informed as to existing district policies relative to a student's eligibility to enroll in classes at the high school and participate in extracurricular activities if they are not pursuing a high school diploma. Participation in the high school, charter school or tribal compact school's graduation ceremony is to be determined by local district policy and is not linked to state statute related to diploma

requirements and should be covered in parent and student guidance. Can a school district or high school preclude a student from being eligible to be senior class valedictorian or senior class salutatorian if the student enrolls in one or more classes via Running Start?

No. A 12th grade Running Start student and a traditional 12th grade high school student are entitled to participate equally in a high school graduation ceremony. A school should have criteria, other than mere status as a Running Start student, for these honors. In addition, such preclusion could violate equal protection principles.

For example, if the sole criterion for a specific honor was a high-grade point average (GPA), a Running Start student with a high GPA would be just as eligible as a non-Running Start student with a high GPA. On the other hand, if the criteria include a high GPA, coupled with a certain level of participation in class or school activities (e.g., serving as class officer or other leadership activity), it is possible that a Running Start student would have a more difficult time qualifying for such honors and recognitions.

The intent of Running Start law is to encourage maximum student access to the Running Start program. Districts/Schools should not adopt policies and procedures that intentionally create barriers to student participation in the program, nor other disincentives for student participation.

## TRANSCRIPT INFORMATION

### **130. Do courses that do not meet high school graduation requirements need to be reflected on the high school transcript?**

Yes. Since courses taken through Running Start are funded as part of the student's basic education allocation (BEA), they must be transcribed with the grade achieved at the college. Even though the credit may not be required for graduation, it must still be included on the high school academic record.

### **131. When a student in Running Start drops a class at the college, and receives a "W" on their college transcript, should the high school post the grade as an "F" on the high school transcript?**

No. It must be posted as a "W" on the high school transcript.

### **132. If a Running Start student fails to pay their fees to a college, but otherwise completes the coursework satisfactorily, can the college withhold their grades? Can the student be prevented from graduating from high school?**

The answer to the first question lies in the applicable policy of the institution. It is possible for a student to receive high school credit, but not college credit, in this situation.

The answer to the second question is no. The failure to pay college fees related to the earning of college credit via Running Start is separate from the issue of whether the student satisfactorily met the course requirements to pass and apply the earned credits toward high school graduation. The college is limited to withholding the student's grades only pertaining to issuing the student's college transcript. In the situation described above, the high school counselor and the Running Start coordinator at the college must communicate with one another for the high school to be apprised of the student's grade.

**133. Are all Running Start courses shown on the high school transcript?**

Yes. Running Start courses need to be recorded on the high school transcript. The standardized transcript must contain a designation of “R” for courses completed and credit earned through Running Start in accordance with [WAC 392-415-070](#).

**134. Are colleges required to send individual transcripts to high schools or districts to provide evidence of successful completion of courses taken through the program?**

No. Nothing in statute or administrative code mandates that a high school or district must receive an official transcript from the college. The college must supply “evidence” of successful completion of courses. Evidence may include college-generated spreadsheet in accordance with [WAC 392-169-085](#).

**135. How does the high school transcribe a grade from a college class through Running Start if the college uses a different grading scale than the high school (e.g., the college bases a B- on a 2.6 and the high school uses 2.7)? Will the student have different grades on the high school and college transcripts?**

It is possible that the respective transcripts will show different grades. However, the high school transcript needs to record the grade in accordance with WAC 392-415-050. The high school would transcribe the grade appropriate to the rules for K-12 and the college would transcribe the grade appropriate to its policy in accordance with [WAC 392-415-050](#).

**136. Who and how are grades determined for Running Start courses?**

Grades and credit earned through Running Start courses are transcribed to both the high school and college transcript. School districts are responsible for ensuring student grades on the high school transcript reflect the district’s grading practices and policies. Colleges and universities are responsible for ensuring student grades on the college transcript reflect the higher education institution’s grading practices and policies. Grades earned through completion of a Running Start course are determined by the college or university.

Running Start courses must comply with college or university grading policies. The college or university grading policy – including the grading scale and grade options – is solely up to the college or university and cannot be altered or modified by the school district’s grading policy.

If there is a difference in the grading policies between the college or university and the school district, the district must adhere to their local policies for the high school transcript while, when required, providing grading information to the college or university which adheres to the college or university’s grading policy.

## CONTACTS

For additional information contacts are listed below. Questions related to higher education should be directed to one of the higher education sector leads and questions related to K-12 should be directed toward the Office of Public Instruction.

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