

The line between high school and college need not be a sharp one. It is possible for teenagers to enroll in classes at community colleges and at four-year colleges and universities. The process at community colleges is called concurrent enrollment, dual enrollment, special enrollment, or something similar. I'll call it concurrent enrollment. The procedures vary from college to college. Typically a form is provided for applying for concurrent enrollment. This form will require the signatures of several people, including the student, a parent, one or two high school officials, and one or more college officials. You are an official if you have an R-4 school, and you can, if necessary, take on two (or more) roles, such as principal and counselor. Some colleges have balked at accepting a signature from a parent with an R-4 school. There may be a legal remedy for this problem; [contact the HSC Legal Team](#).

Colleges often place restrictions on concurrent enrollment, such as a limit on the number of classes to be taken; a prohibition against taking certain classes, often the most elementary classes in math and English; allowing registration only during certain times (usually later than "regular" students); and so on. Sometimes only some of the rules are published, and careful questioning will reveal additional possibilities. For example, one college has published a rule that says a concurrently enrolled student may take no more than 6 units, yet another unpublished rule allows for enrollment in more units with an additional signature from a college official.

Find out exactly how the college awards credit for classes taken by concurrently enrolled students to make sure the

credit earned is what's desired. In some instances colleges waive the per-unit enrollment fee (sometimes called tuition) for concurrently enrolled students.

At four-year schools there is often a process for enrolling students who have not been formally admitted. At UC Santa Cruz this happens through concurrent enrollment with University Extension, at San Jose State through Open University. Other state campuses will have similar procedures, and private colleges and universities may also provide such enrollment opportunities. Contact admissions offices for specific information.

College students are independent adults pursuing studies more rigorous than high school coursework; college work is at a faster pace and a higher level and requires independent thought and action. Some kids at 14 or 15 or 16, occasionally even earlier, thrive in this environment, while many others are not ready for it. Possibly the best indicator of readiness for college is a kid's own personal desire and informed choice to study at this level.

Rarely, a very young and academically gifted young person may need special guidance in taking college courses. In these instances, it is a good idea to contact potential instructors and make sure they are willing to include young kids in their classes.