



Tab 10 Dual Credit Eligibility Requirement

Coordinating Board for Higher Education
June 16, 2021

BACKGROUND

Since 2008, the number of high school students enrolling in dual credit courses has significantly increased, and a larger share of first-time, full-time students are entering Missouri colleges and universities with postsecondary credit. However, these gains are not equal across all populations or regions of the state. Data pulled for the *2019 Equity in Missouri Higher Education Report* indicate that students of color, especially Black students, are less likely to enter college with dual credit, and the same holds true for low-income and first-generation students.

Additionally, the [2011 Missouri Dual Credit Report](#) revealed that “the inability to find or replace qualified teachers to instruct dual credit courses continues to be the most significant barrier for all institution types” since at least 2008, and that this issue was especially prevalent in rural regions and low-income areas around the state. This problem has been exacerbated by policy changes in 2015 by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), the regional accreditor that oversees Missouri’s postsecondary institutions. This policy change requires all postsecondary instructors (including high school instructors teaching dual credit) to have a master’s degree in the subject area; if the instructor has a master’s degree in another area, than an additional 18 graduate credit hours in that content area is required.

In order to meet goal 1.5 in *The Blueprint for Higher Education*—which commits the state to reduce inequities in higher education by race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, and disability—and to align to the Department of Higher Education & Workforce Development’s (DHEWD’s) strategic initiative to serve more diverse Missourians in postsecondary and workforce programs to advance equity, the Office of Postsecondary Policy proposes a dual credit pilot project to address some of the barriers students and instructors face.

CURRENT STATUS

As part of ongoing conversations and projects related to educational equity in the state of Missouri, staff from both the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE) and DHEWD have identified potential areas of collaboration. One of these areas is in dual credit, and staff from both agencies have outlined a potential pilot program, set to begin in January of 2022, based on differential dual credit modalities and testing the modification of student eligibility criteria, in an attempt to overcome barriers to early college opportunities.

Co-teaching Model

Because of the HLC policy change in 2015, rural regions and low-income areas have difficulties finding and retaining qualified dual credit instructors. As a result, this pilot project will use a co-teaching model between a high school instructor and a college or university faculty member. In this model, the qualified postsecondary faculty member will offer instruction two to three times a week, and be the instructor of record, while the high school teacher will assist with assignments, grading, classroom management, etc. The postsecondary faculty will either deliver the instruction in-person or on-line, while the high school teacher will be with the students every time the class meets.

Staff from both agencies see potential benefits of this co-teaching model, for both instructors and students. For instructors, this model allows college faculty to learn from high school instructors about pedagogy and ways to engage students, which can improve the level of postsecondary instruction. Additionally, this allows professional development opportunities for the high school instructor, who can work with the college faculty on identifying content courses to be considered a qualified dual credit instructor. This also opens up opportunities for students who may not have access to dual credit because their district could not recruit or retain qualified dual credit instructors.

Student Eligibility Requirements

Since tuition is usually offered at a heavily discounted price, dual credit is a low-stakes opportunity for students to engage in postsecondary education. As the data demonstrate, however, not every student is able to access these opportunities, and certain populations—students of color, low-income students, and first-generation students—face systemic barriers to these opportunities. Additionally, data from the *Equity in Missouri Higher Education Report* series finds these same student populations face barriers in retention and persistence, and graduation.

In order to make dual credit more accessible, and potentially open up further postsecondary opportunities for students, DHEWD staff are evaluating the student eligibility requirements in the *Policy on Dual Credit Delivery*. In addition to meeting postsecondary institutions' admissions guidelines, students must currently meet other requirements, depending on the grade level. Students in eleventh and twelfth grade must maintain a cumulative GPA requirement of 3.0 or higher (a B average, or the top 15-20 percent of students) to be automatically eligible, while those with a cumulative GPA of 2.5-2.99 may be eligible with letters of recommendation. Students in lower grades must also maintain a GPA of 3.0, but additional steps are required; ninth and tenth grade students must receive letters of recommendation and written permission, while 9th grade students must score at or above the 90th percentile on the ACT or SAT. Staff are researching other student eligibility requirements in other states, and exploring other criteria for placement, such as content GPA as opposed to cumulative GPA requirements.

NEXT STEPS

In the upcoming months, DESE staff will identify potential partner school districts in low-income or otherwise under-resourced areas. DHEWD staff will research potential modified dual credit placement measures and student eligibility requirements based on best practices in other states. It is anticipated DHEWD staff will submit a recommendation to the board in a future meeting regarding placement measures for this pilot program.

Further, staff will identify potential dual credit courses (CORE 42 eligible, to ensure that they are guaranteed to transfer) and faculty to teach those courses. By October, DESE and DHEWD staff will finalize school districts, cohorts of students, courses, and faculty, and have high school instructors and postsecondary faculty begin meeting about co-teaching plans.

This pilot will begin initially with two cohorts, of around 20 students, in January 2022 for the spring 2022 semester, with plans to increase the number of cohorts in subsequent semesters. During this time, DESE and DHEWD staff will engage in on-going evaluation of the pilot project to assess the feasibility of scaling this model to other regions and under-resourced areas statewide.

RECOMMENDATION

This is an information item only.

NO ATTACHMENTS