

Creating Success

NC Community Colleges



Basic Skills Plus

Legislation and Guidelines



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Submitted to State Board of Community Colleges for Approval: October 15, 2010

North Carolina Community Colleges
Basic Skills Plus – Legislation and Guidelines

Basic Skills Plus Legislation

When the North Carolina General Assembly passed the 2010 budget bill, one of their legislative budget priorities was to enact provisions to support a program called **Basic Skills Plus**. This program provides accelerated job training for people seeking a high school diploma or its equivalent. Section 8.5 (see below) provides instructions for the use of State Literacy Funds in support of the Basic Skills Plus program.

SESSION LAW 2011-145, SECTION 8.5.(a)

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the State Board may authorize a local community college to use up to twenty percent (20%) of the State Literacy Funds allocated to it to provide employability skills, job-specific occupational and technical skills, and developmental education instruction to students concurrently enrolled in a community college course leading to a high school diploma or equivalent certificate.

SECTION 8.5.(b)

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, if a community college is authorized by the State Board to provide employability skills, job-specific occupational or technical skills, or developmental education instruction to students concurrently enrolled in a community college course leading to a high school diploma or equivalent certificate, the college may waive the tuition and registration fees associated with this instruction.

At its meeting on October 15, 2010, the State Board of Community Colleges approved the guidelines for the Basic Skills Plus program.

Basic Skills Plus Guidelines

Program Description

The Basic Skills Plus program was developed to provide employability skills, job-specific occupational and technical skills, and developmental education instruction to students concurrently enrolled in a community

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college course leading to a high school diploma or equivalent certificate. To accomplish this task, local colleges may use up to twenty percent (20%) of their State Literacy Funds to develop and implement a customized education program that features redesigned program delivery models which include learning communities, streamlined operational processes, integrated teaching strategies, contextualized instructional materials/teaching aids, collaborative partnerships, and accelerated strategies that support student success.

Approval Process

Colleges must seek State Board approval before expending funds for their Basic Skills Plus program. Below are the guidelines for the approval process.

Submission of Applications

- Local colleges will complete the attached Basic Skills Plus Program Plan application and submit the plan to the System Office College and Career Readiness Section for processing. Local colleges will submit one original and one (1) copy of their application to the contact information listed below:

North Carolina Community College System Office
Attn: Associate Vice President of College and Career Readiness
5016 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-5016

Approval of Applications

- Applications will be reviewed by the North Carolina Community College System Office College and Career Readiness Section prior to fall and spring semesters.
- If the program plan meets the guidelines set forth by the legislation, the application will be submitted to the State Board of Community Colleges for final approval.
- Once an application has been approved by the State Board, the college does not have to resubmit its plan unless there are substantial changes.
- Colleges will submit to the College and Career Readiness Section any budgetary changes or changes in courses offered, but those will not have to be re-approved by the State Board.
- System Office staff shall notify a college within five business days when its plan has been approved by the State Board of Community Colleges.
- Colleges may begin the Basic Skills Plus program upon receipt of State Board approval.

Disapproval of Applications

- If the program plan does not meet the guidelines set forth by the legislation and is therefore not submitted to the State Board of Community Colleges for approval, an explanatory memo will be sent to the college.
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- Upon request, System Office staff will provide technical assistance with revisions.

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Program-Specific Requirements

Required Basic Skills Component

- The Basic Skills component includes courses in Adult High School and General Educational Development (GED) which lead to a high school diploma or equivalent. Students who are seeking a high school diploma or equivalent and are enrolled in a Basic Skills course are eligible for Basic Skills Plus. Colleges will set an eligibility score and determine their targeted audience for Basic Skills Plus.
- All students must qualify for federally supported levels of basic skills education. Students must be pre-tested using one of the Basic Skills state-approved standardized assessments and must be post-tested in compliance with the state assessment policy. Pre- and post-test results must be recorded in the Literacy Education Information System (LEIS). Students with high school diplomas or the equivalent are not eligible for Basic Skills Plus.
- Students may only participate in Basic Skills Plus employability skills, job-specific occupational and technical skills, and developmental education instructional components if the student is also enrolled in any Adult High School or GED courses. Basic Skills students who receive a GED or Adult High School diploma prior to completing a Basic Skills Plus occupational, developmental, or HRD course may complete the course, but will not be eligible for future courses as part of Basic Skills Plus.
- Undocumented students enrolled in GED or Adult High School must go through the regular admission process. They are not eligible for Basic Skills Plus.

Employability Skills Component

- This component includes Human Resources Development (HRD) program and the Career Readiness Certification (CRC).
- The focus of the course content may include, but is not limited to, the following topics: career exploration, skill assessment, study skills, job seeking skills, job retention strategies, and computer literacy training.

Job-Specific Occupational or Technical Skills Component

- This component includes continuing education or curriculum courses from an approved program of study. Curriculum courses must lead to an entry-level occupational certificate.
- Colleges will provide job-specific occupational or technical skills programs based on evidence of local and regional labor market demand in the industry.

Developmental Education Instruction Component

This component includes Developmental Education courses which are required as prerequisites for courses in an approved program of study.

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Program Design

Student Eligibility

Colleges must set an eligibility score on a standardized test (such as TABE, CASAS, GAIN, or Workkeys). Students must meet or exceed the set score before being admitted to Basic Skills Plus.

Service Delivery Models

The framework for service delivery should be integrated, collaborative, and accelerated in relation to curriculum planning, staff responsibilities, length of courses, timeframe (days/times) of courses, student cohorts, learning outcomes, and instructional delivery. Students should not have to complete one program component before they are allowed to enroll into another component. Each training component should prepare students to progress to another component. A career pathway diagram should be included in the program plan.

Teaching Strategies

Teaching strategies should include provisions for joint classroom instruction, contextualized course content, and technology-based curriculum materials and teaching aids. Students should be able to make the connection between what is taught in the Basic Skills component and its applicability to the course content in other components included in their Basic Skills Plus program. Colleges should provide supplemental instruction for Basic Skills Plus students. Supplemental instruction might be a Basic Skills class for the cohort of students who are enrolled in Basic Skills Plus to provide mentoring, additional study support, etc.)

Partnerships

The program plan should include internal partnerships with the local community college as well as various external partnerships which will enhance the student outcomes of this project. Colleges should seek multiple sources outside of their regular Basic Skills program for outreach/recruitment, academic support, career advising, financial assistance and employment placement for students. Colleges should identify the planning team and the support team for Basic Skills Plus. The team should include administrators, student services staff, Basic Skills staff, Learning Resource Center personnel, and other faculty members.

Student Transitions

Strategies that promote transition into and success within a career pathway are essential to the goal of helping students successfully complete a program and get credentials and degrees faster. Colleges should assist students with setting career and educational goals and developing strategies for tracking progress. Evaluating student progress should be a joint process between staff from all program components. Colleges should develop a plan for transitioning Basic Skills Plus students to employment and/or to become a full-time curriculum student, including assistance with financial aid and college success courses. The applying college

should map out an education pathway for students (i.e., courses in a welding certificate that will lead to an AAS or courses in a CNA I certificate that will lead to CNA II and possibly to ADN).

Student Outcomes

Minimum expected outcomes for each student who completes the Basic Skills Plus program should include at least one of the following:

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Momentum Points

- Earned 6 or more credits that count toward a credential
- Completed Developmental Reading
- Completed Developmental Math
- Completed Human Resources Development (HRD)
- Earned Career Readiness Certificate (CRC)
- Completed ACA

Milestones

- Earned college credential or certificate
- Moved one level of basic skills
- Completed pre-college coursework

Colleges should describe how students in Basic Skills Plus will be tracked, what data will be gathered, whether or not Basic Skills Plus students will be compared with control groups of students, and whether or not colleges will track students beyond Basic Skills to verify their readiness for and success in college or in the workforce.

Program Operational Procedures

Use of Funds

Basic Skills Plus funds may be used for instructional costs. Instructional costs include the salary of the instructor(s) as well as fringe benefits, supplies, materials, and travel paid from college funds. (Reference: NCAC 2D .0326 (a) (b) (c)) Basic Skills funds may be used to hire assessment and retention specialists; these funds **may** also be used to pay for transportation of Basic Skills students. Basic Skills funds **may not** be used for support of administrative functions (such as Director of Basic Skills programs, clerical, etc.). {Reference: G.S. 115D-31(b-1)} Funds will be budgeted and expended through Purpose Code: 320 Basic Skills Plus.

Program Eligibility

Program plans should include strategies for student recruitment, criteria for eligibility, identification of barriers to program completion, and attendance policies. Students must be enrolled in a Basic Skills component to be eligible for Basic Skills Plus. Students with high school diplomas or the equivalent are not eligible for Basic Skills Plus.

Reporting FTE's

Basic Skills Plus students who are co-enrolled in a curriculum, continuing education, or developmental education class must be enrolled in a separate concurrent section. The membership/contact hours generated by the Basic Skills Plus students will generate Basic Skills FTE. The faculty member's salary must be proportionally funded with State Literacy funds.

Data Collection/Program Evaluation

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Colleges will be expected to submit a mid-year and an annual report. Below are the guidelines:

- Colleges will submit a mid-year report of the progress of the Basic Skills Plus program to the College and Career Readiness Section. Success metrics include, but are not limited to, the following: the number of students served, academic program completion, and credentials earned.
- Colleges will submit an annual evaluation of their Basic Skills Plus program to the College and Career Readiness Section according to the plan they submit as part of their application. System Office staff will evaluate statewide statistics for Basic Skills Plus students such as number of participants, number of hours of attendance, outcome measures, persistence in program, etc. Basic Skills Plus students will continue to be a part of the current National Reporting System; however, the United States Department of Education may develop additional outcome measures for students enrolled in integrated education and training programs such as Basic Skills Plus. If additional outcome measures are developed, all programs will receive notification of those measures.

Student Cost

- Colleges may waive tuition and registration fees for Basic Skills Plus courses. Students will be responsible for textbook and supply costs.

Budget Request

- Budget requests will be submitted on an annual basis to the College and Career Readiness Section for approval.