

Frequently Asked Questions

Advanced Coursework Network Information for District/School Leaders, Families/Students

The Advanced Coursework Network is designed to help districts and schools create opportunities for Rhode Island students to envision, pursue and complete their individualized graduation pathway.

For additional questions, contact advancedcoursework@ride.ri.gov.

Table of Contents	
Overview	Pg 1
Academic: Courses, Credit and Transferability	Pg 1
Instructors: Highly Qualified Educators	Pg 3
Cost: Funding and Specific Course Costs	Pg 3
Student Eligibility Criteria	Pg 4
Student Supports	Pg 4
Information Access and Management	Pg 5
LEA Advanced Coursework Policy and Reporting	Pg 5

1. Overview

1.1. What is the Advanced Coursework Network?

The Advanced Coursework Network offers advanced coursework options for Rhode Island students with the goal of expanding access to advanced coursework opportunities that promote college and career readiness. The Advanced Coursework Network will enable students and their families to choose to enroll in formerly unavailable high value academic- and career-focused courses while they remain enrolled at their public school. The Advanced Coursework Network is made up of Network Members, schools and districts that voluntarily chooses to extend the Advanced Coursework Network opportunities to students, and Network Providers (school districts, Rhode Island based community based organizations or higher education institutions) that extends advanced coursework opportunities to Rhode Island students.

1.2. What specific courses will be offered through the Advanced Coursework Network?

Course offerings will include advanced science and math, world languages, [dual/concurrent enrollment](#), Advanced Placement (AP[®]), and/or career-preparation coursework and learning opportunities.

2. Academic: Courses and Credit

2.1. What is the difference among regular high school or middle school courses and the Advanced Course Network course offerings?

Students participating in the Advanced Coursework Network are earning credit toward their high school or middle school coursework requirements by enrolling in courses that are not traditionally offered at their public school. Advanced Coursework Network courses will be offered in a variety of modalities, including traditional (e.g. face-to-face), online, or a hybrid (e.g. blended) courses. The main difference is that the student will be taking courses provided by other LEAs, organizations or higher education institutions. Advanced Coursework Network

courses have the same rigorous educational expectations and learning objectives as traditional advanced classes for high school or middle school students, respectively.

2.2. Are the academic rules different if the class is held by a Network provider school?

No, the same rules apply regardless of location. Credit earned through an Advanced Coursework Network option becomes part of the student's transcript. For that reason, a course must maintain the integrity and rigor of advanced level work regardless of where, how or by whom the class is taught.

2.3. When does coursework count toward high school or middle school requirements?

In Network member schools and districts, students can enroll in Advanced Coursework Network courses to satisfy academic coursework requirements for a high school diploma or middle school promotion. Before registering for an Advanced Coursework Network course, a student should meet with their school counselor to ensure the course will contribute to their school requirements. It is a local decision how a Network course count for high school credit however as part of the participating in the Network, LEAs agree to grant credit for Network courses.

2.4. Which courses are available through the Advanced Coursework Network?

The statewide Advanced Coursework Network course offering will be updated and published each year at www.ride.ri.gov/advancedcoursework. The 2016-2017 catalog will be published in February 2016. Students should check with their guidance counselor or school administrator to see if their school offers the course(s) they are interested in, prior to registering for a Network course. LEAs may decide which courses from the Network are available to their students if not all. Check with your school or at www.ride.ri.gov/advancedcoursework to see the course listings that the school has chosen as options. Additionally, students must meet the prerequisites (determined on an individual course basis). Space in the class is provided on a first come, first serve basis. Course offerings may include, but are not limited to:

- Advanced Math and Science Courses: Courses may include Biochemistry, Anatomy & Physiology, Human Genetics, Calculus, and Trigonometry.
- Advanced Placement (AP) : College -level coursework that offers college credit if successfully completed. Learn more about the College Board AP program [here](#).
- Dual/concurrent enrollment: Dual enrollment means that a student is enrolled in a secondary school while simultaneously enrolled part time or full-time as a non-matriculating student at a postsecondary institution, such as a community college, college or university. Concurrent enrollment means a student is enrolled in a dual enrollment course that is offered at the secondary school and taught by a secondary school teacher who is approved by the postsecondary institution. Upon successful completion of a dual or concurrent enrollment course, students earn credit at both the secondary school and the postsecondary institution offering the course.
- Career prep courses: Courses that result in the attainment of an industry-recognized certificate or credential.

2.5. What grade does the student need to receive for a Network course to count toward high school or middle school requirements?

The LEA must determine and publish the grading policy for Network courses. The minimum passing grade for Advanced Coursework Network courses will be listed in the course syllabus. The grade awarded for the course will be included on a student's high school transcript. The school or LEA determines how the course credit will appear on the high school transcript. It is recommended that the course title on the high school transcript match the Advanced Coursework Network course title.

2.6. If the student does not complete an Advanced Coursework Network course with a passing grade, what are the consequences?

The student will be responsible for the grade received and it will appear on the official high school transcript; and the forfeited credit for the course could mean that the student is lacking credit for high school graduation. It is vital that students pay close attention to the withdrawal deadlines. The student should communicate immediately with their guidance counselor if he/she is considering withdrawing from a course for any reason.

2.7. Does an Advanced Coursework Network course provide extra weight for a high school student's grade point average (GPA)?

The LEA may determine to give a Network course extra weight in calculating a high school GPA. The LEA is responsible for publishing this information for students and their families.

2.8. Can Advanced Coursework Network courses count for college credit?

If the Advanced Coursework Network course is offered through a college or university, students completing the course may be eligible to earn college credit. Students should check with their guidance counselors to learn if college credit can be earned and transferred. More information on public. You can look up how a course taken at CCRI, RIC, or URI transfers to another of the RI public higher education institutions at RI Transfers (www.ritransfers.org).

3. Instructors: High School Instructors

3.1. Who can be a Network course provider?

Network providers must have a demonstrated record of providing quality academic and academic enrichment programming. Providers must be Rhode Island LEAs, nonprofit or educational organizations, or Rhode Island institutions of higher education. Providers may partner with corporate or out-of-state providers.

3.2. What is the process to be approved to teach an Advanced Coursework Network course?

All Network Providers must demonstrate that the teacher of record for their course demonstrates RIDE's qualifications to be a "highly qualified" teacher of the subject of the course.

3.3. Does the school or LEA need to add staff to run the program?

The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) has assigned staff to coordinate and oversee the Advanced Coursework Network program. Schools and LEAs should designate a staff member(s) at the school to be the main point of contact for student registration, grades, student transcripts, etc.

3.4. Who is responsible for evaluating course instructors?

Instructors employed at Rhode Island public secondary schools will follow the LEA's approved educator evaluation process. Postsecondary institutions and community-based organizations may have their own processes for evaluating the course/ course instructor.

3.5. Will high school teachers be compensated beyond existing contractual obligations for teaching an Advanced Coursework Network course?

Incentive or remuneration for teachers teaching Network courses is a local decision and should be addressed in the LEA's policy and procedures for Advanced Coursework Network programming.

4. Cost: Funding and Specific Course Costs

4.1. What are the costs associated with participating in the Advanced Coursework Network?

The Rhode Island Department of Education will be supporting the costs of the additional coursework via a mix of funding sources for students not enrolled as full time students at the Network Provider. As such, LEAs, public schools, public school students and their families will not be assessed any tuition or fees associated with participating in Advanced Coursework Network programming. While many options will be available in blended or virtual formats, some courses will be face to face. Students and their families are responsible for transporting the student to the course at the Network Provider's location. The school or district may choose to support transportation of their students. The student or family is responsible for working with their high school to receive high school credit for a Network course.

4.2. Who receives funding to support the Advanced Coursework Network?

RIDE will receive and distribute all funding related to the implementation of the Advanced Coursework Network. The funding will be distributed from RIDE to each Network Provider for course tuition and fees for the successful enrollment and progress of eligible public high school students in Network programming.

The school or LEA needs to ensure students complete the required registration forms and verify that the student is enrolled. RIDE will work with Network Providers to verify high school or middle school status of Advanced Coursework Network students. NOTE: LEAs who are Network Providers will not receive additional funding for students enrolled as full time students at the Network Provider.

4.3. Is there a course limit for courses taken as part of the Advanced Coursework Network?

In the first year of the Advanced Coursework Network program, students will be limited to enrolling in no more than the equivalent of two year-long courses (i.e two year long courses or four half-year courses or a combination.) Any Rhode Island student enrolled with a Network member for the pilot year can choose to register for his/her chosen course.

4.4. Does the funding cover the cost of advanced placement classes?

The allocated funding does pay for the costs associated with AP coursework and testing.

5. Student Eligibility Criteria

5.1. How do I know if a student is eligible to participate in the Advanced Coursework Network?

Any Rhode Island public high school or middle school student enrolled with a Network member school can choose to register for a course. Depending on the course chosen, students may need to meet a set of prerequisites (determined on an individual course basis). The students' local academic achievement and attendance record may be taken into consideration but should not be the sole determinant of a student's eligibility to participate. The decision regarding a student's participation in Network courses is subject to appeal through the LEA's appeals policy.

5.2. Do students with disabilities who receive services through an IEP or 504 accommodations need to meet the same eligibility criteria as other students?

Yes, students with disabilities are held to the same eligibility criteria outlined by the LEA. Students with disabilities will receive from the Network Provider the protections, services and accommodations as prescribed by federal and state law.

5.3. How do students register for Advanced Coursework Network courses?

All students requesting to participate in Advanced Coursework Network courses should make the request through their counselor or appropriate school administrator following the LEA-established process to verify they meet the eligibility criteria. The LEA or school should clearly publish the enrollment process and eligibility criteria for students and families. The counselor or administrator can assist students to register for Network courses and help ensure that students receive high school credit for a course.

5.4. What if students plan their next year around an Advanced Coursework Network opportunity and when they are able to register there is no longer space in the course?

Any scheduling issue should be handled in accordance with the LEAs local policies and is not different than scheduling for other advanced coursework opportunities. The student, working with the school counselor or school administrator, should establish a backup plan in the event they cannot get their first choice courses.

5.5. Are Rhode Island students who are homeschooled eligible to participate in the Advanced Coursework Network?

Yes, Advanced Coursework Network opportunities are available to home school students. However, as home school students are not public school students and are not enrolled in a public Rhode Island High School, the student is not eligible for the funding and would be responsible for the associated costs of taking an Advanced Coursework Network course.

6. Student Supports

6.1. How will students and families find out about Advanced Coursework Network opportunities?

RIDE will publish information regarding Advanced Coursework opportunities, the process to enroll, the benefits of taking the courses, specific commitments for the course and consequences if a student should fail a course. The

school or LEA will publish this information through multiple modalities for students and their families. School counselors and administrators should be available to answer any questions students or families have.

6.2. What if there is no room in the student’s schedule to participate in the Advanced Coursework Network?

The school counselor or appropriate administrator should work with the student to accommodate the desired course as much as possible based on the student’s schedule and graduation requirements. Note that options will be offered outside of the traditional school day hours.

6.3. Who is responsible for transportation of students for the Advanced Coursework Network?

Students and their families are responsible for transporting the student to the course if the course meets face-to-face. The school or LEA may choose to support transportation of their students.

6.4. Who is responsible for providing books for the Advanced Coursework Network?

State funding will address the books and course materials for courses via the per student tuition payment to the Network Provider. Districts and families are not responsible for the costs of books.

6.5. Who is responsible for ensuring the student successfully enrolls in the Advanced Coursework Network courses?

The LEA or school should also assign staff to work with the student to: assist students to enroll in courses; ensure that students follow the established enrollment procedure; and track student enrollment, course grades and course completion.

6.6. Do the accommodations listed in the secondary student’s IEP or 504 automatically apply to Advanced Coursework Network classes?

Not necessarily. Students with disabilities who meet the prerequisites of a course must be provided reasonable accommodations through Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in Advanced Coursework Network courses to ensure the same access as students without disabilities. Courses offered by postsecondary institutions are not required to modify course content or performance expectations that would substantially alter the essential elements of the course. Not all accommodations available at the high school or middle school may be allowed in college level classes. With the help of their high school; students receiving special education services and/or reasonable accommodations in high school or middle school should meet with the disability services office of the higher education institution to arrange for necessary accommodations in college courses. Students with an IEP may reconvene their IEP team to discuss the special education services they receive and how those services may support their enrollment in Network courses.

7. Information Access and Management

7.1. Who communicates the list of available Advanced Coursework Network courses that will be offered?

RIDE will publish the list as early as possible upon Course Provider approval each year as to the Advanced Coursework Network course offering. The Network Member LEA or school should review and publicize course offerings to students and families.

7.2. When will the list of courses be available each year?

No later than March 31st of each year RIDE, will publish and disseminate the course catalog that details the available courses, student eligibility criteria and prerequisites, course costs, Course Provider, delivery modality, and corresponding information.

The school or LEA should provide all students and their families with the available course and program information as far in advance as possible of course selection and enrollment. This information shall be made available in multiple modalities (website, letters, emails) and languages, as is feasible.

8. LEA Advanced Coursework Policy and Reporting

8.1. Must LEAs adopt a local Advanced Coursework Network policy?

LEAs and schools that choose to be a Network Member are strongly encouraged to adopt a policy for Advanced Coursework Network programming.

8.2. What elements are recommended to be in the local Advanced Coursework Network policy?

The local policy should ensure that it covers all local responsibilities outlined in these FAQs, including but not limited to:

- Academic information including communication about available courses, educational outcomes, grading policy, awarding of high school or middle school credit, respectively and transcript process.
- High School Instructor approval and identification of designated staff coordinators.
- Student eligibility criteria including local criteria, process to enroll and appeals process.
- Student supports including communication to students and families regarding the benefits, accommodations for students with disabilities, and transportation.
- Information access and management including the communication process and timing to notify students and families of Advanced Coursework Network opportunities.
- Reporting ensuring there is a process to track student enrollment in and completion of Network courses.

8.3. Are LEAs required to pay for transportation to Advanced Coursework Network courses?

LEAs are not required to provide transportation for Advanced Coursework Network programming. It is a local decision and should be incorporated into the local Advanced Coursework Network policy.

8.4. Will Advanced Coursework Network affect school classifications and if so, do other early college access courses, such as AP count?

Starting with the 2015-16 school year, college credit earned while still in high school, including AP, will be part of an additional data collection. Initially, this data will inform the diploma system review tool that will include a school profile. Additionally, RIDE is waiting for approval on our state's ESEA 3 Year extension which includes measures of postsecondary credential and credit earning. For more information visit the new accountability revisions document, found [here on the RIDE website](#).

AP is not governed specifically by State regulations but LEAs are encouraged to offer AP courses as part of the advanced course offerings for students. LEAs are encouraged to work other higher education institutions to establish additional dual and concurrent opportunities as feasible.