

Guidelines and Expectations for Instruction and Programs from Outside Sources

As schools expand programs and experience teacher shortages, there has been a trend toward using outside or third-party providers for supplemental instruction and other types of programming. These are evident in dual college credit classes, online courses, and programs that are contracted through companies or school districts for instructional and non-instructional purposes, like technology, sports, or music. Some of these may not be staffed with direct hires and not taught under the auspices of the Christian school. This document will help the school create policies to be able to use these services and still maintain the mission and biblical worldview development of the students.

These guidelines are not intended for offerings or courses that make up a primarily online program or an online diploma track attached to a traditional brick and mortar program. Those must be taught from a Christian perspective by Christian teachers, just like the classes in the brick-and-mortar school.

Please note: All scenarios assume that the school or 3rd party provider ensure that appropriate safety checks are done on any staff involved. The school should be able to document the process, even if done by the 3rd party.

Scenario 1: The school has developed or had substantial input for a course that is taught either on or off campus and is taught from a Christian perspective. This could be a dual college credit course and is being granted credit by an outside group. The school must include these courses in their curriculum documentation in the same format as the rest of their courses. If they are partners with a college in terms of developing a dual credit syllabus, they must “own” the course in terms of objectives, Expected Student Outcomes, instructional activities, assessments, biblical worldview, and all other required curriculum elements.

Scenario 2: If the course belongs wholly to another entity (college, online school, etc.) and it is Christian, then the school simply notes the course on the transcript similar to a course that is transferred in. They can choose whether to incorporate the grade from the course into their overall GPA.

Scenario 3: If the course belongs primarily to another entity (college, online school, etc.) and is not from a Christian perspective, the school must have a policy with a written plan demonstrating how they are going to meet the goals identified in the guiding questions below.

Assuming the course is **not** being taught from a Christian perspective, the visiting team will want to see that this educational experience still contributes to the mission and vision of the Christian school. In some cases, the school will be able to directly influence the content and teaching and in other cases, someone from the school will come alongside and discuss with students what is being taught during or after the fact. The plan we require may look different for different colleges, online providers, ages of students, and unique situations.

The **guiding questions** are:

- *What are you going to do to ensure that your student is processing their learning in the secular environment from a Christian perspective?*
- *How are they accomplishing your Expected Student Outcomes (while taking this course)?*
- *How are you as a school counteracting the wrong or worldly views that would speak against a biblical worldview?*

Suggestions to include in the school's plan (include all of these that apply):

1. A Christian mentor (ACSI strongly suggests a subject specialist) works with the student while they are taking the course. This would involve planned sessions to dialog with the student about what they are learning. Some schools have a Google Drive to support the course so they can have an ongoing dialog with the students taking the course. It provides an avenue for discussion and additional resources.
2. Periodic additional assignments ensuring biblical integration either during or after the course, allowing the student to reflect on their learning and giving the K-12 Christian school faculty interacting with the student an opportunity to dialog with them about what they have learned.
3. A Christian worldview seminar for all students taking non-Christian courses.
4. A capstone project that the student completes showing how they incorporate their faith with what they have learned in the outside course.
5. Other creative ways to do something similar either face-to-face, online, or through a combination of means.

We would also expect the school's plan to include ALL of the following:

- A. Details on which courses can be taken in a non-Christian environment. (For example, some schools list that core courses may not be taken in a non-Christian environment.)
- B. A minimum percentage of how many courses must be taken on campus during the student's junior and senior year. It should be clear to the visiting team that the students are still substantially educated by the Christian school in order to earn a Christian school diploma.
- C. That requirements for Bible, chapel, etc. are still consistent with other students in the school.
- D. Credits that a student earns at the K-12 Christian school must be at least 25% of their high school credits. These must be accomplished during the last three semesters of the student's educational work at the school. Any exceptions to this must be through written request and approved by the ACSI Divisional Office.

These guidelines apply to credit recovery and advanced courses as well as dual credit high school and college courses.

Homeschool or non-accredited program credits transferred into an accredited school and placed on a transcript must be validated by the receiving school. Validation should include such elements as a mastery or placement knowledge/skills test, a descriptive syllabus of the course content, and/or an interview with the student that assesses the level of mastery. (This is usually covered in a separate policy on courses that transfer in prior to acceptance. However, occasionally schools allow courses from these sources during concurrent enrollment.)

Any **exceptions** to these guidelines and expectations may be requested through writing to the ACSI Divisional Office along with written documentation of state or local law prohibiting some portion thereof.