

Credit Flexibility Program

In compliance with Senate Bill 311, Grove City Christian School (GCCS) will offer students the opportunity to earn high school credit(s) through a credit flexibility program. Credit Flex shifts the focus from evaluating student learning based on “seat time” to assessing students’ demonstrated academic and skill level or performance and provides students with an alternative method for earning high school credit. Recognizing that some students have advanced skills and/or special interests in particular content areas, credit flexibility provides a venue for demonstrating learning and proficiency-thus allowing students to earn credit and/or move into more advanced coursework, bypassing previous “seat time” requirements.

Credit flexibility encourages student self-direction and motivates learners to develop new skills and fulfill their potential. It also recognizes that, while learning experiences must be high quality, not all learning happens inside the classroom or in formal education settings. With Credit Flex, students will have options to show what they know, earn credit(s), and move on to higher-order content. Students can choose to customize aspects of their learning around their interests and needs. The Credit Flex options being offered at GCCS are:

1. Earning credit by taking a class online through approved institutions
2. Completing and documenting an independent study

Detailed information and guidelines for each of these options are available. **It is important to note that there are specific guidelines and timelines that have been established and must be followed in order to be considered for participation in GCCS’s credit flexibility program.** Please read through these guidelines very carefully. If you have questions, contact your school counselor prior to completing and submitting the attached application.

Credit Flexibility Guidelines

The following guidelines apply to both Credit Flex options:

- All high school students are eligible to participate in Credit Flexibility. Credit can only be earned for learning experiences beginning with the ninth grade year.
- The amount of credit awarded will depend on the scope of the learning experience.
- Students wishing to earn credit through Credit Flexibility for either an online class option or an independent study option must develop a formal proposal and submit it to the school counselor's office.
 - Students who elect to earn credit through Credit Flex must complete and submit the attached application and a typed proposal.
 - The deadline for submitting proposals for the 2016-17 academic year will be Friday, April 8th. Students will be notified of approval/disapproval of their proposal approximately thirty (30) days after the established deadline. Regardless of the submission date, the Credit Flex Committee will not review the proposal until after the established deadline date, and the project cannot start until after approval by the GCCS Credit Flexibility Committee.
- Credit will not be issued for any projects retroactively; students must adhere to designated deadlines and follow the application/proposal process.
- Any cost(s) associated with completing the Credit Flex proposal (the cost of an online class, the cost of an AP test if applicable, etc.) is the responsibility of the student.
- The GCCS Credit Flexibility Review Committee (consisting of an administrator, the school counselor, and a content area teacher) will serve students wishing to participate in the program in the following ways:
 - The GCCS Credit Flexibility Review Committee will review and approve/disapprove all Credit Flex proposals.

- At the conclusion of the learning experience, students will be required to schedule a presentation time with the Credit Flexibility Review Committee seven days prior to the beginning of final exams for each semester in order to present during exam week.
- For students participating in the independent study option, students will be required to develop and present a product or products (reflection paper, portfolio, video, etc.) to the Committee for review; the student's mentor may be required to be present at the presentation. Review the attached rubric for project/presentation assessment expectations. The Committee will ultimately determine whether or not credit is issued to the student; credit will be granted for what students learn from their experiences, not just having experiences.
- For students participating in the online class option, students will be required to keep record of all work completed for the online class and submit any grades associated with the online class to the Committee for review. GCCS will need an official final transcript for credit verification.
- Appeals of any decision made by the GCCS Credit Flexibility Committee should be submitted in writing to the high school principal.

Credit Flexibility Program: Independent Study

- Independent studies may require a project mentor. The mentor does not have to be a school employee; however, the mentor must be an “expert” in the content area for proposed work (i.e. a license, certification, and/or degree is required in the field of study). Additionally, the proposed mentor must be approved by the GCCS Credit Flexibility Committee.
- Credit will be issued for an independent study based on a score of 70% or higher; a rubric is attached to this application that will be used to evaluate student learning experiences.
- Students can elect to receive a letter grade (as determined by the rubric score) or a “P” for passing on their transcript. The student must notify his/her school counselor of this decision within two weeks of receiving a score; otherwise, the letter grade will be used. The rubric score will be the final grade awarded. The final grade will appear on the transcript; there will be no exceptions to this rule.

The following is a list of ideas, which may be included in your final presentation to the committee after the completion of your independent study in order to document your learning:

- A portfolio which may consist of, but is not limited to:
 - Goals expected to be achieved during the learning experience including:
 - Outline of specific steps to achieve the goal
 - Chart obstacles for achieving goal
 - Time frame
 - Details/description of plans (could be stated in goal setting criteria)
 - A log maintaining time spent at internship, practice, rehearsal and/or competition hours
 - Testing data if applicable
- A weekly journal documenting:
 - Learning experiences through the program (changes you are noticing, new terminology used, new techniques, challenges facing in completing the program, competition results)
- A reflective essay about the experience
- Mini research papers pertaining to:
 - Specific techniques used
 - Why they are used
 - Why are they valid
 - What results they produce
- Copies of tests/assessments (if applicable)
- A video of the student’s final performance to be presented to the GCCS Credit Flexibility Committee

Credit Flexibility Application

Student Name: _____ **Date:** _____

School Counselor: _____ **Current Grade:** _____

Credit Flexibility Option: _____ **Online Class** _____ **Independent Study**

Content Area for which Credit Flexibility is Requested: _____

Course Title (if applicable): _____

Credit Amount Requested: _____ **.5** _____ **1.0**

Project Start Date: _____ **Project End Date:** _____

*Note: Credit will not be issued for any projects started/completed prior to receiving approval notification.

Mentor or Online Provider Information (required):

Name: _____

Buisness: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Will Learning Experience Take Place at this Business Site? _____

If No, List Experience Site: _____

Attach a proposal for this learning experience to the application. The proposal should be typed, double-spaced and be approximately 300-500 words in length. Be sure to include and respond to the proposal prompts listed below.

- What is the nature and scope of this learning experience?
- Why have you chosen this learning experience? This content area?
- What are you hoping to learn through this process? What essential question is driving your inquiry (if applicable)? Explain how this learning experience will enable you to learn/master the State standards and/or GCCS curriculum for this type of credit. Be specific. YOU MUST BE ABLE TO DOCUMENT SPECIFIC LEARNING.
- How do you hope to stretch your learning through this experience? How will your learning be different through this experience as compared to the traditional classroom?
- What exactly will you be doing? What times of the day will be devoted to this experience? How much total time (in hours) will you dedicate to completing this experience? Where will you be doing the experience(s)?
- How will you document your learning? What writing will be included in the documenting process?
- How will you demonstrate your learning? What will you present to the Credit Flexibility Committee (i.e. reflection paper, portfolio)?
- What role, if any, will your mentor serve during your project? How will your mentor provide feedback to you about your learning progress?
- How does this experience connect to your life? To the larger world?

Include a timeline for your learning experience. List all the tasks you must complete for a successful learning experience. Also, include benchmarks (tasks along with completion dates) for checking your progress.

Mentor Signature: _____ **Date:** _____
(If applicable)

Parent Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Student Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Credit Flexibility Review Committee Use Only

Project Approved: Yes _____ **No** _____ **Credit Amount:** _____

Date: _____

Credit Flexibility Appeals Process

If the initial Credit Flex plan is not accepted, then feedback about why it was not approved and what might make the plan more acceptable should be provided to the student in writing or through a meeting. The student should then resubmit the application with changes based on the feedback provided. If the plan is still not accepted, the student can file an appeal.

Appeals of any decision made by the GCCS Credit Flexibility Committee should be submitted in writing to the GCCS Director of Education within 10 days of the GCCS Credit Flexibility Committee's decision. The student filing the appeal and his/her parent/guardian(s) shall be given an opportunity to present concerns and recommendations to the GCCS Director of Education. The GCCS Director of Education will review appeals within 10 days from the date the appeal was submitted in writing.

The written appeal must include an explanation for why the student believes that the plan was wrongfully denied and must include **all required aspects of the credit flexibility application.**

The decision of the GCCS Director of Education shall be final unless there is a directive resulting from an appeal filed with the Ohio Department of Education.

Students may submit an appeal to the Ohio Department of Education if there is a complaint about having access to or implementation of the credit flexibility policy. The Department's appeal may be held by a third party and will evaluate the extent to which students were given fair and equitable treatment or process.