

Academic Focus Schools & Supporting Clusters

WHY PLAN

What are career clusters?

A group of related courses that help you decide if you're interested in pursuing a career or college degree related to those courses after high school.

Why did we change to an academic focus/career cluster system?

We want to help students see the connection between their coursework and their plans for life after high school. Also, state department guidelines called Personal Pathways mandate schools do more to help students make those connections. You can find out more about Personal Pathways at www.scpathways.org.

What's an academic focus school?

College and universities have used this structure for years. Related areas of study are placed together in a "school." Within the "school," students choose from a cluster of courses geared toward more specific career areas.

What if I choose an academic focus or career cluster and then change my mind about what I want to study?

Moving from one cluster to another or from one academic focus to another should not be a problem for you. As you take courses in your academic focus and cluster, you'll still be taking the courses required for graduation.

How many courses should I take?

We recommend you take four core courses in your academic focus cluster plus a minimum of two supporting courses.

Can I take courses outside my cluster?

You should still have room in your schedule to take courses outside your cluster. In fact, we encourage you to explore other clusters, especially if you have interests in more than one area. The basic purpose of this structure is to help you see and explore career options.

What is an Individual Graduation Plan?

An opportunity for you and your parents/guardians to work with your guidance counselor to discuss a plan for what you'll study in high school. The plan will help you achieve your goals. You'll review the plan every year and make changes as your interests and needs change.

School of Arts & Humanities

◆ Arts, AV Technology & Communications Cluster

- Architecture/Mechanical Design
- English
- Journalism & Mass Communication
- Modern Languages
- Performing Arts
- Visual Arts

◆ Education & Training Cluster

- Early Childhood Education
- Introduction to Teaching

School of Business Management & Information Systems

◆ Business Management & Administration Cluster

- Administrative Services
- Business Information Management
- General Management

◆ Finance Cluster

- Accounting

◆ Hospitality & Tourism Cluster

- Culinary Arts

◆ Information Technology Cluster

- Networking Systems
- Programming & Software Development

◆ Marketing Sales & Service

- Marketing Communications

School of Engineering, Manufacturing & Industrial Technologies

◆ Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources Cluster

- Agriculture Mechanics & Technology
- Environmental & Natural Resources Management
- Horticulture
- Plant & Animal Systems

◆ Architecture & Construction Cluster

- Building Construction
- Carpentry
- Electricity

◆ Manufacturing Cluster

- Machine Technology
- Welding Technology

◆ Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics Cluster

- Math/Science
- Preengineering - Project Lead the Way

◆ Transportation, Distribution & Logistics Cluster

- Automotive Collision Repair Technology
- Automotive Technology

School of Health Science & Human Services

◆ Health Science Cluster

- Biomedical Science - Project Lead the Way
- Health Sciences

◆ Human Services Cluster

- Cosmetology
- Family & Consumer Sciences/Design
- Family & Consumer Sciences/Nutrition

School of Public Services

◆ Government & Public Administration Cluster

- Social Sciences

◆ Law, Public Safety & Security Cluster

- Emergency & Fire Management Services
- Law Enforcement Services
- Military Science
- Pre-law

WHY PLAN

Plan so you'll take what's required

One of the biggest mistakes you can make as you plan your schedule for next year is forgetting to check on requirements for a high school diploma.

"No one wants to go to school

four years and then find out he won't graduate because he didn't take all the requirements," Lancaster High Counselor Eric Byrd said.

"We try to

double check to be sure students take the required courses, but we make sure students know it's their responsibility to select appropriate courses."

As you select courses, refer to the state requirements and regulations listed on this page.

Check the regulations

✓ You must take courses in sequence.

✓ If you earn two units in science and six or more units in a specific occupational service area, you'll meet the S.C. high school diploma science requirements.

✓ You can apply no more than two units from one summer school period to graduation requirements.

✓ You must take one unit of English each year. In Grade 12, English 4, Advanced Composition or English AP satisfies this requirement.

Promotion standards

Attendance requirements
Must meet the state and district attendance standards in all grades

Promotion from grade 9

- Must have five units
- Must be able to schedule all remaining units in the appropriate sequence

Promotion from grade 10

- Must have 10 units
- Must be able to schedule all remaining units in the appropriate sequence

Promotion from grade 11

- Must have 16 units and be able to schedule or complete all remaining units required for graduation.
- Must be able to schedule all remaining units in the appropriate sequence

Note: These are minimal requirements for four-year public college admission in South Carolina. Students should check with the college of their choice to see if there are additional requirements.

What is an Individual Graduation Plan (IGP)?

The IGP is your education plan for high school detailing the courses necessary for you to prepare successfully for graduation.

The plan is also designed to help you prepare for what you want to do after high school—either going into the job you want or entering a two-year or four-year college program or some other educational experience beyond high school.

Your guidance counselor will work with you as you begin high school to create the plan. You and your parents should talk about your goals for after high school as you create the plan.

Then, each year as you register for courses, your guidance counselor will review the plan with you to see how you're progressing and to allow you to revise the plan as your interests and goals change.

The Economic Development Act, which mandates that every student have an IGP, states that in South Carolina, the IGP must

- ◆ Align career goals and a student's course of study based on involvement in career guidance;
- ◆ Be based on the student's selected cluster of study and an academic focus within that cluster;
- ◆ Include core academic subjects, which must

include, but are not limited to English, math, science, and social studies to ensure that requirements for graduation will be met;

- ◆ Include experience-based, career-oriented learning experiences including, but not limited to internships, apprenticeships, shadowing, mentoring, co-op education and service learning;
- ◆ Be flexible to allow change in the course of study

but be sufficiently structured to meet graduation requirements and admission to postsecondary education;

- ◆ Incorporate provisions of a student's individual educational plan, when appropriate; and
- ◆ Be approved by a certified school guidance counselor and the student's parents, guardians, or individuals appointed by the parents or guardians to serve as their designee. (59-59-140)

What the state requires

- English— 4 units
- U.S. History— 1 unit
- Economics— 1/2 unit
- Government— 1/2 unit
- Other Social Studies— 1 unit
- Mathematics— 4 units
- Science— 3 units
- Computer science— 1 unit
- Physical Ed or JROTC— 1 unit
- Foreign language— 1 unit for college prep
- or
- Vocational— 1 unit for tech prep
- Electives— 7 units
- Total required for graduation 24 units**

What colleges want you to take

English 4 units

You must have at least two courses with strong grammar and composition components, with at least one in American literature and one in English literature. Completing college prep English 1, 2, 3 & 4 will meet these requirements.

Foreign language 2 units

You must have two units of the same foreign language. **Some colleges require 3 units.**

Lab science 3 units

You must have at least 2 units from two different fields selected from biology, chemistry or physics. Your third unit may be from one of these fields or from any lab science for which biology or chemistry is a prerequisite. Courses in earth science, physical science or introductory or environmental science for which biology and/or chemistry is not a prerequisite won't meet this requirement.

Math 4 units

Courses include Algebra 1 for which Applied Math 1 & 2 together may substitute if you successfully complete Algebra 2. You must also take Algebra 2 and Geometry. A fourth higher-level mathematics course must be selected from Pre-calculus, Calculus, Statistics or Discrete Math and should be taken during your senior year.

Social studies 3 units

You must have one unit of U.S. History, a half unit of economics, a half unit of government and one additional unit of social studies.

Fine arts 1 unit

You must have one unit in appreciation of, history of or performance in fine arts.

Elective 1 unit

You must have one unit as an elective. A college-preparatory course in Computer Science (i.e., one involving specific programming content, not simply keyboarding) is strongly

recommended for this elective. Other acceptable electives include college preparatory courses in English, fine arts, foreign languages, social science, humanities, laboratory science (excluding earth science, general physical science, general environmental science, or other introductory science courses for which biology and/or chemistry is not a prerequisite) or math courses above the level of Algebra 2.

P. E./JROTC 1 unit

You must take at least one unit in either physical education or JROTC

Exceptions for college requirements

- A state college may grant an exception for
- a student not meeting the prerequisites if the failure to meet prerequisites is beyond the student's control or
 - a student who takes Tech Prep courses and meets all other admissions criteria.

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