

Ottawa County Early College Handbook for 2025-2026

Ottawa County Early College is a program that allows selected students to extend high school by one year to earn both their high school diploma and up to 62 college credits from Muskegon Community College at no cost to the student. The program is offered through collaboration between Ottawa Area ISD and Muskegon Community College.

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Ottawa County Early College Student Handbook

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INTRODUCTION

What Is Ottawa Area Early College?

Ottawa Area Early College is an intensive 3 year-year high school program, combining the best elements of the high school and early college experience. It is a partnership between Muskegon Community College (MCC) and the Ottawa Area ISD. The program provides a supportive and rigorous educational environment to qualified students from participating districts who are interested in earning college credit while still in high school. Students have the opportunity to earn up to 62 transferable college credits and/or an associate degree from MCC before graduating as a high school student, with a diploma, after year 13.

The Ottawa Area Early College is designed to prepare students for the rigors of a top-tier university and the demands of the workplace once they graduate. All students begin to enroll in college coursework during grade 11, earning 12-13 credits. During their 12th grade year, students will take 20-24 college credits, and during their 13th year, students will take at least 24 college credits and complete their final high school requirement and/or math class.

Ottawa Area Early College provides the best of both worlds for students as they take college level classes while still attending their high school and participating in all high school activities. At the same time, students are able – and encouraged - to partake in almost all college campus activities, and they have access to the wide variety of academic assistance resources provided by the college.

The purpose of Early College is to ensure that students are ready for a 4-year university or the workplace.



The Goals of Ottawa Area Early College- Transforming Potential into Success

Ottawa Area Early College strives to create a first-class learning community on the campus of Muskegon Community College where all who participate (students, staff, teachers/professors, parents, and community members) are valued as both learners and teachers. In so doing, the program provides real-world learning experiences for students in a potential career and supports students in a college environment as they learn to utilize the college's resources.

To help best prepare students for an ever-changing world, the program's goals are to:

1. Prepare students for successful transfer to four-year colleges and universities and enable students to pursue higher-level degree opportunities through our local partnerships with university programs.
2. Help students expand their ability to think critically, communicate effectively, and develop lifelong learning skills.
3. Develop technical and vocational skills necessary to enter and/or advance in the technologically sophisticated workplace of the 21st century.
4. Provide for the assessment and/or improvement of learning skills and attitudes necessary for a successful educational experience.
5. Meet the unique educational, cultural, and societal needs in the community through special courses, seminars, and exhibits.
6. Respond in a rapid fashion to the ever-changing educational and training needs of local and regional business and industry.
7. Stimulate intellectual curiosity, promote humanitarian values, and enhance the general educational experiences necessary for persons to function as effective citizens.
8. Create an atmosphere where diversity is acknowledged and encouraged.
9. Provide comprehensive student services that are conducive to student learning and satisfaction in all facets of the college experience and appropriate to an open-door community college.
10. Equip students with the ability to become resourceful and independent learners.
11. Teach students how to advocate for themselves professionally, respectfully, and effectively.
12. Improve student academic performance, while increasing high school graduation and persistence rates.
13. Increase the number of students graduating with options for professional careers.
14. Provide an atmosphere where all parents and community college stakeholders are part of the shared vision of EC.



General Information

Attendance

In order to carry out an effective attendance policy, students must have good attendance at high school as well as college. Attendance policies will be enforced from the student's high school. Attendance policies at Muskegon Community College will be enforced as well. The professors for each individual class establish these policies. It is the student's responsibility to check each course syllabus for this information. Ottawa Area Early College Program will support high school and college attendance policies. The Dean and Advisor will provide support for students, but it is the responsibility of the student to know the attendance policy for each class and to notify teachers if there is a conflict that will result in a missed class.

Student Conduct

It is a privilege to be a part of the Ottawa Area Early College Program. Students enrolled in the Early College program will follow the rules and guidelines established from their high school as well as the rules and guidelines of Muskegon Community College, Ottawa Area Early College, and the State of Michigan. Proper behavior is expected while in high school and on the campus of Muskegon Community College. Extreme violations of these rules and guidelines may result in dismissal from the program.

Resources/Activities

Students will have full access to all the resources provided by Muskegon Community College, including personal counseling, advising, and tutoring. Students are encouraged to utilize the Tutoring Center as needed, prior to having difficulties in class. Early College students are not eligible to participate in interscholastic athletic programs at MCC, but they are encouraged to join clubs and engage in the activities provided by Muskegon Community College.

School Closings

Students should follow local TV and radio stations for MCC or high school closures (look for the specific MCC campus you attend). If a high school is closed, that does not mean that MCC is closed. MCC is usually open, so students cannot assume anything. It is the student's responsibility to assure that they are attending school (MCC or High School) if it is open. To get the most up to date information on MCC closures, be sure to sign up for the RAVE alerts through MCC.

Grand Haven MCC Campus – DOES NOT CLOSE WITH GRAND HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS. It will be listed as MCC Grand Haven campus on all news outlets.

Coopersville Campus – the Coopersville MCC campus closes due to weather only when Coopersville Public Schools are closed due to weather.

Fees

As part of the Early College program, students are not required to pay tuition or book fees. In addition, most materials that are required on the class syllabus are covered through the program. Questions regarding fees should be addressed to the EC Dean or Advisor. Parking on campus is also free of charge. Students should register for a parking pass at the Welcome Center located in the front of campus.

Some examples of items not covered under the Early College program may include, but are not limited to, field trips, computers, state ID's, play or theatre performances, museum entrance fees, and any items not purchased before the Financial Aid window closed (books, scantrons, lab glasses, etc.).

MCC Student ID Card

Students are expected to carry their MCC student ID card with them while on campus. Students can use their card to enter most events on campus. These cards will be distributed during Summer Success Camp.

On-line Classes

Early College students will be allowed to register for on-line classes at the discretion of their high school and advisor. Generally speaking, (in a non-pandemic year), students will not be allowed to register for online classes until they have completed two semesters of classes on campus and established a GPA of 3.0 or better. Hybrid classes will be allowed.

The Early College staff recommends students take only one online class per semester. If a student wishes to take more than one class, this must be discussed with the school district and the student's parents. In order to be registered for more than one online class, an agreement must be signed by the student, parents, and school district. Students can receive a copy of this agreement from their advisor.

Book Policy

EARLY COLLEGE BOOK ORDERING PROCESS

Effective 2/1/2016

All Ottawa Early College students are responsible to rent/purchase and return their own books every semester through MCC Bookstore (at the bookstore or online). Due to the rising cost of textbooks and the amount of money this is costing your district; the decision has been made to make the switch from "buying" textbooks to "renting" textbooks when the option is available. This means that you will need to enter a credit or debit card number at checkout, however, this card WILL NOT BE CHARGED UNLESS YOU FAIL TO RETURN YOUR BOOKS ON TIME OR RETURN THEM IN POOR CONDITION/DAMAGED.

Students will go through the process of ordering books with a bookstore representative during summer orientation so that it is done correctly. If you have questions regarding the ordering process in future semesters, please contact the bookstore.

It is the student's responsibility to go to MCC (Muskegon location) to pick up books prior to the start of each semester. The student is also responsible for making sure their textbooks get returned. Students are required to save their receipts for the book return at the end of the semester. Failure to return books by the posted return date – or returning damaged books – will result in the credit card on file being charged. If a student does not return textbooks that were purchased by the district, that student will be responsible for paying for his/her own books for the following semester.

All books and materials must be purchased by the posted financial aid deadline.

Anything purchased after that will be the responsibility of the student.

Cohort Meetings

As part of the Early College program, students are required to attend group cohort meetings. These sessions will not be held at the same time or on the same date each month, as we try to recognize students' different schedules. Cohort meetings are established for students to share information with each other and also for the Dean and Advisor to provide information as it relates to their college and career readiness and the program.

It is the responsibility of EC students to adjust their schedules to attend these cohort meetings. Only college classes, high school games, or performances that conflict with these times are reasons for not attending cohort meetings. Practice or work are not acceptable reasons to miss. If a student does miss a cohort meeting for a reason other than listed above, the student will be responsible to contact the Dean or Advisor. Students that miss cohort meetings for unexcused reasons will be placed on Early College probation (See Page 10). Should you have a question, please contact the Dean or Advisor.

Checking In

Students are required to check in with their Advisor on a **WEEKLY** basis (during the school year and summer if taking summer courses) to discuss progress and concerns or respond to critical thinking questions. Students can schedule the meetings, drop by their advisor's office during office hours, or communicate via email. In addition, students should be monitoring their email (both MCC, their high school email, and personal accounts if provided) on a regular basis, as the Dean and Advisors will be using email as a primary form of communicating important information, such as meeting dates/times, class scheduling, bookstore information.

Students should send a copy of their college schedule to their high school counselors each semester, to ensure they are on track for high school graduation.

Withdraw/Changing Classes

Course change/withdrawals are not allowed once the semester has started. If you have extenuating circumstances, please contact your high school and your advisor. The student may be responsible for repaying the school district the costs associated with a dropped class, this includes being dropped from a class by the instructor. Families are encouraged to check the school district's policy regarding dropped classes ahead of time to see if they would be responsible to cover that cost. Ottawa Area Early College is not responsible for financial decisions and will not cover the cost of the tuition, registration fees, or books for classes that are dropped past the refund deadline. Please see below for probation information regarding dropped classes.

Early College Probation Criteria

Ottawa Area Early College Program is a privilege, and each Early College student must meet certain criteria in order to remain in the program.

When a student fails to meet these set criteria, that student will be placed on Early College probation for the remainder of their current semester and the entire following semester (Fall and Winter Semesters).

To be placed on Early College probation, at least one of the following has taken place:

- Student has failed to communicate with the Dean or Advisor as required.
- Student has failed to attend cohort meetings.
- Student's semester GPA is below 2.0.
- Student has withdrawn from a course after the drop/add deadline for any reason.
- Student has been dropped from a class by the instructor.
- Student has failed at least one course.
- Other as deemed by the Early College Dean or Advisor, based on the expectations outlined in the Early College handbook.

To have the probation removed, the student must follow and meet the minimum criteria listed below:

- Meet with the Dean or Mentor on a weekly basis to establish progress while at MCC for one full semester. A mutual meeting time will be set.
- Attend sessions in the tutoring center as needed.
- Attend sessions in the college success center as needed.
- Earn an overall GPA of 2.0 or greater at the semester.
- Attend all required cohort meetings.
- Pass all of your college classes.

**In addition to the above, the student may be slowed down as deemed necessary by the advisor or high school.*

If, after the probationary period is over, the student has failed to meet the minimum requirements set forth by Ottawa Area Early College, their High School, and Muskegon Community College, that student will be transitioned out of the program and returned full time to his/her High School with any outstanding costs to be paid by the student/parent.

Counseling and Advising Center

The counselors at Muskegon Community College are available by appointment to meet with students regarding both personal and academic matters. Students can contact the counseling office at 231-777-0362 to set an appointment. Students are also required to meet with an MCC counselor at least one time per semester to schedule classes and talk about transferability. Students will not be registered for classes for the next semester until a meeting with an MCC counselor has taken place.

Tutoring Center

Peer Tutoring - If assistance is needed in a specific course, you may contact the Tutoring Center at 231-777-0393, located in Room 204. These appointments can also be scheduled through your MyMCC portal. Student tutors recommended by instructors are available to any student on campus. The number of hours per week of free tutoring available to you varies with the number of credits being taken.

Walk-in Tutoring - Walk-in Tutoring is a set schedule of times when a tutor will be available to assist with problems without an appointment.

Supplemental Instruction (SI) - Supplemental Instruction is a small group academic assistance program, which has shown an increase in student performance. It is offered

only in specific introductory classes. Check with your counselor or the tutoring center and SI supervisor for more information.

Referral Tutoring – If peer tutoring is not appropriate or available, any student, parent or concerned adult may contact the College Tutoring Center to request help in finding a tutor. The Tutoring Center does not pay for such tutoring, however. Those who prefer referral tutoring must pay the tutor themselves after each session unless other arrangements are made.

Online Tutoring – Online Tutoring is available to all students. Students can receive one-on-one help directly from a tutor in any subject. In addition, students may post questions on the Online Tutoring Shell to be answered within 24 hours by a qualified tutor. Please call 231-777-0393 for access to the Online Tutoring Shell.

MCC Tutoring Center Website – www.muskegoncc.edu/tutoring

Office of Information Technology

MCC students should call the Student Technology Helpdesk at (866) 718-5170 for all technology-related issues, including anything related to Blackboard. The technicians at the Student Helpdesk are specially trained to work with students' technology needs and are available anytime.

College Success Center

The College Success Center (CSC) was established to help students realize their full educational potential at MCC. It includes three labs, all of which offer credit courses in writing, math, and reading/study skills. The CSC works closely with the Testing Center. CSC courses are taught in a classroom setting or on a one-to-one basis where assignments are designed to meet the academic needs of the individual. CSC courses range from basic skills to more sophisticated college-level activities, such as skim reading or the writing of research papers.

For one-on-one courses, weekly scheduled conferences with instructors and paraprofessionals provide constant monitoring of skill development, and assignments are adjusted accordingly.

The CSC is open at least 60 hours a week so that students may use it during their free time.

Students Privacy

The Ottawa County Early College Program will follow all of the appropriate FERPA laws as they pertain to student privacy. Please contact the Dean or Advisor should you have any questions.

Student Privacy – FERPA

Students wishing to authorize release of their record will need to fill out the Authorization to Release Information Form. If you wish to revoke a previous authorization, you should complete a FERPA Retraction Form. Students wishing to withhold directory information will need to complete the non-Disclosure form. Once completed you may fax or mail form to:

MUSKEGON COMMUNITY COLLEGE - REGISTRAR'S OFFICE 221 S
QUARTERLINE RD

MUSKEGON MI 49442
FAX: (231) 777-0209

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS & PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords students certain rights with respect to their educational records. They are:

The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the College receives a request for access. Students should submit to the Dean of Academic Services and Registrar written request that identify the record(s) they wish to inspect. The College will make arrangements for access and notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

The right to request the amendment of the student's education record that the student believes is inaccurate or misleading. Students may ask the College to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. Student should submit to the Dean of Academic Services and Registrar in written request, clearly identify the part of the record(s) they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the College decides not to amend the record as requested by the student, the College will notify the student of the decision and advise the student of his or her right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the student when notified of the right to a hearing.

The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the College in an administrative, supervisory, academic, research, or support staff position; a person or company with whom the College has contracted (such as an attorney, auditor, or collection agency); a person serving on the Board of Trustees; or a student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by Muskegon Community College to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20202-4605

Student Agreement Page

I have read and understand the Ottawa Area Early College handbook and guidelines.

I will follow the rules and guidelines set by my High School, Ottawa Area Early College, Muskegon Community College and the Michigan Department of Education.

If I violate any of the guidelines/rules, I understand that I could be dismissed from the program. I understand that if I am dismissed from, or choose to exit the Ottawa Area Early College program, I will be responsible for any costs associated with tuition and books.

Student Name Printed _____

Student Signature _____

Parent/Guardian_____

Date_____