

Scheduling and Credits

The State Board of Education has established minimum graduation requirements designed to ensure that graduates have taken courses in several different subject areas that should result in students having mastered essential knowledge, skills and competencies to be successful after high school.

Additionally, all students should have an [Individual Career and Academic Plan](#) (ICAP) that presents a sequence of courses and experiences that conclude with the student reaching his or her postsecondary goals. *Students, parents and district personnel should consider the student's English language proficiency level when developing an ICAP for English learners.* Students who are new to the US education system need early successes if they are to maintain the motivation to stay in school. The options in Appendix E may satisfy this need, but it is largely dependent on the student, their aspirations and the availability of courses and qualified staff at the district level.

Supports and flexible scheduling are necessary to provide a meaningful education and a motivating pathway to graduation. The following are options districts should consider when graduation planning for newcomers who enroll in unique situations.

There are no restrictions on how many ESOL classes a school may accept for credit towards graduation. A sheltered World History classroom may cover the same key skills and concepts as the regular course. Even in the case of language arts, an ESOL class may provide students with the kinds of communicative strategies and skills as regular English classes, and students should be given credit for it. Typically, students should earn credit for the content area they are studying, irrespective of how the content was delivered (ie. Sheltered Instruction).

ELs should not be discouraged or prohibited from enrolling for credit in foreign language classes that may, in fact, be their first language. English-speaking students are still required to take English even though they know the English language! Most foreign language teachers would welcome the opportunity to have their students interact with a native speaker and to use the student's background and cultural knowledge as a basis for class work and discussion.

Rather than viewing them as exceptions, schools that have been successful teaching ELs see ESOL classes more as accommodations that allow students access to a much wider range of coursework. These accommodations allow students to benefit from the course content while they are developing English language skills. In other words, effective school programs for ELs view language as a means to an end, and not as the end itself.

Sheltered Classes

All students are entitled to an equitable education that requires all curriculum, assessments and instruction to be accessible to all students, including students acquiring English. Offering sheltered content classes is one option for districts to support ELs. A qualified instructor who is proficient in both content and English language development must teach sheltered classes. Although delivered with an ELD lens, the same standards and content are acquired during the course. Therefore, credit should be awarded as the standard course equivalent.

Newcomer Programs

A growing number of Missouri School Districts are operating newcomer programs. These programs can be offered as a single class, a series of courses (a school within a school), or an entire building. Some newcomer programs are fluid, with students transitioning to mainstream courses when the ELD department deems them ready. Other programs are offered for a semester, an academic year or a full 12 months. According to a study by Short & Boyson (2012), newcomer programs have the following characteristics:

- An orientation to US schools
- First language literacy
- English language oracy and literacy
- Sheltered core content classes
- Extended school days, Saturday school and/or summer school
- Connections to non-academic community resources

Virtual education

Missouri's Virtual Instructional Program (MoVIP) is an option for students to accrue credits to catch up to their peers or to take a course more fitting to their zone of proximal development. Although the coursework is in English, students can work at their own pace. Districts are required to accept all credits earned through MoVIP. Local policy may also recognize units of credit from other sources delivered primarily through electronic media with a physically present teacher that is not certified in the content area being studied.

Credit for off-campus instruction

Under some circumstances, students may earn high school credit for off-campus learning experiences and through the School Flex Program, work-based and/or classroom instructional activities. DESE offers a series of options for students to earn credit through off-campus experiences. Each situation is unique and dependent on the student's Individualized Career and Academic Plan. Details can be found in the [Graduation Handbook](#).

Embedded credit

School districts may choose to embed competencies from one subject into another class, or a sequence of classes, with potential for awarded credit to students for both. This option requires prior DESE approval. The embedded subject and the other subject should be closely linked. Although there is a natural fit between some academic and Career & Technical Education (CTE) courses, districts should not feel limited to that scope. This is a good opportunity to make up credits lost due to arriving in the US without transcripts.

Waiver of required academic credit for students in CTE programs

Local board of education policy may permit a waiver of one unit of academic credit (ELA, math, science or social studies) for students who complete a three-unit career and technical education program of studies. If one exists, students must take the end-of-course exam required of any waived course.

Substitution of courses to fulfill academic credit requirements

A student may fulfill one unit of academic credit with a district-approved agriculture or career and technical education course for any ELA, math, science or social studies unit required for high school graduation in any combination up to fulfilling one requirement in each of the four subject areas. This excludes courses which have an EOC assessment