



LEARNTM **MORE**

**Indiana's Guide to Student Success
Educator Guide, 2nd Edition**

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A Message from the Indiana Commission for Higher Education

Education beyond high school remains a powerful force to address income disparities, close equity gaps and provide economic mobility to all Hoosiers.

Indiana's college-going rate has been steadily declining since 2015, with most recent data showing only 59% of Indiana high school graduates pursuing some form of higher learning. Indiana cannot reach our 60% educational attainment goal without reversing that trend. The Commission for Higher Education's fourth strategic plan, [Reaching Higher in a State of Change](#), is a blueprint for increasing the number of Hoosiers with education beyond high school.

One strategy, the Indiana College Core, allows students to complete 30 credit hours of general education that can be transferred as a block between any public college or university and some private institutions in the state of Indiana. Intentionally pursuing dual credit opportunities can allow students the possibility to complete their postsecondary degree early and reduce the total cost of their degree, all while providing valuable exposure to higher education coursework, improving their confidence and raising the likelihood they will earn a credential. Popularity for the Core has grown since its creation with more than 2,000 high school students having earned the Core during the 2020-21 school year. Additionally, more than 100 high schools have met the criteria for being a delivery site of the Core.

This guide is meant to support you—our vital team of administrators, counselors and educators—as you assist students pursuing the Indiana College Core and prepare them for the next step in their educational journey.

The Commission for Higher Education remains committed to ensuring higher education is affordable, career-relevant and valuable for students. The Indiana College Core serves as an incredibly valuable cornerstone for any student's higher education journey. Thank you again for playing an integral part in supporting Indiana's students and tomorrow's workforce.

Indiana Commission for Higher Education

What You Need to Know About the Indiana College Core



What is the Indiana College Core?

The Indiana College Core, formerly known as the Statewide Transfer General Education Core, or STGEC, is a block of 30 credit hours of general education college-level coursework that can be transferred between all Indiana public colleges and universities and some private institutions. The Indiana College Core was developed by the public institutions in Indiana in response to Senate Enrolled Act 182 in 2012. It allows a student who satisfactorily completes an approved program of general education at any public institution to transfer that coursework to another public institution as a block of 30 credit hours toward the general education core requirements.

Why should students pursue the Indiana College Core?

The Indiana College Core helps students save time and money when pursuing higher education. Dual

credit earned in high school is significantly more affordable than earning the same credits at two- or four-year institutions. By earning the Core in high school, students are able to pursue additional opportunities in college such as adding a minor, studying abroad, immersive learning opportunities or starting graduate school earlier. Additionally, students can focus on major-specific coursework beyond typical gateway courses faster than students without credits earned in high school.

Simply put, the Indiana College Core saves students time and money, while increasing their academic confidence and the likelihood that they will complete a higher education credential.



BENEFITS OF EARNING THE INDIANA COLLEGE CORE

- Save money – earn a year of college for \$750 or less
- Focus on major-specific courses earlier
- Pursue other opportunities in college
 - » Add a minor
 - » Study abroad
 - » Immersive learning opportunities
- Potential to graduate early
 - » Start graduate school earlier if you choose

What is a Competency?



The Indiana College Core competencies, which were agreed upon by faculty across public institutions, are the skills and knowledge associated with the coursework considered foundational for further study in higher education. The competencies introduce students to a range of skills and disciplines. Within the Indiana College Core framework, the competencies are categorized as either Foundational Skills or Ways of Knowing.

How can a student earn the Indiana College Core?

It's important to know that requirements for completion of the Indiana College Core vary by campus and institution. A student must fulfill the Indiana College Core requirements of the school at which a student is enrolled, with a minimum of 30 credit hours and with an Indiana College Core grade point average (GPA) no lower than 2.0. Additionally, students earning dual credit must earn at least 30 semester hours of credit and have mastered the

competencies required for the Core by the primary postsecondary dual credit provider. Each state public institution has specified how its program meets the competencies described within the [Indiana College Core framework](#).

The Indiana College Core is based on six core *competencies* that fall under two categories, “Foundational Intellectual Skills” and “Ways of Knowing”:

FOUNDATIONAL INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

1. Quantitative Reasoning
2. Speaking and Listening
3. Written Communication

WAYS OF KNOWING

4. Humanistic and Artistic
5. Scientific
6. Social and Behavioral

Each institution has a unique set of guidelines students must follow to receive credit for the Indiana College Core. Courses that meet dual credit requirements vary from institution to institution. You can find specific information on the Indiana College Core from each institution below:

TWO-YEAR INSTITUTIONS

- [Ivy Tech Community College](#)
- [Vincennes University](#)

FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS

- [Ball State University](#)
- [Indiana State University](#)
- [Indiana University – Bloomington](#)
- [Indiana University – East](#)
- [Indiana University – Kokomo](#)
- [Indiana University – Northwest](#)
- [Indiana University – South Bend](#)
- [Indiana University – Southeast](#)
- [Indiana University – Purdue University Indianapolis](#)
- [Purdue University – Fort Wayne](#)
- [Purdue University – Northwest](#)
- [Purdue University – West Lafayette](#)
- [University of Southern Indiana](#)

Which postsecondary institutions participate in the Indiana College Core?

All Indiana public colleges and universities participate in the Indiana College Core. Independent or private institutions in Indiana are not subject to the law that created the Indiana College Core. However, some private colleges and universities do participate in the program.

The following Independent Colleges of Indiana have indicated they accept the Core in some fashion, meaning that the Core satisfies some or all of general education, or may or may not satisfy degree requirements:

- Calumet College of St. Joseph
- Franklin College
- Holy Cross College
- Marian University
- Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College
- Trine University
- University of Indianapolis

Please check with the specific private institution to see if they accept the Indiana College Core.

How can my high school become a delivery site for the Indiana College Core?

There are specific criteria high schools must meet in order to be considered an official delivery site for the Core. The most critical requirement is that a Memorandum of Understanding must be signed between the high school and an Indiana public, primary postsecondary partner.

The primary postsecondary partner must provide a variety of duties, but most importantly it must deliver at least 15 of the 30 credit hours of coursework required to complete the Indiana College Core. The full list of criteria for high schools and primary postsecondary partners can be found [here](#). Almost 100 high schools have met the criteria for being a delivery site of the Core.



Resources

Students will have multiple journeys to earn the Indiana College Core. Their final path will depend on the following:

- Dual credit opportunities available at their high school (see page 10 for an overview of dual credit in Indiana)
- The institution they plan on attending after high school
- Their degree major
- Their ability to schedule dual credit opportunities alongside their other high school credit obligations

Additional Resources

- [Indiana College Core FAQ](#)
- [Indiana College Core Framework](#)
- [Indiana College Core Infographic](#)

Below are a multitude of resources available to those pursuing the Indiana College Core meant to help answer questions not covered in this guide.

The Indiana Credential Registry

The [Indiana Credential Registry](#) allows students to find out if the Indiana College Core is offered at their high school. In addition to determining if a school offers the Indiana College Core, the Registry can also be used to search and compare majors, certificates, licenses and more.

TransferIN

[TransferIN](#) is a one-stop resource for information about transferring college credit in the state of Indiana. In addition to being home to information on the Indiana College Core, TransferIN has guidelines on how to earn credits and to transfer credits between institutions and is home to the Indiana Core Transfer Library (CTL).



Guiding a Student Through Earning the Indiana College Core

Every student who achieves the Indiana College Core will have a path unique to them. While there is no one-size-fits-all guide or checklist, the outlined steps should be followed by students working with their counselor or academic advisor to earn the Indiana College Core.

It's important to note that in order for your high school to be publicly recognized as an authorized delivery site for the Core and listed on the Indiana Credential Registry, it must meet specific criteria and have a signed MOU with a primary postsecondary provider. See page 6 for more information.

1

Explore postsecondary plans

Prior to pursuing the Core, students should consider which public Indiana college or university they'd like to attend after graduation. Additionally, they should consider what degree program they'd like to pursue. Both of these options affect the types of dual credit opportunities the student will intentionally pursue. While these plans may change, it's best to have a starting point. While it's ideal to have a postsecondary plan, some students may be unsure of what they want to do after graduation. However, they can still earn the Core.

2

Educator Toolkit

Once the student understands the requirements of the primary postsecondary provider awarding the Core, as well as the eligible courses available at their high school, they should create a plan or checklist of dual credit opportunities (including [dual enrollment](#), [AP Exams](#) and [CLEP](#)) that they will pursue to meet each requirement. A great example is Ivy Tech Community College's "Start as a Sophomore checklist." Once students have a sense for what dual credit opportunities they are able to pursue, the student should build them into their postsecondary plan for after high school graduation. If you're working with a student who is unsure of their postsecondary plans, allow them to explore your school's available courses that can be used to complete the Core requirements and pick courses that interest them. Use the course listing template in the corresponding Educators Toolkit to create a custom course list for your school.

3

Track progress

The student should then work closely with their counselor and primary postsecondary provider to monitor their progress toward completion of the Core. This includes ensuring AP exam scores and dual credit course GPAs meet the requirements to receive credit with the primary postsecondary provider.

4

Transfer of credits

As part of the Core confirmation process, the student will need to request their college transcripts from all higher education institutions with which they have earned credit. These transcripts must be sent to the primary postsecondary provider that is awarding the Indiana College Core. The student will also need to request their AP exam scores from [College Board](#) to be sent to the Core provider. This will enable the primary postsecondary provider to determine if the student has met the competency requirements to earn the Core.

**Each primary postsecondary provider's process may vary.*

Guiding a Student Through Earning the Indiana College Core

Official Transcripts

While students can access an “unofficial” transcript at no cost, these are not accepted as documentation in the credit evaluation and transfer processes. The cost to secure an official transcript varies by institution, and ranges from \$0-\$15.

Ball State University - \$12
Indiana State University - \$12
Ivy Tech - \$5
Indiana University - \$10-\$15
Purdue Fort Wayne - \$0
Purdue Northwest - \$0
Purdue West Lafayette - \$0
Univ. of Southern Indiana - \$8-\$10
Vincennes University - \$5

5

Earn the Indiana College Core

Once approved by the primary postsecondary provider, the completion of the Indiana College Core will be noted on the student's official postsecondary transcript and can be transferred as a block of 30 credits and satisfy the Indiana College Core equivalent at any public Indiana college or university.*

*If the student earned the Core from Ivy Tech or Vincennes University, the student would also earn a certificate and be awarded a diploma.

6

Apply to a public Indiana college or university

As part of the process of applying to an Indiana college or university, students must submit their high school transcript using the [Indiana e-Transcript](#).

7

Enrollment

If accepted at a college or university that is different than where they earned the Core, the student must request the official transcript from the primary postsecondary provider where they earned the Core. This transcript must be sent to the institution with which they plan to enroll, as well as all transcripts from any higher education institutions of which they have earned credit. This also includes AP and CLEP exam scores from College Board. This ensures that all previously earned credits are applied appropriately. It is highly recommended that all of these documents are sent to the new institution prior to orientation and course scheduling.



Overview of Dual Credit in Indiana

Indiana is home to a multitude of dual credit enrollment opportunities for students. Dual credit courses provide opportunities for qualified students to earn college credit from a regionally accredited institution while attending high school. While many students will have an opportunity to earn some form of dual credit during their high school career, intentionally pursuing credit opportunities that meet the requirements for the Indiana College Core can allow students to enter college with their core general education credits completed.

To the right, you'll find an overview of the various forms of dual credit, as well as other credit-earning opportunities available to Indiana students that may help to fulfill the Indiana College Core requirements.

Dual Credit	AP/IB Courses
Dual credit courses are a partnership between an Indiana high school and a regionally accredited higher education institution. Students who successfully complete dual credit courses at their local high school receive the corresponding college credit from the partner institution. Colleges are required to generate transcripts for students who enroll in dual credit courses. These courses and grades become part of a student's academic record and can potentially impact their college grade point average (GPA) and financial aid eligibility.	High school students can take college-level Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) classes to earn high school credit and prepare for AP and IB exams. Indiana high schools offer more than 30 AP courses, but not all schools offer all courses. Sufficient <u>scores</u> on AP or IB exams can earn students college credit and/or course equivalencies, depending on an individual institution's requirements. Students should check the policies of the college or university they plan to attend to confirm how AP or IB credits are handled, depending on an individual institution's requirements.

Dual Enrollment
Dual enrollment applies to students taking courses concurrently at a student's high school and a higher education institution either on-campus or online. Students may choose to take courses as dual enrollment, online or on campus without the high school and college having a formal MOU. However, there is no guarantee that the courses will apply for high school credit and possibly the Core. Usually, students must pay full tuition for these courses. In contrast, high schools have formal agreements with a primary postsecondary partner by which students can take courses as dual enrollment on campus or online. Tuition and other specifics would be incorporated into the MOU, including how the course would count for high school credit and apply toward the Indiana College Core.

Overview of Dual Credit in Indiana

Early College High School and Dual Credit	What Does it all Mean?
<p>Early College High School begins in ninth grade, enabling students to complete up to two years of dual credit coursework toward a specific college degree. Early College schools generally absorb most course costs while families may be responsible for dual credit costs beyond the Indiana minimum offering of two courses. While open to all students, endorsed Early College is tailored for first-generation college students, minorities and socioeconomically disadvantaged students. The schools provide additional supports for student success including academic, social and emotional, career exploration and postsecondary guidance.</p> <p>In partnership with the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, the University of Indianapolis Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning (CELL) works to endorse Early College High Schools in Indiana. To learn more about Early College programming and guidelines, visit CELL's website.</p>	<p>Students pursuing the Indiana College Core typically rely on a combination of intentional dual credit opportunities to earn the credits necessary to complete the Core. It's vital for any student interested in pursuing the College Core to be aware of the opportunities to achieve college credit available to them. Institutions also have flexibility in determining what credits meet the requirements for the Indiana College Core. It is important that students understand the various types of dual credit, the importance of intentionally selecting the right dual credit courses for their intended major and their preferred institution's guidelines on what credits will be accepted as part of the Core.</p> <p>Visit the TransferIN website to learn more about dual credit in Indiana, or visit the Indiana Department of Education and Commission for Higher Education's FAQ on dual credit.</p>



Indiana's E-Transcript



It's safe, secure, available 24/7 and free.

The [Indiana e-Transcript](#) allows students to send their high school transcripts electronically to any higher education institution. It's safe, secure, available 24/7 and free.

After earning the Indiana College Core, submitting their high school transcript through e-Transcript is just one step students must complete when applying to college. If a student is planning to attend a postsecondary institution other than where they earned the Core, they must request the transcript from the college or university where they earned the Core.

The Indiana College Core will be noted on the transcript from the primary postsecondary provider that awarded the Core, but they must also request transcripts from each institution of which they have received college credit to be sent to that college or university they plan on attending. This ensures the proper transfer and application of the Core and all their postsecondary credits.



The Impact of Early College Credit on Student Persistence and Attainment



Dual credit earners are **less likely** to drop out of college and more likely to **complete on time or early**.

Students with some dual credit (at least one semester) are about **10 percentage points more likely to graduate on time**, and students with more dual credit (two semesters or more) graduate even more quickly.

70% 

of Indiana College Core earners who enroll in college **meet all three** of the Commission for Higher Education's metrics for early success in college.

They do not need remediation; they complete all courses they attempt during their first year of enrollment and **they persist to their second year** of enrollment.

Earning college credit in high school saved students roughly

\$82 million

in 2018 in potential tuition costs.



The cost of higher education is often cited as the **No.1 reason for not pursuing a degree**. Earning dual credit in high school can help reduce the financial burden on students.

94%

of Indiana College Core earners in the high school class of 2018 **went on to attend college** during the 2018-19 academic year.



Exposure to college-level coursework in high school helps students **build their confidence** and know they are capable of success at the college level.



Dual credit can allow students to **save time** in college by reducing their gen-ed courseload.

Generally, the more dual credit students earn, the less likely they are to enroll in a gateway math or English course once they enroll in college. **This trend holds true regardless of whether students pursue a bachelor's degree or an associate or longer-term certificate.**

Student, Parent & Educator Testimonials



The Indiana College Core is earned by more and more students each year. While data can demonstrate its value, it's also important to understand the experience from students, parents and educators directly!

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"The Indiana College Core gave my son the opportunity to complete 30 college credits while in high school. Most of his basic required courses were finished before he got to his university. This was a great financial savings and gave him an advantage toward completing his degree."

- Shawn Wilhelm, Parent of East Central High School Graduate

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"Because I completed the Indiana College Core, I was able to enter my freshman year of college with almost all of my general education classes accounted for because I received college credit for my efforts in my high school classes. This has helped me be one step ahead of others around me and get a head start on pursuing my major."

- Noah Wilhelm, East Central High School 2021 Graduate

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"The Indiana College Core has given me the opportunity to pursue a future in a college environment. Being able to immerse myself into college-level content as a high schooler gave me the confidence I needed to push myself fully into college life post high school. Not only has the Indiana College Core given me confidence, but it's given me a head start on higher education for significantly less than I would have paid at a university."

- Allyson Eppert, Wawasee High School 2022 Graduate



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"Students at Muncie Central benefit greatly from the Indiana College Core. The cost savings for students and families by earning the Indiana College Core in high school is a game changer, and the seamless transfer of credits also saves students time in completing their degree. Completing the Indiana College Core is a great predictor of how successful students will be in college, and we are extremely fortunate to be able to offer our students this amazing opportunity."

- Christopher Walker, Principal of Muncie Central High School



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"The partnership between qualified teachers, high school staff and the Indiana College Core normalizes the process of taking college classes at sixteen or seventeen years old, and it helps these students build academic confidence that directly leads to more informed decision making in regards to postsecondary education. Every year as graduating seniors complete the Indiana College Core, they leave high school with a sense of accomplishment that goes beyond a high school diploma and propels them further into their postsecondary goals."

- Jessica Jones, Head of Guidance at Peru High School



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"Batesville High School and Ivy Tech Batesville continue a decade-long partnership offering all students relevant college credits. The Indiana College Core continues to be leveraged by dedicated Batesville High School students as they enter postsecondary institutions earning a sophomore designation. Students enter desired majors with tangible and aligned credits to enhance academic experience or accelerate program completion to embark on defined career paths."

- Andy Allen, Principal of Batesville High School

