

Is Your Student's Class a Co-curricular Course?

Arkansas Children's Educational Freedom Account Program

Co-curricular courses are a qualifying expense under the Education Freedom Account program. This page explains what a class has to look like to be approved as one.

First, is it actually a course?

A course is a discrete program of study that follows a predetermined syllabus or specification. It has a defined beginning and end, a set body of content, and a written plan that exists before instruction starts. A drop-in class with no set curriculum is not a course, no matter how good the instruction is.

Co-curricular courses can come from many subject areas

The rule names fine arts such as visual arts, music theory, instrumental and vocal instruction, dance, and theater; science, technology, engineering, and math subjects such as robotics, coding, engineering design, applied sciences, and advanced math; world languages taken as enrichment rather than as a core subject; and career and technical subjects such as business, agriculture, culinary arts, digital design, and other vocational pathways. The list is not closed, so other subjects can qualify.

The subject alone does not decide it

Being in one of these subject areas does not make a class a co-curricular course. Within any of these subjects, some instruction is built as a course and some is not. A class that meets weekly to practice and perform, with no syllabus, no stated learning objectives, and no assessments, is an extracurricular activity even though its subject appears above. What decides the category is whether the class meets all ten requirements below, not what it is about.

Then check all ten requirements

A co-curricular course has to meet every one of these. If your class misses even one, it will not be approved in this category.

- It builds on, reinforces, or extends your student's main academic program
- It contributes to your student's academic development
- It teaches structured content in an instructional setting
- It lines up with academic standards, educational goals, or subject-area skills
- It is not one of your student's required core subjects
- It has a written academic connection to a recognized subject area or educational standard
- The instructor has subject-matter knowledge or experience in what they are teaching
- It has real instructional design, such as a syllabus, defined learning objectives, or performance-based assessments. A document titled "syllabus" is not enough by itself if it only lists the skills to be practiced each week.
- It supports the academic goals in your student's homeschool education plan or private school curriculum
- It is the kind of course Arkansas public schools offer. The course does not have to be taught at a public school, but a course of that type has to be part of what public schools teach. A class in a subject no Arkansas public school teaches will not qualify as co-curricular.

The same subject can go either way

Subject	Likely a co-curricular course	Likely an extracurricular activity
Dance	Ballet Technique I, a year-long course with a written syllabus, term learning objectives, and graded technique assessments	A weekly recreational jazz class with a set schedule and a qualified instructor, ending in a spring recital, with no syllabus, objectives, or assessments
Computer science	A semester Introduction to Programming course with unit objectives, assigned projects, and graded work	A robotics club that meets to build and compete, with no syllabus or assessment of individual learning
Spanish	A Spanish II enrichment course with a syllabus, proficiency targets, and end-of-unit assessments	A conversation group that meets to practice speaking, with no curriculum or assessed progress

Both categories are qualifying expenses. The category matters because it changes what documentation we need from you, and extracurricular activities are limited to twenty-five percent of your student's annual account funds, a limit shared with physical education activities and educational field trips.

What to send us

The strongest submissions include the syllabus or course outline, the written learning objectives, a description of how student progress is assessed, the instructor's background, and the term or session dates. Ask your provider for these before you enroll. If a provider cannot produce them, the class is probably better submitted as an extracurricular activity instead.

One more standard applies to everything

Every EFA expense must also be ordinary and necessary: used in a recognized instructional setting, reasonable in cost and frequency, and directly supporting your student's academic learning, developmental growth, or career readiness. Classes that are mainly recreational or hobby-based are not approved unless they are tied to a structured instructional program with clear academic or career-preparation objectives.