

CREDIT FLEXIBILITY PROGRAM GUIDE

A guide to expanded educational opportunities for high school credit



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Forest Hills School District will provide educational opportunities that enable our students to acquire the knowledge, skills and personal qualities necessary for responsible citizenship and lifelong learning.



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Dear Parents/Guardians and Students,

Ohio's Plan for Credit Flexibility is designed to broaden the scope of curricular options available to students, increase the depth of study possible for a particular subject, and to personalize learning around a student's interests and needs.

Students may now earn high school credits by:

- Completing coursework
- Testing out of courses
- Demonstrating mastery of course content
- Pursuing one or more educational options (online/distance learning, dual credit, educational travel, independent study, internships, after-school programs, community service, or other individualized projects)

Credit Flexibility is intended to motivate and increase student learning by allowing:

- Access to more learning resources, especially real-world experiences, and customization around individual student needs
- Multiple measures of learning, especially those where students choose how to demonstrate what they know and can do, apply their learning, or document their performance

Please use this document as a guide to understanding what options are available. Each option requires a different level of student independence to successfully complete the coursework for credit. For this reason, all courses and a student's interest level should be carefully considered. Students interested in accessing Credit Flex should detach and complete the Credit Flex Application and follow the requirements and timeline in this guide.

Sincerely,

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CREDIT FLEX OPTIONS

The following Credit Flex options are listed in order of degree of student independence necessary for completion.

LEVEL ONE – GREATER STUDENT DIRECTION AND INDEPENDENCE	
Online Courses	<p>Courses offered completely online with little or no face-to-face teacher-student or student-student interaction.</p> <p>The following online providers have been approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ fueleducation ➤ Brigham Young Online ➤ APEX ➤ Any online course from an accredited college or university <p>AP courses taken from an online provider must be audited and approved by The College Board. Students will have to provide proof of the audit and approval from The College Board in order to receive a weighted grade on a transcript.</p>
Independent Study	<p>The opportunity to pursue an in-depth study of a topic of individual interest. Students design a course of study with the assistance of a Forest Hills teacher/advisor certified in the content area and schedule periodic sessions with that teacher/advisor.</p> <p>Whether students are working on enrichment or advancement of skills and knowledge, they can expand their learning by connecting with resources both within and outside Forest Hills. Examples of independent study include local immersion experiences in a foreign language, conducting a musical performance, creating a book of original short stories or poetry. Students wishing to access independent study must consult a staff member or community mentor willing to work with them and certify their learning. An outline of learning expectations and standards will be detailed in the plan.</p>
Study at Approved Institutions	<p>Opportunities for credit that students could access through summer camps or college/university courses.* Students may also choose to earn college credit through College Credit Plus (CC+).</p> <p>Approved post-secondary institutions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Northwestern University Summer Institute ➤ Johns Hopkins University Summer Program ➤ College Credit Plus**
Internship	<p>An opportunity for students to gain experience in a particular field of interest or in a specific career. Internships provide students with real-world opportunities to evaluate their level of interest, to create a network of contacts/mentors, and to gain credit for their work. The Community Mentor Waiver and Acknowledgement form must be completed before beginning any of these options (see Appendix) Students selected for Community Work Experienceships requesting credit must complete the credit flex application and flex plan as appropriate.</p>

LEVEL TWO – COMPLETELY STUDENT-DRIVEN

<p>Mastery Assessment</p>	<p>The three components of mastery assessment are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A cumulative assessment and/or a performance-based assessment ➤ A portfolio ➤ A presentation to a panel consisting of teachers, administrators, and other invited judges <p>Students who wish to access mastery assessment have three opportunities: April, October, and January. Students must achieve a minimum score of 80% (with no rounding) on the agreed upon cumulative assessment to be eligible for completion of the mastery assessment process. As appropriate, End of Course Assessments and Advanced Placement assessments may be used. An agreed upon score will be determined by the Credit Flex panel in collaboration with the applicant.</p> <p>Upon successful completion of the assessment, students will receive specific entries for the mastery assessment portfolio. They will then have until the next mastery assessment testing week to complete their portfolios. All portfolio presentations will be scheduled through the Credit Flex panel.</p> <p>Credit for mastery assessment will be assigned based on the course content: one semester = .5 credit; two semesters = 1 credit; one-fourth of semester = .25 credit. Students may not select the mastery assessment option for only one semester of a two-semester course.</p> <p>There will be no option for mastery assessment in courses that require students to work collaboratively together to produce a final group outcome. Examples of this type of course include performing groups (such as band, orchestra, chorus) and courses that specifically deliver a team-based product (such as journalism).</p>
<p>Individual Research</p>	<p>Projects/products resulting from independent student research as outlined in a student proposal made as part of the Credit Flex planning process. Unlike independent study this option is completely student-driven from proposal to presentation. The Community Mentor Waiver and Acknowledgement form must be completed before beginning any of these options (see Appendix).</p>
<p>Community Service / Service Learning</p>	<p>An option which combines student interest with community service experience(s) and reflection to encourage and strengthen students' understanding of civic engagement and responsibility, service to others, and activities to promote the common good. The Community Mentor Waiver and Acknowledgement form must be completed before beginning any of these options (see Appendix).</p>
<p>Educational Travel</p>	<p>Travel experiences based on specific student interests or needs and resulting in an agreed upon product or performance showcasing detailed learning targets. The Community Mentor Waiver and Acknowledgement form must be completed before beginning any of these options (see Appendix).</p>

CREDIT FLEX TIMELINES

Note: Students who wish to sign up for any Credit Flex option must complete the Credit Flex Application and Access Plan (see Appendix). Once a plan is approved, any necessary changes to a schedule can be accommodated.

SUMMER & FIRST SEMESTER and YEAR-LONG APPLICATIONS	
DATE	TASK
Before March 31	Applications for first semester (including access plan) due to principal.
Second Week of April	Mastery Assessment exam/cumulative assessment for students choosing this option.
Month of April	Student will present Credit Flex application to review panel for evaluation of all applications/access plans. After review, the panel may make suggestions on how to improve/revise individual access plans. Students will then have one week from the date of their review to revise their access plans according to the panel's instructions (Credit Flex panel consists of content area specific teachers/supervisors, one administrator, one counselor, and one Credit Flex facilitator).
April-1st Week of May	Panel review of revised applications/access plans.
1st Week of May	Final notification of approval or denial. Students who have plans denied will be notified of the appeal process.
Through Mid-May	Credit Flex advisory meetings for students to discuss their plans (for either summer or first semester).
Oct. 1-Mid Oct.	Student presentation of Credit Flex projects/portfolios (for students who completed a project over the summer).
October	Mastery Assessment exam/cumulative assessment.
December	Student presentation of Credit Flex projects/portfolios (for students who completed a project first semester). For some credit flex options, a student video presentation may be an acceptable culminating student presentation. This option should be outlined in the credit flex plan.

SECOND SEMESTER APPLICATIONS

DATE	TASK
1st Week of Nov.	Applications (including access plan) due to principal.
Through Mid Nov.	Student will present Credit Flex application to review panel for evaluation of all applications/access plans. After review, the panel may make suggestions on how to improve/revise individual access plans. Students will then have one week from the date of their review to revise their access plans according to the panel's instructions (Credit Flex panel consists of content area specific teachers/supervisors, one administrator, one counselor, and one Credit Flex facilitator).
Mid-End of Nov.	Panel review of revised applications/access plans.
1st Week of Dec.	Final notification of approval or denial. Students who have plans denied will be notified
Through Mid Dec.	Credit Flex advisory meetings for students to discuss their plans (for second semester).
January	Mastery Assessment exam/cumulative assessment.
May	Student presentation of Credit Flex projects/portfolios (for students who completed a project second semester). For some credit flex options a student video presentation may be an acceptable culminating student presentation. This option should be outlined in the credit flex access plan.

APPENDIX



CREDIT FLEXIBILITY APPLICATION

<i>Office Use Only:</i>

<i>(Student Last Name)</i>

<i>(Application Date)</i>

Student Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Student ID#: _____ **Current Grade:** _____

Student Email: _____

Student Cell: _____

Method of Access (Check all that apply):

Note: Students must attach a detailed Credit Flex access plan (see below).

Online course from approved providers

Individual Research

Independent Study

Internship (requires a separate application) unless Experienceship

Study at Approved Institutions

Community Service/Service Learning

Mastery Assessment

Course:

Educational Travel

Expected Credit to be Awarded (check one): _____ .25 _____ .50 _____ 1.0

Quarter Semester Full Year

*Please note that credit flex credit is awarded on a 4.0 scale consistent with other course work in FHS D with the exception of online AP options meeting the course audit requirement or College Credit Plus courses.

Credit Flex Access Plan

Attach a Credit Flex access plan to this application. The plan must include all of the following items:

- For online courses, the access plan will only require title of the course, provider, syllabus, date of beginning of the course, completion date, and rationale for request.
- ***For all other options please include:***
- Title of option (include the content area, such as English, Science, Art, etc.) Please list the title as requested for it to appear on student transcript.
- A detailed outline of the work scope of project including a timeline for initiation and completion of work
- Specific learning goals to include learning expectations, standards being met, and/or learning objectives. For online courses an approved course syllabus would meet this expectation. This requirement may be waived for Mastery Assessment option.
- A detailed explanation of the evidence student will provide of learning.
- Grading expectations including request for pass/fail option or method of determining final student grade.
- An explanation how Credit Flex option will help student reach immediate and post-secondary goal(s)
- An outline of resources/support needed to enable successful completion of this Credit Flex option. This section should clearly outline the student and school responsibilities.

Students should read the following statements, initial in the space provided to the left of each statement, and sign below to indicate understanding and agreement to the procedures put forth in this document. All of the following must be completed and agreed upon.

I _____ understand and agree that:

- _____ If my credit flex application is accepted, I will earn _____ credit for my work.
- _____ The drop date for Credit Flex classes is five school days after the course begins and, if I drop a Credit Flex class, it may not be possible to enroll in a traditional class that is already in progress.
- _____ I may not drop a Credit Flex courses after the withdraw date as established in the Credit Flex policy. Incomplete courses will be treated in a consistent manner as traditional courses based on district/school policy.
- _____ Academic honesty rules apply just as they do in a traditional class setting.
- _____ I must meet the attendance requirements set forth in my plan.
- _____ Passage of required state testing may impact the approval of my application.
- _____ Performance in previous/current Credit Flex courses may impact the approval of my application.
- _____ Any Credit Flex option I select must meet the athletic participation requirements set forth by OHSAA and/or NCAA Initial Eligibility Center and I must speak with my counselor and Credit Flex facilitator to evaluate the impact of accessing Credit Flexibility on my eligibility for high school and collegiate athletics.
- _____ I am responsible for verifying graduation requirements with my counselor and, if appropriate, ensuring timelines are met in advance of the graduation ceremony.
- _____ I am responsible for meeting the requirements for periodic checkpoints as established.
- _____ I will follow the Forest Hills Student Code of Conduct while working on this course and at all times.
- _____ Forest Hills School District cannot offer hardware or software support for my personal computer.
- _____ I am not allowed to retroactively receive credit for courses or experiences prior to the submission of an application.
- _____ If I have an Individual Education Plan (IEP), I understand my plan must reflect the IEP goals and objectives.
- _____ An IEP team meeting will be conducted to amend my IEP after my proposal has been accepted and prior to beginning my Credit Flex plan.
- _____ My Credit Flexibility application is subject to approval by the Credit Flexibility access panel. I further understand that completion of this form does not guarantee access.

The following are applicable to most, but not all, depending on delivery option selected:

- _____ I will have to present both my application and project/portfolio to the Credit Flex panel.
- _____ I am responsible for scheduling and attending meetings with my Credit Flex facilitator to meet the following requirements: check points, project guidance, work completion, panel presentation and attendance.
- _____ I will earn a letter grade for the course (not checking this option will make the credit pass/fail).
- _____ The letter grade that I earn will appear on my transcript and the final grade will be calculated as part of my GPA. It will not be designated as a Credit Flex course but will appear as a regular course.
- _____ If I am in the school when I am not scheduled in a traditional class, I will remain in designated areas.

Student Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Credit Flex Advisor Signature (independent study only): _____ **Date:** _____

Superintendent or District Designee Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

OFFICE USE ONLY:

Credit Flex Facilitator Responsible for Evaluating Learning and Assigned to Student: _____

Credit Flex Access Panel Members: _____

Panel Approval: Yes No **Date:** _____

Completion Date: _____ **Grade:** _____



COMMUNITY MENTOR WAIVER AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

Return this form to the student's Credit Flex Facilitator with the Credit Flexibility application /access plan.

This form is only needed if a student is participating in an individual research, internship, community service/service learning, or education travel option.

I, _____, the parent/guardian of
(parent name, printed)

_____,
(student name, printed)

Understand that my child will be participating in an educational option with a mentor who is not an employee of Forest Hills School District.

I have been informed that all mentors must undergo a background and security check by Forest Hills School District prior to participating in this project. Costs associated with background checks will be the responsibility of the mentor.

I also understand that while my child is participating in their educational option, Forest Hills School District Student Code of Conduct will fully apply, and all rules and regulations contained in the Code of Conduct will be strictly enforced and reported back to school.

Finally, I understand that the assigned mentor will have the authority to direct and supervise my child in his/her studies.

I acknowledge that I have read and understand this Community Mentor Waiver and Acknowledgement form.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student Name (please print): _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Name (please print): _____



CREDIT FLEXIBILITY ATHLETIC WAIVER

This waiver contains important information for student athletes who wish to access a Credit Flexibility option. Sign and return to Credit Flex facilitator before beginning any Credit Flexibility option.

HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS:

To be eligible to play interscholastic high school sports, a student must be currently enrolled in the Forest Hills Schools District and must have been enrolled in five full-credit courses during the immediately preceding grading period (semester, quarter, six-weeks, etc.) At the conclusion of the high school’s grading period, a student enrolled in Credit Flex options must be passing all courses, including Credit Flex options in which they are enrolled, to establish athletic eligibility. (The student may not yet have completed the Credit Flex options, but it must be determined that the student was passing at the time the grading period ended.)

If it is determined that the student was/is not passing, no credit towards the five credits (or equivalent) required for eligibility can be awarded and the student will not be eligible for athletics.

COLLEGE ATHLETICS:

Students who anticipate continuing participation in sports at the college level should carefully consider the possibility that the NCAA Initial Eligibility Center may not include some Credit Flexibility options as part of the qualifying core courses required for Division I and II eligibility. For potential college student athletes, the NCAA eligibility requirements specifically address the types of learning opportunities available through the Credit Flexibility policy (e.g., online/distance learning, independent study, one course taken over two years). The NCAA does not allow “credit by exam” (or Mastery Assessment) courses to be applied to core course eligibility requirements

I have carefully read this information and understand that accessing Credit Flexibility options might negatively impact high school and college athletic opportunities/eligibility.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student Name (please print): _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Name (please print): _____