



Keys to a Successful Running Start Experience for Home-Schoolers 2012 - 2013

Areas for Consideration...	What you need to know...
Materials And Texts	Materials and texts, selected by instructors and academic departments, may be 'worldlier' than many home schoolers are accustomed to using. No special considerations or special texts, literary selections or class materials should be expected - though some exceptions may occur. Students and their families need to select courses wisely, with their own personal preferences foremost in their mind. Literature, science, history and philosophy courses will prove to be challenging for some students used to 'faith-based' curriculum.
Students In-Class Interaction	In many instances, teamwork or study teams are a part of course activity. Running Start students are full members of their classes and as such, are expected to participate fully in all course activities. Student teams will be cross-age, cross-culture and be comprised of a wide variety of abilities and experiences – including those of the Running Start students. It is not the role of the instructor or professor to 'shelter' high school students in their courses and Running Start families should not expect such treatment.
Special Considerations For Running Start Students	Running Start students are expected to participate in all of their classes, seminars and labs as full participants in the learning experience. No special considerations are traditionally made for high school students attending college classes. Additionally, there are no special accommodations made for students with faith-based preferences toward secular topics. Selecting courses wisely is the best defense for students with special concerns in this area.
Student Life On Campus	Running Start students are not identified, sheltered or segregated from other college students in any way. Families should be aware of their student's exposure to the 'social' components of campus life and Running Start. Though the high school aged student does not live on campus, there are constant opportunities to meet and interact with 'older' students. Concerned families should talk about the Running Start students options prior to beginning the college experience, as well as managing the student's 'down-time' wisely. While a gap in a student's schedule provides excellent opportunities for research and assignment completion, it also provides 'social' time. Each family should decide what the best schedule for their student would be; making the most informed use of class and free time.
Due Dates... Not Just A Suggestion	While many home schooling families use precise schedules, calendars and due dates, many others do not follow such exacting timetables. Home schooling Running Start students do not have the luxury of flexibility with deadlines in their college coursework. Assignments are 'due' on the date and at the time the instructor designates. No special timetable is established for Running Start students. They are expected to do the same work on the same schedule as all other college students.

Formatting Assignments	Not only are assignments due on specific dates, they are often required to be finished following certain guidelines. Professors frequently establish the formatting parameters for completed work at the beginning of the course - regularly as part of the syllabus. These guidelines are not suggestions, but criteria for assignment acceptance. Student's work may be rejected or 'marked down' due to failure to format the finished work.
Professor or Instructor Contacts	While home schooling students are used to having immediate and constant contact with their parent educators, the college experience will be dramatically different. Each instructor will inform their classes as to the appropriate method of asking questions in class – at the end, during the lecture or activity, raising of hands and waiting to be called on, or speaking out – every professor has their own preferences. Similarly, office hours will be posted for each instructor. Email contact is now part of our daily society and many professors will provide their classes with this contact method. Students should not expect 24/7 (round the clock) access to their instructors. In addition, it is the student's role to contact their teachers, not the job of their parents. Home schooling parents need to realize that professors are not legally allowed to give student information to the parents' regardless of the student's age. Establishing productive communication with the instructor is the role of the students; it is part of the learning experience. Alienating professors or instructors by continuous, inappropriate or inconsiderate contacts will harm the student's chances for success.
Attendance And Absences	Traditionally, home schooling families are free to travel on their own schedule, not needing to pay attention to school calendars. However, Running Start students are expected to follow the educational institution's calendar during the school term. Students should only be absent for extreme illness, family emergency or bereavement. Absences of any length may influence the student's grade. Prolonged absences may lead to failing grades or the need to withdraw from the class. Communication with the instructor is recommended in such cases.
Tutoring	While professors and instructors are happy to answer questions about their curricular topic, it may be necessary to seek tutoring for more involved assistance. Many departments on today's college campuses foster study sessions, which are free. Additionally, tutoring is provided free of charge at all public college sites. Students should not wait for problems to seek tutoring; instead it is an excellent proactive tool.
The College's Counseling Center	The Counseling Center on each college campus is a terrific place to seek advice. Curriculum planning, future options, problem resolution, self-improvement and decision making are all services provided by campus advisors. Whether by appointment or on a 'drop-in' basis, these dedicated and highly trained professionals are there to assist you with your educational needs.
Good Luck!	If The Enrichment Cooperative may be of help with your Running Start experience, please contact us at saradu@spokaneschools.org .