

GUIDANCE FOR AWARDING PROFICIENCY CREDIT

Career Cluster Pathways in Kansas offer a variety of integrated coursework. Such coursework provides students with the opportunity to use academic content in real-world situations and demonstrate academic proficiency. Students may earn full or partial academic credit by successfully demonstrating they have met standards and expectations through integrated academic and/or career & technical education (CTE) courses. Students who receive credit through such courses still complete all of the high school credit requirements at the same level of performance as students following more traditional approaches. For example, a course in machine tooling would need to have sufficient math content at the level of Algebra I and higher in order to fulfill diploma requirements.

The responsibility for planning and scheduling courses, delivering instruction, and awarding credit resides with the local school district. The Kansas content standards help schools align curriculum and instruction which facilitates student learning necessary to meet the rigorous curricular expectations justifying proficiency credit opportunities.

Instructors involved in teaching proficiency credit courses must be fully licensed by the state of Kansas. Instructors who are certified, rather than licensed, would not be eligible to teach proficiency credit courses.

Integrated instruction can occur in a variety of contexts that embed knowledge and skills from one or more academic disciplines into CTE courses or other academic courses. It can be a course, series of courses, long-term project, collaborative instruction, or some combination of these. No matter the form integrated instruction assumes, there is some level of professional collaboration, curriculum planning, and assessment that should take place in order to assure that content is both relevant and rigorous. The sections below provide a guide for teachers and administrators who wish to make proficiency-credit options available to their students.

Course Selection

For the purpose of awarding proficiency credit, school districts may select:

- Existing courses that already contain integrated content;
- Existing courses that need to have additional content embedded;
- New courses that will be written with integrated content.

The integrated subjects should be closely linked. For example, awarding geometry credit through a Computer Aided Drafting (CAD) course seems a natural fit, as does awarding science credit through a health occupations course, or English credit through a history course.

Design Process

1. Form a collaborative planning team which includes separate representatives from instruction, administration, counseling and the community. The team must include an instructor(s) who is licensed/certified for the subject(s) considered.
2. Review the integrated instructional materials to ensure they include content to award the designated amount of credit.
3. Identify methods to compensate for gaps in content expectations. Suggested options include the addition of content for all students to learn or the designation of supplemental materials to be completed only by those individual students wanting to earn the additional credit (i.e., reports, online coursework, projects, etc.).
4. As a team, determine the amount of credit that should be offered for each content area based on the standards explicitly addressed in the course content.
5. Develop and document the curriculum for each course and specify the method(s) to be used to measure student progress toward mastery of standards.
6. Explore the possibility of students earning a full academic credit for completion of a sequence of approved pathway courses. The Student Personal Career Plan of Study should include the coursework students need to assure they have taken the appropriate sequence of courses.
7. Credit in each of the content areas is to be identified on the student transcript by the Common Course Codes and the local course title(s).
8. Determine the appropriate means of ensuring that licensure requirements are being met by instructors. This may involve awarding standard academic credit, credit for proficiency, or credit for CTE related instruction.

Proficiency Award Methods of Delivery

High school courses are assigned a code from the Kansas Common Course Codes. **The course content, course code and endorsement need to be aligned to ensure that the district is complying with licensure and highly qualified rules.** This is true for both credit options described below. Annually, districts report teaching assignments including a specific course code to KSDE through the Licensed Personnel Report. That process determines whether the teacher is appropriately licensed/certified for the Kansas Course Code assignment.

Standard Academic Credit

A teacher may have a license with multiple endorsements that allow him or her to teach courses from multiple areas such as mathematics and science, English and social science or Agriculture and science. In

these cases the course code and the teaching license are aligned with federal standards for highly qualified teachers and KSDE rules.

Proficiency Credit Through Collaboration

Proficiency credit involves collaboration between an academic teacher and a teacher who is delivering the instruction through integrated content. This process would be necessary if additional academic credit is being offered in content areas covered under federal highly qualified teacher rules. For example, if a teacher who is only licensed to teach agriculture is teaching a class that will provide some related biology credit, the district would need to follow the credit for proficiency guidelines in order to be compliant with highly qualified teacher requirements. The district should take the following steps if this collaborative method for providing proficiency credit is being used.

1. The school district should have a policy and set of procedures in place that addresses how credit through collaboration will be awarded.
2. The teacher awarding academic credit must be a Highly Qualified, fully certified teacher.
3. The collaborating instructors work together to define the method(s) for determining a student's level of achievement.
4. The collaborating instructors must hold scheduled meetings throughout the school year to discuss student progress.
5. The collaborative teaching process includes the completion of a course plan (scope & sequence) for instructional delivery involving both the collaborating instructors.

In Kansas, all credit for core academic subjects, including elective credits, must be awarded by a fully licensed, highly qualified teacher as defined by the Kansas State Department of Education standards. However, in many cases, integrated courses can be taught by instructors who are not licensed in the core content areas. A teacher licensed to teach agriculture can teach an agricultural science class that meets graduation requirements for science, however, that same teacher may not be qualified to teach a regular biology course.

Annual Follow-up / Maintenance Activities

In order to maintain the rigor and relevance of all content competencies and objectives, annual follow-up and review must occur and should include the following:

1. A review of student achievements and suggestions for continuous improvement.
2. A review of any changes in local or state standards &/or curriculum that may affect the program.
3. Completion of professional development activities by all collaborating instructors involving both academic and/or technical education.