

DUAL CREDIT STUDENT HANDBOOK



HISD
Postsecondary
Programming

HISD Dual Credit Handbook

Houston Independent School District (ISD) is excited to provide high school students the opportunity to obtain college credit through its dual credit program. This unique Houston ISD initiative requires a high level of commitment from students, but it also offers many benefits that include:

- exposure to college-level coursework while still in high school.
- the opportunity to improve your high school GPA and class rank.
- obtaining college credit that can lead to the completion of a postsecondary degree or certificate.

The Basics of Dual Credit

How does it work?

Students enrolled in a dual credit course are completing a semester-long college class that also awards them high school credit. Houston ISD administrators determine which high school course credit is paired with each college class. The final letter grade for each dual credit course will appear on the student's high school transcript as well as the corresponding college transcript. Dual credit classes traditionally are offered during the fall, spring, and summer sessions. They can be completed at the student's high school, on a college campus, or online. Dual credit classes include the district-approved quality point that impacts a student's high school GPA.

Who can participate in dual credit?

Houston ISD students can start taking dual credit classes as early as 9th grade, but the college partner may put limitations on the types of classes that can be completed by first-time high school students. All students are encouraged to meet with a high school counselor or administrator to discuss their high school grades and any other commitments (e.g., job, family support, extracurricular activities) to determine if they should enroll in a dual credit class. Students interested in enrolling into a dual credit class must first complete an [ApplyTexas](#) application while also submitting the appropriate enrollment paperwork to their dual credit leader by the appropriate deadline. The entire enrollment process is outlined in **Appendix A: Dual Credit Onboarding Steps**.

What does it cost?

Dual credit courses are **free** to Houston ISD students who have received approval from a high school administrator to complete these college classes. The school district also is responsible for covering any potential out-of-district expenses for dual credit students. The only instances when a student potentially will be responsible for tuition and/or textbook expenses is if (a.) campuses administrators do not sign the dual credit paperwork waiving these expenses, or (b.) the student opts to complete classes outside of the traditional dual credit program at their high school campus.

What can students take?

Houston ISD students can choose from more than 100 different college courses available for dual credit. The commonly offered dual credit classes are the academic "Common Core" courses that are considered transferrable to most in-state public universities as well as a handful of other colleges/universities. Dual credit students completing academic classes designed to transfer to 4-year colleges/universities likely need to meet a reading, writing, and/or mathematics score threshold to enroll in the course.

Students interested in a CTE (i.e., workforce) dual credit class typically are limited to college courses that can be paired with CTE classes offered at their high school campus. For instance, students typically cannot complete welding classes for dual credit if their home campus does not offer this program. Community college partners may not allow dual credit students to simultaneously complete academic and workforce classes unless the

student's college degree plan requires both types of courses. Students are not limited to dual credit classes offered at their high school campus if they can complete classes virtually or at the college campus.

Eligibility

Houston ISD students should be performing well in their traditional high school courses before considering dual credit. They will need approval from a high school administrator to complete dual credit classes. This approval process involves collaborating with college personnel to ensure students meet the reading, writing, and/or mathematics score requirements along with any course prerequisites.

The chart on **Appendix B** of this document (i.e., **Course Placement Requirements for Dual Credit**) reflects the different exam scores that can be used to qualify for these classes. It is important to note that a student relying on STAAR End of Course (EOC) Algebra I score also must successfully pass both semesters of Algebra II. Lastly, the STAAR EOC and PSAT exams only can be used to qualify for dual credit classes. Students are not required to meet any reading, writing, and/or math score standards for community college classes linked to a Level I Certificate, which typically represents a 15-to-42 semester credit hours of postsecondary coursework within a workforce (i.e., CTE) program.

Grades

As a reminder, the final letter grade that Houston ISD students receive in the college course will be the same letter grade that should appear on their high school transcript. Therefore, students should meet with campus administrators if they have any concerns about their ability to be successful in the dual credit classroom. Additionally, campus and/or college administrators may pose limitations on the number of postsecondary classes that can be completed by students if they are struggling in the dual credit classroom.

Students should notify campus administrators at the start of the semester if their dual credit courses do not appear on their high school or college schedules. Failure to provide campus personnel this notification can result in the student not receiving course credit. We have included below a couple commonly asked questions regarding dual credit grades.

Q: *What dual credit grades will a parent see on their child's HISD report card?*

A: HISD campuses are asked to apply the numeric grade for a dual credit course at the end of the semester. At that time, campus administrators should retroactively apply the same numeric grade to each grading cycle for that term.

Q: *Given this practice, how can parents track their child's performance in a dual credit class?*

A: Parents should review their child's dual credit course syllabi at the start of the semester to understand how the course will be graded. Parents also can review individual course grades on HCC's instructional platform (i.e., Canvas). Please consult with a campus representative to address any privacy concerns related to your student's academic records.

Q: *Will a dual credit student be eligible for UIL activities if they do not have a cycle and/or progress report grade on their high school report card?*

A: Yes, dual credit students still will be eligible for all UIL activities.

The following chart better explains the high school and college grade correlation within the dual credit courses as well as the implications on the high school grade point average.

Letter Grade	College Numeric Grade	High School Numeric Grade	Traditional Grade Point Scale	Dual Credit Grade Point Scale
A	90-100	95	4	5
B	80-89	85	3	4
C	70-79	77	2	3
D	60-69	72	1	2
F	59 and below	60	0	0
FX	59 and below	60	0	0
W	No Grade	NG	0	0

Speaking with Faculty and FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. According to the U.S. Department of Education, FERPA also gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. We have included below a couple commonly asked questions regarding FERPA as well as communication between parents/guardians and faculty regarding a student's dual credit grades.

Q: *What if an HISD instructor refuses to communicate with a parent about their child's performance in the dual credit classroom?*

A: Parents should reach out to the dual credit leader or principal at their respective HISD campus if they are concerned about a dual credit faculty member's unwillingness to disclose academic performance information about their child.

Q: *How does the school know if they are complying with FERPA by disclosing personally identifiable student information to a parent or guardian?*

A: Community college partners have provided HISD campus administrators the appropriate FERPA language explaining the rights of the student as well as the parent(s)/guardian(s).

Q: *Can HISD teachers communicate via phone, email, and/or in person with a parent or guardian about their child's dual credit grade?*

A: Yes - HISD teachers/staff members are expected to utilize the abovementioned communication methods for dual credit students who are considered a minor and/or dependent or if they have submitted the [FERPA Release Form](#).

Q: *Can parents communicate with the instructor of a dual credit class if the course is taught by an HCC faculty member?*

A: Parents should expect to work through their campus administrative team to receive feedback regarding their child's performance in a dual credit class taught by an HCC faculty member.

Attendance

Dual credit students can be dropped from a college class by their instructor if they miss more than 12.5% of the class time (e.g., six hours for most non-lab classes). If a student cannot avoid missing class, it is his/her responsibility to provide the instructor advanced notice of the conflict while also ensuring any work missed during that date(s) is completed. Ultimately, the dual credit instructor is the final authority in providing students an alternative option for completing an assignment or exam. We have included below a couple commonly asked questions regarding attendance.

Q: Does HISD's 15-day/6-day course drop rule apply to dual credit courses?

A: No, because dual credit students can withdraw from a college course as late as Nov. 1st (fall term) or April 1st (spring term). However, students and parents should meet with a campus administrator prior to enrolling in a dual credit course to understand their options for securing the high school credit. Students should not withdraw from a dual credit course before getting approval from a campus administrator.

Q: What high school credit options are available for student who withdraw from a dual credit course prior to the community college's deadline?

A: Dual credit students opting to withdraw from a college course may have a face-to-face or virtual option for obtaining the high school credit for this same course. However, this option is based on course availability, and students will not receive the quality point associated with the dual credit class. Additionally, students opting to withdraw from a college class may be limited to enrolling in a non-credit high school course (i.e., office aid) or receiving a 50W on their high school transcript if no other options exist. Students need to be mindful of the college's withdrawal deadlines.

Dual credit students also can receive an Incomplete ("I") for the college grade in special circumstances. It is important to review the college's policy around Incompletes, as students typically have six months to address the grade before it converts to an "F".

Textbooks

Houston ISD's district office purchases for all dual credit students the textbooks aligned with courses that were approved by campus administrators and met the enrollment deadline. Given that more than 4,000 students participate in HISD's dual credit program, most instructional materials are provided in the form of an ebook and/or access code that is provided to the dual credit leader on campus.

It is the student's responsibility to know which books are required for their course based on the instructor's syllabus. Additionally, students always should first try to access course content via a code provided by the school district as opposed to a temporary code provided by their instructor. Students need to immediately notify the dual credit leader on their campus if they are missing any instructional materials. Failure to bring a textbook concern to the attention of a dual credit administrator may result in the student needing to purchase the book if the district office cannot support the late request.

Final Thoughts and Best Practices

Taking a dual credit class for the first time can be intimidating, but our district has observed numerous success stories when Houston ISD students adopt the following practices when completing these college-level courses.

- Read, read, read your course syllabus. It should include the important details related to your class (e.g., grade breakdown, book details, instructor email, etc.).
- Understand how to use all facets of the college's online student system. These virtual platforms not only include accessing the instructor's online course, but they also enable students to review their academic progress or send their dual credit transcript to a 4-year school.
- Utilize the college's student support resources available to all students (virtual library, online tutoring, etc.). Several links can be found on HISD's dual credit web site: <https://www.houstonisd.org/dualcredit>.
- Constantly communicate in a professional manner with your dual credit professors – this includes requesting test/assignment results if that information has yet to be provided. Always advocate for yourself and do not wait until it is too late to ask a question.

- Remember your HCC usernames and passwords! In some instances, forgetting a password may lead to you not accessing course content for more than two weeks. This disconnect from the classroom can be the difference between an “A” and a “C”.

It also is important to remember:

- Students do not have to pick between dual credit, dual enrollment, advanced placement, or IB classes. If your schedule allows for it and the classes are available at your high school, you potentially can complete classes associated with all four postsecondary programs.
- Certain 4-year colleges may only take a “A” or “B” letter grade, so do not overload yourself with too many dual credit classes. Our team wants to see students thrive, not survive, in the dual credit classroom.
- Withdrawing from a dual credit class avoids a failing/poor grade, but it may have future financial aid implications. In addition to the impact on your high school transcript, a withdrawal (i.e., “W”) from a dual credit course may impact you years later when it comes to financial aid. Therefore, always try your best to finish out the semester.
- Have fun being a college student! You are part of a unique group of students in HISD who get a head start on college by completing dual credit coursework. Be proud of the work that has allowed you to get to this point and will allow you to be a successful college student going forward.

Appendix A: Dual Credit Onboarding Steps

HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

First-Time HISD Dual Credit Students: YOUR PATHWAY TO SUCCESS!

The steps to becoming a dual credit student often times start months prior to the first day of class. The following graphic outlines the process that should be followed by HISD students seeking this unique opportunity.

GET STARTED!



1. Complete dual credit orientation. Check with campus regarding this date.



2. Complete ApplyTexas application: <https://www.applytexas.org>



3. Monitor your email for your college ID#. This number is needed to complete your student profile.



4. Take the TSI exam (if applicable). This exam can be completed at the high school or community college.



5. Complete dual credit student paperwork packet.



6. Submit signed dual credit paperwork by campus-designated deadline.



7. Follow up with campus administrators to confirm enrollment status.



8. CONGRATULATIONS!
You're now a Dual Credit Student!



Don't forget to check your community college's student system before the first day of class to complete the student orientation while also reviewing your instructor's course syllabus.

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🌐 <https://www.HoustonISD.org/DualCredit>

Appendix B: Course Placement Requirements for Dual Credit

TYPE OF ASSESSMENT	Minimum scores for Reading & Writing based classes eg, English/History/Government	Minimum scores for Reading, Writing and Math based classes eg, Economics	Minimum scores for Math based classes eg, College Algebra
ACT (TSI Exemption)	English 19+ AND Composite 23+ (both)	English 19+, Math 19+, AND Composite 23 (all three)	Math 19+ AND Composite 23+ (both)
SAT (after 3/2016) (TSI Exemption)	Evidence-Based Reading & Writing 480+	Evidence-Based Reading & Writing 480+ AND Math Section Score 530+ (both)	Math Section Score 530+
STAAR EOC (TSI Exemption)	English III 4000+	Combined English III 4000+ AND Algebra II 4000+ (both)	Algebra II 4000+
PSAT (TSI Waiver <i>only while in high school</i>)	Evidence Based Reading & Writing 460+	Evidence Based Reading & Writing 460+ AND Math Section Score 510+	Math Section Score 510+
ASPIRE (TSI Waiver <i>only while in high school</i>)	English 435+	English 435+ AND Math 431+ (both)	Math 431+
STAAR EOC (TSI Waiver <i>only while in high school</i>)	English II 4000+	Combined English II 4000+ AND Algebra I 4000+ plus passing C or higher grade in Algebra II (all three)	Algebra I 4000+ plus passing C or higher grade in Algebra II (both)

TYPE OF ASSESSMENT	Minimum scores for Reading & Writing based classes e.g., English/Government	Minimum scores for Reading, Writing and Math based classes e.g., Economics	Minimum scores for Math based classes e.g., College Algebra
TSI Assessment 2	ELAR: 945-990 AND Essay 5-8 (both) OR ELAR: 910-944 AND Diagnostic Level 5-6 AND Essay 5-8 (all three)	(ELAR: 945-990 AND Essay 5-8 OR ELAR: 910-944 AND Diagnostic Level 5-6 AND Essay 5-8) AND (MATH: 950-990 OR MATH: 910-949 AND Diagnostic Level 6)	MATH: 950-990 OR MATH: 910-949 AND Diagnostic Level 6 (both)