

GETTING STARTED WITH HOMESCHOOL COLLEGE USA

This quick guide is designed to help you begin a program of studying at home, to earn your college degree through the use of college-level exams such as the CLEP, DSST (Dantes), TECEP (Thomas Edison exams), and ECE (Excelsior College Exams) tests. You may only choose to take a handful of exams, to gain credits and shorten your time enrolled at a "traditional school," or you may test your way straight through to a Bachelor of Arts or Science degree at the accredited Excelsior College, (or one of the other "Big Three" schools – Thomas Edison College or Charter Oak State College.)

You may even use this program as a homeschooling high school student, as an alternative to expensive curriculum programs, in order to earn the credits you need for a high school diploma.*

WHERE DO I BEGIN?

Where you start depends a lot on where you currently are. Are you a high school freshman homeschooler? A college student needing to pick up a few extra credits to graduate? An adult learner who wants to earn a college degree? After you have finished reading this guide, be sure to read all the other files found in the "general information" section of the website. Whether you need to start studying a "full curriculum," as a high school homeschooler meeting accountability laws for your state, or you only need to focus on one subject at a time because you are a full-time worker interested in earning college credit in your spare time, most of the program works the same.

Have you ever heard the old real estate joke about the three most important factors when selling a home? They are: location, location, location.

When you decide to use Homeschool College USA for any or all of your high school/college credits, the same philosophy applies, only in this case the three most important factors that will determine your success are: dedication, dedication, dedication. There will not be anyone holding your hand through this process. YOU must do the work, study hard, and pass your exams. While it would likely help if you were very smart and possessed of an excellent memory for details, the truth is, the average student with persistent dedication to his studies will do better, in the long run, than the brilliant student who only approaches his work with minimal seriousness.

Before you begin working in an individual course, you will need to create a RECORD OF STUDY book. The exception to this would be if you are only studying for one exam, in which case, your STUDY JOURNAL may be expanded to keep your official records.

Your RECORD OF STUDY should be a hard-backed, three-ring binder. In it you will keep the following information (more details on each component will follow):

- An intended course of study.
- A goals list.
- A schedule of study.
- High school transcripts.
- Information regarding the enrollment into a college or university.
- Official copies of test/exam results.

Your Intended Course of Study:

Whether you plan to study one subject or thirty, you will need to make a list detailing which courses you will take. How you determine this depends on your final goals. If you are looking to complete a high school education only, you will want to examine the HIGH SCHOOL STUDIES section of HC USA for a recommended course of study. If you are also looking to pick up college credits, you will want to make sure you have visited the Big Three's college websites (found on the HC USA "About" page) for more information on college-credits by exams.

A Goals List:

This list is very important and should be kept on-hand to motivate you any time you feel yourself falling into a slump. Why are you using Homeschool College USA? Are you completing/finishing your high school career? Do you want to earn college credit, or even a college degree? Do you simply have a specific area of study you want to explore, for personal enrichment? Whatever your education goals are, write them out on paper. Also list what things may be driving you to further your education - a better job or career with greater salary possibilities, advancement in your current field, the satisfaction of new knowledge - anything at all that motivates you now and can keep motivating you as you go along.

In addition, make a time goal for yourself. When do you want to complete your studies? How much time, in months or years, do you want to allow yourself to finish?

A Schedule of Study:

While your goals include an eventual graduation date, such as "Four years from now, I hope to have earned my BA degree.", a schedule of study is a calendar of time, planning your actual hours of study. You may make a weekly calendar that shows you plan to spend 4 hours on Tuesdays and Saturdays studying. You might be able to devote time daily. Remember, studying is work, and just like the weekly work schedule you follow at a job, you need a weekly study schedule, with time dedicated to your schooling. Make a schedule and stick to it! If you allow yourself to get easily distracted, you will find your lack of discipline will limit your chances of success in the end. If, on the other hand, you find your projected schedule is truly not working for you, don't try to force it. Rethink it, and create a new schedule that works best for your needs. Serious, persistent, consistent studying is the key. Dedication, dedication, dedication.

High School Transcripts:

If you have already graduated high school, include a copy of your transcripts here. If you are a homeschooler or never finished high school, you will work on building your transcripts as you study the individual course subjects. (You can find examples of transcripts in the HIGH SCHOOLER STUDIES section of the Homeschool College USA website.)

Information Regarding College Enrollment:

You do not have to be currently enrolled in a college or university when you begin this program. Eventually, however, you will need to choose and apply to a school in order to receive credits for your exams and earn your diploma. When this time comes, file your paperwork here, for reference. Many colleges and universities in America accept the CLEP, DSST, TECEP, and ECE tests for college credits. They also, generally, do NOT allow you to earn all of your credits through testing.

If you want to earn your degree through exam-taking alone, you will need to explore and eventually apply to one of the Big Three schools.

Official Exam Results:

Once you've started taking the college-level exams, file your official results papers here.

Keep your RECORD OF STUDY in a safe, but accessible place, adding to it when needed, and referring back to it for reference and motivation.

Once you have put together your RECORD OF STUDY book, you will need to assemble your first STUDY JOURNAL, to use as you begin your work. The link from the HC USA homepage will give you the information you need.

* Homeschool College USA is not an accredited institution and does not issue transcripts or diplomas.