

## YOUTH OPTIONS PROGRAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

*Revisions, including some new numbering of questions, were completed in September, 2013*

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### **1. What is the Youth Options Program?**

The program is an opportunity for students in grades 11 and 12 currently enrolled in a Wisconsin public high school to attend a Wisconsin postsecondary institution for the purpose of taking one or more courses for high school and college credit.

### **2. Which postsecondary institutions qualify?**

- All University of Wisconsin System institutions including UW colleges and extensions
- All campuses of the Wisconsin Technical College System
- All Wisconsin tribally controlled colleges
- All Wisconsin private, nonprofit institutions of higher education if they have completed their annual notice of intent to participate

Listings of all participating colleges and universities as well as contacts for each may be found under “Contacts” on the DPI Youth Options website:

<http://youthoptions.dpi.wi.gov/>

### **3. How does a student access the Youth Options Program?**

Students interested in participating in the program should talk with staff at their high school and the postsecondary institution they plan to attend and decide on an appropriate course or courses. High school counselors are typically a good place to start.

Once a student has decided on the course or courses for which he or she wants to apply, the student needs to complete the Youth Options Program Plan and Report Form PI-8700-A (<http://youthoptions.dpi.wi.gov/files/forms/doc/f8700-a.doc>) and submit it to his or her school board. This is typically done by submitting the form to a school counselor or administrator. If unsure to whom the form should be submitted, check with the district's designated Youth Options Contact, which can be found on the School District Contacts document ([http://youthoptions.dpi.wi.gov/yth\\_yocontpers](http://youthoptions.dpi.wi.gov/yth_yocontpers)). The form needs to be submitted to the district by March 1 when applying for fall semester classes and October 1 when applying for spring semester classes.

On the PI-8700-A, the student should list all courses and alternate courses he or she might take. The school board will then determine which of the courses meet the state criteria and can be approved. The district must notify the student of those courses that have been approved and those that have been denied by November 15 for the spring semester and April 15 for the fall semester.

After receiving approval from the school district, students must apply to the postsecondary institution and comply with all of the institution's admission standards and application deadlines. In the event that space is not available in a student's primary course(s) or a student's preferred course(s) cannot be conveniently scheduled, the student may substitute approved alternate course selections listed on the PI-8700-A form.

#### **4. Who pays for the tuition, books, and fees?**

The school board must pay for:

- Any course taken for both high school and college credit that is not comparable to a course offered in the school district. (See [Question 23](#) for virtual/online comparability information)
- For private, tribal, and the UW-System courses: the cost of books, fees, and materials required for the courses that will not become the property of the student.
- For technical college courses: the cost of books and fees required for the courses.
- Fees for a student to apply to the college.
- Fees for physicals, background checks, and similar things required for a student to enroll in a specific course.

The student must pay for:

- Postsecondary courses taken at the university or private colleges that are not for both high school and college credit.
- Postsecondary courses taken at any post-secondary institution that are comparable to a course offered at the school district. (See [Question 23](#) for virtual/online comparability information)
- Reimbursement for a course that is dropped or failed (see [Question 7](#)).
- Transportation costs (see [Question 8](#)).
- Incidental college fees (i.e., parking permits), the cost of consumables (workbooks, notebooks, uniforms), equipment and supplies.
- The cost of tools and equipment for technical college courses.

**5. Can school districts require Youth Options students to pay for tuition, course fees, and/or books and then allow them to seek reimbursement from the school district if they pass the course(s)?**

No. Sections 118.55(5), (6), and (7r), Wis. Stats, and Article X, Section 3 of the Wisconsin Constitution make it clear that the school district is responsible for these costs when both high school and college credit are requested.

**6. Can the school district expect reimbursement for books and materials?**

Books and materials purchased by the school district must be returned to the district upon the completion of the course unless other arrangements are made. If a student intends to keep the books or materials, or loses, damages, or destroys them, the district's return policy applies.

**7. Can the school district request reimbursement for a course that a student drops or fails?**

Yes. If a student receives a failing grade in a course or fails to complete a course for which a school board has made payment, the student's parent or guardian (or the student if he or she is an adult) is required to reimburse the school district the amount paid on the student's behalf, if requested {§118.55 (7t)(c), Wis. Stats.}.

Failure to make reimbursement when requested could result in future denial of Youth Options courses for that student.

**8. Who is responsible for the cost of transportation?**

Unless required by a student's individualized education program (IEP), parents and students are responsible for transportation of the student to the post-secondary institution.

**9. Is there transportation aid available for families in need?**

Transportation assistance is available from the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). Priority is given to families who qualify for free/reduced lunches under the federal school lunch program (**see note below**). To apply for transportation reimbursement, families must file a claim using form PI 8701 (<http://youthoptions.dpi.wi.gov/files/forms/doc/f8701.doc>). This reimbursement only covers roundtrip mileage costs from the student's high school to the postsecondary institution. Reimbursement does not cover parking costs.

A completed and signed copy of the PI-8700-A (Youth Options Program Plan and Report) that authorized the student's Youth Options enrollment must be included with the reimbursement claim form. Both forms, with all required signatures, must be sent to DPI within 30 days of the end of the college semester in which the student was taking classes. The form should not be submitted until after the last day of the college classes.

**NOTE REGARDING TRANSPORTATION AID FUNDING:** Funds available for this program are sum-certain; they are set in the Wisconsin State Budget and do not change regardless of the number of claims submitted. Consequently, they may be insufficient to cover the full amounts requested. If this occurs, PI 40.06(4)(b), Wis. Admin. Code requires DPI to prorate available funds among eligible recipients. In recent years, the reimbursement rate was below 40%, so those applying should not count on receiving the full amount unless the budget is increased or claims are lower than recent years.

**10. Does a school district have the discretion to deny a Youth Options course offered at a higher cost institution in favor of a lower cost institution?**

No, there is no authority in either the statute or administrative code to allow a school district to require a student to select a course at a postsecondary institution based on favorable cost.

**11. May a school district limit the total number of credits a student takes through the Youth Options program?**

Yes, if a school district has a board policy in place, the school district may limit a student to 18 college credits over the period a student is eligible for Youth Options (§118.55(7t)(a), Wis. Stats.). The school district is not authorized to set the number of credits lower than 18; however, the district may set the number of credits higher or not set a limit.

**12. Can the school district limit the number of college credits per semester?**

No. The school district does not have authority to limit the number of credits or courses a student takes through Youth Options each semester. Students are cautioned, however, to consider the challenges of post-secondary coursework and the possible consequences of performing poorly due to enrolling in too many college courses; these consequences could mean having to pay for college classes that they cannot finish or in which they receive a failing grade and/or beginning their college career with poor grades that could then factor into their college grade point average.

**13. Can the college or university limit the number of college credits per semester?**

While the college or university cannot establish a specific limit on the number of credits or courses a student takes each semester, they can apply course enrollment and management criteria and practices that may have the effect of limiting courses and credits. In addition, the post-secondary institution may deny enrollment of Youth Options students in courses that do not have space available.

**14. Does the district have financial responsibility for Youth Options courses that the local school district grants credit for but the credit is not needed by the student for graduation?**

Yes. As long as other students are allowed to take courses in their high school that they do not need in order to graduate, Youth Options students must be allowed to take courses under similar circumstances at a college

**15. May a student take courses comparable to those offered by the school district? May these comparable courses be included on the student's high school transcript and/or be substituted for required courses?**

Students are allowed to do this under PI 40.05 (1) (a) and (b) and PI 40.055 (1) (a) and (b), Wis. Admin. Code. In this case, the student and/or his family would have to pay for the course or courses and the following provisions must be in place:

- The student/family pays for the course.
- The school district policy allows release time to take the course, if offered during the school day.
- The school district policy allows the course to be included on the transcript and/or substituted for required courses.

**16. Are private school and home based students eligible to participate in Youth Options?**

No. The Youth Options program is available to “any public school pupil enrolled in the eleventh or twelfth grade.” Private school and home-based students are not enrolled in the public school even if they are accessing up to two courses at the public school under §118.145(4), Wis. Stats.

**17. Can open enrollment students participate in the Youth Options program?**

Yes. Fulltime open enrollment students can participate in the Youth Options program. Application deadlines required for the two programs might make it impossible for a full time open enrollment student to participate in Youth Options during the first semester at their nonresident school.

**18. Can a Youth Options student take a course that is offered by a postsecondary institution outside of Wisconsin?**

No, the statute specifically states that the program is available for programs located in the state (Wisconsin). Eligible institutions include the Wisconsin Technical College System, the University of Wisconsin System, Wisconsin private nonprofit institutions, and Wisconsin tribally controlled colleges.

**19. Does Youth Options apply to courses offered during evenings or weekends? What about summer school?**

A student may take a postsecondary course during or after regular school hours as long as the course is offered during the high school’s regular academic year. Youth Options does not apply to summer school.

**20. Are private lessons and independent study Youth Options eligible?**

The Youth Options program is available to take post-secondary courses but not private lessons such as independent piano or music lessons. The Youth Options program is also not available for flight lessons. UW-Extension Independent Learning program is the only independent study program that is Youth Options eligible. On-line coursework is covered in [Question 23](#).

**21. How many postsecondary semester credits equal one high school credit?**

Four. One semester credit offered by a postsecondary course is equivalent to ¼ high school credit. {PI 40.07 (2), Wis. Admin. Code}

**22. Is any course offered by a participating technical college or university eligible for Youth Options?**

No. While the vast majority of offered courses are eligible, there are exceptions. Courses offered through a participating institution but administered and taught by a non-participating institution or organization may not be eligible. In addition, technical college courses may only be taken if they meet the following provision from PI 40.04 (5)(d):

*“only regular occupational or technical courses or general education courses that satisfy the requirements of an associate degree or vocational diploma program may be taken by a pupil under the Youth Options program. Technical college remedial programs and courses may not be taken to meet high school graduation requirements under this program.”*

There are other circumstances that may also make a course ineligible. Students and their families should discuss any questionable courses with their district's Youth Options coordinator.

**23. Does a course offered by a postsecondary institution via two-way interactive instructional television, correspondence, or the Internet (on-line) qualify as a Youth Options course?**

As long as the course is offered by a Wisconsin post-secondary institution that is participating in Youth Options (see [Question 2](#)), a student may take the course as a correspondence course, a web-based course, through virtual or on-line programming, or by video conferencing.

**24. Can a course offered by a school district via two-way interactive instructional television (ITV) or the Internet (on-line) be used when determining if a district offers a comparable course to a Youth Options requested course?**

For determining comparability, a school district may use any course offered by the district which is consistent with the district's policy and is taught by a Wisconsin teacher licensed by the Department of Public Instruction in the content area being taught. This includes courses offered via ITV or a web-based program or network.

**25. Can a district consider a course that is not offered regularly when determining if they offer a comparable course to a Youth Options requested course?**

If a course will be offered and held prior to the Youth Options applicant's graduation, the course can be considered when determining comparability. If the course is not planned to be offered or has a likelihood of not being held prior to the applicant's graduation due to insufficient enrollment or other reasons, the district should not use that course for determining comparability.

**26. May students test out of Youth Options courses and receive college credit without attending the Youth Options courses?**

No; students in Youth Options, by statute, are not permitted to test out of the course and receive college credit. Students who are seeking to attend post-secondary options may take placement tests to determine proper course placement, but a Youth Options student may not take a test in lieu of attending Youth Options courses paid for by the school district.

**27. Is a Youth Options student eligible to stay in a dormitory located at the institution of higher education where they take coursework?**

Yes; when space is available, a Youth Options participant enrolled as a full-time student in a University of Wisconsin System institution will be eligible to live in a university residence. When residence halls are oversubscribed, particularly in the fall semester, preference will typically be given to regularly enrolled high school graduates.

**28. Are there differences for special education students under the Youth Options Program?**

The Youth Options program is open to all students, including students with disabilities. However, the school board may refuse to permit a student with a disability to attend a technical college if the cost would impose an undue financial burden on the school district. {§118.55 (7r) (am), Wis. Stats.}

Students with disabilities who participate in the Youth Options program are encouraged to share their IEP and their need for services with the post-secondary institution to help ensure success. School districts are required to ensure that proper support services are provided, consistent with the student’s IEP. Accommodations for students with disabilities, including the type, level, and cost, are negotiated at the local level between the school district and the post-secondary institution.

**29. Are there differences in program requirements between technical colleges and other postsecondary institutions that participate in the Youth Options program?**

Yes. Below is the list of differences that are documented in statute and administrative rule:

<b>Technical Colleges</b>	<b>Other Postsecondary Institutions</b>
Special education students may be denied access based on undue financial burden to the school district.	Special education students may <i>not</i> be denied access.
Student must be <i>in good academic standing</i> for the school board to approve Youth Options.	No provision made.
Technical colleges may refuse a student who has been identified to have discipline problems.	Are not informed of discipline problems under this statute.
Students who meet the definition of being a child at risk (under §118.153) cannot access the technical college through this program.	Children at risk are not included or excluded.
School district pays for books and fees, <u>but not</u> materials.	School district pays for books, fees <u>and</u> materials.

**30. Is a Youth Options student allowed to participate in high school athletics and extra-curricular activities?**

Yes, the student is considered to be fully enrolled in the local school district even if he or she is attending full-time at a postsecondary institution.

**31. Why are some Youth Options students sent a 1098T form at tax time?**

Students **may** be sent the 1098T form from a UW Institution. This form is for information only and alerts students that they **may** be eligible for education tax credits. The figure in Box 5 of the 1098T – Scholarships or Grants – includes scholarships, grants and, if applicable, payments made by a third party under a formal billing arrangement (i.e., outside scholarships, Youth Options, employer provided educational assistance [regardless of taxability], military, etc.) which have been administered by the University of Wisconsin System. For more information see: <http://www.uwsa.edu/fadmin/tax/1098TFAQ.pdf> and/or contact your individual tax preparer.

**32. Is a social security number required to participate in Youth Options?**

A social security number is not required to participate in Youth Options. However, a particular program may require a social security number for background checks as part of program admission (i.e., certified nursing assistant, criminal justice). In these cases, the student must provide the required information in order to enroll in the college and/or program.



**33. Can a student apply for Youth Options in a district at which they plan to enroll but are not currently enrolled?**

No. The student is only able to submit a Youth Options application to the district in which he or she is currently enrolled {PI 40.04 (1) 2, Wis. Admin. Code}.

**34. On what is comparability based for students enrolled in a virtual or online high school?**

Comparability is always based on the course offerings of the district of which a school is a part. Consequently, the courses used for determining comparability – including for a district’s virtual or online school – are those offered through any of that district’s high schools, both online and brick and mortar. This is one of the tradeoffs students must accept when choosing to enroll in an online school.

**35. For Additional Information Contact:**

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