

SECTION II: GENERAL INFORMATION

Attendance

Attendance Requirements to receive credit for a course:

1. State law mandates that a student must be in attendance for 90% of the time a class in session to receive credit.
2. The Attendance Committee will make the ultimate decision whether or not the student receives credit in a class.
3. Dual Credit students must meet the attendance requirements set by the local campus.
4. ARD and 504 committees may be considered as an attendance committee for students with disabilities.

Minimum Course Load

All students are required to enroll in eight classes (or equivalent) per semester.

EXCEPTIONS:

1. Senior students enrolled in off campus Dual Credit courses can take the last period off in their high school schedules. College course schedule verification and counselor/administrator approval is required.
2. Senior students who are on track their graduation credit requirements and are enrolled in at least 15 College Credit Hours (including Dual Credit and AP courses), may be granted Independent Study classes. Counselor/administrator approval is required.

Student Classification

Freshman (9th) – must have been promoted from the 8th grade.

Sophomore (10th) – must have satisfactorily completed 6 credits.

Junior (11th) – must have satisfactorily completed 12 credits.

Senior (12th) – must have satisfactorily completed 18 credits by the beginning of the fall semester of the school year in which the student expects to graduate.

How to Earn Credits

Courses vary from one to two semesters in length. Students can earn a half credit for each semester course and a whole credit for a year-long course*. Students earn credits when they pass their courses with the minimum of 70% average and meet 90% attendance requirement.

Each semester stands alone. Semesters are not averaged together except in cases of student progression plan.

Progression Plan

A high school student who fails the first semester of any core course with a grade no lower than 60, but who passes the second semester of the course, may receive credit if the average of the two semesters results in a grade of 70 or above.

The following are ways a student can earn credit:

- A course is taken as a part of the student's high school schedule
- A Dual Credit college course - approved by counselor - is taken for high school credit and college credit (must be one of the approved courses listed on the dual credit list-- refer to the Dual Credit programs, Section IV.)
- Through a Credit-by-Exam (CBE) or Exam for Acceleration (EA) offered through the UT Austin or Texas Tech University, AP Exam, or CLEP exam (College Level Examination Program)
- Online courses - approved courses through accredited online course providers
- Summer School Opportunities

Students and parents assume the responsibility for registering for, and completing courses attempted. Students and parents assume the cost of taking courses outside of their regular high school schedule

Students must communicate with a counselor for information regarding alternate methods of acquiring credits before signing up for any course

Repeating a Course

The following guidelines apply if a student wants to repeat a course in which credit has been earned:

- No additional credit is earned when a course is repeated
- Students who have already earned a credit for specific high school course cannot repeat the course to pull up her/his GPA

High School Credits in Middle School

By Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §74.26. (b), districts may offer courses designated for Grades 9-12 in earlier grade levels. Students in middle school may be given high school graduation credit for passing courses offered in middle school that are aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for each course. Credit for courses for high school graduation may be earned only if the student received a grade which is the equivalent of 70 on a scale of 100 (TAC §74.26. (c)).

Credits obtained in middle school will not be included in the GPA calculation and class rank.

Schedule Changes

Students must choose their courses carefully and with the advice of their counselor and parents to minimize the need for a change. The master schedule is built to accommodate the classes originally chosen by the student. A copy of the courses requested will be provided to the students at the end of the school year. Any course request changes for the following school year must be made before the end of the spring semester. Parents of 8th grade students will have opportunities to receive assistance with course registration. *Parents are strongly encouraged to attend one of the help-sessions or schedule an appointment with the middle school counselor.*

Schedule changes based on teacher, elective, or section preferences will not be honored. The administration reserves the right and has the responsibility to only make changes as necessary to meet graduation requirements, balance class sizes, correct administrative or clerical error, reflect changes in school personnel, or other educationally appropriate reasons.

Dropping a Class

In determining whether there are extenuating circumstances for an absence, the Attendance Review Committee will use the following guidelines:

- Changes requested after the Course Plan has been submitted will be made only for the following reasons per counselor approval:
 - A Senior needs to make up deficient graduation credits
 - A student received a failing grade and needs to repeat the class for high school graduation requirements or to meet college eligibility requirements
 - A student is in the incorrect course level
 - A course requested will not be offered due to budgetary restraints or low class size
 - A student completed a course credit at summer school
- During the first 15 school days of class, students may request a schedule change according to the following guidelines.
 - Level changes can be requested by students and parents based on availability (grades from the dropped upper level course will be carried into the added lower level course)
 - Placement recommendation based on academic performance
 - Medical/health issues require adjustment in schedule
 - Course needed for graduation or college eligibility requirements

Campus Advanced Academics Placement Committee (AAP)

Each HPS campus should develop Campus Advanced Academics Placement Committee (AAP) which is made up of teachers and administrators. This committee finalizes course enrollment decisions about the AP, Pre-AP, PLTW and Dual Credit courses. Campus AAP Committee ultimately implements and enforces college level course enrollment policies and regulations. HPS central office provides a guide for campuses to use for AP/Pre-AP enrollment. AAP committee may revise this guide for their local needs. (Refer to AP/Pre-AP Campus Guide).

Grading Scale, Class Ranking, GPA

Grade Calculation

A student's Grade Point Average (GPA) is calculated by dividing the total amount of grade points earned by the total amount of credit hours attempted. All semester grades for courses attempted will count toward a student's GPA. Weighted GPA is used to determine class rank. Unweighted GPA is used for admission to most colleges and universities, and for scholarships at in-state schools.

Grading Scale (starting in 2016-2017 school year)

A	90-100	"Excellent"
B	80-89	"Above Average"
C	75-79	"Average"
D	70-74	"Below Average"
F	0-69	"Failing"

Course Weight (starting in 2016-2017 school year)

A student's Grade Point Average (GPA) is calculated by dividing the total amount of grade points earned by the total amount of credit hours attempted. All semester grades for courses attempted will count toward a student's GPA.

Table 4: Course Weight (starting in 2016-2017 school year)

Letter Grade	Grade Range	Advanced Placement (AP) / Dual Credit (DC)	Pre-AP	On-Level Course
A	90-100+	5.0	4.5	4.0
B	80-89	4.0	3.5	3.0
C	75-79	3.0	2.5	2.0
D	70-74	2.0	1.5	1.0
F	Below 70	0.0	0.0	0.0

Note: Grades earned before 2016-2017 school year and course weights will stay same in the transcripts.

Project Lead the Way (PLTW) courses will be weighted as AP/DC level course for certified campuses and other PLTW courses will be considered as a Pre-AP level.

Senior Class Rank

Harmony Public Schools are non-ranking schools and only rank students within the top 10%, or if it is for the benefit of the student. A class rank indicates how a student’s grades compare with those of other students in his/her class.

All courses recorded on the Academic Achievement Record (high school transcript) shall count toward Grade Point Average (GPA) and class rank, using the grades received.

Class rank is determined by the weighted grade point average (GPA) of all high school credit courses taken through the end of the eighth semester. Rank for honor graduation status (valedictorian / salutatorian) is determined by the GPA through the end of the first semester of the senior year.

Estimated class rankings are to be determined at the end of the junior year, and the first semester of the senior year for the express purpose of college entrance requirements. A final calculation of GPA and class rank is determined at the completion of the senior year and will be reflected on the final transcript.

A student with a disability who has completed four years of high school, but not graduating and is continuing to receive special education and related services from the school district, is permitted to participate in the graduation ceremony with classmates. The student is entitled to a certificate of completion as part of the graduation ceremony, but must receive a regular high school diploma when formal schooling ends.

To be eligible for all senior class ranking students must be enrolled for their junior and senior years in the same high school, and graduate in no fewer than eight regular semesters.

Graduation Ceremony

Students completing the Harmony Public Schools and State of Texas requirements for graduation will be granted a high school diploma. HPS annually sponsors a graduation ceremony for students who have completed requirements established by both the HPS and the State. Students who have not completed requirements may participate in graduation ceremony with an approval from principal and receive a certificate of attendance. Even if the student participates in graduation ceremony to receive the certificate of attendance, he or she may remain enrolled to complete the HPS requirements and earn his and her high school diploma; however, the student will only be allowed to participate in graduation ceremony. Ordering graduation cap and gown, announcements, or other senior memorabilia does not guarantee a student’s participation in graduation ceremonies. Graduation announcements are not invitations to the graduation ceremony. If a student does not attend and does not participate in the graduation ceremony practice, the student is ineligible to participate in the HPS Graduation ceremony.

ATTENTION JUNIORS

Credits earned during the summer following the junior year will be entered to the junior year course lists and be counted in the overall GPA and ranking computations. Any credits received **after September 1st** will be entered to the senior course list and will not affect the ranking submitted to colleges during the fall semester of the senior year. It is students’ responsibility to ensure summer credits are submitted on time and properly entered to their course lists.

Eligibility for Automatic College Admission

Explanation of Eligibility for Automatic College Admission under the Automatic Admission policy (Texas Education Code §51.803):

Under the Automatic Admission policy (Texas Education Code §51.803), Texas students may be eligible for automatic admission to a state college or university as an undergraduate student if they meet certain criteria. To qualify for automatic admission, a student must:

1. Earn a grade point average in the top 10 percent* of his/her high school graduating class,
2. Graduate from a Texas public or private high school (or, if the student is a Texas resident, from a high school operated by the U.S. Department of Defense),
3. Earn the Distinguished Level of Achievement and/or a Performance Acknowledgment for outstanding performance (starting from Class of 2018) OR successfully complete the requirements for the Recommended High School Program (RHSP) OR the Distinguished Achievement Program (DAP) (or the equivalent if enrolled in private school) OR satisfy ACT's College Readiness Benchmarks on the ACT college entrance exam OR earn a score of at least 1,500 out of 2,400 on the SAT college entrance exam, and
4. Apply for admission to a state college or university within the first two school years after graduation from high school.

Students who meet the criteria for automatic admission must submit an application before the deadline set by the college or university to which they are applying. Students must also provide a high school transcript or diploma that indicates whether they have satisfied or are on schedule to satisfy the requirements of the Distinguished Level of Achievement and/or a Performance Acknowledgment for outstanding performance, RHSP or DAP.

Curriculum Requirements

No later than the end of a student's junior year in high school, his or her official transcript should indicate whether the student has satisfied or is on schedule to satisfy the requirements for the Distinguished Level of Achievement and/or a Performance Acknowledgment for outstanding performance (starting with the Class of 2018), RHSP or DAP. Students who are unable to satisfy the curriculum requirements for graduation because the courses necessary to complete the requirements are unavailable as a result of course scheduling, lack of enrollment capacity, or another cause not within the student's control, are considered to have satisfied the requirements of the relevant program. In such cases, the student must have successfully completed the portions of the graduation requirement curricula that were available and the student's official transcript or diploma must indicate this.

Admission and Enrollment

State colleges and universities may admit a student accepted under the Automatic Admission policy for either the fall semester of the academic year for which the student applied or for the summer session that proceeds that fall semester. Additionally, the admitting college or university may require that applicants in need of additional preparation for college-level work enroll in enrichment courses or programs during the summer immediately after the student is admitted. Colleges and universities are required to admit an applicant as an undergraduate student if the applicant is the child of a public servant who was killed or fatally injured in the line of duty and who meets the minimum entrance requirements set by the college or university.

*The University of Texas at Austin

Beginning with admissions for the 2011-2012 school year, The University of Texas at Austin (UT) is no longer required to automatically admit applicants in excess of 75% of its enrollment capacity for first-time resident undergraduate students. The University has determined that it will automatically admit all eligible 2017 summer/fall freshman applicants who rank within the top 7% of their high school graduating classes, with remaining spaces to be filled through holistic review. Even applications from students who are automatically admissible are subject to holistic review to determine the major to which the applicant will be admitted.

Cum Laude System

Harmony Public Schools recognize at graduation those students with weighted GPAs at or above specific benchmarks. Benchmarks may require occasional adjustments as changes in curriculum dictate. Currently, graduates are recognized as follows:

Summa Cum Laude	Weighted average of exactly 128.0 or higher	GPA = 4.0+
Magna Cum Laude	Weighted average of exactly 120.0 or higher	GPA = 3.8 to 3.9
Cum Laude	Weighted average of exactly 112.0 or higher	GPA = 3.5 to 3.7

Transfer Students

A student transferring into the district from a **public school or a regionally/nationally accredited institution** will receive the numerical grade earned in courses from that school. Weighted courses will be honored and converted to match our system.

Students Transferring from Schools Outside of the United States: Students from other countries will receive Ps for passing in appropriate courses. Translation of out-of-country transcripts is the responsibility of the parent/guardian. Awarding of credit will be determined by school administration after review of all documentation.

Students from Home Schooling Programs or Private Schools: Credits earned through home schooling programs and private schools will not be calculated for GPA and class rank by the district. Students must provide documentation of enrollment and completion of courses in order to get credit.

CREDIT BY EXAM (CBE) / EXAM FOR ACCELERATION (EA)

Credit by exam (CBE) is available for students who failed a course and can be taken only for an original credit.

1. A student in grades 6-12 will be given credit for an academic subject if the student scores 70% or above on each of the criterion-referenced examinations for the applicable course. Credit will be given and the examination score will be entered on the student’s transcript.
2. It is not recommended to gain credit by such an examination if the course grade is less than 60% in the course failed. Students may not attempt to earn credit by examination for a specific high school course more than two times.
3. Students who have already earned a credit for specific high school course cannot take CBE to pull up her/his GPA.

Exam for acceleration (EA) is available for students who want to skip each of the following areas: English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.

1. To earn a credit students need to score 80% or above for EA.
2. Students may take a specific examination only once during each window. Students may not attempt to earn credit by examination for a specific high school course more than two times.
3. Credits obtained through EA (without instruction) will not be calculated for GPA and class rank.

Table 5: Credit by Examination Windows

August 9-13	CBE/EA
November 8-15	CBE/EA
March 23-30	CBE/EA
May 4-13	CBE/EA

Procedure

Students are required to register for CBE/EA at least one month prior to first day of testing (or CBE/EA window). Parents/Students need a counselor (and/or Campus CBE coordinator) approval to order a CBE. Once approved, parents/students pay a fee (only for credit recovery / fee subject to change) per semester course. There is no fee for taking Exam for Acceleration

