

Michigan Merit Curriculum Frequently Asked Questions

Introduction

The Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) is crafted around the philosophical belief that all students will need postsecondary learning opportunities beyond high school. It is not a curriculum in the traditional sense in that it doesn't describe instructional materials and approaches. Instead it specifies that all students who earn a diploma, at a minimum, have demonstrated proficiency with the content outlined by the state academic standards or guidelines. Since districts are responsible for awarding diplomas so too are they responsible for providing all students the opportunity to learn the content outlined by the standards. As the learning skills for college and the workplace have merged, the MMC, if properly implemented, will prepare students with the skills and knowledge needed to be successful in our global economy and workplace. It supports the need for personalization, acceleration, and innovation in an atmosphere of high expectations and high support for students.

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General Overview

1. Q: How does the Michigan Merit Curriculum impact local school district decisions?

A: Under the MMC legislation local school districts retain responsibility to issue diplomas, align curriculum, determine what constitutes a credit, establish a credit award system, identify assessments, set school calendars, select and purchase textbooks, etc. Local school boards and districts have the responsibility to determine “how” to implement the graduation requirements outlined by the MMC and when students have earned the credits. The MMC gives districts the flexibility to develop scheduling systems, curricula, and courses to meet the individual needs and desires of each district.

Local boards of education can establish additional graduation requirements beyond those in the MMC and the total number of credits required for graduation. However, a district cannot establish lesser requirements.

[See also [Earning Credit](#)]

2. Q: Which students have to meet the requirements of the MMC to receive a diploma?

A: Districts must ensure that any student who entered 8th grade during or after the 2005-2006 school year and wishes to receive a high school diploma from a public school must meet the requirements of the MMC. This includes alternative and adult education students. Modifications can be made to the MMC based on student needs (see [Personal Curriculum Options](#)).

Students seeking a General Educational Development (GED) are not subject to the MMC requirements since the GED is an equivalency diploma issued by the

Michigan Merit Curriculum High School Graduation Requirements (18 credits)	
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA) - 4 Credits	
Proficiency in State Content Standards for ELA (4 credits)	
MATHEMATICS - 4 Credits	
Proficiency in State Content Standards for Mathematics (3 credits) Proficiency in district approved 4 th mathematics credit options (1 credit) (Student must have a math experience in their final year of high school.)	
ONLINE LEARNING EXPERIENCE	
Course, Learning or Integrated Learning Experience	
PHYSICAL EDUCATION & HEALTH - 1 Credit	
Proficiency in State Content Standards for Physical Education and Health (1 credit); Or Proficiency with State Content Standards for Health (1/2 credit) and district approved extra-curricular activities involving physical activities (1/2 credit)	
SCIENCE - 3 Credits	
Proficiency in State Content Standards for Science (3 credits); Or beginning with the class of 2015: Proficiency in some State Content Standards for Science (2 credits) and completion of a department approved formal career and technical education program (1 credit)	
SOCIAL STUDIES - 3 Credits	
Proficiency in State Content Standards for Social Studies (3 credits)	
VISUAL, PERFORMING AND APPLIED ARTS - 1 Credit	
Proficiency in State Content Standards for Visual, Performing and Applied Arts (1 credit)	
WORLD LANGUAGE - 2 Credits (Effective beginning with students graduating in 2016)	
Formal coursework OR an equivalent learning experience in grades K-12 (2 credits); Or Formal coursework or an equivalent learning experience in grades (1 credit) and completion of a department approved formal career and technical education program or an additional visual, performing and applied arts credit (1 credit)	

This document is intended to provide general guidance. Due to the complexity of the law, policies and guidance will continue to evolve. For specific information regarding the law, please refer to [MCL 380.1278a](#) and [MCL 380.1278b](#).

U. S. government and is subject to its own criteria. [Non-public and home schools](#) can set their own graduation criteria and are not required to ensure that students have met the requirements of the MMC. However, the requirement for one semester credit in Civics/Government does apply to all public and non-public and home schools in Michigan.

3. Q: What is an Educational Development Plan?

A: The Michigan Merit Curriculum legislation *380.1278b (11)* states:

*The board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy shall provide the opportunity for each pupil to develop an educational development plan during grade 7, and shall ensure that each pupil reviews his or her educational development plan during grade 8 and revises it as appropriate before he or she begins high school. An educational development plan shall be developed, reviewed, and revised by the pupil under the supervision of the pupil's school counselor or another designee qualified to act in a counseling role under section 1233 or 1233a selected by the school principal and shall be based on high school readiness scores and a career pathways program or similar career exploration program. An educational development plan shall be designed to assist pupils to identify career development goals as they relate to academic requirements. During the process of developing and reviewing a pupil's educational development plan, the pupil shall be advised that many of the curricular requirements of this section and section 1278a may be fulfilled through **career and technical education**.*

It is up to district to determine to processes and timelines for implementing this requirement. The Department has developed Guidelines for the Use of EDP's at the following link:

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/MDE_EDP_10-2-09_296459_7.pdf

[See also [Personal Curriculum Options](#)]

Earning Credit

What the Michigan Merit Curriculum Law Says

380.1278(a) (4)(a) A pupil is considered to have completed a credit if the pupil successfully completes the subject area content expectations or guidelines developed by the department that apply to the credit. For a career and technical education credit, a school district or public school academy may supplement those content expectations and guidelines with additional guidelines developed by the school district or public school academy.

380.1278(a) (4)(b) A school district or public school academy shall base its determination of whether a student has successfully completed the subject area content expectations or guidelines developed by the department that apply to a credit at least in part on the student's performance on the assessments developed or selected by the department or on 1 or more assessments developed or selected by the school district or public school academy that measure a student's understanding of the subject area content expectations or guidelines that apply to the credit.

380.1278(a) (4)(c) A school district or public school academy shall also grant a pupil a credit if the pupil earns a qualifying score, as determined by the department, on the assessments developed or selected for the subject area by the department under section 1278b or the pupil earns a qualifying score, as determined by the school district or public school academy, on 1 or more assessments developed or selected by the school district or public school academy that measure a pupil's understanding of the subject area content expectations or guidelines that apply to the credit.

380.1278(b) (2) If a pupil successfully completes 1 or more of the high school credits required under subsection (1) or under section 1278a(1) before entering high school, the pupil shall be given high school credit for that credit.

380.1278(b) (7) The board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy that operates a high school shall ensure that each pupil is offered the curriculum necessary for the pupil to meet the curricular requirements of this section and section 1278a. The board or board of directors may provide this curriculum by providing the credits specified in this section and section 1278a, by using alternative instructional delivery methods such as alternative course work, humanities course sequences, career and technical education, industrial technology courses, or vocational education, or by a combination of these. School districts and public school academies that operate career and technical education programs are encouraged to integrate the credit requirements of this section and section 1278a into those programs.

380.1278(b) (14) This section and section 1278a do not prohibit a pupil from satisfying or exceeding the credit requirements of the Michigan merit standard under this section and section 1278a through advanced studies such as accelerated course placement, advanced placement, dual enrollment in a postsecondary institution, or participation in the international baccalaureate program or an early college/middle college program.

1. Q: What counts as a credit under the Michigan Merit Curriculum?

A: The MMC requires that credit be awarded not by the commonly used Carnegie unit, which is based on seat time, but based on a student's demonstration that he or she has successfully met the content expectations for the credit area. The [content area standards and guidelines](#) outline the content required for earning the total credit in each content area as specified in the legislation. Credit assigned to courses and other learning opportunities are at the discretion of the district, and may or may not be the same as the credit earned by the student.

2. Q: How can a student earn credit?

This document is intended to provide general guidance. Due to the complexity of the law, policies and guidance will continue to evolve. For specific information regarding the law, please refer to [MCL 380.1278a](#) and [MCL 380.1278b](#).

A: Students may earn credit if they successfully demonstrate mastery of subject area content expectations or guidelines for the credit. The assignment of credit must be based, at least in part, on student performance on assessments designed to measure the extent to which they meet the credit expectations and guidelines. Districts determine the assessments and criteria of success for determining student proficiency.

Beyond earning credit through a traditional course setting, a student may earn a credit in a variety of ways, including, but not limited to:

- work-based learning programs
- integrated sequences
- project-based learning
- Independent teacher-guided study
- [Testing out](#)

In addition, the district may allow students to satisfy credit requirements through:

- [Career and Technical Education](#)
- [College Coursework](#)
- [Early College](#)
- [Advanced Placement Courses](#)
- [International Baccalaureate](#)
- On-line classes

3. Q: How do NCAA rules impact district-level course decisions?

A: Because courses utilizing flexible learning options are designed and delivered locally, the NCAA suggests that those considering such visit the NCAA Eligibility Center and read the [Nontraditional Course FAQ](#). If you feel that the non-traditional course you are offering students meets the requirements listed, you call 877-622-2321 for review.

4. Q: Will colleges accept students who earn credit through non-traditional classes, such as integrated mathematics or project-based learning?

A: Colleges and universities see many different types of transcripts from multiple states and countries that vary in course name and type of reporting for credit. These institutes make the ultimate determination in accepting students whether they come from a traditional or non-traditional secondary experience through a variety of measures, which may or may not include a transcript.

5. Q: Do we have to worry about double-dipping; in other words, can a course count towards credit in more than one content area?

A: Credit is based on student proficiency with the content. How and where they learn the content has no bearing on whether or not they earn credit as long as they satisfactorily demonstrate proficiency on district-determined measures. So for instance, if a student takes a physics class that requires students to also learn important mathematics concepts, students should be able to earn partial or full credit in both subject areas if they demonstrate they have learned the content.

Content Standards and Guidelines

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA)

What the Michigan Merit Curriculum Law Says:

Sec. 1278b (1) Except as otherwise provided in this section or section 1278a, beginning with pupils entering grade 8 in 2006, as part of the requirements under section 1278a the board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy shall not award a high school diploma to a pupil unless the pupil has successfully completed all of the following credit requirements of the Michigan merit standard before graduating from high school:

(a) At least 4 credits in English language arts that are aligned with subject area content expectations developed by the department and approved by the state board under this section.

Sec. 1278b (5)(f) The English language arts credit requirements of subsection (1)(a) and the science credit requirements of subsection (1)(b) are not subject to modification as part of a personal curriculum under this subsection.

1. Q: What is the required number of credits for ELA?

A: At least 4 credits in English language arts that are aligned with subject area content expectations approved by the State Board of Education. Districts are responsible for ensuring that students meet the anchor standards for the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards. For more information see the [ELA Credit Guidelines](#).

2. Q: Where will educators find the ELA content standards?

A: Content standards and other guidelines can be found at www.michigan.gov/academicstandards

What the Michigan Merit Curriculum Law Says:

Sec 1278a (1)(a)(i) At least 4 credits in mathematics that are aligned with subject area content expectations developed by the department and approved by the state board under section 1278b, including completion of at least algebra I, geometry, and algebra II, or an integrated sequence of this course content that consists of 3 credits, and an additional mathematics credit, such as trigonometry, statistics, precalculus, calculus, applied math, accounting, business math, a retake of algebra II, or a course in financial literacy as described in section 1165. A pupil may complete algebra II over 2 years with 2 credits awarded or over 1.5 years with 1.5 credits awarded for the purposes of this section and section 1278b. A pupil also may partially or fully fulfill the algebra II requirement by completing a department-approved formal career and technical education program or curriculum, that has appropriate embedded mathematics content, such as a program or curriculum in electronics, machining, construction, welding, engineering, computer science, or renewable energy and in that program or curriculum successfully completing the same content as the algebra II benchmarks assessed on the department-prescribed state high school assessment, as determined by the department. Each pupil must successfully complete at least 1 mathematics course during his or her final year of high school enrollment. This subparagraph does not require completion of mathematics courses in any particular sequence.

Sec. 1278b 5(g) The mathematics credit requirements of section 1278a (1)(a)(i) may be modified as part of a [personal curriculum](#) if the pupil successfully completes at least 3-1/2 total credits of the mathematics credits required under that section before completing high school, including algebra I and geometry, and successfully completes at least 1 mathematics credit during his or her final 2 years of high school. The algebra II credit required under that section may be modified as part of a personal curriculum under this subsection if the pupil meets 1 or more of the following:

- (i) Successfully completes the same content as 1 semester of algebra II, as determined by the department.*
- (ii) Elects to complete the same content as algebra II over 2 years, with a credit awarded for each of those 2 years, and successfully completes that content.*
- (iii) Enrolls in a formal career and technical education program or curriculum and in that program or curriculum successfully completes the same content as 1 semester of the algebra II benchmarks assessed on the department-prescribed state high school assessment, as determined by the department.*
- (iv) Successfully completes 1 semester of statistics, or functions and data analysis, or technical mathematics.*

1. Q: What is the required number of Mathematics credits?

A: At least 4 credits in Mathematics that are aligned with subject area content expectations approved by the State Board. Each pupil must successfully complete at least 1 mathematics or mathematics-related credit or experience during his or her final year of high school enrollment. Districts are responsible for ensuring that students demonstrate proficiency in Michigan’s Mathematics Standards. For more information see the [Mathematics Credit Guidelines](#).

2. Q: Where will educators find Mathematics content standards?

A: Content standards and other guidelines can be found at www.michigan.gov/academicstandards

3. Q: What course(s) may serve as a student’s 4th math credit?

A: Districts determine content, structure, and delivery of mathematics courses. This includes how students fulfill the 4th mathematics or mathematics-related course/experience. More information can be found in the [Mathematics Credit Guidelines](#) document.

This document is intended to provide general guidance. Due to the complexity of the law, policies and guidance will continue to evolve. For specific information regarding the law, please refer to [MCL 380.1278a](#) and [MCL 380.1278b](#).

4. Q: What is the difference between the 4th mathematics credit and the senior year mathematics requirement?

A: In many cases the 4th mathematics credit and the senior year mathematics requirement are one and the same. For instance students who complete the required mathematics content standards by the end of their junior year will probably complete their 4th credit in their senior year. Similarly, traditional course-taking students electing to take Algebra II over 2 years for 2 credits will probably take the second year of Algebra II in their senior year. However, the 4th mathematics credit is not necessarily synonymous with the senior year math credit. For example, students could take a pre-Algebra II class as a junior that would count as the 4th credit and then take Algebra II as a senior. An integrated sequence of mathematics could incorporate the required HSCE in each of the 4 years plus enough additional mathematics content to warrant the awarding of 4 credits.

5. Q: By what standards is technical mathematics defined?

A: Districts determine content, structure, and delivery of mathematics courses. In addition, districts are responsible for ensuring that students demonstrate proficiency in Michigan’s Mathematics Standards.

6. Q: In order to replace a mathematics credit with department-approved formal career and technical education program or curriculum, how do districts determine what mathematics content needs to be embedded so that the content is the same as the “Algebra II benchmarks assessed on the department-prescribed state high school assessment?”

A: There are no specified “Algebra II benchmarks” on the state high school assessment. In addition to a college entrance test and a work skills assessment, grade 11 students will be assessed in spring 2015 on the current high school state standards in English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics, science, and social studies. Please see July 10, 2014, MDE Memorandum regarding [Clarification on Student Assessment](#) for 2014-15.

Because of the specificity in the legislation regarding the exchange of Algebra II with a formal CTE program, there is no difference between exchanging the Algebra II credit and earning Algebra II credit through the integration of the mathematics into a CTE program or class. Districts are encouraged to use the [Mathematics Credit Guidelines](#) to ensure that students have the opportunity to learn all of the mathematics standards before they graduate whether they are enrolled in formal CTE program or not.

ONLINE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

What the Michigan Merit Curriculum Law Says:

1278b (1)(b) Meets the online course or learning experience requirement of this subsection. A school district or public school academy shall provide the basic level of technology and internet access required by the state board to complete the online course or learning experience. For a pupil to meet this requirement, the pupil shall meet either of the following, as determined by the school district or public school academy:

(i) Has successfully completed at least 1 course or learning experience that is presented online, as defined by the department.

(ii) The pupil's school district or public school academy has integrated an online experience throughout the high school curriculum by ensuring that each teacher of each course that provides the required credits of the Michigan merit curriculum has integrated an online experience into the course.

1. Q: What are the specific requirements for online learning and courses?

A: Students must successfully complete at least 1 online course or learning experience. The Michigan Department of Education has developed [Online Learning Guidelines](#) that describe in more detail the options for fulfilling this requirement.

2. Q: Can the online learning requirement be met prior to 9th grade?

A: Yes, the requirement may be satisfied by an online experience at the middle school level, but students are encouraged to continue with online learning throughout high school.

3. Q: Does the online learning experience need to go on a transcript?

A: While districts will need to assure students complete this requirement, the law does not mandate that a student be given credit for this experience or this experience be recorded on a transcript.

4. Q: Can a student taking a class, which the district has determined also meets the online learning requirements, test out of both the class and the online requirement?

A: No. While a student may test out of a subject or class required by the Michigan high school graduation requirements, the law does not mention testing out of the online requirement. The online requirement is unlike the other graduation requirements in that it is more about process than content. It is not about "computer skills," which most young people are presumed already to have. It is instead about the process of using those skills to pursue learning in an online environment, which is a process that unfolds as students engage in online learning activities. It is unlikely that any kind of testing-out assessment (like an end-of-course exam) could truly "test" the process that occurs when a student engages with content, other students, and a teacher online.

What the Michigan Merit Curriculum Law Says

MCL 380.1278a (iii) At least 1 credit in subject matter that includes both health and physical education aligned with guidelines developed by the department and approved by the state board under section 1278b [or at least 1/2 credit in health aligned with guidelines developed by the department and approved by the state board under section 1278b and at least 1/2 credit awarded by the school district or public school academy for approved participation in extracurricular athletics or other extracurricular activities involving physical activity].

MCL 380.1278b (5)(i) The health and physical education credit requirement under section 1278a (1)(a)(iii) may be modified as part of a personal curriculum only if the modification requires the pupil to complete 1 additional credit in English language arts, mathematics, or science or 1 additional credit in a language other than English, or requires the pupil to complete a formal career and technical education program. This additional credit must be in addition to the number of those credits otherwise required under subsection (1) and section 1278a (1) or under section 1278a (2).

MCL 380.1169 Dangerous communicable diseases; human immunodeficiency virus infection and acquired immunodeficiency virus infection; teacher training; teaching materials; curricula; teaching of abstinence from sex.

Sec. 1169 (1) The principal modes by which dangerous communicable diseases, including, but not limited to, human immunodeficiency virus infection and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome, are spread and the best methods for the restriction and prevention of these diseases shall be taught in every public school in this state. Subject to subsection (3) and section 1507b, the teaching under this section shall stress that abstinence from sex is a responsible and effective method for restriction and prevention of these diseases and is a positive lifestyle for unmarried young people.

(2) Except for licensed health care professionals who have received training on human immunodeficiency virus infection and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome, each person who teaches K to 12 pupils about human immunodeficiency virus infection and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome pursuant to subsection (1) shall have training in human immunodeficiency virus infection and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome education for young people. The superintendent of public instruction, in cooperation with the department of public health, shall train trainers to provide the teacher training required by this subsection and shall provide for the development and distribution to school districts of medically accurate material on the teaching of human immunodeficiency virus infection and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome to young people.

(3) The choice of curricula to be used for human immunodeficiency virus infection and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome education required to be taught under subsection (1) shall be approved by the appropriate school board and implemented in the school setting not later than October 1, 1990. Before adopting any revisions to the curriculum implemented under this section, including, but not limited to, revisions to provide for the teaching of abstinence from sex as a responsible method for the restriction and prevention of disease, a school board shall hold at least 2 public hearings on the proposed revisions. The hearings shall be held at least 1 week apart and public notice of the hearings shall be given in the manner required under section 1201 for board meetings. A public hearing held pursuant to this section may be held in conjunction with a public hearing held pursuant to section 1507.

1. Q: Do the requirements give the option for students to take just physical education OR health?

A: No. One credit that includes both physical education AND health must be earned by high school students for graduation. The requirement could be met in 2 separate courses each earning 1/2 credits. The 1/2 credit for PE may also be awarded by the school district or public school academy for approved participation in extracurricular athletics or other extracurricular activities involving physical activity. Please note, however, that this pertains only to the physical education credit guidelines of the MMC, not the health education credit guidelines.

2. Q: What extracurricular athletics or other extracurricular activities involving physical activity are allowed to fulfill the 1/2 credit of physical education?

A: A district may determine what extracurricular activities involving physical activity may be used as credit toward the physical education requirement. The department strongly recommends the local school board develop its own policy outlining what is acceptable for the credit as to be clear to students and parents and consistent in implementation.

3. Q: Where will educators find the health and physical education content standards?

A: Content standards and other guidelines can be found at www.michigan.gov/academicstandards.

4. Q: Can a student required to take the MMC waive the state's physical education or health credit requirement for any reason?

A: Yes, under certain conditions. The Michigan Merit Curriculum MCL 380.1278b, allows a student to substitute one physical education and health credit to acquire extra English language arts, mathematics, science or world language credits, if a student has an approved [personal curriculum](#).

In addition, students may test out of any state-required graduation credit if the student earns: 1) a qualifying score, as determined by the department, on the assessments developed or selected for the subject area by the department or 2) the student earns a qualifying score, as determined by the school district or public school academy, on one or more assessments developed or selected by the school district or public school academy that measure a student's proficiency in the content expectations or guidelines that apply to the credit.

5. Q: Can a student receive high school credit for a health or physical education class in middle school?

A: Yes, students may receive high school credit for a health or physical education class in middle school if the following three criteria for middle school credit outlined below are met:

- The middle school class MUST cover the same content expectations as the high school class
- Proficiency must be assessed using the same assessment (e.g., exam) used at the high school
- The level of proficiency expected in order to pass must be the same as at the high school

However, leaving students without such education during high school does not give them a chance to practice much needed skills acquired through health education and could place students at greater risk for alcohol, tobacco, and drug use, sexual activity leading to sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancies, personal injury (e.g., violence, bullying) and long term health problems related to lack of nutrition education and physical activity opportunities.

What the Michigan Merit Curriculum Law Says

Sec. 1278 (1)(b) At least 3 credits in science that are aligned with subject area content expectations developed by the department and approved by the state board under this section, including completion of at least biology and either chemistry, physics, anatomy, or agricultural science, or successfully completing a program or curriculum that provides the same content as the chemistry or physics benchmarks, as determined by the department. A student may fulfill the requirement for the third science credit by completing a department-approved computer science program or curriculum or formal career and technical education program or curriculum. The legislature strongly encourages pupils to complete a fourth credit in science, such as forensics, astronomy, Earth science, agricultural science, environmental science, geology, physics, chemistry, physiology, or microbiology.

380.1278b (5)(f) The science credit requirements of subsection (1)(b) are not subject to modification as part of a personal curriculum under this subsection.

1. Q: What is the required number of science credits?

A: At least 3 credits in science that are aligned with subject area content expectations approved by the State Board. A student may fulfill the requirement for the third science credit by completing a department-approved computer science program or curriculum or [formal career and technical education program or curriculum](#). However, districts are responsible for ensuring that students have an opportunity to learn the standards for science as outlined in the [High School Essential Science Content Expectations](#) since these will be tested on the grade 11 science exam. For more information see the [Science Credit Guidelines](#).

2. Q: Where will educators find science content standards?

A: Content standards and other guidelines can be found at www.michigan.gov/academicstandards.

3. Q: Can physical science be a successful completion of a program meeting chemistry and physics content expectations?

A: Yes, as long as the students demonstrate proficiency in the science course content expectations for both physics and chemistry, physical science is considered an optional course for students. As mentioned before, credit is not based on seat time, but instead on demonstration of proficiency of the essential content expectations.

4. Q: What are the 8th grade science standards?

A: Districts determine which high school science content expectations they will teach at the 8th grade level. More information can be found in the [Science Credit Guidelines](#).

5. Q: Is there a Common Core for science?

A: There is not a Common Core for science. There is part of the [Common Core English Language Arts Standards](#) called Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects which describes the literacy skills and understandings required for career and college readiness in multiple disciplines.

6. Q: What course(s) may serve as a student's 3rd science credit?

A: Districts determine content, structure, and delivery of science courses. This includes how students fulfill the 3rd science credit. More information can be found in the [Science Credit Guidelines](#) document.

7. Q: Can a student take a CTE class for the 3rd science credit?

A: Any course or program, including CTE that integrates science content may count as the 3rd science credit.

If the 3rd science credit is *exchanged* for a [formal career and technical education program or curriculum](#) then science content does not need to be integrated. However, districts are responsible for ensuring that students have an opportunity to learn the standards for science as outlined in the [High School Essential Science Content Expectations](#) since these will be tested on the grade 11 science exam.

[See also [Earning Credit](#) and [Career/Technical Education](#)]

SOCIAL STUDIES

What the Michigan Merit Curriculum Law Says

Sec. 1278a (ii) At least 3 credits in social science that are aligned with subject area content expectations developed by the department and approved by the state board under section 1278b, including completion of at least 1 credit in United States history and geography, 1 credit in world history and geography, 1/2 credit in economics, and the civics course described in section 1166(2).

Sec. 1278b (5)(h) The social science credit requirements of section 1278a (1)(a)(ii) may be modified as part of a [personal curriculum](#) only if all of the following are met:

(i) The pupil has successfully completed 2 credits of the social science credits required under section 1278a (1), including the civics course described in section 1166(2).

1. Q: What is the required number of credits?

A: Three credits of social studies aligned with the subject area content expectations developed by the department to include 1 credit in United States history and geography, 1 credit in world history and geography, 1/2 credit in economics, and 1/2 credit in civics/government. More information can be found in the [Social Studies Credit Guidance](#) document.

2. Q: Where will educators find the social studies content standards?

A: Content standards and other guidelines can be found at www.michigan.gov/academicstandards.

3. Q: Is there a Common Core for social studies?

A: There is not a Common Core for social studies. There is part of the [Common Core English Language Arts Standards](#) called Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects which describes the literacy skills and understandings required for career and college readiness in multiple disciplines.

4. Q: What is the C3 Framework for Social Studies and what will be the impact?

A: Michigan is one of 28 states that helped develop the [College, Career, and Civic Life \(C3\) Framework](#). The purpose of the C3 Framework is to provide guidance to educators to strengthen their social studies programs. The Michigan Council for Civic Education, Michigan Council for Economic Education, Michigan Geographic Alliance, Michigan Council for History Education, along with the Michigan Council for Social Studies, are forming committees that will work to align Michigan's current Social Studies Standards with curriculum, instruction, and assessment through the C3 Framework lens.

VISUAL, PERFORMING AND APPLIED ARTS

What the Michigan Merit Curriculum Law Says

Sec. 1278a (1)(iv) The board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy shall not award a high school diploma to a pupil unless the pupil has successfully completed at least 1 credit in visual arts, performing arts, or applied arts, that is aligned with guidelines developed by the Michigan Department of Education.

Sec. 1278a (2)For pupils who graduate from high school in 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, or 2020 only, a pupil may partially or fully fulfill 1 credit of [a world language] by completing a department-approved formal career and technical education program or curriculum or by completing visual or performing arts instruction that is in addition to the requirements under subsection (1) (a)(iv). The board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy is strongly encouraged to ensure that all pupils complete

Sec. 1278b (5)(g)(j)(j) The visual arts, performing arts, or applied arts credit requirement under section 1278a (1)(a)(iv) may be modified as part of a personal curriculum only if the modification requires the pupil to complete 1 additional credit in English language arts, mathematics, or science or 1 additional credit in a language other than English, or requires the pupil to 1 complete a formal career and technical education program. This additional credit must be in addition to the number of those credits otherwise required under subsection (1) and section 1278a (1) or under section 1278a (2).

1. Q: What is the required number of visual, performing, and applied arts credits?

A: One credit aligned with the guidelines developed by the Michigan Department of Education. See also information on the [Personal Curriculum Options](#) and [Career and Technical Education](#).

2. Q: Where will educators find the visual, performing, and applied arts guidelines?

A: Content standards and guidelines can be found at www.michigan.gov/academicstandards.

3. Q: Can a student exchange a world language credit for a visual, performing, and applied arts credit?

A: Yes. Starting with the graduating class of 2015 a student has the option to reduce the number of world language credits to one and increase the visual, performing, and applied arts credits to two.

What the Michigan Merit Curriculum Law Says

Sec. 1278a (2)(2) In addition to the requirements under subsection (1), the board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy shall not award a high school diploma to a pupil unless the pupil has successfully completed during grades K to 12 at least 2 credits that are grade-appropriate in a language other than English or course work or other learning experiences that are substantially equivalent to 2 credits in a language other than English, based on guidelines developed by the department. For pupils who graduate from high school in 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, or 2020 only, a pupil may partially or fully fulfill 1 credit of this requirement by completing a department-approved formal career and technical education program or curriculum or by completing visual or performing arts instruction that is in addition to the requirements under subsection (1)(a)(iv). The board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy is strongly encouraged to ensure that all pupils complete at least 1 credit in a language other than English in grades K to 6. For the purposes of this subsection, all of the following apply:

- (a) American Sign Language is considered to be a language other than English.*
- (b) The pupil may meet all or part of this requirement with online course work.*

1. Q: What credit requirements exist for learning a language other than English? Who and/or which graduating classes will be impacted by this requirement?

A: The MMC legislation states that beginning with the graduating class of 2016, students need to complete during grades K-12 the equivalent of 2 grade appropriate credits in a language other than English or have course work or other learning experience that are substantially equivalent to 2 credits. The board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy may request as an option that pupils graduating in 2015 meet the world language requirement, but are not bound by law to require that pupils graduating in 2015 meet the world language requirement.

2. Q: How can students meet the requirement?

A: Students can meet the world language requirement in the following ways:

- By completing the equivalent of 2 credits in a language other than English during grades K-12.
- Through learning beyond the K-12 classroom: formal study abroad, study abroad programs, college coursework, home or heritage languages, online courses, or other life experiences as determined by the district.
- Students who are graduating from high school in 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, or 2020 only may partially or fully fulfill 1 credit of the world language requirement by completing a department approved formal career and technical education program or by completing visual, performing, or applied arts instruction that is in addition to the visual, performing, and applied arts requirement. Students who are graduating from high school in 2015 and are required by their district to earn 2 credits in language other than English, may also use the options described in this paragraph.
- More information and guidelines on meeting the credit requirements for learning a language other than English can be found at www.michigan.gov/academicstandards.

CAREER/TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE)

What the Michigan Merit Curriculum Law Says

Earning Credit

380.1278(b) (7) *The board or board of directors may provide this curriculum by providing the credits specified in this section and section 1278a, by using alternative instructional delivery methods such as ... **career and technical education.***

Mathematics

Sec 1278a (1)(a)(i) *...A pupil may partially or fully fulfill the algebra II requirement by completing a **department-approved formal career and technical education program or curriculum**, that has appropriate embedded mathematics content, such as a program or curriculum in electronics, machining, construction, welding, engineering, computer science, or renewable energy, and in that program or curriculum successfully completing the same content as the algebra II benchmarks assessed on the department-prescribed state high school assessment, as determined by the department.*

Science

380.1278b (1)(b) *...A student may fulfill the requirement for the third science credit by completing a **department-approved formal career and technical education program or curriculum...***

World Language

Sec. 1278a (2)(2) *... For pupils who graduate from high school in 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, or 2020 only, a pupil may partially or fully fulfill 1 credit of this requirement by completing a **department-approved formal career and technical education program or curriculum...***

1. Q: What is a “department-approved formal career and technical education (CTE) program”?

A: This is defined in the [Michigan Administrative Code](#). According to R 395.241, Rule 11, a “**Department-approved formal CTE program or curriculum**” consists of:

- a) A coherent sequence of courses so that students gain academic, technical, and work behavior skills.
- b) Instruction that includes classroom, laboratory, work based learning, and leadership opportunities.
- c) Instruction that is supervised, directed, or coordinated by an appropriately certificated career and technical education teacher.
- d) Consists of standards approved by the state board (R395.243, Rule 13).
- e) Must receive approval from MDE/OCTE through an application process (R 395.244, Rule 14).

According to R 395.243, Rule 13 “**Successful Completion**” means

- a) Complete coursework covering all state program standards
- b) Take any required technical assessment

For state and federal funding purposes, a new CTE instructional program must submit an application to operate which must be approved by the CTE office. The number of courses covering the standards in a CTE program is determined by the district and submitted in its application. The district may design one or two year programs. Not all high school students in CTE instructional programs can complete the requirements for certificates. Some industry certificates/licensures can only be received once a student turns 18 years old

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This document is intended to provide general guidance. Due to the complexity of the law, policies and guidance will continue to evolve. For specific information regarding the law, please refer to [MCL 380.1278a](#) and [MCL 380.1278b](#).

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or after they have completed additional postsecondary coursework.

2. Q: What is the difference between replacing a MMC credit requirement and earning a MMC credit requirement through a CTE program?

A: The law is explicit in stating that a credit may only be replaced by a “department-approved formal CTE program,” as described above and in the [Michigan Administrative Code](#). By replacing a course with formal CTE program, the program does not need to embed the content standards from the content area being replaced. On the other hand, students may earn credit in a variety of ways, including integrating academic content into CTE instruction. (See also [Earning Credit](#)).

3. Q: Which MMC credit requirements may be replaced with a CTE program?

A: The following credits may be **replaced** only with a department-approved formal Career and Technical Education program as defined in [administrative code](#) for students *without* a personal curriculum:

- One credit of a [world language](#); and/or
- [One science credit](#) .

Completion of a department approved formal Career and Technical Education program may be used to replace one or both of these credits.

Through a personal curriculum, students have options for replacing one MMC credit in social studies, physical education/health, and/or visual, performing and applied arts with a department-approved formal Career and Technical Education program. More information is available on the [Personal Curriculum webpage](#). One department-approved formal Career and Technical Education may be used to replace up to three of these credits.

4. Q: In order to replace a mathematics credit with department-approved formal career and technical education program or curriculum, how do districts determine what mathematics content needs to be embedded so that the content is the same as the “Algebra II benchmarks assessed on the department-prescribed state high school assessment?”

A: There are no specified “Algebra II benchmarks” on the state high school assessment. In addition to a college entrance test and a work skills assessment, grade 11 students will be assessed in spring 2015 on the current high school state standards in English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics, science, and social studies. Please see July 10, 2014, MDE Memorandum from Joseph Martineau regarding Clarification on Student Assessment for 2014-15: http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Clarification_on_Student_Assessment_462341_7.pdf.

Because of the specificity in the legislation regarding the exchange of Algebra II with a formal CTE program, there is no difference between exchanging the Algebra II credit and earning Algebra II credit through the integration of the mathematics into a CTE program or class. Districts are encouraged to use the [Mathematics Credit Guidelines](#) to ensure that students have the opportunity to learn all of the mathematics standards before they graduate whether they are enrolled in formal CTE program or not.

5. Q: Which MMC credit requirements can be earned through a CTE program?

A: Career and Technical Education Programs may be used to help students partially or fully earn the necessary credits in a variety of required credit areas. For example, a district may allow a student to receive

credit for Algebra or Geometry in building trades classes, if the district determines that the building trades program covers the required high school content expectations for those subjects. It is also possible for Career and Technical Education courses to be used to help students in, for instance, an electronics class earn credit for the "one additional math or math-related" credit required in the MMC. The amount of academic credit granted for CTE Programs is a local decision.

Guidelines on Awarding Academic Credit in Career and Technical Education, Humanities and Other Delivery Models provide a format for using teacher work teams in each local district to examine the CTE curriculum and determine the amount of academic credit to award based on a crosswalk with the content expectations. Local districts are encouraged to use the guidelines for awarding academic credit in ways other than CTE as well. The process will help to legitimize that academic standards can be taught using a variety of delivery models and will hopefully inspire creativity and encourage teachers to include other teaching techniques, such as thematic units, project-based learning, portfolios, and other strategies to provide the best possible learning options for students.

6. Q: Can a student take a CTE class for the 3rd science credit?

A: Any course or program, including CTE that integrates science content may count as the 3rd science credit.

If the 3rd science credit is *exchanged* for a [formal career and technical education program or curriculum](#) then science content does not need to be integrated. However, districts are responsible for ensuring that students have an opportunity to learn the standards for science as outlined in the [High School Essential Science Content Expectations](#) since these will be tested on the Grade 11 science exam.

[See also [Earning Credit](#) and [Career/Technical Education](#)]