

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

PATHWAYS EARLY COLLEGE INNOVATION SCHOOL

How does the Pathways program work?

Once you have been admitted to the Pathways Early College Innovation School, you are enrolled in a small learning community at **Mount Wachusett Community College**.

- A learning community is comprised of 22 students, all of whom take their first semester foundation classes and second semester cohort classes together, to aid in the transition into college curriculum and expectations.
- Cohort courses that Pathways students take together are FYE 101, ENG 101, PSY 105, ENG 102, SOC 103, SPC 113 and Friday career exploration classes and college transitioning workshops.
- Students can expect to receive homework in each subject area on a daily basis.
- Students enrolled in Mount Wachusett Community College courses earn both high school and college credits, while simultaneously working toward a high school diploma and an Associate degree.
- Courses are selected with the guidance of the Pathways Administrator, based upon each student's high school completion plan, desired Associate degree pathway and educational goals.

What can I expect to achieve by enrolling in the Pathways Program?

Students are given the opportunity to earn their high school diploma from the Ralph C. Mahar Regional High School and an Associate degree from Mount Wachusett Community College, at the same time, at little cost to themselves or their families.

What is the cost of the Pathways program?

School Choice funding allows Pathways students to take MWCC classes for free. Students are responsible for the cost of textbooks and supplies.

How long will it take to earn my high school diploma and Associate degree?

Two academic years – your junior and senior year, which means students graduate on time with their peers in May of their senior year.

I've heard that Pathways is a year-round program. What exactly does that mean?

That's correct – although you won't be going to school 365 days a year, you can expect to take classes when everyone else is on "break." This includes the January ten-day Intersession between the fall and spring semesters, the ten-day "Maymester" which is between the spring semester and the start of the summer semester, in addition to the summer semesters which are five-week courses during the months of June and August. This is necessary in order for you to graduate with your associate degree when you earn your high school diploma.

Can I stay with my high school while in the Pathways program?

Upon acceptance into Pathways, students become Ralph C. Mahar Regional High School students. If you didn't complete your freshman and sophomore years at Mahar you will be school-choiced to Mahar. The first step would be to contact MWCC at 978-630-9480 to speak to a Pathways representative or to request an application.

What if I want to play extra-curricular sports or other activities?

Pathways students will have a dual identity – they will be considered both MWCC students and Ralph C. Mahar Regional High School students. As such, they are free to participate in events and activities offered by both institutions. Students must meet Mahar requirements for participation in extra-curricular activities at the high school, including academic standards set forth by MIAA for student athletes.

What is expected of Pathways students?

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- To attend 100% of their classes.
- To come to class on time, to bring materials, and to complete all class work and homework assignments.
- To spend 3-4 hours each day on homework (outside of class time). (Students who have a job are strongly encouraged to consider that time demands of the program take priority over the job.)
- To earn a minimum of a 'C' average in each class taken and maintain a 2.5 GPA.
- To adhere to all Mount Wachusett Community College policies and procedures.

What happens if I don't pass one or more classes?

You will be placed on academic probation and have a conversation with the Pathways director/ advisor to determine the reasons for your poor academic performance. If the classes are high school/college degree graduation requirements, you will need to repeat the class at your own expense.

How does Pathways Academic Advising help me?

- Comprehensive high school and college transcript reviews
- Assistance with class enrollment and course transferability
- Introducing students to campus activities, clubs and leadership opportunities
- Referrals to resources such as tutoring, counseling, student activities, health services, and more.
- Personal guidance with college applications, the admissions process and SAT registration
- Help accessing scholarships and FAFSA resources
- Having access to someone who can answer questions and help you navigate your early college experience

If I have been on an Individual Education Plan (IEP) while in high school, will I receive the same support services from Mount Wachusett Community College?

Applicants who have received Special Education Services and who have an IEP are required to participate in an IEP meeting in their school district to determine if Pathways is an appropriate placement. MWCC cannot guarantee that this process will be completed in time for acceptance to the fall term for which the applicant is applying. Students with and IEP or 504 will also meet with the MWCC Disabilities Services coordinator to ensure MWCC has the resources to address students' individual needs.

What do I tell my high school if I am accepted into the Pathways program?

You will need to notify your current school that you are transferring to the Ralph C. Mahar Regional School District in Orange for the Pathways Early College Innovation School.

If I decide during the program that I would feel more comfortable back at my previous school, can I go back?

Students are not "trapped" in the Pathways program – they may transfer out. However, keep in mind that if you decide to go back to traditional high school after the add/ drop period and Pathways already paid the bill for your classes, you will be billed for the price of those classes.

How do I apply for the Pathways program?

Students may contact the Division of Access and Transition at (978) 630-9248 or the Program Administrator at (978) 630-9480. An application packet can also be downloaded from the MWCC website under dual enrollment/ Pathways.

www.mwcc.edu

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