

Frequently Asked Questions: Concentration

The Future-Ready Core Graduation Requirements that go into effect for entering freshmen in 2009-2010 allow students the option to concentrate in an area of particular interest while they are in high school. As part of this core, the State Board of Education strongly recommends that local school counselors assist students in developing a four-credit concentration focused on student interests and post-secondary goals. A concentration will provide an opportunity for students to participate in rigorous, in-depth and linked study.

In approving the new standards, the State Board of Education stressed its desire that local education agencies be given the flexibility to create curricula pathways that are innovative and rigorous. Students should be encouraged to take advantage of college level courses while in high school, including community college concurrent enrollment, Learn and Earn Online, Huskins courses, and university dual enrollment offerings.

How can the electives requirement of the Future-Ready Core be fulfilled?

Under the Future-Ready Core Graduation Requirements, students must earn six elective credits. Two of these credits are to be from any combination of Career and Technical Education (CTE), Arts Education, and Second Languages. Students may take ANY combination of elective courses, as long as at least two of them fall under one or more of the identified categories. A student could take one Arts Education course and one CTE course; one Arts Education course and one Second Language course; one CTE course and one Second Language course; two Arts Education courses; two Second Language courses; or two CTE courses to meet this requirement. Keep in mind that the UNC System requires two units of credit in Second Language for admittance into any of the NC colleges and universities in the system.

The other four credits may be from any content area(s). The student may choose to use these credits to complete a four-credit concentration. Students can also earn more than six electives, depending upon local requirements.

Why is it important to have a concentration if it isn't required for graduation?

The option to add a concentration allows students to design a customized program that integrates their long-term career interests and post-secondary goals. This option can help them focus on possible careers and give them a jump start into post-secondary education or further training. Data show that students who take a focused course of study do better in high school, are more likely to graduate from college and are better prepared for their careers.

In what areas are concentrations available?

Concentrations can be customized to reflect students' special interests including any of the 16 Career and Technical Education Career Clusters; or the four Arts Education disciplines (dance, music, theatre arts, visuals arts); JROTC, Second Languages or any

other subject area (such as Science Education). Students also can design cross-disciplinary concentrations that combine courses from multiple curriculum areas.

What courses are required for a concentration?

Students must earn four credits in their area of interest to qualify for a concentration. Concentrations should be content-based and should be focused on student interests and post-secondary goals. Student concentrations should be approved by the local principal or his or her designee. Courses taken to fulfill any specific course requirement for graduation may not be counted toward the four-credit concentration; however, they may be taken to enrich the concentration. Changes are planned to allow NC WISE to track and record student concentrations.

Who should I contact if I have additional questions?

More detailed information on designing a concentration will be distributed to high school counselors and career development coordinators. You can also contact NCDPI [K-12 Programs](#) or [Career and Technical Education](#) for additional information.

SAMPLE CONCENTRATIONS*

Arts Education	
Examples of concentrations in MUSIC [Any combination of courses within the discipline of music, as long as at least one is an advanced level (level II or above) course]:	
5230 Vocal Music I 5231 Vocal Music II 5232 Vocal Music III or Honors Vocal Music III 5233 Vocal Music IV or Honors Vocal Music IV	5230 Vocal Music I 5231 Vocal Music II 5255 Band I 5275 Piano

Career and Technical Education¹	
Examples of concentrations in the INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY Cluster (Four technical credits in the cluster, at least one of which is a complete level course):	
7400 Introduction to T&I 7980 Networking I 7991 Computer Engineering Technology I 7992 Computer Engineering Technology II	6411 Computer Applications I 6421 Computer Programming I – VB.net 6422 Computer Programming II – VB.net 6499 CSC 151 JAVA Programming (Community College course)

Second Languages	
Examples of concentrations in SECOND LANGUAGE [Any combination of courses within Second Languages, as long as at least one is an advanced level (level II or above) course]:	
1041 French I 1042 French II 1043 French III 1044 French IV	1053 ² Spanish III/1402 SNS II 1054 Spanish IV 1055 Spanish V (AP Spanish Language) 1350 Spanish VI (AP Spanish Literature)

Cross-Disciplinary¹	
Examples of cross-disciplinary concentrations [Any combination of courses that relate to students' career or other interests, as long as at least one is an advanced level (level II or above) course]:	
Student is interested in a career in international business	Student is interested in a career in web design
1048 ² Chinese III 1049 Chinese IV 1345 Chinese V (AP Chinese Culture & Language) 6225 Business Management	6415 e-Commerce I 6416 e-Commerce II 5433 Graphic Design 7935 Digital Media I

* These are SAMPLE concentrations. Students should design their own concentrations that are linked to career interests and post-secondary goals.

¹ Students must take four Career and Technical Education courses in a cluster to count as a concentrator for federal CTE reporting purposes. A cross-disciplinary concentration may meet graduation standards without counting for federal CTE reporting purposes.

² Students may enter high school with high school courses completed and may be able to advance to higher levels in a sequence and/or complete complementary concentrations.