Dual Enrollment and Application Integration

In this brief, the term "dual enrollment" refers to enrolling in a college course while being simultaneously enrolled in high school or an adult education high school diploma or equivalency program. Students may be dually enrolled through programs that are officially offered through their high school or equivalency program, or they may enroll independently.

CALL TO ACTION

Dual enrollment is considered a critical practice for increasing rates of high school graduation, college enrollment, and completion. Students take dual enrollment courses either through programs at their high schools or through high school equivalency programs, or independently, to earn credits towards completing their postsecondary goals. Governor Newsom's multiyear compacts with the [University of California (UC)](#) and [California State University (CSU)](#), as well as his multi year [Roadmap with the California Community Colleges (CCC)](#) and CCC's Vision 2030, spell out the importance of having the state's public colleges and universities collaborate to expand dual enrollment opportunities through CCCs.

When students apply to college, they are responsible for documenting the courses they have taken in high school and college as part of their initial application, and, after they are accepted, students must submit final transcripts from both their high school and any colleges where they took courses. However, given the lack of clear guidance and challenges securing timely transcripts, students frequently do not include dual enrollment coursework in their college applications and do not receive appropriate credit for completed coursework once enrolled. They risk being flagged as ineligible for admission to a CSU or UC and may be required to retake previously completed college coursework.

In this brief, we focus on challenges related to exchanging data among high schools, community colleges, and four-year institutions-—particularly at the point of college admission—and identify some potential ways to address these issues.

PROBLEM TO SOLVE: STUDENTS LACK STREAMLINED WAYS TO REPORT DUAL ENROLLMENT PARTICIPATION FOR COLLEGE ADMISSIONS APPLICATIONS.

Students often don't know that they must submit a final CCC transcript as part of their college application process.

When dual enrollment courses are facilitated through their high school or high school equivalency program, students often assume that related information is part of their secondary transcript. Regardless of what may appear on high school or high school equivalency records, during the admission process, colleges require an official transcript from each community college where dual enrollment coursework was completed. Depending on the colleges attended while dually enrolled and their particular transcript request and fulfillment processes, students may experience confusion about how to request transcripts and delays in their delivery. Students must also pay for college transcripts, with ordering procedures and costs varying across the state.

PROBLEM TO SOLVE: INCONSISTENT TRANSCRIPTION PROCESSES MAY IMPACT ADMISSIONS DECISIONS.

High school transcripts do not consistently identify and document dual enrollment coursework as being college courses.

Inconsistencies in the documentation of dual enrollment coursework at high schools can lead to issues like college courses being incorrectly listed as high school courses in the UC Course Management Portal (CMP), the "source of truth" database used by UC and CSU admissions officers to verify students' college preparatory coursework (commonly known as a-g).

Or conversely, dual enrollment classes taken to meet necessary a-g subject area requirements for admission do not appear on the high school transcript at all. For example, if a student took a dual enrollment English course that does not appear on their high school transcript, it would appear that they did not fulfill the a-g sequence required to meet public four-year institution eligibility requirements.

Dual Enrollment and Application Integration

PROBLEM TO SOLVE:
CURRENT DATA STRUCTURES MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO TRACK DUAL ENROLLMENT

Most community colleges track dual enrollment at the student versus the course level.

Community colleges generally track dual enrollment information through their application process, which is used to identify whether the student is considered a "Special Admit" in the CCC Management Information System. There is no consistent, course-level documentation on CCC transcripts that indicates dual enrollment participation, which limits FERPA-permissible data sharing between the dual enrollment college and the student's high school that could provide useful information for guidance counselors about how students are leveraging dual enrollment opportunities. Furthermore, very few researchers have been able to conduct comprehensive analyses of early college credit course taking patterns because they must first build a data set that includes K12, high school equivalency, and community college records.

DESIGNING SOLUTIONS

Embed community college transcript requests into admissions applications

The California College Guidance Initiative (CCGI) works with K12 districts to enhance the use of data to improve college preparation and application processes for high school students through the CaliforniaColleges.edu platform. Districts that have a data sharing agreement with CCGI to transmit transcripts have access to enhanced tools that use their official transcript data. For example, the CSU and UC Eligibility Tools allow students to see their progress towards meeting minimum requirements for admission. Students enrolled in partner districts also have the ability to import high school transcript data for their CSU application. Beginning in Fall 2024, students will also be able to import high school transcript data for their UC application.

Building off the successful CaliforniaColleges.edu model that is already in place for high school transcripts, community college transcript requests could be embedded into the CCC, CSU, and UC admissions applications. This integration would assure that students are prompted to submit their dual enrollment coursework as part of the application process, expedite delivery, and resolve the issue of costs associated with students ordering their transcripts. This could work on

three levels when students indicate in their applications that they took community college coursework:

» **Unified High School Transcripts**: Information from any CCC attended would be transmitted from eTranscript California and shared back to CCGI to generate a unified high school transcript that provides official documentation of both high school and CCC coursework.

» **Prepopulate Coursework on Application Forms**: Integration between eTranscript California and CaliforniaColleges.edu would also allow the unified high school transcript to automatically import dual enrollment courses into the UC and CSU application forms, which currently must be manually entered (this feature would work for both dual enrollment and regular community college coursework).

» **Automated Free Delivery of Transcripts**: eTranscript California would automatically deliver students' transcripts to the colleges where they have applied, free of charge (this feature would work for both dual enrollment and regular community college coursework).

Implement transcript data standards

The newly created California High School Transcript and Student Record Portability Standard for CaliforniaColleges.edu establishes a high school transcript standard, including guidance to K12 districts that California high school transcripts must clearly indicate any dual enrollment coursework and requiring that California student information system vendors support this standard. Creating a consistent high school approach to documenting dual enrollment will alleviate issues such as institutions receiving incomplete or conflicting documentation and the inaccurate reporting of coursework to CMP.

The California Electronic Transcript Data Standard, enacted by [Assembly Bill 1056](#) in 2012, established a similar standard for California-specific community college transfer data that is transmitted through eTranscript California. This standard could be updated to align dual enrollment notations with the new high school standard. Leveraging a common standard would help identify which community college courses a student completed while still in high school, to support college eligibility tools provided by CaliforniaColleges.edu. This topic will be discussed at greater depth in the March task force meeting.

Dual Enrollment and Application Integration

While official CCC transcripts that are sent as part of college admissions processes do not need to include course-level dual enrollment notations, there are other ways this information may be helpful. For example, a common standard could be leveraged to provide more comprehensive information to the CCC Management Information System on the types of dual enrollment courses students are taking and the number of units they earn through dual enrollment.

The community college transcript standard could also be updated to address other recent developments such as the creation of the California General Education Transfer Curriculum (Cal-GETC) standard and the need to document credit for prior learning.

If the electronic postsecondary transcript standard were to be updated and implemented across all higher education segments, instead of just community college records, it would allow for more efficient transfer admissions processes among and between CSUs and UCs, facilitate reverse transfer, and provide a means for independent California colleges to integrate eTranscript California transcript requests into their application forms.

Finally, a shared standard is necessary for delivering data to the future Career Passport and to make the development of a true Learner and Employment Record possible.