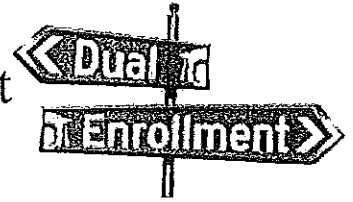


Should you consider Dual Enrollment for next



By Katherine L. Cohen, Ph.D., CEO and Founder of IvyWise. LLC

By the end of the school year, most students are grateful to get away from the stress of school. Still, some might feel that, rather than being too difficult, their high school does not offer courses that are challenging or interesting enough. But there's a simple way to fix this problem. Students from a diverse range of academic backgrounds may take advantage of dual enrollment programs, through which qualified high school students take college courses while in high school. These college courses fulfill high school graduation requirements, and may even be used as credit towards an associate or bachelor's degree, depending on where you attend college. In the end, dual enrollment could even help you and your parents save money on college tuition.

Dual enrollment is a growing opportunity for both students and colleges alike. According to the US Department of Education, dual enrollment programs are growing nationally: more than half of all colleges and universities have enrolled high school students for college credit. Unlike the traditional courses covered by the 34 Advanced Placement exams, dual enrollment courses offer wider breadth: 51% of dual enrollment courses focus on career and technical/vocational subjects. Yet another perk is the flexibility of dual enrollment classes. Courses can be taught at a college, high school, or online and you can take them during both the academic year and summer.

You really need to consider dual enrollment if you:

- **Are looking to enrich your academic experience.**
If you're on the track to completing the necessary requirements for a high school degree, dual enrollment will give you the opportunity to take advanced coursework with college students and faculty. It's also a great opportunity to experience the reality of college while still in high school.
- **Have a flexible schedule.**
Dual credit courses can be offered on campus, online or at postsecondary institutions. Yet, to take full advantage of dual enrollment programs, students must have a flexible schedule. Occasionally, dual enrollment courses will overlap with your regular high school schedule, which may cause conflicts.
- **Have school and home support.**
Dual enrollment courses are accelerated and faculty will expect high school students to perform at the college level. In order to handle the added pressure of the independent work required in a college course, and to manage transportation to and from class, you will need the support of not only a parent, but also your high school teachers and counselor.

Some students should think twice before enrolling early in college courses. Here are some factors to consider before taking a college course while in high school:

- **Not all colleges consider dual enrollment courses for transfer credit.**
Although many public postsecondary institutions accept dual enrollment courses towards their graduation requirements, this is less likely at a private college. Because there are no consistent policies about accepting dual enrollment courses for college credit, I tell students not to assume that their credits will automatically transfer when they enroll in college.
- **Dual enrollment courses can negatively impact a student's high school experience.**
Although academics are a priority, spending time in a dual enrollment course may adversely affect a student's schedule. Remember, there are other benefits that are only available during high school, such as developing an artistic or athletic talent. Colleges like to see more than just academics—specifically, how you make an impact in your high school community.
- **Additional costs**
There may be additional fees for enrolling in dual enrollment courses. In some instances, students are responsible for paying college tuition, on top of books, lab fees and transportation costs. You must examine the financial cost of taking dual enrollment courses before enrolling and weigh the costs versus the long-term benefits.