



**National
PASS
Center**

Program Implementation Guide

PASS
Portable Assisted Study Sequence

2020

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What Is PASS?

PASS (Portable Assisted Study Sequence) is a nationally-recognized program that offers at-risk students an alternative means of earning full or partial academic course credits, or of building educational skills.



With PASS, a student works semi-independently with the assistance of a mentor/instructor who meets or is in contact with the student on a regular basis. The curriculum consists of learner-centered materials developed specifically for PASS, which include current teaching strategies to address all learning styles. Students also are able to undertake courses at their own pace.

Each semester of coursework is comprised of five study units, complete with unit tests. A student needing to complete an interrupted course, or one who is seeking a way to strengthen specific skills, can do only the units necessary instead of the entire course. Each unit equals approximately twelve to eighteen hours of instruction, adding up to a total of 90 hours for a full semester. If a student successfully completes all five units, that work equates to $\frac{1}{2}$ Carnegie credit or its local equivalent. With the cooperation of school counselors and administrators, a student can begin a course in one location and complete it in another.

National PASS Center-developed Courses and Materials *

- ➔ Language Arts – 13 + 5*
- ➔ Social Studies – 13
- ➔ Mathematics – 19 + 5*
- ➔ Science – 4 + 1*
- ➔ Electives – 4 + 1*

A comprehensive list of courses with publication dates and brief descriptions of supplemental materials can be found at npcpass.org.

* non-credit-bearing supplemental offerings

PASS offers curriculum and support materials to help secondary-school-aged students who are:

- * Credit deficient
- * Mobile or transferring to a new school
- * In need of skill-building or remediation
- * Able to benefit from a non-traditional educational setting
- * Limited English Proficient
- * Seeking alternative credit accrual options

PASS Provides

- * Over 50 courses in all content areas developed to meet academic learning standards of numerous state and national organizations, including Common Core State Standards
- * An option for attaining requisite skills to make up failed courses, give supplemental support for in-school course work, or provide access to courses not available in a traditional setting when needed
- * Enhancement of critical-thinking and problem-solving skills
- * A pathway for dropout recovery

Credibility

The credibility of the PASS program is maintained at all levels of its development and use.

- * Curriculum is written by qualified education specialists and certified teachers.
- * Learner-centered techniques are embedded throughout to address different learning styles.
- * Student work is monitored and tests administered and evaluated by trained staff.
- * Credit is verified and awarded for completed work.
- * Standards-based curriculum meets requirements of most individual districts and states.
- * Courses are reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

PASS Flexibility

Flexibility is an important reason why PASS courses are an attractive option for credit accrual or skill acquisition and reinforcement. The semi-independent, learner-centered, self-contained, portable materials can be used in a variety of situations, such as:

- * a single student working during non-class time in the school setting;
- * a single student working at home, or while traveling with his or her family;
- * a small group of students working together in a before or after school tutoring program;
- or
- * a larger group of students working together in a summer program.



I would not have accomplished what I have without the PASS program. It is very helpful and I encourage more students to participate.

José Paz Pruneda, Minnesota/North Dakota/Mexico
2016 PASS Student of the Year

Program Delivery Options

Summer:

- * Program can be configured in one classroom using multiple subject areas with one or more mentor/instructor.
- * Gain access to a computer and/or science lab for supplemental activities.

Non-Traditional Hours and Setting:

- * Schedule learning time and location based on student availability and needs.
- * Adjust time to complete a course based on individual circumstances.
- * Provide students with access to tutors during lunch, study hall, or before or after school.

On-the-Road or Short-Term Absence:

- * Supply a student who will be absent for a period of time, for medical, disciplinary, or travel reasons, with one or two units on which to test upon return to school.

Credit Granting Arrangements

Verification of student needs – Programs should verify a student’s course needs before enrolling the student. Verification can be achieved by checking records from current or previous schools.

Identify institution granting credit – *BEFORE* a student begins, or works toward completion of a course through the use of PASS, one crucial piece of the credit accrual process should be in place. It is essential to identify a credit-granting institution that will issue a transcript for the course, and that the student’s intended school of graduation agrees to accept the credit awarded to help meet their graduation requirements.

Ensuring credit is recorded – All necessary forms should be forwarded as quickly as possible to the institution granting credit. If that institution is not the student’s school of graduation, an additional step will be necessary to ensure that a transcript is sent to the student’s intended high school of graduation.

Partial Credit for Course Completion

Each PASS course is comprised of five competency-based units with a final test for each, rather than an overall final test. Each successfully completed course of five units is equal to one semester of study. If a student’s schooling is interrupted part way through a semester, that student may be able to demonstrate content mastery of a portion of a course that was being taken in a traditional setting through final unit tests, and thereby not need to start a PASS course from the beginning. For instance, if the student was within a month of completing the sophomore English course before the family moved, he or she may be able to complete the credits by finishing one or two of the PASS English II units.

On-the-Road or Short-term Absence

On the Road – Students who intend to move are identified by their present school and urged to use the time away to complete a course in progress, make up a failed course or move ahead with gaining credits to meet graduation requirements. The school then contacts the PASS state contact in the destination area to find a PASS mentor/instructor for the student. The student can be given materials to begin a PASS course, a single unit with the supplementary materials, taking those on the road to study prior to meeting with the PASS mentor/instructor in the destination area. Additional PASS units and supplementary materials can be sent to the mentor/instructor to provide for the student as work is successfully completed. The student on the road may need more than one



mentor/instructor during travel. The home-base school may assume responsibility for the issuing of credit, that credit may be issued by the school where the course is completed and transferred to the home-base school, or in some states there is one school district that issues all credits for completed work.

The student can also begin a PASS course while traveling. Upon arrival at a work destination, a potential student is identified by service providers who put him/her in touch with a program in the area. Once the student's needs have been assessed, the student is given course materials and linked with a mentor/instructor. Arrangements are made to provide documentation of results for granting of credit by either the local educational institution or the school where the student is enrolled throughout most of the school year.

Short-term absence – Designed to be used for semi-independent study, PASS is an attractive curriculum option for schools needing materials to assist a student who is unable to attend school for a period of time. The PASS mentor/instructor in this case may be a home visitor if the student is unable to attend meetings elsewhere.

Dropout Recovery or Alternative High School Education (AHSE) Diploma Preparation

PASS is one option for a student returning to school to complete credits for a diploma. Such a student might make up credits as a supplement to the regular high school curriculum during the school year or during the summer. This possibility of accruing credits outside the limits of the regular curriculum is an attractive incentive for dropout retrieval.

Some programs use the semi-independent curriculum to help students who are not planning on a high school diploma but instead are preparing for AHSE testing. The students' needs for particular subject area skills can be assessed and an appropriate course chosen for study.



I am thankful for the PASS program.... It has made a difference in my career and life plans.

Pedro A., Yuma, Arizona

Accommodations for the EL Student

PASS courses and materials have been developed taking the English Learner (EL) student into consideration.

- * Instructional materials are written approximately two grade levels below the content level of a course while still meeting academic learning standards.
- * Glossary and vocabulary resources are embedded in lessons.
- * Some courses and supplemental materials are available in Spanish.
- * The PASS student is not bound by traditional time constraints to complete PASS materials. An EL student can take the additional time necessary to master the materials.

Glossary of Biology Terms <i>Glosario de Términos de Biología</i>	
abiogenesis <i>abiogénesis</i>	Latin term referring to the early belief that life could arise from non-living matter <i>término del latín que se refiere a la creencia antigua que la vida podía surgir de materia inerte</i>
absolute age dating <i>datación de edad absoluta</i>	a method of looking at the amount of radioactive atoms in a material to determine its age <i>un método de examinar la cantidad de átomos radioactivos en un material para determinar su edad</i>
absorption <i>absorción</i>	passage of substances into or out of a cell through the cell membrane <i>movimiento de sustancias hacia el interior o el exterior de la membrana de una célula</i>
acetylcholine <i>acetilcolina</i>	the most common neurotransmitter used to transmit nerve impulses across a synapse <i>el neurotransmisor más común, que actúa transmitiendo los impulsos nerviosos a través de las sinapsis</i>
adenine <i>adenina</i>	one of the two purine nucleobases used in forming nucleotides of the nucleic acids DNA and RNA; in DNA, adenine (A) binds to thymine (T) via two hydrogen bonds to assist in stabilizing the nucleic acid structures; in RNA, adenine binds to uracil (U) <i>una de dos bases nitrogenadas de la purina usadas en la formación de nucleótidos de los ácidos nucleicos ADN y ARN; en ADN, la adenina (A) se une a la timina (T) mediante dos puentes de hidrógeno que ayudan a estabilizar las estructuras del ácido nucleico; en ARN, la adenina se une al uracilo (U)</i>
aerobic <i>aeróbico</i>	occurring in the presence of oxygen or requiring oxygen to live <i>ocurriendo en la presencia de oxígeno o que requiere oxígeno para vivir</i>
allantois <i>alantoides</i>	a membranous sac that grows out of the lower end of the digestive tract in embryos of reptiles, birds, and mammals, where oxygen, carbon dioxide, and metabolic wastes are exchanged <i>saco membranoso que sale desde el extremo bajo de la vía digestiva en los embriones de reptiles, aves y mamíferos, en donde el oxígeno, dióxido de carbono y los desechos metabólicos son intercambiados</i>



*The PASS program
always kept me up on my
studies during the summer so I
was able to get all my credits
on time.*

Norma H., Texas/Wisconsin

Student Selection Considerations

A good process to identify whether PASS is an appropriate option for a student will help to avoid problems of course duplication, enrollment in courses that do not fit graduation requirements, or ones for which the student lacks adequate preparation.

✓	Questions to Consider	Ensuring Successful Outcomes
	What are the student's credit needs?	Transcripts and other student records should be checked against credit and exit exam requirements at the anticipated school of graduation. Does the student have partial credits that might be completed?
	Does the student have adequate language skills?	PASS materials are written about two grade levels below the content level of the course. Careful consideration should be given to increased support before enrolling an EL student in PASS.
	Is the student able to work semi-independently?	A student needs the self discipline and motivation to complete the materials in a non-traditional classroom setting without a teacher explaining the concepts on a daily basis. More support may be required initially until the student gains confidence.
	What arrangements can be made for monitoring and assistance?	The student and mentor/instructor need to have a <u>method for meeting</u> on a regular basis, whether this is attending a summer school or evening class, having home or office visits, or possibly even connecting online.
	Does the student have sufficient time availability?	The student needs to have <u>sufficient time</u> available, free from other commitments, to complete course work in a timely fashion. Some students have school and work schedules that prohibit successful completion of PASS courses.

Mentor/Instructor Identification

Selection – Key to the successful use of the PASS curriculum and support materials is the selection and training of a mentor/instructor(s) to work with PASS students.

mentor/instructor	The person who works with a PASS student, monitoring and assisting progress through the PASS materials. This person may also have PASS recruitment and assessment assignments.
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The mentor/instructor is charged with the responsibility of assisting students in one or more PASS course areas, establishing trust and respect with students, meeting regularly, checking progress, answering questions, possibly doing some supplementary instruction, and, perhaps,



administering unit tests. The mentor/instructor may also have the responsibilities of identifying and selecting students for PASS and serving as liaison with the credit awarding institution or a contact in another location to which the student is traveling. Ideally the PASS mentor/instructor has certification in the content area being taught, but any PASS mentor/instructor needs to have:

- * excellent communication skills and rapport with students,
- * completed or be a participant in a post-secondary program,
- * supervision by a secondary education certified instructor, and
- * preferably, expertise in the course content area.

Working with the Student

PASS semester courses are divided into five units with a unit test or alternative assessment tool for each unit so that a student has materials that are portable and manageable in size. An entire semester or full-year course text might be intimidating, but when a mentor/instructor issues one unit at a time, students are less intimidated and usually react, “I can do this.”

First Meeting – Following the matching of a student and mentor/instructor, they should meet to discuss procedures, responsibilities and meeting dates. The mentor/instructor discusses the workings of semi-independent study through PASS and the responsibilities of student and parent as well as those of the mentor/instructor. Many PASS programs use the *PASSport to Success* form found on the npcpass.org website in the Tools and Tips section of Publications, which serves as a reminder of assignments and meeting dates as well as a contract signed by student, parent/guardian and mentor/instructor.

Useful support documents are available on the npcpass.org website in the **Forms** section. These include:

- * Credit-granting Memorandum of Understanding
- * “PASSport to Success” *contract* for student, mentor, and home support person
- * “To the Student” letter
- * “To the Parent/Para los padres” letter
- * Study Strategies/Estrategias de estudio
- * Test Taking Tips/Ideas para tomar exámenes

Subsequent Meetings – At subsequent meetings, the mentor/instructor checks work completed, giving the student opportunities to ask questions. If appropriate, the mentor/instructor gives instruction on the upcoming assignments. He/she also sets up a follow-up meeting date and issues supplementary materials as necessary.

Testing – Each unit is accompanied by a unit test or other assessment tool. The student should be given only one unit at a time to study. PASS success is based on giving the student manageable units to work on. When a unit is completed, the student’s achievement should be evaluated with the unit test or alternate assessment tool. If a pretest is available for a unit, the mentor/instructor might administer it to determine the student’s readiness for the unit exam. If the mentor/instructor and student agree to proceed with the course, they should discuss the first unit of the course, reviewing the introductory material and checking to be sure the student has access to any necessary materials.

Some units also have review tests that a student can use to see if he/she is ready for the unit test. The mentor/instructor should not try to test on more than one unit at a time. If the student completes the test successfully, another unit can be given for study. There is no final examination for a PASS course that tests on the entire course. The student can be awarded credit upon successful completion of all five units and their evaluation instruments or those that were needed to complete course work initiated elsewhere.

To maintain the integrity of the PASS system, tests and answer keys should be safeguarded. A completed test should be graded, results posted to the student’s record, shared with the student, and then destroyed.

Grading – The Mentor/Instructor Manual for a course includes the answers to the lesson exercises. The mentor/instructor can share the Manual with the student as the situation warrants. Courses and tests have some objective multiple choice or matching sections that can be machine graded; however, other sections require students to demonstrate advanced thinking and writing. Many tests require the scorer to read paragraphs or evaluate essays. A rubric is included to assist grading. An average of the unit test scores should determine the final grade.

Passing Scores – States and school districts vary on specific passing scores.

Course Completion – Upon the successful completion of all five unit tests, the student has completed a semester’s course. If the student was taking the course for credit, an understanding of who will be awarding that credit should be in place before course work is started.

Trouble Shooting – If the student is not completing the work as scheduled or is unable to complete a unit test successfully, the mentor/instructor should ask the student about problems and consider what additional assistance will be helpful:

- * Has the student been encouraged to ask questions, to get needed help with new concepts?
- * Does the student need help with time management and study skills?
- * Is the student’s outside employment schedule interfering with completion of PASS work?
- * If the student had difficulty with the unit test, did the mentor/instructor check the test to ensure that all sections were completed?
- * Are the student’s parents involved in his/her support?



Supporting Student Success

- 1 • Two Hours With Student Per Week 
- 2 • Foster Language Expansion 
- 3 • Nurture Student Self-Confidence 
- 4 • Enhance Motivation To Succeed 
- 5 • Encourage Persistence To Completion 
- 6 • Make The Task Achievable 
- 7 • Involve The Student's Family 
- 8 • Relate The Course To Student's World 
- 9 • Access Other's Expertise 
- 10 • Provide Grades Promptly 

Obtaining PASS Materials

PASS materials are available through the National PASS Center Licensed Distribution Sites, and on the NPC password-protected website to state and local Migrant Education programs in those states with a signed State Participation Agreement. Course offerings and prices may vary slightly from one distribution site to another. Catalogs of available courses can be obtained from the distribution sites. The sites are also listed on the NPC website (npcpass.org).

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Course Sales other than KS & NE
migrant students

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National PASS Center

The mission of the National PASS Center (NPC) shall be: to coordinate PASS (Portable Assisted Study Sequence) activities, continuing the PASS vision of providing at-risk youth viable credit accrual options based on a learner-centered process with flexible, portable, readable, and credible materials. Specific objectives for the NPC are, but not limited to, the following:

- To coordinate the revision, updating, and development of PASS courses in alignment with current state academic standards, incorporating technology in the courses as appropriate.
- To serve as a repository and clearinghouse for PASS materials.
- To evaluate/assess the impact of course usage on students' overall success rates in realizing the goal of achieving a high school diploma or equivalent credential.
- To provide/facilitate technical assistance, as requested, to sites interested in implementing/expanding PASS activities.



National PASS Center

Director: Janet Fancher

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“This opportunity has been a lifesaver. Without PASS, students like me would never be able to graduate. We would all be high school dropouts.”

~ Juan Cenobio, Van Buren High School, Van Buren, Arkansas
National PASS Student of the Year