

# **Lakota Credit Flexibility Handbook and Application**

**Student Options  
for  
Earning High School Credit**

## What is Credit Flex?

**Credit Flexibility provides options for students with high school standing to earn graduation credits through alternative ways outside of regularly scheduled classes. All Credit Flex options must be generated and planned by students according to the provisions and process outlined in the *Lakota Credit Flexibility Handbook and Application*.\***

- Credit Flexibility is intended to motivate and increase student engagement in learning:
  - by allowing student-generated plans for learning in non-traditional ways;
  - through access to a wide variety of learning resources, especially real-world experiences;
  - with learning opportunities planned around individual student interests and needs; and
  - for multiple measures of learning for students to demonstrate what they know, to apply their knowledge, and to present their learning to real-world evaluators.
- Students may now earn graduation credit through one of the following options:
  - following a traditional schedule at one of the Lakota high schools;
  - taking an online course;
  - proving mastery of course content; or
  - developing an individual plan for an internship/field experience, community service, educational travel, or independent study.
- Students are not limited in the number of courses or the number of credits earned through Credit Flex. However, **approval of Credit Flexibility Plans and credits earned will be dependent upon the Lakota Local School District's capacity to implement them.** If Credit Flex Plans are approved, students may earn either required or elective credits or simultaneous credit in more than one academic area at a time or partial credit.
- Credits earned through Credit Flex:
  - will result in a letter grade (A, B, C, D, or F) and will be included in the calculation of a student's grade point average (GPA);
  - will be reflected on the student's transcript in the same way as traditional credits earned via traditional seat time with no distinction made between traditional coursework and Credit Flex coursework\*;
  - will **not** be weighted;
  - will **not** be available as Pass/Fail unless students earning credit in a traditional class have a pass/fail option, or as otherwise outlined in policy.
- Grades for online coursework will be recorded as submitted by the online provider.
- Grades earned through independent study, internships/field experiences, community service/service learning, or educational travel will result from collaboration with a Lakota Teacher of Record (TOR).
- Students choosing Mastery Assessments or Individual Plans may be assessed a fee; online course fees will be paid directly to the provider.

*\*The NCAA requests that transcripts for student athletes reflect coursework taken in a non-traditional manner; i.e., online, mastery assessment, or other Credit Flex options.*

## What Options are Available?

Students may earn graduation credits through Credit Flex by taking online courses, by proving mastery of course content, or by crafting an individual plan for independent study, internships/field experiences, community service/service learning, or educational travel. Students interested in any of these 3 options must complete the *Credit Flex Application* on the Credit Flex webpage – [www.lakotaonline.com/creditflexibility](http://www.lakotaonline.com/creditflexibility).

### 1. Online Courses

Students may take an online course through an outside provider with control over the time, place, and pace of their learning. Students are responsible for all fees associated with online courses (see below). Approved online providers are identified based on the course. Please see the chart of approved online providers.

#### Application Process:

- Complete the *Credit Flex Application*, circling “Online Course” as the requested option.
- Meet with a counselor to discuss online provider options for the requested course.

#### FEE NOTICE

The following are fees that apply to the Online Credit Flex Option. *All fees are the responsibility of the applicant.*

- Course fee(s) as specified by the online provider
- Proctoring fee(s) for final assessment (IF required by online provider)

Some providers MAY require proctored assessments. Unless the online provider offers specific proctors for such assessments, students themselves must choose an approved outside provider to proctor the final course assessment. *Lakota does not choose or approve proctors.*

#### Approved Online Provider and End-of-Course Assessment Information:

Online courses through Credit Flex are an alternative option; they are not an easier option than taking a course at a Lakota building. It is necessary to select online providers that are adequately aligned to state standards. In addition, with the state-required, End-of-Course Assessments, the online courses must also be rigorous for students. Therefore, only certain online providers are identified so that they adequately and appropriately prepare students for the new requirements. When the course is one that has a state End-of-Course Assessment for graduation, students are required to take the state test during the identified testing window. The state decides when these tests are given. Therefore, there may be a lapse between the time the student finishes the course and when the student sits for the assessment.

#### Prerequisite Courses:

*Students using online courses for core areas as a prerequisite to another course for original credit **MUST COMPLETE** the online course **BEFORE** being scheduled in the next course in the sequence.*

***Example:** Students taking Algebra I through an online provider **MUST COMPLETE** the course **PRIOR** to the school year when they want to take Geometry.*

**Note:** *The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) has limitations on the types of courses it will accept for athletic eligibility. Specifically, the NCAA does not recognize all online courses for core graduation credit. Please reference the NCAA Eligibility Center for more information regarding specific course options.*

## 2. Mastery Assessment

Students may choose to demonstrate mastery of course content by passing a comprehensive course exam with 80% or higher and by demonstrating their ability to apply knowledge and concepts.

### Application Process\*:

- Complete the *Credit Flex Application* - See the timeline at the end of this Handbook for Mastery Assessment deadlines to allow for re-scheduling of the course if students are unable to meet the 80% mastery goal.
- Meet with a Teacher of Record (TOR) to complete the Mastery Assessment process.
  - Students will be given **one attempt** to demonstrate proficiency by completing a comprehensive exam covering essential content knowledge addressed in an equivalent Lakota course. See the *Handbook and Application* for testing dates and other deadlines.
  - Students failing to score 80% or above on the exam will be reassigned to a traditional course.
  - Depending on the content, students demonstrating 80% or greater mastery on the exam may also complete a project/problem-based assessment designed to prove their ability to apply their knowledge. Students will then present their work to the Lakota Credit Flex Committee who will decide on level of competency demonstrated for the purposes of assigning a grade and credit.

### MASTERY ASSESSMENT NOTICE

- Students may not select the Mastery Assessment option for courses which require students to work collaboratively to produce a final group product (e.g., band, orchestra, chorus, drama, journalism).
- Students may choose to use an Advanced Placement (AP) exam for their Mastery Assessment option providing a *Credit Flex Application* is submitted and approved according to the timeline (see end of this *Handbook*). Students should also make note of these other considerations.
  1. All AP tests will be given according to The College Board schedule.
  2. Students choosing AP as their Mastery Assessment option must earn a score of 3, 4, or 5 on the AP test in order to get credit for the course.
  3. Scores are not official until they reach the school in July. *Students using AP Tests for the Mastery Assessment option cannot apply any credit earned until the following school year.*
  4. Students are responsible for all fees associated with AP exams.

**NOTE:** College Board regulations do not allow AP exams to be taken more than one time. Students should understand that using an AP exam for Mastery Assessment means that this would be their only opportunity to take that particular AP test.
- Fees may be assessed based on the costs associated with this Credit Flex option.

When the course is one that has a state End-of-Course Assessment for graduation, students are required to take the state test during the identified testing window, in addition to any Mastery Assessment plan the student completes. The state decides when these tests are given. Therefore, there may be a lapse between the time the student finishes this option and when the student sits for the assessment.

**\*IMPORTANT NOTE:** If there is no Mastery Assessment or AP exam available for a requested course at the time of application, the district will determine if it can meet the request and, if so, provide an appropriate assessment in a timely fashion. In cases where Lakota does not have the capacity to generate an assessment, students will be encouraged to select another Credit Flex option for the course.

**Note:** *The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) does not permit credit for mastery assessment (testing out) of courses. Please reference the NCAA Eligibility Center for more information regarding specific course options.*

### 3. Individual Plan

Students may earn graduation credit by generating and developing an Individual Plan for any of the following: independent study, internships/field experiences, community service/service learning, or educational travel.

#### Application Process:

- Complete the *Credit Flex Application*.
- Email a **detailed** outline of the plan to the counselor. That outline should include the following:
  - specific information about the content knowledge and skills the student will learn;
  - specific number of credits the student is seeking for the work;
  - how the student will access knowledge and practice skills;
  - proof of learning, not including a paper/pencil exam; e.g., artifacts, video, PowerPoint, art work, another appropriate product;
  - a reflective journal or essay documenting learning as it takes place;
  - documentation of internship/field experience or community service/service learning hours; and
  - other information as appropriate to the plan.

#### **INDIVIDUAL PLAN NOTICE**

- In order to complete an Individual Plan, students must have a licensed Ohio educator to serve as Teacher of Record (TOR). This individual must meet HQT requirements for core courses.
- Lakota will assign a TOR for an Individual Plan.
- In certain cases where it seems appropriate, students may select an outside mentor (non-Lakota staff member) for their Individual Plan; however, this mentor does not replace the need for a Lakota TOR.
  - Outside mentors cannot be related to the applicant.
  - Outside mentors must have a background check and be fingerprinted (Bureau of Criminal Investigation check) prior to working with students. This is the financial responsibility of students/families. BCI documentation must be provided along with the *Credit Flex Application*.
- Based on the details of the Individual Plan, students will be required to make a formal presentation to members of the Lakota Credit Flex Committee.
- Students must obtain approval from members of the Lakota Credit Flex Committee prior to proceeding with an Individual Plan. Retroactive credit will not be awarded under any circumstances.
- Students on approved Individual Plans will periodically be required to provide evidence of progress and attendance to their TOR.
- Students failing to meet the standards for ongoing participation and satisfactory progress described in an Individual Plan may be reassigned to traditional courses at the discretion of Lakota Schools.
- *Students who have been expelled from school will not be eligible to apply for Credit Flexibility until they are allowed to re-enroll.*
- Students are responsible for all fees or supplies necessary to carry out an Individual Plan.

**Note: The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) has limitations on the types of courses it will accept for athletic eligibility. Please reference the NCAA Eligibility Center for more information regarding specific course options.**

## STUDENT CHECKLIST

**NOTE TO STUDENTS: *Please read carefully through all of the following information before beginning the Credit Flex Application Process. The Application requires you to verify that you have read this material and have followed all directions.***

\_\_\_\_\_ Meet with a counselor to ensure that your Credit Flex Plan aligns with your 4-year high school plan and will provide both graduation credit and opportunities for enrichment of your career and college plans.

\_\_\_\_\_ Complete the *Credit Flex Application* in collaboration with your parent/guardian and your counselor.

\_\_\_\_\_ You and your parent/guardian must indicate on your *Application* that you understand and agree to **ALL** Credit Flex guidelines.

\_\_\_\_\_ Submit the completed *Application*.

\_\_\_\_\_ If not approved, make revisions to your *Credit Flex Application* and resubmit as directed.

\_\_\_\_\_ If approved, begin work on your course.

For Mastery Assessment or Individual Plans, communicate with your Teacher of Record.

If it is an Online Option, work independently and make sure your counselor has received the final grade from the online provider.

For all students using Credit Flex to complete the PE 1 graduation requirement, students MUST also complete the state-required PE Assessment in addition to any other work outlined in the application and plan. Students will be assigned a Teacher of Record and will be required to communicate and meet as needed to complete all requirements. Final grades will NOT be awarded until this state requirement is met.

*If this course is a prerequisite to another course for original credit, you MUST complete the Credit Flex course PRIOR to being scheduled into the next course in the sequence.*

\_\_\_\_\_ Take any End-of-Course assessments applicable to your course as scheduled by the school within the state testing windows.

## Credit Flex Guidelines

- If my Credit Flexibility Plan is accepted, I will earn a grade upon completion of the course.
- Academic honesty rules apply to all Credit Flex Plans, just as they do in a traditional class setting.
- Grades for online coursework will be recorded on my transcript as submitted by the online provider.
- Credit will be granted at the end of Lakota School District's grading period for all Credit Flex options, and all completed Credit Flex options will appear on my transcript.
- Weighted grade/credit cannot be obtained through a Credit Flex Plan.
- I may not drop my Individual Credit Flex Plan after the regular drop date without receiving a failing grade.
- If I drop my Credit Flex Plan (Online Option, Mastery Assessment, or Individual Plan), I assume all financial responsibility associated with that Plan.
- I have discussed with my counselor how the outcome of this Credit Flex Plan may impact any traditional classes I need to take and/or my ability to schedule other courses, especially in the case of the Mastery Assessment option.
- I must meet attendance requirements set forth by the Lakota Local Schools.
- I am not to be in the school during times that I am not scheduled for a traditional class unless I have a scheduled appointment with my TOR, my counselor, or my administrator regarding my Credit Flex Plan.
- I am responsible to ensure that I have met graduation requirements by established deadlines to participate in senior graduation.
- I will participate in the traditional scheduling process with all students. The schedule of classes established during this process will not change until my Credit Flex Plan has been accepted.
- If I choose the Mastery Assessment option, I will be required to demonstrate mastery on a comprehensive exam identified by Lakota Local Schools. I further understand that I must earn an 80% or above on that exam and any required performance-based portion of Mastery Assessment. Finally, I understand that I may **not** retake the test in an attempt to earn an improved score.
- If I choose to use an Advanced Placement exam for the Mastery Assessment option, I understand that I must earn a 3 or better and that the results of such AP exam must be obtained by the district in time for me to complete graduation (specifically for 12<sup>th</sup> graders wishing to participate in graduation).
- My family and I are responsible for all fees or costs associated with my Credit Flex Plan as specified in this *Handbook*. No credit will be awarded if there are outstanding fees.
- If this course is a prerequisite to another course for original credit, I MUST complete the Credit Flex course PRIOR to being scheduled into the next course in the sequence.
- I am still required to take all End-of-Course assessments applicable to my courses and as scheduled by the school within the state testing windows.

## Credit Flex Application Process

(see graphic on following page)

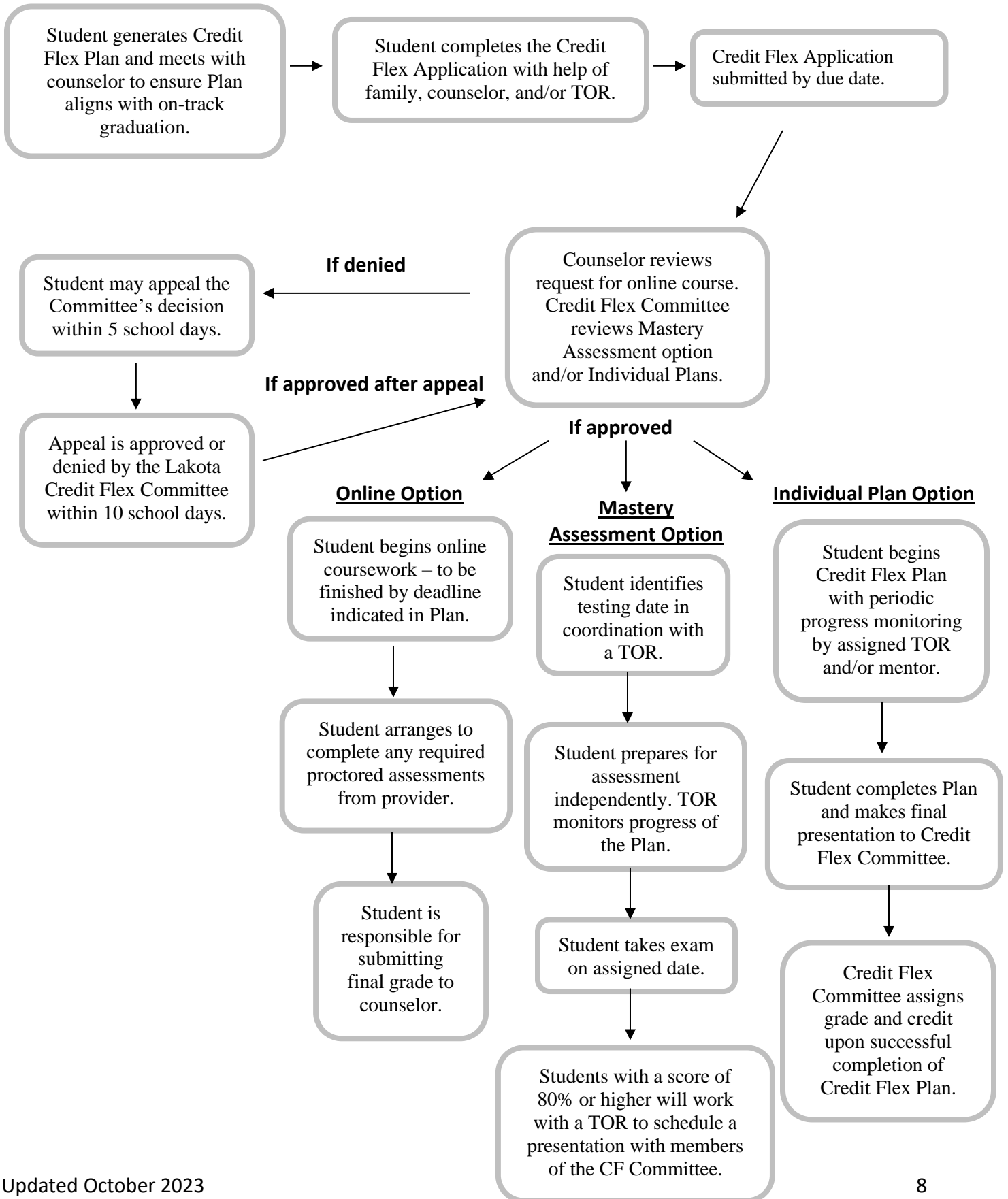
Students with high school standing wishing to earn graduation credits through a Credit Flex Plan must work through the following process.

1. Meet with a counselor to determine the following:
  - a. whether Credit Flexibility aligns with your 4-year high school graduation plan and
  - b. which Credit Flex option best fits your needs.
2. Complete the Credit Flex Application in collaboration with your parent/guardian.
3. Submit your Credit Flex Application.
4. Your counselor and/or the Lakota Credit Flex Committee will approve your Application or return it to you for revision.
5. You may appeal decisions regarding any part of your Credit Flex Application by submitting an appeal within 5 school days to the Lakota Credit Flex Committee for further review.
6. If you file an appeal, you and your parent/guardian will have an opportunity to present concerns and recommendations to the Committee. Appeals will be reviewed by the Committee within 10 school days from the date the appeal was submitted. Decisions of the Lakota Credit Flex Committee regarding appeals will be final unless overturned by the Superintendent or the Ohio Department of Education.
7. Once your Individual Plan is approved, you will be expected to meet with your Teacher of Record and outside mentor\* (if applicable) periodically to check on the progress of your Plan.
8. At the conclusion of your work, your online provider or the Lakota Credit Flex Committee will assign your final grade and credit.
9. It is your responsibility to submit all final grades to your counselor.
10. All credits you earn through Credit Flex will transfer between school districts in the same manner as traditional courses.

**\*Outside mentors must be fingerprinted and approved through the BCI background check process. All BCI documents must be included with the Application.**



## Process Flowchart



## Important Information for ALL Students

- Lakota Local Schools will communicate important information about Credit Flex to students and parents/guardians on an annual basis in a variety of ways: the district website, individual school websites, the High School *Program of Studies*, informational meetings, counseling departments, etc.
- Lakota Local Schools' personnel will build and maintain a resource of examples of Credit Flex applications in order to assist students, parents, and teachers with construction of Credit Flex Plans.
- Credit Flex Plans for students participating in extracurricular activities governed by the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) shall include procedures for documenting ongoing participation and satisfactory progress on the part of the student for the purpose of satisfying academic eligibility requirements established in OHSAA. Student athletes should check with the NCAA Clearinghouse or Eligibility Center for more information.

## Important Information for Student Athletes

- **High School Athletes**—To be eligible to play *interscholastic high school sports*, students must meet the following requirements:
  - be officially enrolled in school,
  - be enrolled in at least five, one-credit courses or the equivalent, each of which counts toward graduation, and
  - have received passing grades in at least five, one-credit courses or the equivalent, each of which counts toward graduation, during his or her last grading period.
- Students enrolled in a Credit Flex option which counts as one of their 5 credits required for athletic eligibility must “pass” that Credit Flex option even though the Plan may not be complete. If they are not considered “passing,” no credit toward the five required credits for eligibility can be awarded, and students will not be considered eligible.
- **College Athletics**—Students planning to participate in athletics at the college level should be aware that some Credit Flex options may not be included as part of the NCAA Eligibility Center's qualifying core courses required for eligibility. For potential college student athletes, the NCAA eligibility requirements specifically address the types of learning opportunities available through Credit Flex. *The NCAA does not allow the Mastery Assessment (test-out) option for core graduation requirements. In addition, not all online courses are approved by the NCAA. **Again, student athletes should consult the NCAA Clearinghouse or Eligibility Center for more information.***

## Credit Flexibility Application Timeline\*

### Semester and Year-Long Courses

<b>December 1</b>	Credit Flex Applications ( <u>for Mastery Assessment or Individual Plans</u> ) for work beginning second semester of this school year are due. Counselors forward applications to members of the Lakota Credit Flex Committee for review.
<b>April 15</b>	Credit Flex Applications ( <u>for Mastery Assessment or Individual Plans</u> ) for work beginning over the summer or the first semester of the next school year are due. Counselors forward applications to members of the Lakota Credit Flex Committee for review.
*Credit Flex <u>Applications for Online options will be accepted throughout the school year, but will <b>NOT</b> be accepted after the last day of school in any given year.</u>	

### Deadlines for Mastery Assessments and Individual Plan Presentations

Timelines are determined between the Teacher of Record and the student for the required components of each type of application. These are the items that need to be completed. If the course is a pre-requisite, the student must complete all components prior to being scheduled in the next course in the sequence.

<b>Mastery Assessment</b>	Students take the course exam. Students must score 80% or greater to continue with Mastery Assessment for semester or year-long courses. If students fail to achieve 80%, they must work with a counselor to schedule the course in the traditional manner.
	Depending on content, if earning an 80% or greater on the exam, students present the <b>Performance requirement for Mastery Assessment</b> to members of the Lakota Credit Flex Committee.
<b>Individual Plan</b>	Students present the <b>Individual Plans</b> to the Lakota Credit Flex Committee, based on date and timeline set with the Teacher of Record.

### Deadlines for Seniors

Due to timelines for graduation and appropriate scheduling for seniors, specific deadlines are necessary to confirm students have met graduation requirements.

<b>Deadline to Begin a Course</b>	Seniors must begin a Credit Flex course <u>by the end of September</u> in order to confirm with counselors that they will not need to be scheduled into that course.
<b>Deadline to Submit Final Grades</b>	Seniors must submit final grades for Credit Flex courses <u>by the 1<sup>st</sup> Friday in May</u> in order to ensure they meet graduation timelines.