

Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM) Frequently Asked Questions for Students

1. What is Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM)?

CDM is an option which allows students to demonstrate mastery of a course's content, getting credit and a pass/fail grade for the course by taking an assessment and completing an artifact. In 2013 the NC Dept. of Public Instruction instituted State Board Policy GCS-M-001-13: Credit by Demonstrated Mastery in order to ensure students grow optimally in our public schools and have effective seat time. Transitioning away from seat time, in favor of a structure that creates flexibility, allows students to progress as they demonstrate mastery of academic content, regardless of time, place, or pace of learning. Failed attempts at CDM are not reflected on a student's transcript.

2. Do LEAs have to offer CDM?

Yes. Per State Board of Education policy, all LEAs must offer the opportunity for students.

3. Is a credit earned through the CDM policy intended to be "different" than a credit earned in the traditional manner (completing the course)?

No. The school system will assess students and evaluate artifacts based upon the same standards that are applied to students earning course credit in the traditional sense. The achievement levels required to earn a CDM credit already reflect a more rigorous expectation of students who want to earn credit in this manner than those of students who complete the course with seat-time.

4. Who is eligible to request an opportunity to earn credit by demonstrating mastery?

Any North Carolina public high school student, grades 9-12, who is able to show a deep understanding of the content without seat-time and classroom learning experience is eligible.

5. Is there a limit to the number of courses for which a student may earn credit using the CDM policy?

No. Students may earn credit using CDM for as many courses as they wish. However, students may only make **one attempt per course**. Students who are unsuccessful after one attempt must register for and complete the course to receive credit.

6. May students earn CDM credit for honors courses?

It depends. CDM is only available for standard-level courses and inherently honors courses. CDM credits will be indicated on the transcript as CDM (similar to a 'pass') and therefore do not earn a specific grade or calculate into a student's grade point average. Honors level courses that are not inherently honors are not available for CDM. In either case, a student only earns credit and does not receive grades or an extra quality point.

7. Can the school or district deny a student the opportunity to attempt to earn CDM credit?

No. However, there are courses which are excluded from CDM by the state. Honors, AP, and IB courses are excluded, as are CTE work-based learning courses (co-op, internship, and apprenticeship), CTE courses that have a clinical setting as a requirement of the course, CTE Advanced Studies courses, English Language Learner (ELL) courses, and Healthful Living required courses.

8. May a student earn the CPR credit through CDM?

No. CPR is part of the Healthful Living requirement and NC State Board of Education policy specifically excludes required Healthful Living courses from CDM.

9. Does CDM replace differentiation in meeting the learning needs of students?

No. CDM is not a replacement for differentiated services to meet the learning needs of students. CDM is in fact a way to differentiate and personalize learning based on individual student needs of content replacement.

10. May a student receive credit through CDM for a course not offered at his/her school?

Yes, but only for those courses offered at other high schools within the district. CDM is not available for courses which are not available within the district.

11. May students earn credit by demonstrated mastery for Career and Technical Education (CTE) Courses?

Yes, with the exception of specific courses excluded by the NCSBE policy (work-based learning courses such as co-ops, internships and apprenticeships; courses that have a clinical setting as a requirement such as ProStart, Early Childhood Education I/II and Nursing Fundamentals; Advanced Studies courses). For CTE courses, an industry credential may be accepted as the required artifact component. Students will still be expected to complete the post-assessment, if one is available, or a teacher made exam if the state does not provide a post-assessment. If the student earns credit, the post-assessment score would be reported in the technical attainment performance measure.

12. When a student earns credit by demonstrated mastery for a course, what should schools use to replace the course in the student's schedule?

Generally, students should replace the course with the next course in the sequence, i.e. a student using CDM to earn a Math I credit should schedule Math II in its place. High school students might also use CDM credit to create space in their schedule that can be filled with a community college course available through Career & College Promise or other advanced courses, such as AP and IB. The NC Virtual Public School is also a source of courses for middle school and high school students who need to replace a course for which they have earned a CDM credit.

13. Can students graduate early based upon credits earned through this policy?

Yes. CDM credits work like traditional credits towards graduation. Students wishing to graduate early should follow district procedures to request early graduation from high school.

14. If a student chooses to earn credit by demonstrated mastery for an EOC course, will the student have to take that EOC for the course they passed through CDM?

Yes, students attempting to earn a CDM credit for a course with an EOC must take the EOC as the Phase 1 assessment component of the CDM attempt. If the attempt is successful, the score will be banked for appropriate use.

15. Can students participating in an on-going course decide to earn CDM in the middle of the course?

No, the CDM policy is for students who wish to accelerate without enrolling in a course.

16. Because classroom situations (science labs, conversation in world languages, etc.) cannot be replicated on a standardized assessment, how should these situations be assessed?

Student performance tasks may be required as part of the Phase II artifact assessment, depending on the course content.

17. Are credits earned through this policy accepted by outside organizations such as the NCHSAA, NCCCS, UNC-GA, and NCAA?

No. Students considering collegiate athletics should be advised that NCAA Division I and Division II colleges and universities do not recognize test-out credits in terms of meeting college entrance credit requirements, and therefore CDM is strongly discouraged for potential collegiate athletics.

18. How does the CDM policy and its implementation impact quality points and a student's grade point average (GPA)?

CDM credits are awarded as a "pass" and appear as such on the student's transcript. No course grade is received and the course is **not** included in the GPA calculation. Failed attempts will not be reflected on a student's transcript.

19. How does CDM credit impact course prerequisites and sequencing?

When courses are taught in a predetermined sequence, a student may only apply for CDM for the next course in the sequence. For example, a student who has not taken Algebra 1 would not be permitted to obtain CDM credit for Algebra II.

20. Who provides the assessments students will use to meet the Phase I assessment of foundational knowledge and progress to the artifact stage?

For EOC courses, the EOC test will be given during an early testing window to provide the information needed for the Phase I assessment. For non-EOC courses, LEAs will determine the appropriate examination to use.

21. Can students potentially stay at home and graduate?

No, the CDM policy does not relieve schools, parents or students of the requirement that students attend school until age 16.