

PSEO **Handbook**

for

**K-12 Students, Parents, and High
School Administrators**



RIDGEWATER
COLLEGE

a community and technical college

Contents

Contents.....	1
Welcome!	3
Key Symbols Throughout this Guide:.....	3
Directory.....	4
Hours of Operation	4
Campus Addresses	4
PSEO Values	5
Is PSEO Right for Me?	6
PSEO vs. High School	7
Data Privacy (FERPA).....	9
Attending Ridgewater after High School? Keep this in mind.....	9
How to be Successful as a PSEO Student:.....	9
How to Apply	11
Immunization Records	11
Application Due Dates	11
Spring Semester Starts.....	12
Admissions Decisions.....	12
Appealing an Admissions Decision	12
Schools without GPA or class rank.....	13
PSEO Applications at other Institutions.....	13
Online Orientation	14
Orientation Due Date	14
Advising Appointment & Registration	15
Appointment Location	15
Preparing for the Advising Appointment.....	15
During the Appointment	15
Choosing Courses	16
Want to Earn a 2-year Degree through PSEO? Know this.....	16
After the Appointment.....	16
Additional course information.....	16
Making Schedule Changes	18
Dropping or Withdrawing from a Course	18
Transferring Courses.....	19
Important Information About Technical Programs	20
Registering for Technical Program Courses	21
Nursing Assistant Courses.....	21
Textbooks & Supplies.....	22
How to get your books	22

Materials not covered under PSEO.....	22
All Required materials must be returned	22
Returning materials for dropped courses	22
Writing in Textbooks	22
Important information about shrink-wrapped books & online access codes:	23
Computer Requirements.....	23
Chromebooks	23
Computer Loans through Ridgewater	23
PSEO Mileage Reimbursement	24
The Course Syllabus	25
What is a Syllabus?	25
Why is it Important?	25
Course Calendar or List of Due Dates	25
Using the Syllabus to Stay Organized.....	25
Keep Track of Your Grades	26
Instructor Office Hours.....	26
Save your Syllabi.....	26
Satisfactory Academic Performance	27
Grades	27
Midterm Grades.....	27
Staying in Good Academic Standing.....	27
Retaking a Course	29
Your Ridgewater Transcript is with you for Life!.....	29
Student Services Available for PSEO.....	30
Tutoring	30
Disability Services & Class Accommodations	30
Multicultural Outreach.....	30
Counseling	31
Staying Connected: Email and Text	32
Email	32
How to Check Your Email	32
Texting	33
Starfish	33
PSEO Check Lists.....	34
ANNUAL REQUIRED PAPERWORK:	35
Common PSEO Questions.....	36

Welcome!

We are excited that you have chosen to attend Ridgewater College as part of our Post Secondary Enrollment Option (PSEO) program. This program allows students to earn both high school credit and college credit for the same course.

As a PSEO student, you are unique! You are not only a high school student, but you are also **a college student.**

This handbook was created to help you, your family, and your high school administration learn more about our program. Inside, you will find details on specific policies and procedures. But you will also find best practices and expectations that we have of each PSEO student.

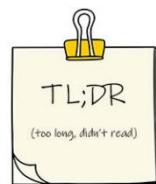
We are excited to assist you in this journey and cannot wait to have you join us!

Key Symbols Throughout this Guide:

Throughout this handbook you'll see the following symbols to highlight key information.



Pay close attention to items noted with this symbol. Any issues or concerns that pop up frequently with our families will have this noted next to it.



TL;DR stands for “too long; didn’t read” and is used to give a short synopsis of each section’s information. While we believe the information we provide should be read in full, we also know a “highlight” list may be useful. You’ll find these located at the end of each section of the handbook.

Definition of Homeschool

At Ridgewater, we consider students who are not enrolled in traditional K-12 system, or online high school (like Minnesota Connections Academy, Minnesota Online, etc.) to be homeschooled. If you’re taking classes through an online high school, work with your guidance or counseling office to discuss PSEO.

Directory

A full directory can be found on our website - www.ridgewater.edu/staff-directory

Hours of Operation

Monday – Friday
8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

View the [Academic Calendar](#) to learn when classes are not in session or when the college plans to be closed for holiday observance.

Campus Addresses

Willmar:
2101 15th Ave NW
Willmar, MN 56201
[View Campus Map & Parking](#)

Hutchinson:
2 Century Ave SE
Hutchinson, MN 55350
[View Campus Map & Parking](#)

PSEO Values

PSEO students are held to the same standards and have the same expectations that we do of our traditional students. We encourage students and families to bookmark or download a copy of the Ridgewater College Catalog which includes policies, procedures, and other important information.

In addition, by the time a PSEO student is ready to graduate high school, our goal is to help them achieve confidence in the following PSEO Values.



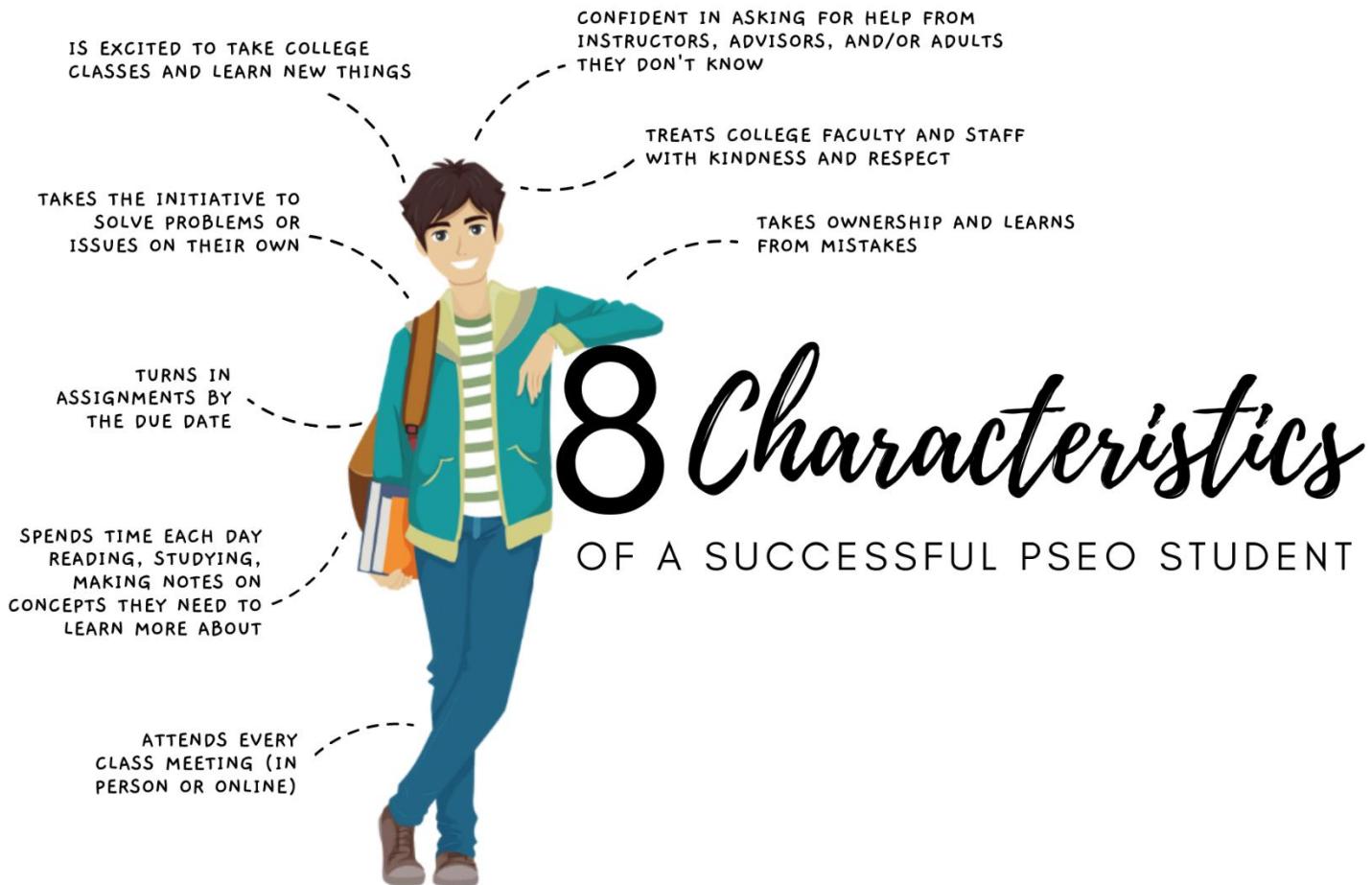
PSEO Values

- 1** Make a schedule based on remaining high school graduation requirements and/or your future major.
- 2** Know your future college's requirements for transferring courses.
- 3** Know Ridgewater student policies and conduct yourself appropriately.
- 4** Advocate for yourself when you need assistance, and use campus resources as needed.
- 5** Know how to run a Degree Audit Report (DARs) and read it with confidence.

Is PSEO Right for Me?

PSEO is a great opportunity for high school students. Earning college credit to get a jump start on a future degree—at no cost to a student—and exploring different interests are a couple great reasons to choose PSEO.

We have the same end-goal that you do: we want you to be successful in PSEO so you can earn college credit before graduating high school. But to be successful it means you need to demonstrate certain characteristics. They include:



If you're exploring PSEO options and have questions, please consider attending one of our spring informational sessions. Typically held in February or March, PSEO Info Nights are a popular way to learn more about PSEO, our program, expectations, and more. To see upcoming dates, please visit our PSEO page at www.ridgewater.edu/PSEO.

PSEO vs. High School

Taking classes as a PSEO student means you are now officially a college student. Being a PSEO student is more than just taking classes at Ridgewater and earning college credit. You are now getting your first taste of what college life is like. Not only do you have more flexibility in your schedule, but you also need to know the differences in policies, procedures, and expectations—which can be very different from your local high school. Check out this list to see some of the more common examples.

	At your High School...	At Ridgewater College...
Absences	A parent/guardian calls to report an absence when ill. Students may also have permission to miss classes for a field trip, vacation, or get to leave early for a game. Students who have missed classes often get a day or two per missed day to make up any assignments, exams, etc.	A class may have an attendance policy that can impact the final grade. Missed classes may mean a missed assignment, quiz or other class requirement. Students who participate in sports with meets/away games need to remember that, unlike high school, they don't get an automatic "excused" absence or time to make up any missing work. Same is true for family trips or extended time away. While absences should be reported to the instructor directly, doing so does not automatically guarantee that extra time will be given to make up missed work. Students should meet with faculty to discuss policies on making up late work if the information provided in the syllabus isn't clear or there are questions.
Accommodations and Class Support	Students can request to have a class modified to best suit their learning style.	Modifications are not provided in college level classes.** Students who have an IEP at their high school, are neurodivergent (conditions such as autism) or want to discuss possible learning concerns/issues prior to enrolling for classes are encouraged to connect with our Accessibility and Disability Services staff. They will schedule a confidential discussion with the student regarding possible accommodations and services.
Class Performance	When a student is struggling, their teachers often notify the guidance office and they work with you. Parents may also be called to intervene.	While encouraged to keep students and advisors up-to-date on a student's performance, instructors are not required to do so. Students who are concerned about their class performance should reach out to the instructor directly. See <i>Instructor Interaction & Communication</i> and <i>Parent Involvement</i> on this chart for more information.
Class schedules	Typically, more time is spent during the school day in classes, with opportunities to get homework done during the day. Schedules are also made for students by their guidance counselor.	Less time is spent in class with more time off during the day, with the understanding that open hours are spent on homework and studying. Students who are attending full-time (approx. 15 credits each semester) can expect to spend 45 hours each week on class work. Students also take an active role in building their schedule, with some assistance from advisors.
Grades	High schools provide regular updates to current grades and often have mid-term grades posted for the student.	While instructors are encouraged to keep grade books up to date so students can know their current progress, they are not required to do so. Often, instructors will outline a grade breakdown

		in their syllabus and expect students to keep track of what they've earned, making the calculations themselves. Students need to connect with instructors if they are concerned about their grade status. In addition, Ridgewater does not issue mid-term grades.
Homework	Work turned in after the due date often is still eligible for full or partial credit.	Each instructor has their own policy on late work. However, many instructors do not accept late or "excused" work. Instructors don't always reach out to students when work is missing or late. It is important that students who take classes through PSEO understand when each assignment is due and plan accordingly to get that work completed and turned in on time. Work not turned in can impact the overall course grade, including possible failure.
Instructor Interaction & Communication	At high school, teachers are often proactive, reaching out to parents and students on a regular basis regarding performance, ways to improve grades, missing homework, etc. Parents often take the lead in connecting with teachers when students aren't doing well or have questions.	As noted under <i>Homework, Grades, and Class Performance</i> , instructors at Ridgewater are not required to be in frequent contact with students or advisors. Therefore, anytime there is a question or concern, students should be taking the lead to connect with their instructor (not parents). Students who are apprehensive or nervous about connecting with an instructor should reach out to their academic advisor for assistance. Advisors can coach students on how to email instructors and what to expect. Any questions parents have about a course should be discussed with the student directly. Even if the student has a FERPA release on file, allowing us to connect with parents, we (advisors, faculty, and support services) do not copy parents on emails. Instructors at Ridgewater also hold office hours which is time dedicated for meeting with students either on campus or possibly even virtually. Learn more about office hours on page 25.
Parent Involvement	Parents can talk to teachers, guidance counselors, the principal about their student's performance. Parents can also log into a parent portal to check academics.	See the note on page 9 regarding FERPA and parent involvement. If a student has a FERPA release on file, the college is permitted to release information only to those the student has noted on the form.
Schedule changes	Students work with their guidance counselor to make the changes.	Students have to initiate the request—either on their own, or working with their advisor—within the specified add/drop or withdraw windows. Students are also required to notify their high school of any changes made to their schedule.
Snow Days	When the high school closes for the day or has a delayed start, students don't attend (unless an eLearning day has been established).	Ridgewater doesn't always close for snowy weather. If the high school is closed/delayed, it is also important that students check to see if Ridgewater is closed/delayed, too. If we're still open, students must attend classes as normal unless the instructor has made other arrangements .

***Course modifications are different than accommodations through our Accessibility and Disability Services office. Students who wish to discuss this in more detail, should contact our ADSO staff directly.*



Data Privacy (FERPA)

PSEO students are entering into an exciting new phase of adult responsibilities and privileges. This phase comes with some federal and state data privacy protection that separates the role of families from the student.

[The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA requires that specific information related to a student's educational records may not be shared with anyone (including parents) other than the student. The law does not consider age, so even if you are under the age of 18—or if you are 18, but haven't yet graduated high school—the privacy laws shall apply. Faculty or staff may not discuss private matters, class performance, grades, etc. with a student's parents or guardian unless the student chooses to sign the written authorization.

Unless students complete the Authorization to Release Student Information form, your educational records may not be shared. FERPA does allow us to share student records and information with high school counselors and administration. The online "Authorization to Release Student Information" form can be found [here](#).

Please note: the decision to release student records is the **student's choice**. This is a legal document and should only be completed by the student. One thing that is often misunderstood about FERPA is that if a release is signed by the student, we keep parents "in the loop." This is not the case. A FERPA release does not mean we send parents copies of emails sent to the student, nor that courtesy phone calls are made regarding progress.

Attending Ridgewater after High School? Keep this in mind...

If you plan to attend Ridgewater after high school, and you fill out the FERPA release as a PSEO student, it does not "go away" or "expire" once you become a traditional student. This release stays on your file until you take it off.

How to be Successful as a PSEO Student:



Goal Setting

We ask all students, "Why are you taking classes?" and their answer becomes the basis for goal setting. But setting a goal is only part of the equation. You need a plan to help achieve it.



Balance

Too often, PSEO students load up their schedule thinking it will be a lot like high school/homeschool, only to learn that the amount of time outside of class that is needed to successfully complete course work cuts into other commitments like sports, youth group, work, etc. We want you to be successful and encourage students to keep extracurricular and personal commitments to 25 hours or less a week.



Ask for Help

It's important to advocate for yourself when you need help. Are you confused about your homework? Run into issues trying to access your email or D2L? Aren't sure where to go for assistance? ASK! Your academic advisor is happy to direct you to those who can assist you, like our free tutoring or even talking with one of our counselors. They'll even help you if you're nervous about reaching out to an instructor. We can't help unless you ask!

Admissions Criteria

In order for a student to eligible for PSEO, they must meet the following criteria

Liberal Arts (also known as "Generals", "Gen Eds," or "Transfer" courses)		
Grade	GPA or Class Rank	Testing/Placement Requirements
Senior	2.5* GPA or upper half of class	<p>Students must also place into ENGL 1210: College Comp I in order to participate in PSEO. Students can place into English by meeting one of the options below (Math placement is only needed if the student plans to take a Math and/or Chemistry):</p> <p>GPA PLACEMENT: English: 2.6 GPA or higher Math: 2.8 GPA or higher, and a final grade of a C- or higher in Algebra 2.</p>
Junior	3.0 GPA or upper third of class	<p>ACT SCORES**: Reading: 21 or higher Math: 22 or higher</p> <p>SAT SCORES**: ERW: 480 or higher</p>
Sophomores	3.0 GPA or upper third of class (available after successful completion of fall technical course with a "C" grade or higher)	<p>ACCUPLACER: Reading: 250 or higher Math (Advanced Algebra & Functions): 250 or higher to take College Algebra. Lower scores are accepted in order to take Chemistry.</p>

*Incoming Seniors who have a GPA of a 2.5 – 2.59, who do not have ACT/SAT scores, will need to take Accuplacer for Reading to be accepted into PSEO

**Lower ACT/SAT scores may be accepted depending on the student's GPA. Our admissions team will notify you if your ACT/SAT scores do not qualify.

Technical Courses (also known as "vocational" or "trades" courses)		
Grade	GPA or Class Rank	Testing/Placement Requirements
Senior	Must be able to demonstrate the ability to successfully complete coursework at a "C" level or higher. The student's academic record, GPA, class rank, and standardized test results are reviewed to determine admission eligibility.	Testing is not required for students who are only taking technical courses. If a student wants to do a combination of technical and Liberal Arts courses, they will need to follow the admissions criteria for the Liberal Arts courses to participate in PSEO.
Junior		
Sophomore		Sophomores must score an 850 on the 8 th grade MCA Reading Exam. If the student does not have an 8 th grade MCA score, they are eligible to take Accuplacer reading. Accuplacer will require a score of 220 or higher.

Generals are courses like English, Math, Science, History, etc. Technical courses are also known as "vocational" or "trades" courses, like Welding, Accounting, Agriculture, Machine Tool, etc.

How to Apply



Applying for PSEO is done in three parts:

- Online application
- Supplemental Documents: Credit Balance Supplement Form, Program Notice of Student Registration (NOSR) Form, and Official High School Transcript.
- Placement testing (if needed)

The PSEO application materials require a parent **and** a high school representative's signature.

Incomplete PSEO applications will not be processed. Therefore, please only apply with the online application once your supplemental documentation is ready.

Online Application

The online application is found on the Ridgewater website under PSEO (www.ridgewater.edu/pseo).

Applying online will require students to create a StarID. Please write down both the StarID and the password and save it as you'll need it for registration.

Supplemental Documents

The PSEO application is not complete and will not be processed until these documents are also received.

They include:

- A current high school transcript
- Completed Notice of Student Registration form (also known as the 3-part form, or the MDE form)
- Completed Credit Balance Sheet documenting any remaining high school requirements (to be completed by the high school counselor)
- A copy of their ACT, SAT, and/or Accuplacer scores if they've taken any of these exams in the last 2 years, and the scores aren't listed on the transcript.

Immunization Records

Students need to have a current immunization record on file, specifically for Tetanus/Diphtheria and Measles/Mumps/Rubella. We encourage adding this information on the transcript. If a student is not vaccinated, an exemption form is available on our website. Not having the student's immunization record up to date can limit the number of classes/credits a student can register for.

Placement Testing (if needed)

Students taking "Generals" need to place into ENGL 1210 College Composition I in order to participate. To do this, we first look at GPA. Students with a 2.6 GPA or higher place automatically into ENGL 1210 and will be accepted for PSEO. Students who do not meet the GPA needed for ENGL 1210, and do not have ACT or SAT scores on file, will need to take the Reading Accuplacer exam. If students do not meet the required score needed for ENGL 1210, they will not be eligible for PSEO.

Students who plan to take Chemistry or Math will need to take the Math placement exam if their cumulative GPA is lower than 2.8 **and** they did not earn a C- or higher in Algebra 2, and if ACT or SAT scores are not on file.

Application Due Dates

Completed applications should be to our office **no later than** May 30th for fall semester starts.

If this seems too early, trust us. It's not.

As we explain on page 13, we meet with students individually for their advising appointment. During this appointment we work with students to help create their course schedules. At the end of the appointment, they will be registered for both their fall and spring PSEO courses. We begin meeting with new PSEO students as early as to build their schedules.

Students who wait until after the deadline to turn in their completed PSEO application will:

- Have longer than average wait times to get an appointment with an advisor
- Need to make alternative class schedules as their first choices are full

On average, Ridgewater advisors meet individually with over 650 PSEO students every spring and summer to register for classes (with half of that being **new** students). Plan ahead and get your application in early!

Spring Semester Starts

Some students want to delay their start and begin PSEO in spring semester. Spring semester starts still need to notify their high schools no later than May 30th. Some of our high school partners hold firm to this deadline and there are no exceptions made. Please work directly with your high school on this option. Applications for spring semester starts are due December 1st.

Admissions Decisions

Complete applications are typically processed within ten (10) business days. Please allow extra time during the holidays, prior to semester start, and during summer months as we see a high volume of applications during these times.

Students admitted into the PSEO program will be sent a welcome letter via the mail. This letter contains important information and next steps in the PSEO onboarding process that all students should read and share with their parents.

Appealing an Admissions Decision

Students who do not meet the criteria as outlined above, or have applied but were denied, are welcome to appeal their admissions decisions. A successful appeal demonstrates that the student has met the admissions criteria in alternative ways—either through completed college level work at another institution, test scores or previous transcripts where a GPA/class rank is calculated, or other demonstration of skills and achievements. Letters of support are required, preferably from the high school counselor and an instructor who can speak to their academics.

Semester Start	Date Appeal Paperwork is Due
Fall Semester (starting in August)	Mid-July
Spring Semester (starting in January)	Mid-December

Students who have received a successful appeal may have restrictions applied to their appeal, such as a limited number of credits, or classes in a specific subject. Students who were denied will need to sit out one year before reapplying.

Appeal paperwork is available upon request from our admissions office. Please contact 320-222-5976 for more information.

Schools without GPA or class rank

Schools without a GPA or class ranking system are still welcome to apply to the PSEO program, however, students will need to go through our appeals process and possibly take the Accuplacer (depending on the class(es) students plan to take).

PSEO Applications at other Institutions

Students who have taken PSEO or College in the High School classes at another Minnesota State institution are still required to apply with us. We cannot transfer applications between colleges. Courses you have earned at another school can be transferred to Ridgewater upon request.

Online Orientation

Students receive information via the mail on when to begin online orientation. This happens in two groups:

Students who apply February 1 – April 1: These students will receive their acceptance letter, with a reminder that orientation materials will be sent to them in early-April. Once received in April, students can log into the online orientation and complete the modules.

Students who apply after April 1: These students will receive the orientation materials in their acceptance letter.

Students who apply after fall semester start to start PSEO in January*: These students will receive the orientation materials in their acceptance letter.

The online orientation is **mandatory** for all PSEO students, regardless of the date in which they have applied to the program. **Upon receipt of the orientation materials, students should complete the orientation within one week.**

This self-paced presentation reviews important policies, procedures, and expectations of our PSEO students. When reviewing this orientation students are encouraged to:

- Take your time—the orientation takes about 20 minutes to complete
- Read all of the information—you'll be quizzed at the end!

At the end of the orientation, students will take a quiz. When the quiz is complete, an email will be sent to the email address they provided when accessing the quiz. This email comes from **RIDGE-PSEO** and it will contain a link to view their advisor's calendar where they'll select an appointment time that works for them.

It is only after the student has submitted their quiz that they can sign up for an advising appointment.

Please note: this email often ends up in spam/junk folders.

Orientation Due Date

There is no specific due date for completing orientation. **However.** As we noted earlier, we work with hundreds of PSEO students every spring and summer. The longer you wait to complete orientation, the longer your wait to get an advising appointment.



We **strongly encourage** students to complete orientation within **one week** of receiving their letter. Advising appointments should be scheduled immediately upon receiving the email that your orientation is complete.



1. Orientation is mandatory & online
2. Students must take a quiz at the end
3. Once complete, students will receive an email to sign up for an advising session. Don't see it? Check your junk mail!
4. Students cannot schedule an advising appointment until orientation is complete.
5. The longer a student waits to complete orientation, they run the risk of waiting several weeks before they can meet with an advisor.

Advising Appointment & Registration

Once orientation is complete, students will set up their one-on-one advising appointment. All new PSEO students are required to meet with an academic advisor.

Advising appointments are on a first-come-first-served basis. It is not uncommon for students to have to wait three weeks for an appointment during the late spring and summer.



In order to get the earliest appointment possible, students should:

1. Turn in a complete application before the due dates (see page 11), **and**
2. Complete the orientation within one week of receiving their acceptance letter, **and**
3. Make an appointment immediately after receiving the **Next Steps after Online Orientation** email from the RIDGE-PSEO email address.

At this meeting students will spend time with their advisor talking about future goals, college plans (including college choice and major), as well as any remaining high school requirements. Students will also register for a full year of classes during this appointment.

Most PSEO students are working on generals through our Liberal Arts program in the hopes of transferring those credits to a 4-year college or university. Others are working on technical (sometimes known as “vocational” or “trades”) courses in hopes of entering the job market after high school. If you are exploring technical program options, please read the important information about technical programs on page 19.

Appointment Location

We no longer require students to come to campus for advising appointments unless they prefer. Our most popular appointment option is Zoom or phone, and the student makes this choice when reserving their appointment time. Students who wish to come to campus for advising appointments are welcome to do so, however, be sure to check in advance if your advisor is based on the campus nearest you (example: you’re closer to the Hutchinson campus, but your advisor could be based in Willmar). In cases like this, if an in-person appointment is requested, the student will need to travel to the advisor’s home campus.

Preparing for the Advising Appointment

To make the most of the advising appointment, we encourage students to do the following:

- ✓ Decide how many classes they want to take each semester
 - Full time: 4 or more classes
 - Part time: 1 to 3 classes
- ✓ Decide which subjects they want to take
 - **TIP:** Work with the high school counselor to review which subjects are remaining for high school graduation
- ✓ Explore course offering types and decide which option is preferable
 - On campus
 - Online
 - Combination of both

During the Appointment

This one-on-one appointment is time set aside specifically for you, the student—so make the most of it! We’ll spend time going over important PSEO information, talk about goals, the difference between PSEO and high school, how to be successful, and of course...registering for classes. Getting to know you helps us to support you!

Choosing Courses

A student's first priority is to graduate high school. High school guidance counselors will prepare a Credit Balance Sheet that lays out some or all of the remaining high school subjects required for graduation. Advisors will use this list to help guide the conversation on what students should be taking.

Advisors do not expect students to know specific course sections they want to register into, but as noted above, students should come to the appointment with a list of subjects they want to take during the academic year. Advisors will help lay out their schedule based on scheduled offerings and balancing those choices with a student's after school activities/commitments.

While high school counselors tell Ridgewater what subjects are remaining, ***it is the responsibility of the student to keep track of what requirements remain.***

Want to Earn a 2-year Degree through PSEO? Know this...

One of the benefits of PSEO is earning college credit while in high school—which can mean saved money and possibly, saved time. Students have the option to work towards a 2-year degree while also completing their high school graduation requirements (but remember—graduating high school is the top priority!). If a student indicates their desire to earn a 2-year degree, we'll discuss how this can be accomplished while doing PSEO.

Students want to earn a technical/trades degree should be aware that not every program is PSEO eligible, and not every program is a fit for PSEO students. See page 19 of this guide for more information.

Students who want to work towards getting their generals done before transferring to a 4-year college or university need to understand that completing a 2-year degree with us doesn't guarantee that they'll only have 2 years remaining. Every 4-year institution has different graduation requirements. It's possible that a student may have an extra semester or two in order to complete those requirements.

While we don't expect students to know what they plan to major in or where they hope to go after high school, having an idea of what they're interested in helps us with long range schedule planning. That way we're making every effort to get several "common generals" covered.

After the Appointment



A follow up email will be sent to the student and the high school counselor. This email will contain a recap of what was discussed, a follow up to any questions they may have had at the appointment, and a copy of their schedule. It will also include a small "to do" list of items that should be completed before the start of the semester. Items include: logging into Ridgewater email, watching resource videos like logging into D2L, etc.

Additional course information

Courses that are Not Eligible for PSEO

Sometimes there is an interest in a class or program that a student is eligible to participate, but it isn't covered under PSEO. These courses are listed [here](#) under Step 6. Should a student want to take one of these courses, it is at the student's expense.

Summer courses

PSEO does not cover summer course tuition, fees, required materials/textbooks, or mileage reimbursement. If a student wishes to take a class during the summer, it is at their own expense.

Summer courses are only 4 weeks long, which makes for a very different class experience. Some students find attending a class every day, for several hours at a time, better for their learning style and for retaining information. Other students find the schedule to be intense and less flexible.

If a student chooses to attend a summer session, we ***strongly encourage*** only taking ***one course per 4-week session***.



1. Schedule your advising appointment immediately after completing online orientation.
2. Appointment times fill quickly and are on a 1st come, 1st served basis.
3. Summer is the busiest time—with an average waiting time of approximately 3 weeks.
4. Students should know in advance what subjects they want to take during fall and spring semester.
5. Students are responsible for knowing if they're on track to graduate high school. Ridgewater advisors do not track this information.

Making Schedule Changes

Before making changes to their schedule, students are strongly encouraged to connect with their high school guidance counselor first to make sure the proposed changes align with high school graduation requirements.

While students can change their schedule without involving the advisor, it is **very important** to pay close attention to:

- ✓ Days/times the course is being offered
- ✓ Campus location (Hutchinson, Willmar, or Online)
- ✓ Prerequisites
- ✓ Not choosing a class from the PSEO excluded list

Students are welcome to consult with their advisor at any time regarding schedule changes via email, phone, or one-on-one appointment.

Once a change has been made, students are responsible for sending an updated copy of their course schedule to their high school guidance counselor. Schedules can be found by logging into [eServices](#) and clicking *Courses and Registration > View/Modify Schedule*.

Dropping or Withdrawing from a Course

At Ridgewater College the act of registration is considered an acknowledgment on the part of the student that s/he will attend the registered course(s). Any drop or withdrawal request must be processed within the established timelines.

There is a difference between a drop and a withdrawal and it is important to know the difference between both types.

DROP: A student asks to be removed from the course within the first 10 business days. Students who request a drop will:

- ✓ Have the course removed from their record
- ✓ The drop will have no impact on their GPA or completion ratio

WITHDRAWAL: A student asks to be removed from a course after the 10th business day, but before the last date to withdraw as noted on the course listing in [eServices](#). Students who request a withdrawal will:

- ✓ Still see the course on their transcript and receive a W
- ✓ W marks impact a student's completion ratio—which can put a student on academic warning even if they have a GPA above a 2.0 (see page 24 for more on Academic Progress)
- ✓ W marks can impact future financial aid decisions
- ✓ W marks can impact future admissions decisions

NOTE: Notifying the high school guidance counselor *is not* the same as officially dropping or withdrawing from the class at Ridgewater. Students may want to visit with an advisor or an instructor prior to taking this action, but dropping/withdrawning from classes is the student's responsibility. In addition, the 10-business day window is **only** for PSEO students. Traditionally enrolled students have a shorter drop window.



Transferring Courses

A common question that parents ask about PSEO is, “Do the classes transfer?”

Courses taken through PSEO will transfer to another college or university. **How** they transfer is up to that institution, which is based on a number of factors including (but not limited to): agreements between colleges, grades earned, content of the course, etc.

As you are aware, PSEO courses are college level courses. Not only is the rigor of this course much more demanding, but it is possible that the acceptance of late work, additional time to complete assignments, number of acceptable absences, etc. may be different than classes at the high school. Unlike high school transcripts, college transcripts and the grades earned are with the student indefinitely and can have an impact on admissions decisions at other institutions.

We offer classes in both Technical/Vocational as well as Liberal Arts (often known as “generals”).

Technical/Vocational courses: these teach a specific skill set, preparing the student to be “employment ready” when they graduate with their degree. Technical courses may not always transfer into the degree program of choice at other colleges or universities. It is up to the discretion of the institution if they’ll accept the credits during the transfer process.

Liberal Arts (or “generals”) courses: At Ridgewater, our Liberal Arts courses are applied to the [Minnesota Transfer Curriculum \(MnTC\)](#). The MnTC allows students at a Minnesota State college or university to transfer courses seamlessly between institutions. It is also widely accepted at many institutions across the state—including private colleges and the University of Minnesota system. These courses have a higher probability of transferring into the degree of your choice; however it is up to the discretion of the institution if they’ll accept the credits during the transfer process.

The MnTC has [10 goal areas](#). To ensure your classes are satisfying the requirements of MnTC, meet with your academic advisor prior to registering for classes.



We encourage students to keep all of their coursework and syllabus should they want to appeal any transfer credit decisions.



1. Yes! Credits transfer. But it's up to the school receiving the credits to decide how they'll be applied.
2. Students should save the course syllabus should they ever need to appeal a transfer credit decision.

Important Information About Technical Programs

While we want to help students reach their goals, sometimes there are additional admissions requirements that need to be met first. It is also possible that some courses are not eligible due to high fees. This list can change without notice, and the most current list of excluded courses is available on our [website](#).

The following programs **are not** eligible for PSEO students:

- Any options for study abroad
- Nursing
- Practical Nursing (students are welcome to take PRNU 1617: Medical Terminology)
- Massage Therapy
- Cosmetology
- Veterinary Technology (students are welcome to take VNTE 1000: Intro to Vet Tech)
- Occupational Skills
- EMT/Paramedic

The following programs are eligible, but require a student to attend full time. This means that if a student has outstanding high school requirements (such as Math, History, English, etc.) those requirements should be completed **before** the student takes classes in these programs:

- Auto Body
- Auto Mechanics
- Electrician*
- Welding

The following programs are eligible, but some courses cannot be done through PSEO:

- Agriculture
- Medical Assistant

*This program is typically on a waiting list for the following academic year by late October. PSEO students who are interested should speak with the admissions office directly to discuss the application process.

The following programs have additional costs not covered by PSEO:

Auto Body

Students may borrow tools from the program for the first year but must purchase their own tools during the second year. Cost of tools varies based on the brand, but on average student spends approximately \$2000

Medical Assistant

Students must purchase their scrubs, shoes, stethoscope, and other materials. Average cost is approximately \$500.

Auto Mechanics

Students must purchase their uniform and tools. Cost is dependent on the uniform supplier and the tool brand students pick.

Registering for Technical Program Courses

Students will be asked to attend a group Advising and Registration session specifically for technical programs. Dates happen each semester and throughout the summer. An RSVP is required to attend a session. At this event, students will meet with the faculty for this program who will talk over long term goals and help to select courses.

In a case where a student is working on a technical program degree, the faculty are their advisor and course specific questions should be directed to those faculty members. PSEO advisors are available for general questions regarding PSEO and campus policies/procedures.

Nursing Assistant Courses

In 2019-2020 academic year, Ridgewater College stopped offering the Nursing Assistant course for college credit (also known as the CNA course). Because a college credit option is no longer available, it is no longer eligible for PSEO.

However, students who are interested, are welcome to explore the Nursing Assistant option offered through our Customized Training and Continuing Education department. The cost for this course and required materials are the responsibility of the student.

For more information, please call 320-222-6067.



1. Technical courses are a great option for PSEO, but they do have different expectations.
2. Students who have remaining high school requirements should complete those first **before** considering full time enrollment in some technical programs
3. There may be an additional cost that PSEO does not cover
4. Not every class is eligible for PSEO. Check the Exempt List for more details.

Textbooks & Supplies

The PSEO program covers the cost of **required** books and materials. These books and materials are provided as a free loan.

How to get your books

Visit the Bookstore

- Must have a photo ID present (ex: Student ID or State Driver's License)
- Bring a copy of your official schedule (found in eServices under *Courses & Registration > View Modify Schedule*)

Order Online to have them Shipped to you or Pick up on Campus

- Visit the campus bookstore at www.ridgewaterbookstore.com You need the following items before you can place an online order
 - The step by step ordering guide found on the [PSEO FAQ page](#)
 - Your Tech/Student ID (8-digit number found in eServices, at the top of the screen, upper right corner)
 - Your Ridgewater email address
 - A screen shot, picture, or copy of your schedule from eServices

Materials not covered under PSEO

The PSEO program **does not** cover the cost of items that are listed as **optional** or are consumable. Examples of items that become the student's property after the course is completed, and are not covered by PSEO include (but not limited to):

- Personal Protective Equipment for the CPR/1st Aid class
- Study guides
- Tool kits for technical courses
- Safety glasses/goggles
- Any items that were listed as **optional** through our bookstore

All Required materials must be returned

All books must be returned to the bookstore by the last day of the semester to avoid a charge. If a student needs to keep a book for the continuation of a class (example: science or math may do this) they **must** notify the bookstore or they will be charged for the cost of the book.

Students who do not return their books will have a hold put on their account. A hold will stop the student from registering for future classes. Further, official transcripts/grades will not be released until books are returned and/or fines are paid.

Returning materials for dropped courses

A student who drops a course within the first 10 business days of the semester (unless otherwise noted) **must return** the books in the same condition they were picked up (ex: no scratches, torn pages, and shrink-wrapped, if new). The receipt (original or copy) must also be included. Students who drop a course and do not return the material will be sent a bill.

Writing in Textbooks

It is acceptable to write or highlight in the textbook. Excessive highlighting and marking in a textbook is discouraged as it cannot be reissued to a future student.



Important information about shrink-wrapped books & online access codes:

Students who get books that come in a shrink-wrapped bundle, or an access code for vendors like Cengage, will find a label attached warning them that once opened, they cannot be returned.

We encourage PSEO students to pause before ripping off the plastic wrap or using your access code. Do you plan to stay in this course until the end of the semester? If so—go ahead and open it. However, if you aren't sure, we encourage you to attend the first week of classes before opening it. If you decide after the first week that you're going to drop the course, then you can return the unopened materials without the risk of being charged.

If, however, you attempted the class, planned to stay enrolled, but changed your mind a few weeks later, don't panic. Instead, speak to the Bookstore Manager to discuss your specific situation.

Computer Requirements

Many of the required assignments that students need to complete will require a computer with access to the Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Power Point, etc). Students have **free access** to Office 365 which includes the entire Microsoft Office Suite and can be downloaded onto their personal computers.

Instructors at Ridgewater will often designate exactly how they want assignments completed. For example, if your English instructor is requiring a 4-page paper, they will often specify the font size, font type, and the document type—often Microsoft Word.

Do not assume that an instructor will accept an assignment done in Google Docs or Pages.

Chromebooks

We know most districts have provided students with Chromebooks. If your Chromebook is able to run Microsoft Office apps like Word, you are welcome to use it. If, however, it does not support Microsoft Office, we strongly encourage you to obtain a laptop that does.

Computer Loans through Ridgewater

Ridgewater College has a **very limited** supply of laptops that can be loaned to PSEO students for the semester. While we can put a student's name on the list for a laptop loan, we cannot guarantee one will be available. We also have access to computers in our library during normal business hours. Therefore, it is in the family's best interest to explore options outside of Ridgewater for computer access.



1. Textbooks and required materials (such as art kits) are included in PSEO
2. Required materials (including art kits) need to be returned on the last day of the semester or the student will be charged and a hold will be placed on the account
3. Students should not open shrink wrapped books until they know for sure they're staying in the class to avoid being charged

PSEO Mileage Reimbursement

If requested by the parents or guardians, school districts must reimburse low-income families for certain transportation costs in the PSEO program. The income levels used to determine eligibility for these programs are on the second page of the Monthly Transportation Reimbursement Request.

A family must complete the [Application for Student Transportation Reimbursement](#) at the beginning of the application request (or during the school year if there is a change in their financial status).

If the family's income qualifies them for this program, they submit the [Student Transportation Reimbursement Report to the district on a monthly basis](#). The district pays the family based on this claim.

The mileage reimbursement is from the student's home or secondary school to the postsecondary institution.

Both forms, the Application for Student Transportation Reimbursement and the Student Transportation Reimbursement Report, are retained in the district office.

The information submitted by the family on the Student Transportation Reimbursement Report is summarized and is used to complete the [Monthly Transportation Reimbursement Request \(ED-01765\)](#). Form ED-01765 is the only form submitted to the Division of School Finance/Transportation Unit. The state will reimburse the district for the payments made to the parent.

This program is only available for 10th-, 11th- and 12th-grade students attending a postsecondary institution under the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act, Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.09.

Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.09, postsecondary enrollment options act includes 10th-grade public school students who have attained a passing score on the reading section of the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments and meet course perquisites to take a career or technical education course as a PSEO student.

Additional information and instructions appear on the reverse side of each form.

Please submit your claims on a monthly basis. Do not wait until the end of the school year; this may delay payment.

Note: An alternative student who qualifies for mileage reimbursement must apply through the postsecondary institution where he or she is enrolled. An alternative student is defined as an 11th- or 12th-grade students not enrolled in a public-school district, and includes students attending nonpublic schools and pupils who are home schooled. The postsecondary enrollment options act is not available for 10th-grade alternative students.

If you have any questions regarding the Application for Student Transportation Reimbursement, the Student Transportation Reimbursement Report, the Monthly Transportation Reimbursement Request or the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Mileage Reimbursement Program email the transportation email:
pupiltransportation.mde@state.mn.us



The Course Syllabus

On the first day of class, your instructor will provide you with a syllabus. As a student you are expected to not only read it but save it.

What is a Syllabus?

A syllabus is like a contract. It contains important information from your instructor, and each instructor has their own style on how they create the class syllabus. Typically, all syllabi, regardless of who is the instructor, contains similar information such as:

- Instructor's contact information
- Instructor's personal office hours
- Course requirements
- Textbook information as well as any required materials
- How grades are calculated
- Classroom policies and expectations—like late work, due dates, absences, and more
- Ridgewater policies and expectations—like cheating, plagiarism, and student conduct
- Information on how to seek accommodations

Why is it Important?

The syllabus is what gives you a first impression about the course. It sets the tone for how the course will be run, the time commitment involved, and clearly lays out what to expect in the coming semester. As a student, you have selected to enroll into the course and as such, you are agreeing to the terms laid out by your instructor as well as the college.

Instructors will reference the syllabus frequently and expect you to read it, understand it, and commit to it. If you have questions on the syllabus, if expectations aren't clear, or you're not sure what an instructor is asking, you must connect with the instructor immediately to talk through the information.

Course Calendar or List of Due Dates

Every instructor is different in how they list out the class due dates or course requirements. Some include this information on the syllabus. Others have a separate document outlining this information. It is important that you do not misplace this list. Many instructors do not give reminders about work that is due. Meaning, once you get the syllabus, it's up to you to keep track of what is due and when.

Using the Syllabus to Stay Organized

After the first day of class, gather all of your syllabi and list of due dates.

- ✓ **Step 1: Use a planner:** This can be anything you want: an app on your phone, a paper planner, a calendar, or something else that you like. It doesn't matter, just as long as you use it regularly!
- ✓ **Step 2: Mark down all due dates:** Go through each syllabus/list of due dates and make note of when things are due. It's possible you might have multiple due dates for a particular assignment or task. It's also common that instructors have things due on different days. This might include:
 - Chapter readings
 - Online discussion posts
 - Quizzes and/or exams
 - Papers
 - Projects
 - Group work
 - Required responses to discussion postings

- ✓ **Step 3: Make note of other after school commitments:** sports practices, away games, getting together with friends or family, part-time job commitments, etc. It's important that you are writing these down as they will impact your study schedule and staying organized.
- ✓ **Step 4: Evaluate busy days and plan ahead:** If you look at your calendar and notice that you have several items due on a particular day, plan ahead!
 - Do you have a break in your schedule each day? If so, use it like a study hall or free period at school. Using that time each day to work on each class—even if it's only 10-15 minutes—will help you stay on track.
 - Break up readings into manageable pieces and take notes as you read
 - Remember: the “due date” is not the “do date”

Keep Track of Your Grades

In your syllabus your instructor should have a breakdown of how points are earned in the class. As we've noted on pages 7 and 26, students are responsible for keeping track of their grades in a course. Ridgewater College faculty are not required to use the online grade book in D2L. Therefore, we encourage you to use the Grade Tracking Sheet at the end of this handbook.

Instructor Office Hours

Every instructor is required to hold office hours each week. This is a time when students can stop by and talk with their instructor without an appointment. Office hours may be offered in person or virtually. Sometimes an instructor's office hours conflict with your schedule. If this is the case, please connect with your instructor to set up a time outside of those office hours.

Save your Syllabi

Students who are planning to transfer after high school to their school of choice should save their PSEO syllabi. While students have been very successful in having courses transfer and count towards future degree requirements, a transfer of credit is never guaranteed. If you don't receive transfer credit for a class you took through PSEO, you can appeal the decision. To do that, you'll need to provide rationale and a syllabus can help you do that.

Satisfactory Academic Performance

College level course work is much more rigorous and demanding than high school courses. Students are often surprised at how much work is required for each of their classes. At the end of the term, the grade that is earned will also be the grade that will be reflected on their high school transcript.

Grades

Just like at your high school, grades are awarded based on how well you performed on a quiz or exam, or how well you did on the assignment. Your final overall grade at Ridgewater is the same grade that will be applied to your high school transcript. As mentioned earlier, some instructors do not have a publicly available gradebook for you to view and keep track of your grade.

If your class is using the D2L gradebook, your access to the gradebook is terminated once the class ends. Again, we strongly encourage all students to keep track of the grades they've earned on their quizzes, exams, assignments, discussions, and activities. You can find the sample grade tracking sheet at the end of the handbook.

Midterm Grades

Ridgewater College does not report mid-term grades or give a mid-term report to the high school.

Staying in Good Academic Standing

We expect that all students will do their best work to remain in good academic standing.

What is "Good Academic Standing"? To be in good standing **both requirements must be met.**

Requirements:	What is it?	How do I Achieve it?
Cumulative GPA of a 2.0 <small>or higher</small>	GPA is based on the grades you earn in your classes.	A 2.0 GPA is achieved by earning a minimum of a C or higher in each class. If you earn less than a C, you should have higher grades in additional courses of equal credit value to "balance out" the C.
Completion Rate of 66.7% <small>or higher</small>	Completion rate is a calculation based on the number of classes you signed up for (attempted), and the number of courses you passed with a D- or higher (completed).	For every class that you have a W, F, NC or FW mark, you should have 2 additional courses of equal credit value with passing letter grades.

If a student doesn't meet good academic standing, they fall into one of two categories:

Status	Definition	How do I get back to good standing?
Academic Warning	Students will be placed in a warning status if they fail to meet one or both of Ridgewater's cumulative academic standards (cumulative 2.00 GPA and/or completion rate of 66.67%).	After being placed on warning, students will have one academic term to meet the cumulative standards. Students who meet the cumulative standards will return to good standing. Failure to meet the cumulative standards

		will result in Academic Suspension.
Academic Suspension	Students who are suspended will need to complete an appeal. The appeal will document what beyond their control caused them to be unsuccessful and what have they done to mitigate the circumstances that caused the suspension.	Typically, students meet with a counselor to identify areas where the student can improve, and to set reasonable goals for the following term. These areas are key considerations in a suspension appeal.

When a student is on Academic Warning, their advisor will talk with them about what happened the last semester to be able to identify areas where improvements can be made. Suggestions like how to better manage their time, tutoring, etc. often are what is needed in order to assist the student towards success.

However, sometimes there is no way to avoid a pending suspension, even with excellent grades and completing all of your classes in the next semester. Therefore, we encourage students to evaluate their options with their Ridgewater College advisor and high school guidance counselor.

PSEO students will not be removed from courses due to low grades. However, Ridgewater College may rescind admission if, in consultation with the high school and/or the guardian(s), it is determined that college enrollment could hinder high school graduation or otherwise not benefit the student. Ridgewater College's primary goal for PSEO students is to support their high school graduation.

Common Questions about Academic Performance:

If I earned less than a C in a class, do I still get college credit for the class?	Yes. However, your high school may have minimum grade requirements for certain courses. Check with your school's guidance counselor for more information.
If I earned less than a C will it transfer to another college or university?	Maybe. Check with the registrar's office of the college or university you're interested in for more information on transfer credits.
If I'm suspended, can I appeal?	Yes. Students are given the opportunity to appeal their suspension before the start of the upcoming semester. Information is emailed to students outlining the appeal process. Students who are at risk of suspension, who are interested in appealing, should work with a Ridgewater counselor on how to best document their situation and write the strongest appeal for the best chance of being approved*.
Are Ridgewater Advisors or my guidance counselor notified when I'm not doing well in a class?	College faculty are encouraged to notify academic advisors if a student is not performing well or if they have general concerns about the student. However, faculty are not required to notify advisors of a student's performance. Therefore, we strongly suggest that students reach out to their advisor if they are struggling in a class or need assistance.

*There is no guarantee that by working with a Ridgewater College Counselor on your appeal documentation that you'll be successful with your appeal.

Retaking a Course

If a student has an F, NC, or FW mark on their transcript, they are eligible to retake that course. Students have one attempt to retake a course and the cost is covered by PSEO.

Students who earn a passing grade of a D- or higher or who withdraw and want to retake a course to earn a better grade, may do so, ***but the cost of the course, textbooks, and supplies are the responsibility of the student.***



Your Ridgewater Transcript is with you for Life!

The choices a PSEO student makes will be with them for the rest of their life. This means, if a student is on an Academic Warning and withdraws from all of their classes, never to do PSEO again, that Academic Warning doesn't disappear.

In fact, if this same student decides 10 years from now that they'll want to take classes at Ridgewater, they will pick up right where they left off. The same is true if a student goes to another school in the Minnesota State system. It is possible that they will transfer the student's Academic Warning status to their school as well. If this happens, the student may be required to submit a letter of appeal or plan for how they intend to stay in good academic standing.

Academic Warnings not only impact students during their current semester but can also impact future admissions decisions and/or financial aid awards.



1. Students need to remain in good academic standing, or they risk being put on academic warning—or even suspended
2. Academic warning happens because of low GPA, an/or too many W, F, NC and/or FW marks

Student Services Available for PSEO

Ridgewater College is committed to the success of our students. Our goal is to support students in becoming the best version of themselves. Per the PSEO statute, we are required to provide access to the following services for students. These services are offered at no cost.

Tutoring

To work with the tutors, our website has the most up-to-date list of tutors in the various subjects. Student are to contact tutors as directed to set up an appointment. Days and hours on campus will vary, so please contact the tutors for availability.

In addition, Peer Tutors are available and will also be available to assist students. Working with tutors is a free service, so please take advantage of this great resource.

For more information and to connect with a tutor, please visit our [Academic Support Center](#) page on our website.

Disability Services & Class Accommodations

The Disability Services Office helps ensure students with disabilities experience equal access during their time at Ridgewater. Accommodations may include, but are not limited to:

- Assistive devices
- Course selection and program advising
- Testing
- Note taking
- Sign language interpreting

Who Is Eligible for Disability Services?

An individual with a disability is defined as any person who:

- Has a physical or mental impairment that limits one or more major life activities
- Has a record of such an impairment
- Is regarded as having such an impairment

Students who have an IEP at their high school, are neurodivergent (conditions such as autism or Asperger's), or want to discuss possible learning concerns/issues prior to enrolling for classes are encouraged to connect with our Disability Support team. They will schedule a confidential discussion with the student regarding possible accommodations and services.

For more information, visit our Accessibility and [Disability Services](#) page on our website.

Multicultural Outreach

At Ridgewater College, our mission is to promote the celebration and inclusion of diversity on campus in order to recognize and appreciate it in our daily lives.

Multicultural Outreach Coordinator

Our on-campus multicultural outreach coordinator serves as a liaison between Ridgewater College and our communities through multicultural events and other social activities. Our outreach coordinator serves as an advocate and resource person for students, staff, and community members.

For more information, visit the [Multicultural Outreach](#) page on our website.

Counseling

Ridgewater College recognizes the relationship between personal development, emotional wellness, health and wellness, and success in academic pursuits.

Our counseling program is designed to support and assist students who have personal issues which impede their academic progress by offering crisis intervention, brief solution-oriented counseling, and referrals to other agencies, services, or professionals in the community.

We offer a variety of health resource links to students as well as a health fair on each campus.

For more information, visit the [Student Health and Counseling](#) page on our website.



1. Student Services are available for all students, including PSEO at no cost.
2. Students do not need to work with an advisor to connect with these support offices, but advisors are happy to assist students in making that connection

Staying Connected: Email and Text

Email

The **official** form of communication at Ridgewater College is your Ridgewater email account. Every student has access to Ridgewater email and is expected to check it on a regular basis (2-3 times a week).

Your student email address is your first and last name, separated by a dot, followed by @go.ridgewater.edu. It will look something like this:

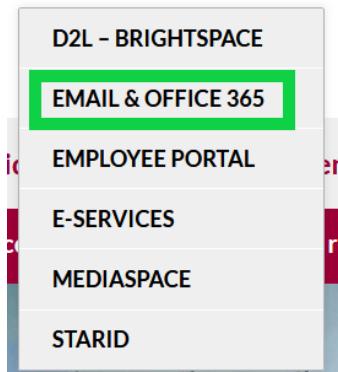
scott.anderson@go.ridgewater.edu

Students who have common names (like Mark Olson, for example) may have a number included with their email address. Advisors are happy to help students verify their email address.

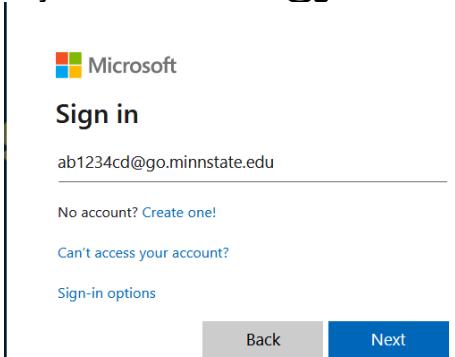
How to Check Your Email

Logging into email requires the use of your StarID and password. Here's how you log into your email:

Access the Ridgewater website and from the **Logins** menu, choose **Email and Office 365**

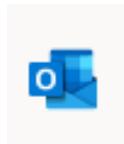


To sign in, you need your StarID—but you will also add **@go.minnstate.edu** behind it. Like this:



Click **Next** and you'll be prompted to enter your StarID password. Once it is entered, click **Sign In**.

You should see a list of Microsoft Office products either in the middle of your screen or down the left hand side. Microsoft Outlook is the email platform that we use. The icon looks like this:



When you click on it, you will gain access to your Ridgewater email!

If you have taken PSEO or College in the Schools classes at any other Minnesota State College or University, you also have an email with that institution. Because your StarID travels with you to any Minnesota State school, your emails are combined together.

Texting

At Ridgewater College, we have text messaging for emergencies (Star Alert) and for advisors and student services staff members to conduct periodic check-ins and share reminders.

Student Services Texting

Ridgewater College has the ability to text students important reminders and information. Upon acceptance, students will be automatically added to this service. While students can choose to opt out of this service, **we encourage you to stay opted in**. This allows advisors to connect with students one on one and allows students to receive timely updates. Advisors only use this option as needed, as email is still the preferred way to connect.

Star Alert - Emergency Text Messaging

Star Alert is Ridgewater's emergency notification system. For weather-related campus closures or a campus emergency, we use Star Alert to send SMS text messages or email messages to accounts that you have designated. Students are automatically opted into this service. To cancel or add info to your Star Alert account, visit www.ridgewater.edu/staralert

Starfish

Fall semester 2021 we introduced Starfish, a student success platform. Starfish is located in D2L and allows instructors to send you notifications when you are doing really well in a class, or raise an alert if something in your class needs attention. Students can also book appointments with advisors, counselors, or tutoring, as well as "raise your hand" for assistance. Advisors are notified when faculty raise flags of concern and will make every attempt to connect with students and help where needed.

When an instructor sends kudos or raises an alert, the student is notified through their Ridgewater email.



1. The official communication method of Ridgewater is email
2. Students should check your Ridgewater email 2-3 times a week
3. Texting is a great way for advisors to connect with students. We encourage students to "opt in" for these services.
4. Starfish is a way for students to request assistance, but also for instructors to notify students if there are concerns

PSEO Check Lists

Regardless of where you're at in the process, it is common to want to make sure you've completed everything. Use these handy check lists to keep track of important PSEO related requirements and expectations.

Application Check List

- Download supplemental documents
 - Credit Balance form
 - NOSR/Billing form
- Notify high school by May 30th (or earlier) of intention to participate in PSEO for the upcoming year
- Work with HS Counselor to complete the NOSR and Credit Balance form
- Ask HS Counselor for a current transcript
- Complete online application
- Scan and email documents to our office (pseo@ridgewater.edu) **or** mail them, **or** drop them off at either campus location
- Completed application should be returned **no later than May 30th**

Orientation & Appointment RSVP Check List

- Complete orientation within 1 week of receiving the PSEO Acceptance Packet
- Once orientation is complete, take the quiz. When filling out the form, be sure to enter the email address you check most often.
- After you finish the quiz, an email will be sent to the address you provided from **Ridge-PSEO**. Don't see it? Check your spam! It contains the link to book an advising appointment.
- Book an advising appointment upon receipt of the email. **Average wait times are 1-2 weeks (sometimes longer in the summer months). Don't delay! Get your appointment reserved!**
- A confirmation email will arrive once you book your appointment with additional reminders closer to the appointment.

Advising Appointment Check List

- Bring your StarID and password
- Talk with your HS counselor to verify remaining graduation requirements
- Plan ahead:
 - What subjects do you want to take in fall and in spring?
 - How many classes are you taking? Full time is 4-6 classes. Part time is 1-3 classes.
 - Do you know what you want to major in after high school or what areas interest you?
 - What colleges/universities are on your short list?
 - What commitments do you have after school and on weekends?
 - How do you want to take your classes (online or on campus? Or both?)

Before Classes Start Check List

- Log into your Ridgewater email
- Taking classes online? Watch the video on how to log in and navigate D2L
- Order your books (2 weeks before classes)
- Taking classes on campus? Come walk around campus to find your classrooms and see how long it takes to get from your car to your first class.
- Give a copy of your schedule to your HS
- Find an organization style that works for you so you can stay on top of assignments (like the Pulse app, a Google calendar, or a paper/pencil planner).

First Week of Classes Check List

- Be in class on the first day
 - Fall classes begin mid-August
 - Spring classes begin mid-January
- Taking a class online? Log in on your first day.
- Using the syllabus from each class, make note of every assignment, quiz, reading requirements, and other class related activities. Make a plan to get organized so you don't fall behind.
- Need to make changes? You can drop a class without any penalty to your transcript by 10th business day of the semester. Email or chat with your advisor for more details.
- Dropping a class by the 10th business day? You must return your textbooks in the same condition they were issued to you (including the shrink wrap) or you could be charged!
- Attend Welcome Week

Throughout the Semester Check List

- Need some extra help with a class? Check out the tutoring center for assistance (it's free!)
- Make sure you're turning in work by the due dates. Late work is often not accepted!

End of the Semester Check List

- Textbooks need to be returned by the last day of the semester
- Your NOSR form for the upcoming semester is due (if you're taking classes) or a hold will be put on your account and you can't get your books.
 - Due by Dec 1 for spring semester
 - Due by May 30 for fall semester



ANNUAL REQUIRED PAPERWORK: The Notice of Student Registration Form (also known as the MDE Billing form)

Every student who participates in PSEO is required to turn in this form. This document is submitted to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) in order to remit payment to Ridgewater for those attending as part of PSEO.

Students and parents (if the student is under 18) complete part 1 of the form. High schools fill out part 2. If the family is homeschooling, the parent or coordinator in charge of homeschool oversight fills out part 2.

New students complete this form as part of the application process.

Returning students will be reminded on several occasions about turning in this form to us. Students who do not turn in this form by the due date will not only have a hold placed on their account (which will prevent them from getting books and official transcripts), but will also result in being charged for the cost of tuition, fees, and materials for the upcoming semester.

The form is now available in an electronic format, making completion easier for all parties.

NOSR DUE DATES

Fall semester: May 30th

Spring semester: December 1st

Forms can be sent via email to pseo@ridgewater.edu

Common PSEO Questions

All PSEO students and their families should review these common questions **before** applying for the PSEO program.

What is the Deadline for PSEO Notification?

MAY 30th

This is the date you must notify your high school of your intention to do PSEO for the upcoming academic year. This deadline is for both the fall and spring semesters. It is also the preferred date that your PSEO application should be completed and submitted to Ridgewater College.

Students who do not notify their high school by May 30th may be financially responsible for the cost of their course tuition, fees, and textbooks.

Can I participate in high school activities?

Yes! Be sure to let your advisor know your plans at your advising appointment. Advisors use this information when helping you build your schedule. Some class times can conflict with practice or away games.

Can I take courses over the summer?

Students can take classes over the summer, but students are responsible for all costs, fees, and textbooks. PSEO funding does not cover summer courses.

Do I have to maintain a certain GPA?

Yes! Students must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of a 2.0 or higher (a "C" average). Students must also complete a minimum of 67% of the classes they take. Students who fall below a 2.0 GPA **or** the 67% requirement, will be placed on academic warning. Students will have one (1) semester to bring their GPA and/or completion percentage back up or they will be suspended after the next semester.

If I fail a class, am I kicked out of PSEO? Do I have to pay for my classes?

No. If you fail a class you are still eligible to take classes through PSEO. However, your high school may have different criteria for participation in the PSEO program. In addition, if you fail a class you are not responsible for the cost. You will have one (1) chance to retake the course to earn a better grade. Retaking a failed course is covered by PSEO funding.

How many classes can I take each semester?

PSEO students are restricted to enrolling in a maximum of 18 credits per semester (approximately 6 classes). While you may be used to taking 5-6 classes at your high school, college classes **are not** like high school classes. It's not about the number of classes you take, but the number of hours you'll be spending in those classes. Taking 18 credits means you're expected to spend 54 **hours** each week attending class and studying. That's not a typo...PSEO is a big commitment!

How does my high school get my grades?

Ridgewater College will forward your transcript to your high school once grades are posted at the end of each semester. You can also review your grades in eServices.

I want to earn a degree in a technical program. Can I do that?

Possibly! The PSEO Statute states that student who take classes through PSEO must be taking classes to complete graduation requirements. If a student has electives that they need to complete, technical program courses can be used to fulfill that requirement. Many of our popular technical programs require

students to attend full time, and don't allow for students to begin mid-year or take a single course. More information on technical programs can be found on page 19.

My family is going on vacation and I won't be in class for 2 weeks. Is that okay?

Unlike high school where you can be out of school for an extended period of time and instructors will put together a homework folder for you, that's not how it works at Ridgewater. Each instructor has their own policies around attendance, absences, and missed deadlines for assignments. Online classes allow flexibility to travel and complete work while away, but in person classes often don't have that luxury. If a student knows they'll be gone, they should discuss the absence as far in advance as possible with the instructor.

A friend said Ridgewater credits don't transfer. Is that true?

Ridgewater credits **do** transfer! However, it is up to the school receiving the credits if they can be applied to your future degree. Keep in mind that everyone's experience with transferring credits is different. If you transfer credits after high school and that request is denied, you can appeal the decision. We encourage all students to hold onto their course syllabi and other materials in order to prove what you learned in the class.

Am I required to have ACT, SAT, and/or Accuplacer scores?

No. We have alternative methods in place to validate a student's placement into English and, if needed, Math.

Will being a PSEO student impact my ability to access free/reduced lunch?

No, this will not impact your eligibility—regardless if you're full or part time. We encourage students who are utilizing this option to speak directly with their high school if you have questions about accessing this service.

Do I have to reapply every year?

Students who enter PSEO as a rising junior do not need to reapply to participate in their senior year. Students who enter PSEO as a rising sophomore, and want to continue with PSEO in their junior year, will need to resubmit the supplemental paperwork and an updated transcript.

In addition, every semester a student is participating they are required to complete the Notice of Student Registration (NOSR, sometimes called the MDE Billing form).

Why do I have to fill out the NOSR/Billing Form every semester? Can't you use the one I gave you?

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) requires us to submit a new form every semester, with updated dates on the signature lines for that specific semester. We do our best to connect with students in advance to notify them of the pending due date. Students who do not turn in this form will have a hold placed on their account preventing them from getting books and official transcripts until the form is received. If after repeated requests the form is not received, the student will be billed for the tuition, fees, and materials.

I'm a new PSEO student. Why do I have to wait until April to start orientation?

As a college, we are required to give returning students priority registration. These students will get to register for their classes beginning in late February/early March. We are also required to give new, traditional students priority registration over new PSEO students. New, traditional students get to begin registering in late March/early April. New PSEO students often begin meeting with advisors as early as mid-April. If a student does orientation within one week of receipt of the orientation materials, and signs up for an appointment right away upon completion, the student should still have a convenient appointment that gives them the best opportunity for getting classes they want.

I already have my schedule planned out. Can you give us the access code to register?

PSEO students are required to meet with their advisor prior to registering. Codes will not be provided in advance of that meeting. It's important that we meet to cover important PSEO updates and information. We'll also take a look at your schedule to make sure there aren't any issues or concerns.

If you are concerned about classes being full before you can register, we ***strongly encourage*** you to follow the guidance outlined on page 13 regarding online orientation and reserving an advising appointment. The sooner you reserve a time, the better your chances for getting the classes you want!

I'm on an IEP at my high school. Can I still do PSEO?

From the Minnesota Department of Education's PSEO Reference Guide:

Students who have an IEP are eligible to apply for participation in the PSEO program available to all students in Minnesota. These students are held to the same eligibility requirements and participation limits as students without disabilities, including:

- Admission requirements set by the postsecondary institution.
- Participation limits defined in Minn. Stat. § 124D.09, subd. 8.
- Courses must be a regular, college-level course offered by the postsecondary institution. It can be offered on campus or at a high school via Courses According to Agreement or Concurrent Enrollment.
- Developmental/remedial courses are not eligible unless they are provided through a PSEO State-Approved Early/Middle College Program.
- In order for MDE to pay the postsecondary institution, the credits earned must be dual credit (i.e., count as college and high school credit).

Students with IEPs Eligible for PSEO

If a student is eligible to participate in PSEO, only PSEO funds may be used to pay tuition to the postsecondary institution. The student's case manager and guidance counselor should be working together to ensure that the appropriate arrangement is made for PSEO.

The postsecondary institution must inform the student of support services available; if the student's IEP or 504 plan specifies general education support and accommodations, the postsecondary institution must provide them, and the postsecondary institution and the district shall negotiate an agreement on the rate to be charged for these services. The student's case manager should work with the postsecondary institution if any accommodations or adaptations are needed for the student.

- Example: A student requires a technology device in order to be able to participate in the PSEO course, but the postsecondary institution's student services do not readily provide the device. In this case, the postsecondary institution would work with the student's case manager and/or guidance counselor to provide the device. The device could be purchased by the postsecondary institution and billed to the resident district, or the resident district could purchase the device. In both cases, the device would be eligible for special education funding and entered on EDRS for reimbursement.

Students with IEPs Not Eligible for PSEO

Students with IEPs who do not meet the PSEO eligibility requirements may be able to attend a postsecondary institution to meet goals in the student's IEP. ***This arrangement does not fall under the PSEO program.*** The postsecondary institution is not obligated to accept the contracted student placement.

The goals and objectives of the IEP are designed to meet students' unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment and independent living. The services are the supports and programs that will enable the student to reach their goals and objectives.

Course:

Grade & Assignment Tracker

Using your course syllabus or calendar, make note of each assignment, quiz, project, paper, or other tasks that you'll need to complete in the course. When you get your assignments returned, make note of the grade earned so you can keep a running total of how you're doing in class. If you are concerned about your grade, please connect with your instructor.

Assignment, Discussion, Quiz, or Project	Total Earned	Total Possible

Instructor Contact Information	
Name:	
Email:	
Phone:	
Office Hours:	

Total Points Available in this Course	
Quizzes	
Exams	
Papers	
Projects	
Discussions	
Presentations	
Final Exam	
Final Project	
Other	
Total Points	

Grade Breakdown for the Course		
Grade	Points Needed	Percentage Needed
A		
A-		
B+		
B		
B-		
C+		
C		
C-		
D+		
D		
D-		
E		