

# FAMILY GUIDE:

## INTRODUCTION TO DUAL CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES



During your child's high school career, they may be presented with opportunities to earn both high school and college credit through either dual enrollment or AP classes. This guide contains information about both types of credit-bearing programs and what you should know about each in order to best support your child.

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### ABOUT DUAL CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities to earn dual credit in high school often come in the form of dual enrollment programs or AP classes.

**Dual enrollment** is a program that provides the opportunity for high school students to take college-level courses and earn college credit alongside their high school requirements. These programs have become a popular way for students to explore college before their high school graduation. Dual enrollment programs often exist as a partnership between local area high schools and nearby community colleges and universities and usually include discounted tuition for a limited number of courses. Courses in these programs may be offered on the college campus, at the student's high school, or online.

**Advanced Placement (AP)** classes are college-level courses offered in a wide variety of subjects made available to high school students within their high school curriculum. At the end of the course, participating students have a chance to take an AP exam in that subject. These tests last 2-3 hours and are scored between 1-5. Upon acceptance, colleges and universities may accept AP credit from any of these exams following their own criteria.



# 5 IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT DUAL CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES

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## 1) AP classes are often offered to higher performing students. Dual enrollment is often available to a wider range of students.

Students who may struggle academically may not be offered an opportunity to enroll in AP classes, but may be eligible for dual enrollment programs. Dual enrollment programs may offer struggling students new motivation to do well in school and can help them successfully complete their higher education. Earning college credit in high school can either speed up the time it takes to complete their degree or at least lighten the course load when they begin attending college fully.



**2) Students who are disappointed or disillusioned with high school may thrive in a dual enrollment program.** Some students feel too mature for high school or like it may be a waste of time and these students may benefit most from a dual enrollment program. Having the opportunity to learn alongside and interact with slightly older students in college classes may be a welcome change. This may allow them to make new friends and take a break from the social pressures of high school. Additionally, they may be more motivated working toward their college degree early than just working toward their high school diploma.

**3) AP classes may not count toward college credit.** In order to earn college credit for their AP classes, students must take the AP exam related to their course and must pay for this test. When they take the test, they must earn a passing score, and the college must accept their score and issue credit. Each individual college and university can decide whether they accept AP credit, how it translates into their programs, and how much credit will be awarded. When considering enrolling in AP courses, make sure you know which of your child's prospective colleges accept AP credit and what the requirements and details are for accepting AP credit.

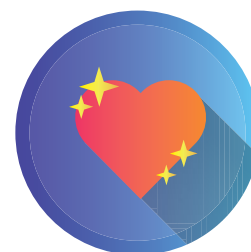


**4) College credit may not be transferable.** In some cases, students may only earn the college credits from their dual enrollment program if they enroll in a particular program at a specific college, usually the college where they completed their dual enrollment. If possible, try to find a dual enrollment program where the college credits earned are transferable to any college or university students may choose to attend.

**5) AP classes and dual enrollment may put unnecessary stress and pressure on your child.** If your child is not excited by challenges and not interested in working toward college just yet, these dual credit programs may put a lot of unnecessary stress and pressure on them. It is perfectly fine not to take these opportunities and to work through high school at a normal pace. Dual credit courses are not the only path to college. As long as your child is taking courses that are rigorous and earning good grades, they will still have their pick of colleges.

## THE BOTTOM LINE

The most important thing to do is to make sure to consider the best option for your child. Just because the opportunity is being offered does not mean it's the right choice. Try not to factor in your personal feelings about the opportunity too much, rather help your child think it through, weigh the options, and make an informed decision that they feel confident with.



The following resources will help you learn more about these options and help guide your decision-making process if and when these opportunities are offered to your child.

- [Dual Enrollment...Is Your Child Ready?](#), AAH 2 College
- [Some Teens Start College Work via Dual Enrollment](#), U.S. News
- [Dual Enrollment Programs: The Pros and Cons](#), StudyPoint
- [Your Burning Questions about Dual Enrollment](#), Answered, U.S. Dept. of Education
- [Are Advanced Placement \(AP\) Classes Worth Your Kid's Time?](#), Medium
- [Advanced Placement \(AP\) Program for Parents & Guardians](#), College Board
- [Why I Regret Letting My Teen Sign Up for an AP Course](#), The Washington Post