

6 Reasons your students should take a dual enrollment course and 3 reasons they should think twice.

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What is dual enrollment?

A dual enrollment course is a single course that provides a student with both high school and college credit. It can be taught at the student's high school, at a community college, at a four-year college or online. The instructor will either be a professor at the college or a teacher at the student's high school who has been approved by the college to teach the course.

What are some of the benefits of dual enrollment courses?

- Students who earn college credit during high school may be able to transfer those credits to the college they ultimately choose to attend. If the course satisfies a general education requirement, the student will have more time in their college schedule to explore other interesting classes, study abroad or internships. If the transferred credits satisfy a prerequisite, the student will likely be placed directly into a higher level course. Students who take several dual enrollment courses during high school may earn enough credits to graduate early or complete a double major in four years.
- Dual enrollment courses are a cost-effective way to earn college credit. Dual enrollment courses are generally much less expensive per credit than equivalent courses taken while enrolled in college. In some situations, dual enrollment courses are subsidized or can even be free.
- Taking a dual enrollment course can help you get into college. Academic rigor is one of the most important factors in getting accepted to college and admissions counselors are impressed by students who challenge themselves academically in high school. Since dual enrollment courses are college level courses, a student who normally takes regular high school classes (not honors or AP) can use dual enrollment courses to show a willingness to take on an academic challenge and demonstrate an ability for success at the college level.
- Dual enrollment courses give high school students the opportunity to practice being college students. They will enter college with a better understanding of a professor's expectations and the amount of reading and writing required for an introductory level course.
- If the course is offered at a local college, high school students will benefit from spending time on a college campus. This experience will likely ease the transition to college. Students will have the opportunity to interact with professors and teaching or graduate assistants. They will learn to navigate a campus and use a college library. High school students will also benefit from meeting and observing college students who may become friends, sources of information on college life and serve as role models.
- Spending time on a college campus can assist students with the college search process. They will learn details about college life that will help them decide what kind of college would be a good fit for them. They will know what it feels like to attend a college of a certain size or in a

certain location so their criteria for selecting a college will be more fully developed when they begin their college search. When they are later touring colleges, students will ask better questions and will have a context in which to place the answers they receive.

What are some drawbacks of dual enrollment courses?

- Dual enrollment courses are not generally considered to be as rigorous as Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Academic rigor is important in the college admissions process. Admissions counselors will study a student's transcript and compare the courses the student chose to the courses offered at his/her high school. Selective colleges are looking for students who take the most rigorous courses available. If a student is planning to attend a selective college, AP courses will be more impressive to college admissions counselors than non-AP dual enrollment courses.
- The college a student ultimately chooses to attend may not accept the transfer of credits earned in dual enrollment courses. More selective colleges may limit the number of dual enrollment transfer credits they accept or may deny them entirely.
- Some high schools do not weight dual enrollment courses in the same way that they weight honors and AP classes when calculating a student's grade point average (GPA). Therefore, students who typically take honors and AP classes could find that even an A in a dual enrollment course brings down their GPA. For this reason, students should discuss their specific circumstances with their high school counselor before enrolling in a dual enrollment course.

Dual enrollment courses are unique educational opportunities that can offer significant advantages for the right student. When deciding whether to take a dual enrollment course, students should think about their college goals, compare the courses available to them at their high school and discuss their options with their school counselor.

Michelle McAnaney is the founder of [The College Spy](#), a full service independent educational consulting firm that assists students and families across the US and internationally with the college selection and application process. Prior to founding The College Spy, Michelle was a guidance counselor and educator for more than 15 years, including serving as the Director of Guidance at two high schools, an adjunct college professor and a GED tutor. Michelle holds a master's degree in school counseling and a bachelor's degree in human development. She recently completed UC Irvine's certificate program in educational consulting and is a MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) Certified Practitioner and a NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming) Master Practitioner. Michelle visits over 40 colleges each year so that she has first-hand knowledge of the colleges and universities her clients will be considering. You can find her on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).