Implementing a
Dual Enrollment Program

Before You Begin
Consider the Following Research Findings:[1]

- Dual enrollment (DE) participation is associated with a range of positive college outcomes (such as GPA, credit accumulation, and persistence) for mainstream students, as well as those in career–technical education pathways and programs.

- Lower achieving, lower income students may experience greater gains from dual enrollment than higher achieving, more advantaged students.

- Students may benefit more from DE courses held on college campuses than from those held on high school campuses.

- Rigorous DE courses, such as college-level algebra, may have particularly strong positive effects on college enrollment and completion.

- Completing two or more DE courses may yield better college outcomes for students than completing just one DE course.

Strong relationships between institutions are crucial to program success and sustainability.

Guiding Questions[2]
Stage 1: Creating a Partnership

Strong inter-institutional relationships are crucial to program success and sustainability. Whenever possible, build upon relationships that already exist.

Questions for High Schools

1. Are there multiple potential partner colleges in the vicinity, or is one college an obvious choice for a partner?

2. For a career-focused DE program, does the college provide courses, programs, and degrees in career fields related to courses offered by your high school?

3. Does your high school have an existing relationship with the college? If so, through which individuals or departments?

4. Does the college have an outreach or partnership office that already works with high schools or arranges for dual enrollment opportunities?

Questions for Colleges

1. Which of the area's high schools have students who could most benefit from dual enrollment?

2. Are there any high schools that send a particularly large number of students to your college?

Questions for Colleges and High Schools

1. Which staff members will implement and oversee the program and maintain clear and frequent communication between the partners? Who will act as the program's high-level supporters at the participating institutions?

2. How should roles and responsibilities be divided between the institutions?

Stage 2: Understanding State and District Regulations

Most states have policies pertaining to dual enrollment. Districts, counties, and postsecondary institutions may impose additional regulations. For instance, some public school districts do not grant high school credit for college courses, which prevents schools from offering DE courses during the school day and can discourage enrollment.

1. What are the state regulations regarding dual enrollment?

2. Are there any additional district or college regulations (e.g., regarding student eligibility or placement tests)?

3. What opportunities or barriers do these regulations present?

Stage 3: Choosing What Dual Enrollment Courses Should Be Offered

Choosing the courses to offer is critical because it can influence student and program success. Student population and ability should be carefully considered when choosing courses. For DE programs serving less advantaged students, courses that engage students on a personal level often have higher enrollment and retention rates. For high-achieving students, more rigorous courses may be appropriate and beneficial. Some DE programs also offer noncredit courses for nonresident students, and some offer test prep courses if minimum test scores are necessary for enrollment.

If dual enrollment classes are held on the high school campus, attention must be paid to quality and rigor.

1. Which college courses would best serve and engage the high school students?

2. What sequence or combination of courses would best prepare students?

3. Do test results or other indicators show that the students are ready for academic college courses? If not, are there supports you can provide to prepare them for dual enrollment?

Stage 4: Figuring Out Course Logistics

DE courses can be offered on the college or the high school campus and can be taught by college instructors or high school teachers who qualify as college adjuncts. Students tend to perceive classes held on the college campus as more authentic. However, if the college is far away, the difficulty of getting there might lead to low enrollment or persistence rates. If classes are held on the high school campus, special attention must be paid to quality and rigor. Opening high school–based DE courses to college students can also help to create an authentic

college classroom experience. Instructor quality is also important; DE instructors should be committed to teaching the target population and should use pedagogies that engage students.

1. Where should the DE classes be held?

2. When should the classes be held?

3. Who should teach the classes?

Stage 5: Offering Supplemental Supports

Support services are critical in addressing high school students' academic and "college knowledge" needs and in monitoring student progress. Tutoring is often an essential part of DE programs, but it must be offered at a time that will ensure participation (for instance, directly before, after, or during class or during the high school lunch hour). To coordinate and manage student support services, many programs have found that it is helpful to assign or hire a dedicated staff member.

1. What academic and nonacademic supports should be made available?

2. Will supports be offered by the high school, the college, or both?

3. How will the program ensure that students take advantage of available supports?

Stage 6: Evaluating Costs

Staff should evaluate program costs and consider possible sources of support (e.g., federal, state, or grant funding).

1. Are there state or local policies governing per-student apportionment and payment of college tuition?

2. Does the college waive tuition for high school students? Does it waive student health or other fees?

3. How will course textbooks be paid for?

4. Will there be transportation costs?

5. What will be the cost of high school staff time for coordination and oversight?

6. What costs are associated with any supplemental supports?

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Stage 7: Promoting and Sustaining Dual Enrollment Programs

Recruiting students for DE programs is often difficult, and high school staff must be enlisted in the effort. Some programs send representatives to high school parent nights to publicize dual enrollment opportunities. To ensure that programs have sufficient institutional support, staff should work to develop relationships with higher level administrators at colleges and school districts.

1. What activities can be used to recruit students into DE programs and courses?

2. Who should be responsible for recruitment?

3. What other stakeholders should the program be promoted to?

4. What messages might be used to promote the program and gain long-term support from the participating institutions?

Stage 8: Measuring Success

It is important to collect information about program participation in order to understand which students take DE courses, what courses they tend to choose, and what their outcomes are. Evaluation is essential for understanding and improving program implementation and benefits. For more information on how to measure outcomes for your dual enrollment program, see CCRC's *Conducting Research to Answer Your Questions about Dual Enrollment.*

1. How will data be collected on student participation and outcomes?

2. What are the important outcomes to measure?

3. How can the data be used to adjust the program for maximum effect?

For a description of how one dual enrollment program addressed issues related to implementation, see *The City College of San Francisco Academy and Pathway Dual Enrollment Program* at http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu.