EARLY COLLEGE & DUAL ENROLLMENT PROGRAMS

Through the Division of Access and Transition, which manages K-12 partnerships in the region, MWCC administers several College Access, Dual Enrollment and Early College programs. These programs provide middle and high school students with an array of academic, college and career awareness services, including, but not limited to, academic and career counseling, tutoring, mentoring, college tours, workshops and activities. Services are generally provided through targeted grant initiatives. In addition, MWCC hosts several annual events and activities designed for students and parents, which are open to the public. Most programs are free of charge. For more information on any program, call 978-630-9248 or visit our website.

GETTING A HEAD START ON COLLEGE

Whether in high school or homeschool programs, juniors and seniors (age 16 or older) can enroll in MWCC classes prior to high school graduation and take courses that may transfer to most two and four-year public and private institutions while also completing their high school graduation requirements. Participants are considered MWCC students and enjoy all the same benefits and responsibilities. Students are encouraged to participate fully in college activities and programs, including the Honors Program, academic support services and other co-curricular activities. Students may enroll at MWCC on either a part- or full-time basis. Students are non-matriculated, but permitted to adhere to the catalog year in which they begin taking dual enrollment courses.

North Central Massachusetts Early College Academy

Students enrolled at Gardner High School, Leominster High School, Fitchburg High School and Sizer School may apply for the North Central Massachusetts Early College Academy. At FHS and LHS, classes primarily take place at each high school or virtually, during the school day, and are taught by MWCC or Fitchburg State University faculty. Students at Sizer School primarily take courses with Fitchburg State University, and students from Gardner High School take courses at the MWCC campus and online. Early College programs are also offered at Narragansett Regional High School. Early College will be offered at these high schools at no cost to students or families. Coursework is integrated into the school day, and are all part of the Massachusetts Transfer Agreement, ensuring transfer to public institutions and many privates as well.

Students will attain both high school and college credit for successfully completed courses, and are eligible to attain 12 or more college credits prior to high school graduation in a defined academic pathway, such as Healthcare, Business, Education or Liberal Arts & Sciences. There is no cost to students for these courses or the program. This program is offered in partnership with these schools and Fitchburg State University. For additional information, interested students should contact their respective guidance office at participating schools.

Find out more about the partnership and the program HERE (https://www.ncmearlycollege.com/)

Gateway to College

Gateway to College has new cohorts starting in both September and January of each year.

This program is a designated early college program designed for students who have struggled in a traditional high school setting, either socially or academically, and need a fresh start in a new setting. Students ages 16-21 can enroll at MWCC to earn both high school and college credits toward a high school diploma and associate degree or certificate. This program is offered through a partnership with the Gardner Public School District at MWCC’s Gardner Campus. Students interested in Gateway to College must attend an information session in the spring for entry in the fall, or, in the fall for entry in the spring, complete an application, and interview with a Gateway to College Resource Specialist. Students from across the region are eligible to apply to the program; students from outside Gardner must school choice into Gardner to participate in the program. Additional information is available at this website (https://mwcc.edu/academics/k-12/programs/gateway/), or by calling the Division of Access & Transition at 978-630-9248.

Pathways Early College Experience

Pathways Early College Experience program accepts a new cohort to start each Fall.

The Pathways program is an Early College high school opportunity for motivated high school/home school students about to enter their junior year, who would like to get a jump start on college. The Pathways program provides an opportunity to earn a high school diploma and Associate’s degree while completing the junior and senior years of high school at MWCC’s Gardner Campus. Admission into the program is a competitive process. This program is offered through a partnership with the Gardner Public School District and Mount Wachusett Community College. Students interested in Pathways must attend an information session in the spring for admission in the fall, complete an application, place into college-level coursework through either a high school transcript review or an Accuplacer assessment, and participate in an interview. Students must have a GPA of a 3.0 or higher to be considered for Pathways
Early College Experience. Additional information is available at this website (https://mwcc.edu/academics/k-12/programs/pathways/) or by calling the Division of Access & Transition at 978-630-9248.

**Fire Science Technology Early Start**

Students in their junior or senior year from our service area are eligible to participate in our Fire Science Technology Dual Enrollment program, which is taught in a hybrid format - both online and with an in-person component. This free program holds classes virtually during the week, with an in-person component required one Saturday each month, conducted at the Fitchburg or Westminster fire station. Students attend Fire Science Technology classes as electives in conjunction with their high school classes. Learn more about the Fire Science Technology Program (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D_9JS-hOo2Y) from Patrick Haverty, Fire Science Instructor and his students at Fitchburg High.

**Dual Enrollment High School Partnerships**

Students enrolled at area schools in the North Central region who have established a dual enrollment partnership, including Montachusett Regional Technical Vocational School and Athol High School also have the opportunity to participate in dual enrollment courses onsite at their respective high schools. Students can attain both high school and college credit for successfully completed courses. For additional information, interested students should contact their respective guidance office at participating schools.

Students interested in healthcare careers at Athol High School, Gardner High School and Fitchburg High School are also able to participate in dual enrollment with MWCC through the Health Career Opportunity Program (HCOP), and have the opportunity to participate in the HCOP Catalyst Program. At GHS and FHS, students participating in this program may also apply to be part of the Early College Academy. Enrollment in HCOP is designed to provide an introduction to allied and behavioral health career fields, with exposure to coursework in health fields, medical terminology, cultural competence and professional behaviors needed for a future healthcare career. For more information, interested students should contact the HCOP Director at 978-630-9307, or visit the HCOP website (https://mwcc.edu/health-career-opportunity-program-hcop/).

**Traditional Dual Enrollment**

Students who wish to take classes at an MWCC campus from a high school that does not participate in an early college or dual enrollment partnership may still enjoy this benefit, through traditional dual enrollment. High school students who intend to complete a portion of their junior or senior year at the college through MWCC’s Traditional Dual Enrollment program must:

- Submit a completed Dual Enrollment Admission Application, with guidance counselor and parent/guardian signature. This application is available at this website or through the Admissions Office at 978-630-9447 or admissions@mwcc.mass.edu.
- Apply no later than mid-August for fall classes, early January for spring classes and early June for summer classes (applications received after the posted application deadlines will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis).
- Be 16 years of age or a current junior or senior and hold a minimum 2.8 GPA (official transcript required). The college will recalculate all GPAs on a 4.0 scale.
- Submit your transcript for multiple measure placement based on academic performance in high school, or, take the Accuplacer college placement assessment, and place into college-level English and Math. Students who do not test into college-level courses in both subjects may be permitted to take foundation-level courses with the approval of their high school and the Division Dean.

Dual enrollment applicants must complete a personal interview, sign a student contract, and meet established guidelines of MWCC and their participating high school. Students enrolled in traditional dual enrollment are not allowed to participate in classes beginning after 6:00 PM without permission from the student’s high school and parent or guardian. Students enrolled in dual enrollment programs are not allowed to participate in web classes without permission from the student’s high school and parent or guardian. Students enrolled in this program must pay all college tuition/fees, and are ineligible for financial aid while they are enrolled in high school.

**Commonwealth Dual Enrollment Program**

High school juniors and seniors from across the service area are able to participate in Commonwealth Dual Enrollment Program (CDEP) courses, typically offered in spring or summer semesters each year. The courses help students attain college credit for some of the mandatory and introductory courses that any college or university would offer, and are embedded within the Massachusetts Transfer Agreement, meaning that they will be accepted at MA public colleges and universities; many private colleges and universities will also accept these credits. CDEP courses are FREE to participating students, and while open to all students, are designed to support students who are first-generation college attendees, served
by other public service programs such as free/reduced lunch, diverse and underrepresented in higher education. For more information, contact your guidance office or email us at: earlycollege@mwcc.mass.edu.