

Dual & Concurrent Enrollment & Students with Disabilities

Background & Definitions:

Through initiatives like [PrepareRI](#), Rhode Island has affirmed its commitment to supporting students in taking college courses to earn credit while still in secondary school. Students with disabilities have the right to access any program offered by the school district as long as they meet all of the same eligibility requirements and prerequisites for enrollment.

In 2013, the Rhode Island General Assembly passed legislation (RIGL 16-100) that called for the adoption of a statewide policy for dual enrollment that allows students to take college courses to earn credit at both the secondary school and the higher education institution. Subsequently, the Board of Education adopted [regulations](#) in April of 2015, that provide all qualified Rhode Island high school students access to college level coursework while still in high school. Students can access college level courses in two ways by taking:

1. **Concurrent enrollment courses at their high school:** these courses are the same courses that are taught at the college, but are approved to be taught at the high school, by a high school teacher.
2. **Dual enrollment courses at the institution's campus:** these courses are part of the institution's regular schedule and are taught by a college professor.

Upon successful completion of a dual or concurrent course, students will earn credit toward their high school graduation requirements and they will earn credit with the higher education institution where they are enrolled for the course. Depending on their plans after high school, students can choose to transfer the credit with another institution.

Accessing Accommodations in Dual & Concurrent Enrollment Courses:

The [RI Board of Education Regulations for Dual Enrollment](#) specify eligibility standards (**Part II Section 5.1**) for all students seeking to access dual and concurrent enrollment courses and the provision of services for students with disabilities (**Part II Section 5.5**):

" Students with disabilities shall receive the protections, services and accommodations set forth in their Section 504 plans and as prescribed by federal and state law in accordance with the policies and procedures of the postsecondary institution in the case of dual enrollment or the secondary school in the case of concurrent enrollment."

Concurrent Enrollment Courses held at the high school:

- ✓ The high school provides all appropriate accommodations and related special education services for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and 504 Plans.
- ✓ The high school teachers are required to maintain the academic and technical standards of the college course and use college grading criteria. The institution/college should be consulted concerning any requested accommodations or services within an IEP that may not be applicable if they fundamentally alter the performance standards of the course (e.g. request for “open book” exams or shorter version of an exams, etc.)

Dual Enrollment Courses held at the institution’s campus:

- ✓ The college provides reasonable accommodations based on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 Act of 1973
- ✓ Students are required to go through the institutions standard process for obtaining accommodations
- ✓ Students may be required to provide their own transportation and some courses may be offered outside of the school day (in the evening, on weekends, or online)

Accommodation Fast Facts:

- Participation in a *dual enrollment* college courses is considered to be a choice on the part of a student, therefore the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and FAPE which govern the delivery of special education services in K-12 settings do not apply to college classes on college campuses, even if the student is still in high school. If the student has an IEP or 504 Plan within their school district, the accommodations in that plan do not automatically carry over to dual enrollment (college) courses.
- However, since the student is still a high school student, IEP services could continue to be provided by the school district in other ways. (*Refer to Case Example*)
- The student should register with the Disability Services office from the institution/college the credit will be earned from, to determine reasonable accommodations under the ADA for the college course. School district personnel (teacher, case manager, counselor) may assist the student with the process of registering with the college Disability Service office, as needed, as part of Transition Planning. The student may opt to list district personnel on the college's FERPA release to aid communication in coordinating accommodations and services.
- The student should continue to work with their school district for any personal services (provided outside of the college course) under IDEA which can aid their learning process.
- Participation in dual or concurrent enrollment courses should be incorporated into the student’s transition plan.
- All students in the college course will be held to the same academic and behavioral standards.

Factors to Consider When Choosing Dual & Concurrent Enrollment Courses:

Students with disabilities should not be discouraged from enrolling in dual or concurrent enrollment programs and should be provided accurate information so they can make informed choices with the understanding that there are differences between high school and college course work and not all accommodations that are available in high school may be allowed in college.

Dual and concurrent enrollment courses are real college courses for real college credit. Students who take these courses are required to complete the same assignments and tests as college students, and are graded according to college standards and expectations. The grades will be posted on the student's permanent academic record (both their official high school and college transcripts). There are many factors to consider to determine if a dual enrollment program is best for high school students with disabilities such as:

- ✓ How the course aligns with the student's career goals,
- ✓ How the course fits into their academic plan
- ✓ What accommodations and services are available in a dual enrollment college course

These factors should be discussed in collaboration with the student, their family, high school counselor and teachers when deciding if a dual enrollment program or course will be the best choice for the student.

Students must pay very close attention to the deadlines for adding, dropping, and withdrawing from dual and concurrent enrollment courses. These deadlines are established for all students, by the institution that is granting the college credit. Each high school student taking a class is personally responsible for also knowing and adhering to those effective dates.

Once a student attempts college and starts a college transcript (even while in high school) the student has created an official, legal document that will be a permanent record. College transcripts are filed in national databases/clearing houses. It is extremely important to note that the college transcript a student starts through a dual or concurrent enrollment courses will be used to determine student eligibility for Federal Financial Aid after the student has graduated from high school due Federal Student Financial Aid rules regarding Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) which requires that all college course work be measured to determine academic success, including dual and concurrent enrollment courses.

For more information visit:

<https://www.prepare-ri.org/>

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/StudentsFamilies/EducationPrograms/DualEnrollment.aspx>



Dual Enrollment Case Example: Luisa

- Luisa is a high school senior who receives special education and related services through an IEP for a learning disability that impacts reading and for anxiety disorder which can cause test anxiety and panic attacks during exams.
- Luisa would like to take a dual enrollment literature course offered at a local college. Luisa would be considered a **college** student in this course.
- To arrange reasonable accommodations for this course under the ADA and Section 504, Luisa will need to meet and register with the college's Disability Services Office to provide documentation of her disability and discuss her strengths and needs as a learner. Her high special education teacher can help her gather the necessary documentation for this meeting.
- The college Disability Services Office approved Luisa for accommodations under ADA that help her **access** the college course curriculum which include: 50% extra time on tests, tests in a separate, quiet room, and use of alternate format texts (audiobooks)
- Although Luisa's special education teacher will not work directly with the college course instructor, per her IEP, he will work with Luisa on study skills, organization, and test taking strategies during her high school resource class period. Luisa will also meet with the high school counselor to practice strategies to deal with anxiety and develop self-advocacy skills.
- As the course progresses, Luisa will need to communicate directly with the course instructor, the college Disability Services office, and her high school special education teacher if she is having difficulty and needs assistance