

Baltimore County Public Schools

Cohort FAQs

<http://www.bcps.org/offices/dpd/cohorts.html>.

1. What is a BCPS cohort?

A cohort is a group of individuals who begin and complete together an approved sequence of courses which are contracted for direct billing. Participants must join the cohort at the start of the cohort. All cohort courses must be taken in the approved sequence, in the identified semester, and at the contracted location.

2. What is direct billing?

Direct billing occurs when BCPS contracts with a college or university to directly bill BCPS for tuition costs up to the negotiated amount of individual student reimbursement for approved, successfully completed cohort courses.

3. What are some of the contracted cohort benefits?

- Reduced tuition
- Direct billing
- Convenient locations

4. What cohorts are available?

View upcoming cohorts at <http://www.bcps.org/offices/dpd/cohorts.html>.

5. What colleges and universities does BCPS currently have contracted cohort partnerships?

A listing of college and university partners for BCPS contracted cohorts can be viewed at <http://www.bcps.org/offices/dpd/cohorts.html>.

Web sites of college and university partners can be directly accessed at the following links:

- Notre Dame of Maryland University (<http://www.ndm.edu/>)
- Community College of Baltimore County (<http://ccbcmd.edu/>)
- Goucher College (<http://www.goucher.edu/>)
- Johns Hopkins University (<http://www.jhu.edu/>)
- Loyola University Maryland (<http://www.loyola.edu/>)
- Morgan State University (<http://morgan.edu/>)
- Towson University (<http://www.towson.edu/>)
- University of Maryland Baltimore County (<http://www.umbc.edu/>)

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6. How do I enroll a BCPS contracted cohort?

To enroll in a BCPS contracted cohort, please contact the college or university directly. Contact information can be viewed at <http://www.bcps.org/offices/dpd/cohorts.html>. Participants must join the cohort at the start of the cohort.

7. Who can participate in a BCPS contracted cohort?

Only permanent BCPS employees in active service are eligible to participate in **one approved contracted cohort program at a time**. Participants must join the cohort at the start of the cohort and take all courses in the approved sequence, in the identified semester, and at the contracted location. Individuals requiring more flexibility need to enroll in non-cohort programs and seek individual tuition reimbursement if eligible.

8. Am I eligible for direct billing?

To be eligible for direct billing, you must be a member of a BCPS contracted cohort. Your name must appear on the BCPS Cohort Membership List and you must sign and return the Cohort Participant Agreement prior to the start of the cohort. If these requirements are not met, BCPS will not accept direct billing from the college.

9. What are my financial responsibilities?

Cohort members are responsible for all costs over and above the contracted direct billing amount per course. Questions regarding your bill should be directed to the college. Participants must notify the college with any name, address, phone number, or e-mail changes.

10. Do I have to take all the courses in the cohort?

Participants must join the cohort at the start of the cohort. All cohort courses must be taken in the approved sequence, in the identified semester, and at the contracted location.

11. What if I have already taken some of the courses in a certificate cohort program?

You may be eligible to receive special permission from the college to become a cohort member if you have taken no more than **one** of the required courses.

12. What if I have already taken some of the courses in a degreed cohort program?

You may be eligible to receive special permission from the college to become a cohort member if you have taken no more than **two** of the required courses.

13. Are the same BCPS contracted cohorts available at all colleges and universities?

No, all colleges and universities do not have the same contracted cohorts.

14. Can I be in two BCPS contracted cohorts at the same time?

No, you cannot be in more than one BCPS contracted cohort at a time.

15. Am I eligible for reimbursement of other courses while I am participating in a BCPS contracted cohort?

Cohort members are not eligible for individual tuition reimbursement by BCPS while taking BCPS contracted cohort courses. The BCPS Cohort Participant Agreement can be found at <http://www.bcps.org/offices/dpd/docs/CohortPlanning/Cohort-Participation-Agreement.doc>

16. What happens if I do not successfully complete a course?

Direct billing requires cohort participants to complete the course and receive a grade of "C" or better by the time the college originally posts grades. Cohort participants are responsible for all course costs for which a grade lower than a "C" or an "Incomplete" is received.

17. Where are the courses held?

Courses are held in convenient locations, generally in BCPS schools or other central sites. Locations of cohort courses are subject to change. The college reserves the right to move the course from a BCPS site to the college campus at any time.

18. What day and time are courses?

The college or university determines the day, date, and time of each course. Courses will not begin before 4:30 p.m. Dates and times of cohort courses are subject to change. The college reserves the right to change the date and time of courses.

19. Do courses need to be taken in a specific sequence and semester?

Cohort courses must be taken in the approved sequence, in the identified semester, and at the contracted location.

20. Can I drop out of a BCPS contracted cohort?

Yes, you may drop out of a BCPS contracted cohort. You are not eligible to rejoin the same cohort after dropping out. If you drop out during a course you will be responsible for the full cost of tuition. To officially withdraw from a cohort or course, you must follow the college's official withdraw procedures.

21. Do I still have class if BCPS is closed or closes early for inclement weather?

If the class is held on a BCPS site and the system is closed or closes early for inclement weather, then classes are cancelled. If the class is held at the college, please follow the college's cancellation policy.

22. Do I still have class if BCPS closes early due to heat-related conditions?

If the class is held on a BCPS site and the system closes early for heat-related conditions, cohort classes/meetings are cancelled. However, the college reserves the right to move the class from a BCPS site to the college campus if the system closes early for heat-related conditions. If the class is scheduled to be held at the college, please follow the college's cancellation policy.

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23. Do I still have class if BCPS is closed for students but open for staff?

Yes, classes will be held as scheduled.

24. What happens if I cannot take one of the courses?

If you miss one course, you will need to take that course on your own after the cohort ends. Direct billing will not apply and BCPS contracted cohort prices are not guaranteed when you take the course at a later date.

25. Can a BCPS contracted cohort be cancelled?

If a cohort's enrollment drops below the contracted minimum number of participants at any time, the cohort may be cancelled.

26. Whom do I contact with questions concerning my certification or a salary lane change?

Please contact the Office of Certification at certunit@bcps.org or 410-887-4147.

27. Whom do I contact for additional BCPS contracted cohort information?

Contact information can be found at <http://www.bcps.org/offices/dpd/cohorts.html>.