



ROCKY RIVER HIGH SCHOOL
Credit Flexibility Program Information and Guidelines

What is Credit Flexibility?

Credit Flexibility (CF) is a student-driven/student-owned study option that provides customized learning of standards focused on a student's interests and needs. Specifically, CF is a structured learning opportunity that allows students to demonstrate mastery of standards through an approved plan with defined learning standards and goals, planned learning activities, and standards for evaluating student learning coordinated by a qualified educator. CF can:

- broaden the scope of curricular options available to students,
- increase the depth of study possible for a particular subject, and
- allow for the tailoring of learning time by providing acceleration and convenience, resulting in more options for courses during the school day.

According to the Ohio Department of Education,

This education option gives students a way to be in charge of their learning. For some students, they see more value in school ("Why do I have to learn this?") when they can connect learning with real world situations and future jobs. Credit flexibility is one way to increase a student's interest in school and motivation to learn. The key to this option is that the student drives the request to learn differently as well as the plan to earn the credit.

--ODE webpage <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Quality-School-Choice/Credit-Flexibility-Plan>

Developed by the Ohio Credit Flexibility Design Team, Ohio's "Credit Flex" plan shifts focus from evaluating student learning based on "seat time" to assessing students' demonstrated academic and skill level or performance. The plan does not eliminate Carnegie units or "seat time" requirements altogether. Rather, it retains seat time as one option and expands the number of options for earning credit by adding demonstration of subject area competency and structures that support it irrespective of any time requirements.

--Ohio Department of Education. 2009. *New Emphasis on Learning*

Why does Credit Flexibility exist?

In 2006, the Ohio General Assembly established the Ohio Core Curriculum (Senate Bill 311), which raised expectations for what all Ohio students must know and be able to do to earn a high school diploma. At the same time, Senate Bill 311 directed the State Board of Education to develop a statewide plan for implementing methods for students to earn units of high school credit based on the demonstration of subject area competency. In addition to raising the expectations for graduation, lawmakers provided flexibility to students and educators to successfully meet these higher expectations.

--Ohio Department of Education. 2009. *New Emphasis on Learning*

The State Board of Education adopted Ohio's Credit Flex plan in March 2009. School districts across Ohio were required to comply with provisions of the plan by the beginning of the 2010-2011 school year.

Who is eligible to participate in Credit Flexibility?

Any student in grades 7-12 may write a Credit Flexibility Plan (CFP).

Is Credit Flexibility right for me?

Students who can “agree” to the following statements are ready for a CF course:

- ✓ When it comes to learning, I am a self-directed person.
- ✓ I am the only one responsible for my own learning.
- ✓ I am able to manage my study time effectively, and I easily complete assignments on time.
- ✓ I am self-disciplined and find it easy to set aside reading and homework time.
- ✓ I understand that I must maintain my status as a full-time student at all times during any CF program.
- ✓ I understand that Rocky River City School District cannot offer monetary support, supplemental materials or other support, such as hardware or software support for my technology needs, for my CF opportunity.
- ✓ I follow the rules and student code of conduct for the Rocky River City School District while working on this CF opportunity.
- ✓ I will follow the recommendations made by the committee approving my CFP, and I will revise my plan according to the specifications of the committee.
- ✓ I understand that, once approved, this learning experience will be graded, be calculated into my GPA, and become part of my high school transcript.

What are my Credit Flexibility options?

In addition to taking courses during the school day, CF allows students to earn course credit by **demonstrating mastery of standards** in a variety of ways:

1. Credit by creating a CFP for an existing course. This could include, but is not limited to taking a course from an Ohio-approved online provider, field experience, internships and mentorships. As Fitness courses are oftentimes courses students choose to credit flex, the district has created a template that students must use when creating a CFP for Fitness.
2. Credit by creating a CFP for a new course. This could include, but is not limited to, taking a course from an Ohio-approved online provider, field experience, internships and mentorships.
3. Credit by assessment for an existing course

Is there a limit to the number of courses I can take via Credit Flexibility throughout my time in high school?

No.

Are there deadlines for creating a Credit Flexibility Plan (CFP)?

Yes. Applications may be submitted throughout the school year. The application deadlines are: 9/1, 12/1, 3/1, 4/1, 5/1 and 6/1.

Transfer students may submit approved applications from another district upon enrollment in the Rocky River City School District for committee consideration and approval.

Who approves my CFP?

The Flexible Credit Committee (FCC) approves CFPs. The FCC is comprised of the principal or principal's designee, at least one school counselor, and the chairperson of the department from which flexible credit is sought or his/her designee. The FCC will appoint a highly qualified teacher of record, when applicable, for the student's CFP. In cases where the student submitting the CFP application has other legally binding education plans (e.g., IEP, 504, WEP), the case manager for that student shall also be a member of the FCC.

If I am interested in Credit Flexibility, what should I do?

Please follow these steps for creating a CFP:

1. Review the CF Guidelines on the following pages.
2. Discuss a possible CFP with your counselor and parents.
3. Complete an application. A student must submit a CFP on the District's Application for Credit Flexibility form. Applications are available on the "Credit Flex" tab of the RRHS and RRMS website homepages.
4. Download related [Academic Learning Standards from the Ohio Department of Education website](#) or [AP course descriptions and standards](#). You will need to demonstrate mastery of each standard your course requires.
5. Be prepared to attend a meeting with the FCC to discuss your proposal or to resubmit is as necessary. A student may be required to provide supporting documentation as determined by the FCC.
6. Once the application is approved, you must complete your CFP coursework as approved by the FCC.

If I am an athlete, is there anything in particular I need to keep in mind if I participate in Credit Flexibility?

Yes. Both Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) and NCAA operate independently from the Ohio Department of Education and each set specific eligibility rules for participation in high school and college sports.

Students wishing to participate in high school athletics must be aware that CF learning experiences **will not** be factored into their eligibility determination (OHSAA) requires that student-athletes must receive passing grades in a minimum of five one-credit courses, or the equivalent, in the immediately preceding grading period, not including the summer, in order to be eligible to participate.

Students wishing to pursue Division I or Division II NCAA athletics eligibility are responsible for ensuring that they will meet the appropriate requirements. The NCAA has determined that they will **NOT** accept Credit Flexibility as an approved core course. We recommend that students continue to enroll in courses posted on the approved NCAA website to ensure eligibility for participation. See your counselor if you have any questions.

ROCKY RIVER CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT CREDIT FLEXIBILITY GUIDELINES

PROGRAM INTEGRITY

In order to ensure the integrity of the learning experience approved under this program, the student will be required periodically and/or upon request to provide evidence of progress and attendance. The principal or his/her designee will be responsible for certifying completion and the award of credits consistent with the District's policies on graduation. If a student ceases to attend or is unable to complete the credit flexibility opportunity for any reason, the application will be voided.

Plagiarism, or the use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work, is prohibited and may subject a student to disciplinary action. In addition, falsifying signatures or data or refusing to provide proper identification or giving false information to a staff member is prohibited and may subject a student to disciplinary action.

APPLICATION DEADLINE

Applications may be submitted throughout the school year. The application deadlines are: 9/1, 12/1, 3/1, 4/1, 5/1 and 6/1. Transfer students are allowed to submit approved applications from another district upon enrollment in the district for Flexible Credit Committee (FCC) consideration and approval.

APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Any student in grades 7-12 may write a Credit Flexibility Plan (CFP).
2. The student shall submit a CFP on the district's Application for Credit Flexibility form.
 - a. All required information, plans, and timelines must be included with the CFP.
 - b. The student may be required to provide supporting documentation as determined by the Flexible Credit Committee (FCC).
 - c. All transportation required for or associated with, and any fines incurred during the FCC approved CFP are the responsibility of the student and his/her parent.
 - d. Fees for materials and supplies used for independent study and flexible credit coursework shall be permitted in accordance with the district's policies on fees for materials and other supplies used in the traditional classroom setting.
 - e. Student athletes and their parents shall discuss Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) and NCAA eligibility requirements with school staff prior to the development of a student's CFP to ensure compliance with OHSAA and NCAA rules.
3. The FCC will return CFP approvals or requests for revision to applicants after each deadline.

FLEXIBLE CREDIT COMMITTEE (FCC)

The FCC is comprised of the principal or principal's designee, at least one guidance counselor, and the chairperson of the department from which flexible credit is sought or his/her designee. The FCC will appoint a HQT teacher of record for the student's CFP. In cases where the student submitting the CFP application has other legally binding education plans (e.g., IEP, 504, WEP), the case manager for that student shall also be a member of the FCC.

TEACHER OF RECORD

As necessary, the teacher of record will be a faculty member(s) with the content expertise (HQT) to assist with the monitoring and assessment of the CFP.

REVIEW OF APPLICATION

The FCC will review the CFP and approve or deny it. In the event the FCC does not approve a CF application and recommends areas for improvement, students who wish to resubmit their application must do so within two weeks. If the deadline has passed, the student may resubmit his/her application for the next deadline.

Upon the approval of a CFP, the student shall commence CFP coursework, custom learning activity, assessment, and/or performance. Credit will be awarded at the conclusion of the preapproved timeline provided all CFP requirements are completed and evaluated in accordance with these Guidelines.

APPEAL PROCESS

A student whose proposed CFP was denied by the FCC may appeal to the superintendent or his/her designee. Appeals must be submitted to the superintendent's office within 14 calendar days of receiving the FCC's determination. Prior to issuing a decision on the appealed matter, the superintendent/designee will review the matter in its entirety including but without limitation any relevant information submitted by the student and/or his or her parent(s). The superintendent/designee shall decide whether there was a reasonable, verifiable basis for the determination which is the subject of the appeal and whether any procedural or substantive error occurred. The superintendent/designee will issue a determination on the appeal within a reasonable period of time.

AWARDING CREDIT

The student may be eligible to receive credit upon satisfactory completion of the alternative coursework, custom learning activity, assessment, and/or performance as approved in the CFP by the FCC. The following standards apply to credit awards:

1. The total number of flexible credits that may apply toward graduation requirements is not limited.
2. Completion of the work outlined in the student's CFP may result in credit being designated as fulfilling either required or elective credit toward graduation requirements as approved by the FCC.
3. In order to receive credit, all CFPs must be aligned to the following:
 - o [Ohio's Learning Standards](#)
 - o [AP course standards \(as necessary\)](#)
 - o RRCSD local curriculum requirements (see department chair for course information)
4. The determination of how credit will be awarded must be outlined in the CFP at the time of its approval. A student must demonstrate proficiency through an assessment or exam, performance, or work product as outlined in the CFP and approved by the FCC.
5. The FCC and the teacher of record reserve the right to award partial credit if student work does not warrant full credit, or to withhold credit until the student does additional work to warrant the agreed upon credit.
6. Seniors must successfully complete preapproved CFP coursework, custom learning activities, assessments, and/or performances as outlined in the CFP by May 1st of the intended graduation year.
7. Credit may be earned simultaneously for: 1) academic and career technical experiences; and 2) more than one academic content area/course.
8. The student may be awarded Carnegie Units as approved by the FCC. Units of credit will be awarded in intervals no less than one-half (1/2) credit.

9. The FCC may award flexible credit in the amount approved in advance based upon the equivalence to a 120-hour (Carnegie Unit) course. In preapproved cases, partial credits may be awarded where deemed appropriate.
10. The FCC may award flexible credit for preapproved assessments, performances or work products that demonstrate mastery of content of any course offered at Rocky River High School. Mastery is defined by a score of 90% or higher.
11. Credit by assessment, or “testing out,” is not limited to a single measure. Rather, it includes multiple measures of assessment (e.g., a paper-pencil test, an oral examination, a presentation, written works such as essays or papers, a portfolio of works, a lab project, a musical performance, or other pieces that are a part of the district’s collaboratively developed instructional course of study).
12. Tests or assessments used to determine advancement and course credit will be given semi-annually in October and May in order to facilitate planning for the subsequent school semester. The student must score 90% or better in order to receive credit. Any assessment for a particular course’s credit may only be attempted once per academic year.
13. Once a student has started a course, he or she cannot apply for the credit by assessment option for that same course.
14. As outlined in the CFP and approved by the FCC, credit may be earned from other districts and other educational providers, including on-line providers, in accordance with Ohio’s minimum operating standards of Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) Chapter 3301-35.
15. Flexible credits earned in another district before transfer to the Rocky River City Schools will count as graduation credits as awarded by the sending district. The principal/designee will review the transfer credit to determine equivalency to specific courses offered by Rocky River City Schools, or to determine its adequacy as a pre-requisite course in the district.
16. If a student is a transfer student from another district and that student has not completed his/her CFP as approved by the transferring school, the FCC shall consider the previously approved application as a new application for flexible credit. The FCC may assign partial credit for partial completion as deemed appropriate.
17. Students are not allowed to retroactively receive credit for courses or experiences taken prior to the submission of an application.

DETERMINING GRADES

1. Flexible credits will be awarded a letter grade in alignment with Rocky River High School’s grading policy.
2. The Rocky River teacher of record will determine the grade.
3. In cases where students are pursuing learning opportunities from an online service provider, the exact grade issued on that institution’s transcript will be the grade posted to the student’s transcript.
4. The Rocky River teacher of record reserves the right to remove the student from a course (withdrawn with penalty) for issues involving plagiarism and copyright violation.
5. Flexible credit grades will NOT be weighted.
6. Flexible credit grades will be posted on the student’s transcript and included in the student’s GPA.
7. The final grade must be posted before the credit can count toward graduation, including early graduation.
8. A senior must successfully complete his/her preapproved CFP by May 1st of the intended graduation year.

9. If a student fails to complete or make adequate progress on his/her CFP within the time frame approved by the FCC, the approval to pursue the proposed credit will be revoked and a failing grade will be posted to the student's transcript.
10. If a student is unable to complete the CFP due to illness (with provided medical documentation) or other valid reason as determined by the principal/designee, the FCC may extend the preapproved timeline or revoke the application without posting a failing grade.
11. Should a student transfer to another school district, upon request of the student or parent, the district shall forward a copy of the approved CFP to the new district for consideration.