Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

OVERVIEW

Dual Credit

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board defines dual credit as a process by which a high school junior or senior enrolls in a college course and receives simultaneous academic credit for the course from both the college and the high school. While dual credit courses are often taught on the secondary school campus to high school students only, a high school student can also take a course on the college campus and receive both high school and college credit. Dual credit courses include both academic courses as well as technical courses. These courses are stepping stones from high school to college, serving as a path to academic degree programs or college-level workforce education courses.

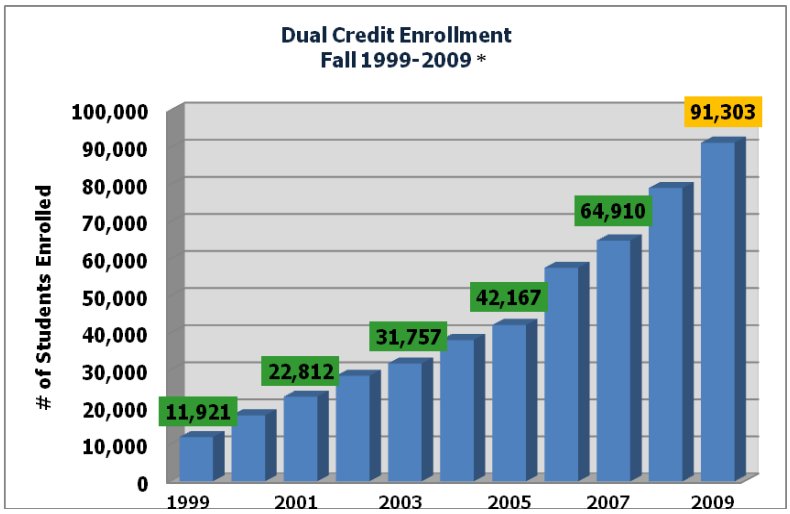
What are some positive outcomes of dual credit?

There are numerous advantages for both the student and the state in regards to dual credit. A few possible advantages include:

- Studies show that dual credit increases the likelihood that a student will complete high school, and enroll in and persist in college.
- Decreases cost of tuition and fees for students by accelerating time to degree.
- Accelerated degree time may free up facility space and faculty for additional students to enroll.
- New graduates enter the workforce sooner and begin to earn wages, benefiting themselves and the economy.
- Contributes to the goals of *Closing the Gaps* through greater participation and increased success.

What is the participation rate for dual credit?

Student participation in dual credit has been steadily rising since record-keeping began in 1999. The number of students participating in fall 2009 was 91,303, a 765 percent increase since fall 1999. The chart on the right shows the increase in participation from fall 1999 to fall of 2009.



* Dual credit enrollments represented above are unduplicated numbers.

How are dual credit courses funded for high schools and colleges?

State law allows both school districts and colleges to obtain state funding for dual credit courses. The state funds school districts based on students'

average daily attendance and districts can count time spent on dual credit towards student attendance. Colleges and universities receive state formula funding for contact or semester credit hours of instruction, respectively.

Who pays the cost of dual credit courses?

Decisions about who pays tuition, fees and other costs for dual credit are made at the local level, and it varies from district to district. Some school districts pay for the students, either out of local funds or from their high school allotment, while other districts require the students and parents to pay out of pocket for these courses.

Public institutions of higher education (IHEs) are allowed to waive all, part, or none of the mandatory tuition and fees for dual credit courses (Texas Education Code, Sec. 54.216). In practice, surveys conducted by Coordinating Board staff indicate that most community colleges waive all or part of the cost, while relatively few universities offer waivers. As participation numbers grow and the cost of courses increases, institutions may reduce or eliminate the waiver.

Who pays for textbooks?

Texas has no state mandate to require school districts or colleges to pay for dual credit textbooks used in dual credit courses, which may cost as much as $250 per book. Colleges have no source of funds dedicated to paying for textbooks, so they are highly unlikely to do so. School districts have no statutory authority to use textbook funds for dual credit courses, so other local funds have to be committed, such as foundation school funds or the high school allotment. This cost will become prohibitive as book prices increase and more students participate. Also, many school districts are reluctant to purchase college textbooks that are changed much more frequently than high school textbooks.

Is a district required to make obtaining college credit in high school available to students?

Yes. College-readiness legislation passed in 2006 includes provisions that require all school districts to implement a program by the fall of 2008, in which students may earn the equivalent of 12 hours of college credit while in high school (Texas Education Code Sec. 28.009). These requirements may be met by offering dual credit for college courses, advanced technical courses, Advanced Placement courses, and/or International Baccalaureate courses.

What does Texas law require of colleges regarding dual credit?

On request, public IHEs in this state are required to assist a school district in developing and implementing a program designed to provide students with the opportunity to earn the equivalent of 12 hours of college credit while in high school (Texas Education Code Sec. 28.009). High schools and colleges can collaborate in efforts that support dual credit programs. High schools can allow their instructors to teach for a local college in order to offer dual credit courses. Similarly colleges can assist with scholarships, transfer agreements for designated courses, course design, instructor training and support, and testing that ensures adequate rigor and student knowledge.

What are the eligibility requirements for students?

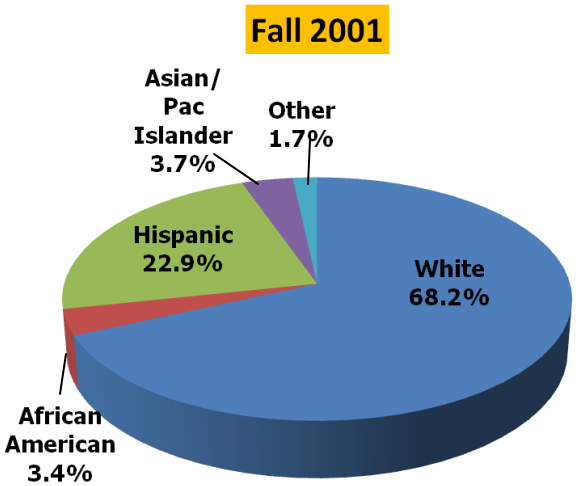
A high school student is eligible to enroll in dual credit courses if:

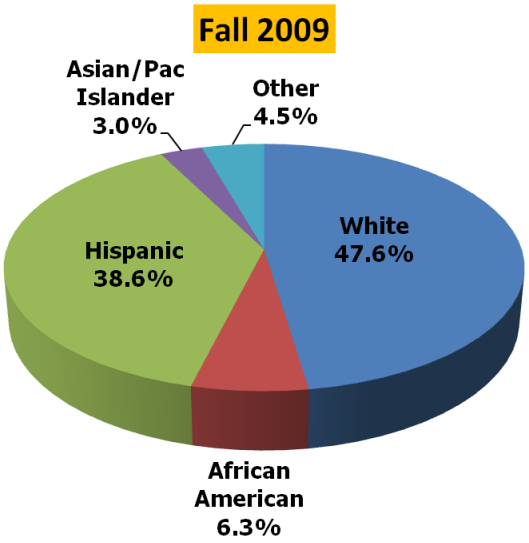
- The student is in the eleventh or twelfth grade and demonstrates college readiness by achieving the minimum passing standards under the provisions of the Texas Success Initiative, or

- The student is an eleventh grade student who achieves a score of 2200 on mathematics and/or a score of 2200 on English/Language Arts with a writing subsection score of at least 3 on the tenth grade TAKS relevant to the courses to be attempted, or
- The student achieves a combined score of 107 on the PSAT/NMSQT with a minimum of 50 on the critical reading and/or mathematics test relevant to the courses to be attempted, or
- The student achieves a composite score of 23 on the PLAN with a 19 or higher in mathematics and English. An eligible high school student who has enrolled in dual credit under this provision must demonstrate eligibility to enroll in dual credit courses in twelfth grade, and
- The student meets all of the college's regular prerequisite requirements designated for that course (e.g., minimum score on a specified placement test, minimum grade in a specified previous course, etc.), and
- The student has at least junior year high school standing, with exceptions to this requirement for students with demonstrated outstanding academic performance and capability (as evidenced by grade-point average and PSAT/NMSQT scores).

What is the ethnic breakdown of the students participating in dual credit courses?

The charts below show the total number of students who participated in dual credit courses in fall 2001 and fall 2009 broken down by ethnicity. The charts show Hispanic and African American students are increasingly participating in dual credit courses.





What are the course requirements for dual credit classes?

Courses offered for dual credit by public two-year colleges must be identified as college level academic courses in the current edition of the Lower Division Academic Course Guide Manual adopted by the Coordinating Board, or as college-level workforce education courses in the current edition of the Workforce Education Course Manual adopted by the Coordinating Board. Courses offered for dual credit by public universities must be in the approved undergraduate course inventory of the university. Public colleges and universities may not offer remedial and developmental courses for dual credit.

How do different types of dual credit transfer?

Academic dual credit can be applied towards the core curriculum or to other specific degree program requirements of an academic associate degree or baccalaureate degree. Workforce dual credit can only be applied towards the requirements for a Workforce Certificate or Applied Associate Degree, and will probably not be applicable to an academic associate or baccalaureate degree program. Students who want more information about how their dual credit courses might transfer should seek specific transfer guidance from an advisor at the institution offering the dual credit.

How can the transferability and rigor of dual credit courses be evaluated and improved?

When choosing which courses to take as dual credit, the best option for students is to choose courses that fit into the core curriculum of the college or university offering the dual credit program. Courses that fulfill the core curriculum of a public college or university are guaranteed to transfer to any other public college or university in Texas by state law.

The Coordinating Board staff is exploring ways to work with the faculty who teach dual credit courses in order to refine the learning objectives for these courses. The aim of this project is to establish statewide consensus about the learning objectives of these widely transferred courses. Clear and consistent learning objectives for dual credit courses would help improve their consistency and the degree to which they prepare students for subsequent course work, and increase the likelihood that IHEs will accept these courses in transfer and apply them to degree requirements. Ensuring that dual credit courses are taught at the college level is also important in that dual credit courses may be given additional weight in the calculation of a student's high school grade point average, equal to that of an Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate course.

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