

North Carolina Guidelines for Awarding Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM)

Version 1
October 2013



Public Schools of North Carolina
State Board of Education | Department of Public Instruction

Update?

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

The guiding mission of the North Carolina State Board of Education is that every public school student will graduate from high school, globally competitive for work and postsecondary education and prepared for life in the 21st Century.

WILLIAM COBEY
Chair :: Chapel Hill

BECKY TAYLOR
Greenville

JOHN A. TATE III
Charlotte

A.L. COLLINS
Vice Chair :: Kernersville

REGINALD KENAN
Rose Hill

WAYNE MCDEVITT
Asheville

DAN FOREST
Lieutenant Governor :: Raleigh

KEVIN D. HOWELL
Raleigh

MARCE SAVAGE
Waxhaw

JANET COWELL
State Treasurer :: Raleigh

GREG ALCORN
Salisbury

PATRICIA N. WILLOUGHBY
Raleigh

JUNE ST. CLAIR ATKINSON
Secretary to the Board :: Raleigh

OLIVIA OXENDINE
Lumberton

NC DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
June St. Clair Atkinson, Ed.D., State Superintendent
301 N. Wilmington Street :: Raleigh, North Carolina 27601-2825

In compliance with federal law, NC Public Schools administers all state-operated educational programs, employment activities and admissions without discrimination because of race, religion, national or ethnic origin, color, age, military service, disability, or gender, except where exemption is appropriate and allowed by law.

Inquiries or complaints regarding discrimination issues should be directed to:

Dr. Rebecca Garland, Chief Academic Officer :: Academic Services and Instructional Support
6368 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-6368 :: Telephone: (919) 807-3200 :: Fax: (919) 807-4065

Visit us on the Web :: www.ncpublicschools.org

M0513

North Carolina Credit by Demonstrated Mastery Implementation Guide or Guidelines?

How to Use This Guide.....	2
Section One – Policy Overview.....	4
Introduction and Purpose of this Guide.....	4
Definitions.....	4
Section Two – CDM Process Overview and Logistics.....	9
Process Overview.....	9
Suggested Timelines.....	9
Fall.....	9
Suggested Timelines, continued.....	10
Spring.....	10
Summer.....	11
Implementation Logistics.....	11
CDM Task Teams.....	12
Local CDM Committees.....	12
CDM Assessment Teams.....	13
CDM Artifact Review Teams.....	13
CDM Toolkit: Parent and Community Tools.....	13
The Notification Process and Other Documentation.....	14
Awarding Credit for Successful Attempts.....	14
Unsuccessful Attempts.....	14
The Appeals Process.....	15
Pre-requisites.....	15
The Role of Other Data.....	15
Section Three – Multi-phase Assessment Guidance.....	17
Introduction.....	17
Phase I - Examinations	17
EOC Courses.....	17
Non-EOC Courses.....	17
Advanced Placement Examination Option.....	18
Re-testing.....	19
EOC Testing Windows.....	19
Examination Procedures	19
Additional Local Requirements.....	20
Appeals Procedures.....	21
Section Four – Additional Considerations.....	22
Long-term Considerations.....	22
Upper-Level Courses.....	
Opportunity for Early Graduation.....	
High School Diploma Endorsements.....	
Athletics and Extra-Curricular Activities.....	
Quality Points and GPA.....	
External Organizations and CDM.....	23
NCHSAA.....	23
NCAA.....	24
North Carolina Community College System.....	24
University of North Carolina System.....	24

How to Use This Guide

This document offers guidance specific to the North Carolina State Board of Education policy addressing how students can earn course credit in a manner that does not require that specific seat-time restrictions be met. This document specifically addresses Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM), which is an option for earning credit for all NC public school students in grades 6-12.

This guide is divided into four sections:

- **Section One** offers an overview of the CDM policy, the rationale, background, and development process.
- **Section Two** addresses CDM implementation and logistical guidelines. These guidelines will be applied for students who wish to bypass entirely or “test out” of a course or subject area and earn course credit without traditional course enrollment. Some students may choose CDM for the purpose of accelerating and moving into another more advanced course.
- **Section Three** discusses the details of the multi-phase assessment process required for students to earn CDM. This section also provides examination and artifact guidance, as well as suggestions regarding local requirements for CDM. Topics covered include testing windows, minimum scoring thresholds, use of standardized tests as local examinations, and types of artifacts and the artifact development process.
- **Section Four** addresses other considerations and areas that may be impacted by CDM including graduation-related issues, accountability impacts, and acceptance of CDM by outside organizations.

These Guidelines, Frequently Asked Questions, and a Toolkit for CDM may be found on the Credit by Demonstrated Mastery wiki at cdm.ncdpi.wikispaces.net.

The CDM Toolkit provides LEAs with recommended timelines and documents which may be customized to meet a school district needs. The CDM wiki will be updated periodically. If there are CDM-related resources or ideas that you find may be helpful to others, please share them with the contacts below and they will post the information to share.

The guidelines presented here are provided by the State Board of Education (SBE) and the NC Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to help districts and schools implement the Credit by Demonstrated Mastery policy for the benefit of students across the state.

Questions, comments, and concerns should be directed to Director of Gifted Education and Advanced Programs or the Director of LEA Projects at NCDPI. They can be reached by calling NCDPI Academic Services at 919.807.3200. (Use an email alias like [\[REDACTED\]](#))

Section One – Policy Overview

Introduction and Purpose of this Guide

The State Board of Education (SBE) encourages supporting students to accelerate their learning appropriately. Several long-standing policies document SBE intent, including:

- GCS-F-016, Policy Defining Academic Rigor;
- GCS-L-006, Policy for Adequately Informing Ninth Grade Students about Accelerated Preparation for College Entry; and
- GCS-N-004, State Graduation Requirements
- GCS-M-001, Course for Credit, High School Courses in Middle School

Policy GCS-M-001, Course for Credit, specifically offers North Carolina students the opportunity to accelerate their learning by earning course credit through a demonstration of mastery of course material, beginning by the end of 2013-14 school year for course placement in 2014-15.

The addition of this Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM) provision to the Course for Credit policy resulted from feedback received from superintendents, district-level Academically and/or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) coordinators, principals, parents and students. In response to this feedback, DPI formed a working group with representatives from Academic Services, the NC Virtual Public School, and district-level staff from school districts around the state to study how the SBE might implement such a policy. These Guidelines and Toolkit are the direct work products from the CDM Work Group.

This guide provides specific guidance to assist local schools and school districts in effectively executing the CDM policy.

Definition

The State Board of Education defines "mastery" as a student's command of course material at a level that demonstrates a deep understanding of the content standards and the ability to apply his or her knowledge of the material.

"Credit by demonstrated mastery" is the process by which LEAs shall, based upon a body-of-evidence, award a student credit in a particular course without requiring the student to complete classroom instruction for a certain amount of seat time.

Policy Language

Section 13 of GCS-M-001 provides the following Credit by Demonstrated Mastery policy:

13. Credit by Demonstrated Mastery

***Policy Language,
continued***

13.1 Credit by Demonstrated Mastery is the process by which LEAs shall, based upon a body-of-evidence, award a student credit in a particular course without requiring the student to complete classroom instruction for a certain amount of seat time.

13.2 "Mastery" is defined as a student's command of course material at a level that demonstrates a deep understanding of the content standards and application of knowledge.

13.3 Beginning with the 2013-14 school year, Credit by Demonstrated Mastery shall be available for all NC students in grades 6-12.

13.4 Students shall demonstrate mastery through a multi-phase assessment, consisting of (1) a standard examination, which shall be the EOC/EOG where applicable, or a final exam developed locally and (2) an artifact which requires the student to apply knowledge and skills relevant to the content standards. LEAs may require additional requirements, such as performance tasks.

This multi-phase assessment process builds a body-of-evidence that allows a committee to determine if the student has a deep understanding of the standards for the course or subject area, as defined by the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, thereby earning credit for the course without experiencing it in the school setting.

13.5 DPI shall develop implementation guidelines for this policy. These guidelines shall provide guidance for LEAs regarding scoring of assessments as well as local implementation. The guidelines shall establish minimum scores for the standard examination and artifact creation. Students must attain minimum scores to earn Credit by Demonstrated Mastery.

13.6 The following courses are excluded from Credit by Demonstrated Mastery:

- Career and Technical Education (CTE) work-based learning courses (co-op, internship, apprenticeship)
- CTE courses that have a clinical setting as a requirement of the course, such as ProStart, Early

Childhood Education I/II and Nursing Fundamentals

- CTE Advanced Studies courses
 - English Language Learner (ELL) courses
 - Healthful Living required courses
-

***Rationale and
Philosophical
Base***

Every student deserves a high-quality education, and the Credit by Demonstrated Mastery policy ensures that every student has the opportunity for the most rigorous and appropriate course of study based on academic progress and need.

This policy emerged from shared views of the North Carolina General Assembly and the North Carolina State Board of Education. The General Assembly believes that "public schools should challenge all students to aim for academic excellence" (Article 9B), while the State Board of Education's mission, adopted in 2006, is that "every public school student will graduate from high school, globally competitive for work and postsecondary education and prepared for life in the 21st century." Achieving this requires that students are able to progress and advance in coursework when they are ready, without the traditional barrier of seat time. A student able to demonstrate a deep understanding of the knowledge, skills and understandings of a particular course will earn credit for that course so that he/she may spend their time more effectively in another course where they will learn and experience new content and material.

The State Board of Education has stated, "A great public education system is one that is ambitious and prepares all students for postsecondary education, careers, citizenship, and lifelong learning. It sets high standards and fosters the critical thinking and other skills needed in today's global economy." By providing the Credit by Demonstrated Mastery process, uniquely qualified students who possess mastery knowledge of content can use their education time in courses that provide new challenges and new learning.

***North Carolina's
Approach***

Currently, at least nineteen other states have policies allowing credit without seat time: Texas, New York, Tennessee, Oregon, Alabama, Iowa, Missouri, Ohio, Idaho, Utah, Oklahoma, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky, Virginia, New Hampshire, Maryland, and Arizona. These states use either an examination only or the option of an examination or another product for a student to receive credit for a course. Implementation guidelines and expectations vary from state to state.

To develop a comprehensive approach designed to ensure students

truly understand the material for which they want to receive credit DPI Academic Services established the CDM Working Group. This group began meeting in Spring 2012 and included DPI personnel from across the agency, NC Virtual Public School representation, and LEA representatives from around the state. During policy and guideline development, representatives from 12 different LEAs have worked in-depth on the committee to ensure quality and meaningful policy development. The committee's goals were to develop a conceptual framework around this topic to ensure students are engaged in personalized learning and using their time most effectively, to develop an SBE policy, and to develop guidelines to support LEAs in policy implementation.

The result of the CMD Working Group is a policy different from those in other states, one intended to address challenges in other policies and the high quality of education in NC. North Carolina's CDM policy requires a comprehensive, multi-phased assessment approach, designed to enable student to demonstrate a deep understanding of content, ensure appropriate student placement, allow students to receive credit for what they know and personalize student learning.

Students Who Can Benefit from CDM

Access to the Credit by Demonstrated Mastery process is open to all NC public school students in grades 6-12. CDM should not be limited to certain students or exclude any student who wants to pursue this pathway.

Title?

The policy recognizes that any student may have unique, individual circumstances in his or her learning path that has allowed the student to gain a deep understanding of content of a particular course or subject area without the traditional school setting. CDM promotes personalized learning and removes the requirement for seat time for student learning and earning credit for courses so that a student may take a more advanced course in that same subject area or provide time in the class schedule to explore a new topic. It allows subject-level acceleration without requiring full grade-level acceleration.

While the CDM process is open to all students, it is not for whole groups of students. It is not intended to replace the general accelerated pathways local school districts often provide advanced students. Instead, it is designed to provide opportunities for an individual student who has an exceptional mastery of course content prior to even taking a course and who wishes to earn credit and move onto something else more meaningful.

While access should not be limited to any student, local schools and

CDM committees are encouraged to have discussions with parents, the student, and appropriate district and school-based personnel, including AIG and content specialists and principal, to ensure the most effective decisions are made for an individual student.

CDM is for standard level credit. Achieving credit through CDM does not impact a student's GPA. It is critical that CDM teams discuss with parents/students the long term implications regarding CDM and the possible impacts on graduation endorsements and other initiatives.

During policy development, the CDM Working Group intentionally crafted a process that eventually will accommodate students wishing to **reduce**, rather than eliminate, seat time, either for acceleration or for credit recovery purposes. The Working Group is still assessing the complex implementation issues for seat-time reduction circumstances and additional guidelines will be available in the future to allow implementation for students in these situations.

Section Two – CDM Process Overview and Logistics

Process Overview An individual student initiates the process to earn CDM and participate in the multi-phase assessment. Students may decide this on their own or through discussions with a teacher or other specialist, but attempts to earn credit through this policy should be undertaken after a conversation between the principal, the student and his or her parents, students, and appropriate subject area teachers. If the parties agree to pursue this option, the student must demonstrate mastery by first successfully completing an assessment to establish foundational knowledge of the subject. The second step is the creation and presentation of an artifact which requires the student to apply relevant content knowledge and skills. Earning credit also may require additional forms of performance assessment appropriate to the course or subject area, such as listening and speaking assessments in world language classes, as determined by the local school district. The combination of examination, artifact creation, and optional additional performance assessments will provide assurance that the student has met standards for the course or subject area, as defined by the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, and deserves credit for the course or subject area.

**Bullet form? use
Phase language?**

**Suggested
Implementation
Timelines**

**Should this also
be a separate
sheet in Toolkit?**

It is the intent of SBE policy and DPI that LEAs will provide opportunities for CDM by the end of the 2013-14 school year, to inform class placement decisions in 2014-15. Schools and school districts must plan how they will implement the policy, and this guide offers suggestions about how to establish an effective program that gives students acceleration opportunities while preserving the integrity of the State Board of Education's standards as defined in the NC Standard Course of Study.

For this upcoming year, the CDM Working Committee recommends starting with the Spring Timeline below.

The CDM Working Committee recommends the following three implementation timelines for the CDM process in local school districts.

Fall

Fall Timeline:

This is for students attempting to earn credit during the fall semester for courses scheduled in the spring.

Last 2 weeks of September: Deadline for student application for CDM. Implement testing window during which students attempting to earn CDM schedule and complete the Phase 1 assessment portion of the CDM process. For students attempting to earn credit for EOC courses (Algebra I, Biology, English II), use testing window

***Suggested
Implementation
Timelines,
continued***

established by NCDPI Academic Services and ensure required test security protocols are followed.

First week of October: Report results to students and parents.

Remainder of October: Schedule Phase 2 artifact work for students who achieve the required standard on the assessment.

First 2 weeks of November: Conduct school–level artifact review; panel meets to review artifacts and determine results.

Mid-November: Provide results to students; send schedule changes to counselors as appropriate. Begin a ten-calendar-day window for appeal submission.

First week of December: Conduct appeals reviews.

Second week of December: Finalize appeal decisions and share results; amend Spring semester schedules as needed.

Spring

Spring Timeline:

This is for students attempting to earn credit during the spring semester for courses scheduled in the fall.

Last 2 weeks of February: Deadline for student application for CDM. Implement testing window during which students attempting to earn CDM schedule and complete the Phase 1 assessment portion of the CDM process. For students attempting to earn credit for EOC courses (Algebra I, Biology, English II), use testing window established by NCDPI Academic Services and ensure required test security protocols are followed.

First week of March: Report results to students and parents.

Remainder of March: Schedule Phase 2 artifact work for students who achieve the required standard on the assessment. (Allow necessary flexibility to accommodate Spring Break in your district.)

First 2 weeks of April: Conduct school–level artifact review; panel meets to review artifacts and determine results.

Mid-April: Provide results to students; send schedule changes to counselors as appropriate. Begin a ten-calendar-day window for submission of appeals.

First week of May: Conduct appeals reviews.

Second week of May: Finalize appeal decisions and share results; amend Fall semester schedules as needed.

Summer

Summer Timeline:

This is for students attempting to earn credit during the summer for courses scheduled in the fall.

The CDM Working Committee recommends this time period should be reserved for students who move into the district after the Spring window or who miss the Spring window due to illness or other extenuating circumstance. Summer timeline CDM will be more difficult to accomplish both for students and administrators due to a lack of flexibility due to time. Please remember to be mindful of the timing with respect to the requirement of having final schedule changes made prior to the 10th day of school.

Last 2 weeks of July: Deadline for student application for CDM. Implement testing window during which students attempting to earn CDM schedule and complete the Phase 1 assessment portion of the CDM process. For students attempting to earn credit for EOC courses (Algebra I, Biology, English II), use testing window established by NCDPI Academic Services and ensure required test security protocols are followed.

First week of August: Report results to students and parents. Begin ten-calendar-day period for Phase 2 artifact completion.

Mid-August: Conduct school-level artifact review; panel meets to review artifacts and determine results.

Mid-August + 5 days Provide results to students; send schedule changes to counselors as appropriate. Begin a ten-calendar-day window for submission of appeals.

Last week of August: Conduct appeals reviews.

First week of September: Finalize appeal decisions and share results; amend Fall semester schedules as needed.

Implementation Logistics

A host of logistical issues should be considered prior to implementing the CDM process and beginning the multi-phase assessment for students. Because different school districts manage operations in different ways and based upon differing local conditions and needs, there is no "one-size-fits-all" solution for these considerations. Below are recommendations of how to develop your own school district's CDM process and practices. These recommendations are not

requirements but suggestions from the CDM Working Group as a place to start your thinking and implementation.

District CDM Teams

The CDM Working Group recommends that central offices convene minimally principals or other school-based leadership, curriculum/instructional leaders, district AIG coordinator, and teacher representatives to form a District CDM Team designed to discuss policy implementation. This team shall develop local procedures and policies to implement CDM most effectively in the LEA, including an appeal process for families. Issues include the notification process and any documentation required throughout the process, how school-level CDM committees will be structured, how the appeals process will work and how to ensure it is applied consistently, and whether CDM will be offered for courses not currently taught in a student's school.

Local CDM Committees

In addition to the District CDM Team, Local CDM committees are suggested at the school level. These small groups conduct the work of leading students through the CDM process at the school-level and assessing the artifacts for those who progress to that stage. The suggested structure includes a total of 3-5 members who reflect the diversity of the school population and could include:

- the principal or designee,
- a curriculum specialist,
- one or more faculty members licensed for and teaching in the relevant subject area,
- the gifted coordinator,
- the testing coordinator, or
- a school counselor.

Typically, committee members will differ depending upon the subject for which a student is attempting to earn credit. In a single school, there may be several different committees at any given time for different students. These subject-area committees may include the same or different members each time a committee is formed for that subject area.

Please note that this suggested structure is designed to help schools implement their local processes; it is not a mandated structure and school teams are encouraged to consider what will work most effectively for their students. School district central office leaders may also decide on a committee structure they wish to be implemented consistently district-wide. Recommended committees include an assessment committee and an artifact review committee, both of which are described in more detail below.

CDM Assessment Team

At the district level, a CDM Assessment Team will guide the development and/or selection of tests (as applicable), artifacts, and rubrics for each course and subject area for which CDM is offered. This may vary from school to school depending upon district policy. These teams may be formed at the district level or at the school level depending upon how districts wish to organize and manage the CDM process. These teams ideally consist of two or more teachers from each content area where CDM is an option as well as at least one administration representative. The responsibilities of this team include creating suggested artifact requirements and accompanying rubrics. This team may also serve as the artifact review team where feasible, or may assist individual schools or groups of schools in developing their own artifact review teams.

CDM Artifact Review Teams

A CDM Artifact Review Team will determine whether a student has met the artifact requirements for CDM. Generally speaking, CDM Artifact Review Teams should be established at the school level but a district CDM Assessment Team may also perform these responsibilities if it makes sense to do so. CDM Artifact Teams shall consist of at least two content-area teachers and the school principal or designee. This group of at least three educational experts will review student artifacts and presentations to determine whether students have successfully met the requirements of Phase 2.

Is this the same as the Student Review Panel that is also talked about in documents? Does this team make the final decision?

CDM Toolkit: Parent and Community Tools

To further support LEA implementation of the CDM policy, the CDM Working Group created a CDM Toolkit comprised of sample forms, letters, and presentations. These documents are provided as a starting point for schools and districts to begin implementation of the CDM policy. The documents may be used as is or may be used to begin discussion and development of customized district- and school-level documentation.

Move to end?

The CDM Toolkit maybe found at <http://cdm.ncdpi.wikispaces.net> and contains the following:

- 

Other types of documentation may be desired as well depending upon local procedures. These might include a results letter, an

appeal form, an appeal decision letter, and other documentation.

***The Notification
Process and Other
Documentation***

Students may arrive at the decision to attempt CDM on their own, or in consultation with a teacher, counselor, or other adult in the school or at home. Students and their families are responsible for expressing interest in earning credit by demonstrated mastery. They may contact the school principal, CDM committee member, or a teacher of his/her desire to earn credit by demonstrated mastery. This notification begins the process and the CDM Working Group recommends LEAs use a standard form to communicate with parents that their child has made a request. (A sample letter is provided in the CDM Toolkit.)

***Awarding Credit
for Successful
Attempts***

Students who demonstrate mastery through the process outlined above shall receive credit for the course toward graduation requirements. Credit shall be indicated on a student's transcript as a "pass" (indicated in Home Base on a pass/fail basis), and where applicable, the "passed EOC" indicator is set to the level at which the student scored, either "III" or "IV". The school shall not grant a numeric or letter grade for the course and shall not include the grade in the student's grade point average (GPA) calculation, as students' GPA will be computed with courses taken during the high school years.

***Unsuccessful
Attempts***

If a student unsuccessfully attempts to earn credit by demonstrated mastery, s/he does not receive credit for the course. To receive credit after an unsuccessful attempt to demonstrate mastery, a student is required to:

- enroll in and complete the course,
- receive a passing grade for the course, AND
- re-take the EOC (if applicable) according to existing State policies and procedures.

The CDM Working Group encourages schools to use data gathered through the CDM process to inform instructional pathways and differentiation for students even if they do not earn credit by demonstrated mastery.

No transcript record or other record of the unsuccessful attempt is required and it should NOT be recorded in Home Base. The local CDM committee may choose to note the attempt in the student's file. **Students shall not be penalized for an unsuccessful attempt and such attempts shall never, under any circumstances, affect the student's grades or transcript.**

The Appeals Process

The CDM Working Group recommends that school districts offer an opportunity for students/families to appeal committee decisions regarding the decision of earning CDM. Students and their parents should submit appeals within ten days of receiving notification that an attempt was not successful and an Appeal Panel should review and finalize appeal decisions within ten days of appeal submission. The CDM Working Group suggests use of a written appeal request form to facilitate the process and included a sample form in the CDM Toolkit found at <http://cdm.ncdpi.wikispaces.net>.

Pre-requisites

For courses taught in a predetermined sequence, a student may only attempt to earn CDM for the next course in the sequence. For example, if a student has taken Math I and would like to attempt CDM for Math III, s/he would need to first successfully earn credit for Math II, either through CDM or traditional enrollment in the course.

The Role of Other Data

For districts interested in a proactive approach to identifying students who may benefit from earning credit by demonstrated mastery, consider other student-level data such as EVAAS, EXPLORE, PLAN, PSAT, ACT, and SAT scores. As with data from CDM attempts, these scores should also be used to inform instructional pathways and differentiation for students even if they do not earn credit by demonstrated mastery.

Earning CDM in CTE Courses

Generally, high school students are able to earn credit for CTE courses using this CDM policy. However, certain courses are not eligible for credit by demonstrated mastery. These courses include those for which there are no state technical standards, such as Advanced Studies courses. Such courses are student-directed and should be scheduled as a means for students to extend their learning beyond the state-approved or LEA-offered courses within the district. Courses that require work-based learning also are excluded from CDM. Due to the requirement for employer interaction and reflection from that work experience, it would not be possible for students to produce the evidence listed in the policy.

Middle school CTE courses should not be considered for CDM. The middle school CTE curriculum is designed to be exploratory in nature and to provide guidance for high school CTE course selection. Middle school students should wait until they enroll at the high school to request CDM for CTE courses.

When students successfully earn CDM for a CTE course, the credit shall be included in the required credits to earn CTE concentrations.

Students should be aware that awarding articulated credit at the community college requires both a course grade of at least B and a post-assessment score of 93 or higher. At this time, students who request credit without completing the course will not be eligible for articulated credit.

Section Three – Multi-phase Assessment Guidance

Introduction

Add Phase 3 about additional local requirements and decision-making?

Earning Credit by Demonstrated Mastery requires students to complete a multi-phase assessment process that includes an examination and an artifact. The Phase I assessment process focuses on the examination which establishes that a student has a strong foundational understanding of the course material. The Phase II process focuses on the artifact and establishes a student's ability to apply knowledge in a real-world context. This multi-phase design intentionally aligns with the conceptual underpinnings of the Common Core and C Essential Standards, which are also designed to convey knowledge and the ability to apply knowledge.

Phase I - Examination

Examinations are the first component of the multi-phase assessment students follow to receive Credit by Demonstrated Mastery. Success at a minimally acceptable level on the exam affords a student the opportunity to continue on to the artifact phase. High school courses comprise two classes – EOC or non-EOC – and districts and schools should use different examinations for each.

EOC Courses

For North Carolina EOC courses (Math I, Biology, and English II), a student's examination component shall be the end-of-course state examination for the course. Students must take the exam in a pre-determined testing window (additional information about testing windows may be found later in this section).

Students must achieve the following scale scores exhibiting superior understanding to qualify for Phase II artifact development:

**Math I ≥ 264
Biology ≥ 261
English II ≥ 165**

These scale scores are research- and content-based, technically sound and based upon item-mapping standard-setting procedures conducted by the DPI during the summer of 2013.

Non-EOC Courses

For non-EOC courses, students must take a local examination developed or selected by the district or school. Examinations shall be based upon the North Carolina Essential Standards for these courses and should be cumulative in nature where a qualifying score demonstrates mastery of the entire course. The number of questions included on the exam for each standard should be

representative of the standard's relative weight within the course.

How these local examinations are developed is the discretion of the district central office. Some options might include:

- Ask subject-area teachers across the district to submit final examinations from their courses and choose the best exam (or exams) from among them, or use them to construct an exam for the purpose of CDM;
- Have principals or other school-based leadership to review examinations from teachers in the school and choose one or construct one;
- Have schools convene subject-area teachers to develop a CDM examination for students in the school.
- Develop shared CDM examinations with neighboring districts.

The list above includes ideas; it is not exhaustive. Authority to establish the examination component for non-EOC courses rests with the district central office and the CDM Working Group recommends a common approach district-wide.

Students attempting CDM for non-EOC courses may take the local exam at any time and must earn a 94 or higher to qualify for Phase II artifact development.

At this time, for security and logistics reasons, state-developed NC Final Exams may not be used. This may be re-assessed in the future to allow for these exams to serve this purpose.

*Advanced
Placement
Examination Option*

If a student earns a 3 or higher on an AP exam without having enrolled in a specific course and wants to earn CDM for the equivalent high school course requirement, where applicable, the AP exam score may satisfy the Phase I assessment and provide evidence of foundational knowledge of the appropriate equivalent high school course. Students will then need to complete the Phase 2 artifact component to receive a CDM credit for the equivalent standard-level high school course for which the AP exam relates. This AP exam option offers an added bonus of potentially earning a student college credit as well as fulfilling the assessment requirement for CDM.

Students may not earn CDM for AP or IB courses, because CDM is only available for standard-level courses based on the NCSCOS. Note that AP and IB courses are not eligible for CDM.

Re-testing

For both EOC and non-EOC courses, re-testing is *not* permitted. Students attempting CDM receive one opportunity per course to achieve the minimum standards for Phase 1.

EOC Testing Windows

Three testing windows per year provide an opportunity for students to use EOC tests to earn credit by demonstrated mastery. A testing window is offered each spring, each summer and each fall according to the following schedule:

- Last two weeks of March
- Last two weeks of July
- Last two weeks of September

The turnaround time for online administrations of Math I and Biology EOCs is the same day; however, online test records are not scored until any required accommodations coding is complete. NCDPI provides daily drops of scored records between 4pm and 7pm daily. For example, if required accommodations coding is complete by 4pm on the day of the test, scored records are returned to the LEA by 7pm that same day. If required coding is not completed until 4pm the following day, the scored record is returned to the LEA test coordinator by 7pm on the following day.

English II exams include constructed response items, necessitating a different scoring process.

Examination Procedures

Schools should adhere to the following guidelines for conducting CDM examinations:

- Exams should be administered during the normal school day in order to ensure equal access.
 - Modifications and/or accommodations based on IEP/504 should be addressed in the testing plan.
 - Testing procedures, including the setting for the exam, should comply with state guidelines as required. Where not applicable, a classroom setting may be appropriate.
 - Where LEA teams determine additional assessments are necessary to determine a deep understand of content standards (for example, performance tasks in world language courses), these assessments must be consistently implemented across the LEA.
-

Phase II - Artifacts

While the Phase I assessment process establishes a student's strong foundational understanding of the course standards, the

Phase II artifact development process establishes a student's ability to apply knowledge in a real-world context, requiring students to show deeper content mastery and establishing clearly that s/he should be awarded credit. This multi-phase design aligns with the conceptual underpinnings of the Common Core and NC Essential Standards, which are also designed to convey knowledge and the ability to apply knowledge.

***Artifact
Expectations***

For all courses, students are expected to create an artifact that demonstrates their deep understanding of the content standards, and their ability to apply the skills and knowledge expected for the course. Artifacts may be of any type, ranging from three-dimensional to paper-based to electronic to oral interviews. Specific expectations for the type and quality of artifacts are left to the discretion of the LEA and the school-level team. This local team must provide students with clear guidance about what "success" looks like, including artifact scoring criteria or a rubric describing the local committee's expectations. The committee may decide to assign an artifact to a student or allow students to propose an artifact.

For Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses that provide a capstone project, the capstone project shall be used as the artifact to demonstrate mastery. Capstone projects are student led projects that demonstrate an understanding of the technical concepts of the course and should represent at least 80% of the course standards. In some CTE areas, capstone projects may require students to use tools and equipment to complete projects. Students should show evidence of training in how to use the tools and equipment safely. LEAs may require the completion of an OSHA 10 certificate or some other assessment that gives evidence of understanding of safety measures prior to work on the capstone project. For example, if a student wanted to demonstrate mastery in a carpentry course by completing construction of a wall segment, the student could demonstrate safety knowledge either by showing evidence of having completed a safety course such as an OSHA 10 certification or by earning a high score on the safety assessment included as part of the carpentry course.

Students who earn a CTE credential may use the credential as the artifact component. Students will need to complete the examination component to receive CDM credit.

***Additional Local
Requirements***

Local teams may choose to implement additional requirements as part of the artifact development process, as appropriate to the course. Some suggestions for LEAs wishing to have additional requirements might include interviews, using other exam formats

(multiple choice, constructed response, technology enhanced, portfolio, etc.), performance tasks (orchestra performance), oral presentations, videotaped performances, or other appropriate demonstrations of student knowledge, skills, and abilities.

**Appeals
Procedures**

Districts should develop standard grievance procedures that allow students an opportunity to make a case for why their artifact meets the standard identified by the assessment team. Grievance procedures should be documented in writing and provided to students at the time they begin the process of earning credit through this policy and no later than the assessment date. The following procedure is suggested at a minimum:

- EOC/EOG test scores are not appealable.
- Appeals must be received in writing within ten (5) days of decision.
- A review panel will conduct an appeals review within 5 days of receiving an appeal request and will collect any additional data requested by the panel.
- Final recommendations will be made within 10 days of Appeals Review.
- The decisions of appeals panels are final.

Section Four – Additional Considerations

Long-term Considerations

Students attempting the CDM process need high-quality counseling on long-term implications of earning CDM and beginning a path of accelerated course work. When considering CDM with a student and his/her family, discuss all aspects of the student's development, including academic, cognitive and social/emotional development. This will ensure that students and their families are able to make an informed decision about participating in the CDM process. It the responsibility of the entire school CDM team, not just one person to counsel students and families. Below are common long-term issues to discuss and consider with your students who are interested in CDM.

Advanced Courses through Grade 12

Discuss current options available for advanced curriculum and instruction. Discuss CDM as well as other possible pathways for advanced learning through grade 12. Review how programs such as high school courses in middle school, AP/IB/Honors courses, CCP opportunities, and whole-grade acceleration may also support a student's needs. If a child does indeed subject accelerate with CDM or through other means, create a long-term plan to ensure the student, family and school are all working together and are aware of future opportunities.

Athletic/Extra-Curricular Activities

Discuss the implications for CDM on athletic and other extra-curricular activities. Discuss with the students/families how earning CDM may impact a student's participation in these school activities. There are some potential impacts to consider of CDM on athletic and other extra-curricular activities. Please see the section on external organizations to learn more about important considerations for students considering CDM.

GPA and Quality Points

Share and discuss how CDM courses will not earn grades or quality points towards GPA. Credit for CDM courses will be granted to meet high school graduation requirements. This may be a concern for some students and families; however, CDM should be pursued when a student truly wants to benefit from a more challenging learning experience and move towards more advanced coursework. Students may earn CDM for all standard-level courses in grades 6-12. Grades for CDM will be recorded as a _____ on the transcript in Home Base.

*High School
Diploma
Endorsements*

Discuss the criteria for High School Diploma Endorsements (SBE, GCS-L-007), Career, College and Academic Scholars. Walk through the CDM implications for interested Diploma Endorsements to ensure appropriate coursework is completed. For example: If a student desires to work towards the NC Academic Scholars Endorsement and achieves CDM for a standard-level course instead of enrolling in an honors-level course, develop a plan to meet the criteria of the honors-level or above course criteria needed to attain the NC Academic Scholars Endorsement.

*Opportunity for
Early Graduation*

Discuss the option for completing high school graduation requirements (state and local) early. Discuss post-graduation options that meet the student needs. Walk through examples of the implications on courses required for graduation and intended High School Diploma Endorsements (SBE, GCS-L-007) if a student earns CDM. CDM may help prevent some students from leaving high school to pursue other options before graduating.

***External
Organizations and
CDM***

One of the considerations of any policy that may award credit to students who have not completed a course in the traditional manner is the future impact on students when they interact with other stakeholder organizations. The CDM Working Group contacted several of the most common external organizations with which a student may interact during high school or following high school graduation including, the North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA), the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), the University of North Carolina system, and the North Carolina Community College system.

NCHSAA

According to the NCHSAA, students' primary consideration with respect to earning credit by demonstrated mastery is maintaining eligibility if they are participating or wish to participate in high school athletics. According to Association by-laws, students must ensure they are enrolled in a number of courses that is at least equal to one less than the maximum number of courses available per the high school schedule. For instance, students in a high school on a block schedule must be enrolled in at least three courses of a possible four. For schools on a seven-course schedule, students must be enrolled in at least six courses. More specific guidance regarding NCHSAA requirements may be found in the Association's eligibility handbook at <http://www.nchsaa.org/pages/685/Rules-Eligibility-Skills-Development-procedures/#.UkGHRxZhpUQ>.

NCAA

According to the NCAA, students' primary consideration with respect to earning credit by demonstrated mastery is maintaining eligibility if they wish to participate in NCAA athletics. Please note that because North Carolina's current CDM procedure does not assign a final letter grade, CDM courses would not be used in the initial-eligibility process. Students would still be required to satisfy NCAA division-specific core course distribution requirements. More information about establishing initial eligibility may be found in these two locations: [here](#) and [here](#).

*North Carolina
Community College
System*

Two primary considerations exist for high school students planning to attend a North Carolina community college – acceptance of the high school diploma and articulation of credit earned while in high school.

Community colleges in North Carolina have traditionally accepted the State Board of Education's authority to determine how students earn high school credit toward graduation and the credit by demonstrated mastery policy does not change that. Students with a diploma from a North Carolina high school will be recognized as high school graduates regardless of the presence of academic or career-technical credits earned via the CDM policy, thus ensuring students' ability to enroll in a community college following graduation.

Like many colleges and universities, North Carolina community colleges offer "credit for prior learning," either according to the high school-community college articulation agreement for CTE courses or through local college decisions to award credit for academic courses. The North Carolina Community College System Office has not established system-wide policies regarding credit for prior learning; final decisions are left to local college administrators. As such, students should anticipate that decisions regarding credit for academic courses will be made on a case-by-case basis, so students are not guaranteed a particular outcome with respect to high school credits earned through the CDM policy. Regarding CTE courses, students who request credit without completing the course will not be eligible for articulated credit at the community college.

*University of North
Carolina System*

Like community colleges, University of North Carolina member universities have traditionally accepted the State Board of Education's authority to determine how students earn high school credit toward graduation. Based upon discussions during the summer of 2013 with UNC-GA staff as well as enrollment managers

across the system, the credit by demonstrated mastery policy does not change that. Students with a diploma from a North Carolina high school will be recognized as high school graduates regardless of the credits earned via the CDM policy, thus ensuring students' ability to enroll in a UNC system university following graduation. As always, minimum admission requirements must be satisfied.
