

## Things to Consider Before Enrolling in Dual Credit Courses

If a student decides s/he is emotionally and intellectually prepared to take a college-level course, s/he must speak to the high school counselors to find answers to the following questions:

- Does the course fit in with the graduation requirements at my high school?
- Will the course help me meet my college or career goals?
- Will dual credit courses transfer from one college or university to another?

Many courses offered by NETnet member colleges and universities meet general education requirements in most degree plans at Texas colleges and universities. Because there are differences between colleges (and even between departments *within* colleges), high school students who later enter college may find that some courses may transfer as electives, but do not fulfill specific degree requirements.

## Cost of Dual Credit Courses

One of the most frequently asked questions about dual credit courses is "Who pays for the course?" The short answer is: "That depends." Several options exist: Students and parents may pay all or part of the costs, Texas community colleges may waive tuition and fees, the high school may pay all costs, or the college and high school may devise a creative way to share the cost. For example, a college may offer reduced tuition and waive or reduce certain fees (like parking, student center, or lab fees), while the high school purchases the student's textbooks and pays admission and testing fees. Another option might involve an arrangement in which, for every 15 enrollments paid by the high school, the college grants the high school one free enrollment to use however it wishes.

There is no One Right Way to arrange for dual credit courses; high schools and colleges must work closely to craft an agreement that will satisfy everyone. This highlights the importance of **EARLY and FREQUENT communication** between the institutions involved.

\*Although federal regulations specify that no federal financial aid can be awarded for students currently in high school, and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) indicates that to receive financial aid the student must be enrolled at least ½ time as a regular student at the college or university, the low cost of community college tuition will result in substantial savings later.

*If you need additional information about dual credit, concurrent enrollment, or articulated credit programs, please contact the appropriate college or university representative listed at the end of this publication.*

**Disclaimer:** This guide is made available by NETnet for informational purposes only. Policies, procedures, and requirements will vary by institution. For policies and procedures specific to a particular college, or to enroll in a dual credit class, ISD's should make contact with the college very EARLY in the process. Contact information for colleges is found at the end of this publication.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

A successful dual credit partnership requires frequent, **EARLY** communication between the high school and college. Contact the college **AT LEAST** one semester prior to the desired enrollment date to discuss eligibility, admissions, and other issues that may affect enrollment in a dual credit course.

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To learn more about how VCT works, visit them online at  
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## Guide to Distance Education and Dual Credit



### NETnet and new technologies

As the technological hub for a distance learning consortium with connectivity across the state and well beyond, the NETnet Center for Educational Technologies (located in Tyler, TX) delivers the college classroom onto the high school campus via ITV and Internet access. New technologies and delivery methods have significantly impacted the growth and nature of dual credit courses. Interactive videoconferencing and online (Internet) courses have broadened the spectrum of students who can take advantage of dual credit courses, since students may remain on their own campus and take courses during the regular school day.

The use of these new technologies is expanding the traditional educational experience. For example, ITV courses provide students the opportunity to experience the dynamics of an interactive college classroom while on their high school campus, and some online courses give motivated, self-directed students the opportunity to complete more rigorous academic courses on their own. Other online courses are not self-paced and may take place during the school day.

*Get a head start on college with distance learning dual credit courses*



The Northeast Texas Consortium (NETnet)  
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<http://www.netnet.org>

## Why take distance learning dual credit courses from NETnet member institutions?

- Enrollment in interactive videoconferencing (ITV) or online (Internet) courses provided by NETnet member institutions means students can earn college credit without ever leaving their high school campus.
- The college environment is more demanding and competitive than ever. By taking dual credit courses, students can prepare for the future while satisfying their need for challenging academic coursework. Students get an introduction to the college experience while taking courses that extend the high school curriculum.
- As our society becomes increasingly information and technology-based, students must be able to assume roles that require technological competency and computer skills. Participating in dual credit courses using distance education technologies will enhance students' computer literacy skills and prepare them for life-long learning — for their jobs, their careers, and their own personal growth.

## Benefits for Students

- enjoy a wider range of course options
- participate in rigorous educational pursuits that encourage life-long learning
- earn credits toward a college degree
- take college classes during the day, while attending high school
- no driving long distances at night to take classes.
- earn college credit and still have time for events, practices and games
- taking college level curriculum better prepares students for scoring high on the ACT and SAT entrance exams
- students and their families save a significant amount of money in student fees, housing, and transportation costs normally incurred while attending college away from home
- learn how to study for college
- demonstrate the ability to do college-level work
- gain the confidence needed to succeed in college
- explore possible majors



## But exactly what is dual credit?

Dual credit courses enable students who meet the requirements to earn college credits while completing their high school requirements. Completing a dual credit course earns the student college credit which may be applied toward an associate degree and/or may transfer to other colleges and universities.

## Dual Credit, Concurrent Enrollment, Articulated Credit... Is there a difference?

All three are alike in that they give motivated, college-bound high school students the opportunity to get a “jump start” on college by earning college credit before attending on a full-time basis. These classes are advanced and maintain a college-level standard. Students taking these courses must meet all eligibility requirements set by their high school and by the college. The distinctions between them have to do with **what** type of credit is received, and **when** that credit is awarded:

**Dual Credit:** allows a student to enroll in a college or university course to earn **college credit**, while at the same time fulfilling **high school** academic requirements. Credit is immediately awarded upon course completion.

**Concurrent Enrollment:** allows high school students to earn **college credit only** while still in high school. Credit is immediately awarded upon course completion.

**Articulated Credit:** allows high school students to take courses that lead to college credit in technical courses. Course credit is awarded by the college **after** the student has enrolled at a participating college.

**NOTE:** *Be sure to ask each NETnet Member Institution for **their** definition of Dual Credit, Concurrent Enrollment, and Articulated Credit.*

## Delivery methods for distance education

**Interactive Videoconferencing (ITV)** - Instruction is delivered through interactive video in specially equipped classrooms at both the college and K-12 sites. ITV provides for live video & audio interaction between students & instructors.



**Online (Internet)** - Instruction is delivered via the Internet and may include e-mail, chat rooms, CD-ROM, streaming video, discussion boards, etc. Students taking Internet-based courses must be self-motivated, well-organized, have strong time management skills and be experienced computer users.



The Virtual College of Texas (VCT) <http://www.vct.org> is a collaborative of Texas' 50 community college districts and the Texas State Technical College System. Through VCT, students may register at their local college to take a wide variety of credit and non-credit online distance learning courses from other community colleges throughout Texas.

**Telecourses** - Instruction is delivered using videotaped course lectures. Students will need access to a television and VCR to view the tapes.



## Which colleges can students attend?

To receive dual credit, students must go to a college that has a contract with their ISD, since offering dual credit for a course is based on an agreement with a school/school district. The college has first option on offering dual credit to ISD's within their service delivery area (SDA).

However, if a desired course is only offered by an out-of-district college, students can register at their in-district college and take the class through the Virtual College of Texas (VCT), or register at the out-of-district college and pay the out-of-district fees. Community colleges may offer VCT at their own discretion, but it is not obligatory.

If students want college credit only, then they may go where they like. A high school student may take a university class from any university after s/he meets the criteria for admission, enrolls, and pays tuition.

## Are there any negatives to consider?

- Enrolling in a dual credit course takes a great deal of **EARLY** planning and coordination between the high school and college. If students wait until the beginning of the semester to investigate their options, the likelihood is high that they will not be able enroll for that semester.
- If a graduating senior takes a dual credit class that is required to graduate from high school, s/he is in danger of not graduating if s/he does not pass the class or fails to complete the assignments and pass the final before the date of high school graduation.
- College courses are inherently **more difficult** than the high school courses most students are accustomed to taking. Therefore, students must be self-directed, motivated, disciplined, with good time management skills, and able to exercise self-discipline when attempting the more challenging curriculum.
- Once enrolled in the course, a student will not be refunded tuition or fees, even if s/he fails to complete the curriculum.
- If a student enrolls in a course via VCT, the instructing college may opt to send the course to sites within their college's Service district area (SDA), instead of to remote colleges through VCT. This might occur if the instructing college places a limit on the number of remote sites to which it will send the course.
- Students must ensure the course will be required for the major they intend to pursue at the college they plan to attend. If not, they may be spending money to take an unnecessary class.

**Students should verify, with the college they plan to attend after high school graduation, that the college credits earned through the dual credit course will transfer and apply toward a college degree.**

**GET AGREEMENTS IN WRITING AND BEFORE ENROLLING.**