

Possible Problems with On-Line Dual Credit Coursework

Despite all the benefits of dual credit courses, **on-line** dual credit courses have several pitfalls that many students and parents don't understand until it is too late and there are unavoidable consequences. The most significant concern is that online courses are not *delivered* in cooperation with the high school. The high school's role is only to help with selection and then to record the University-assigned grade on student transcripts after the semester ends. In challenging classes, students are on their own and will need to contact the professor for assistance or tutoring services. It is not appropriate to ask CHS teachers for help with dual credit coursework. I know this has been an on-going problem for some teachers who are put in an awkward position trying to understand another teacher's instruction. It also interferes with the teacher's availability to assist his or her own in-class students and likely his or her instructional planning time.

High Schools are also not obligated to proctor tests or offer any other assistance and support. Only the university receives funding from dual credit student payments. High schools receive no funding to support online dual credit classes. My own son took all dual enrollment classes his senior year through Roosevelt HS due to the problem of over-crowding. It was made clear that he would need to be 100% independent and that the University is only the service provider...not the high school. He had to pay University Center testing staff and additional fee to proctor his tests. In contrast, CHS is already going above and beyond by offering free proctoring services for tests and a supervised location for juniors to work on dual credit classes during the school day.

The other potential problem with dual credit I have observed as a parent is the inconsistent quality of the courses. My son took mostly AP classes in 10th and 11th grade and all dual credit courses his senior year. He told us that his AP classes prepared him for the next required courses on campus, but many of the online dual credit classes did not. In other words, the rigor of dual credit courses varies greatly by subject matter, the instructor and how well the content fits with on-line learning. Speech is the most-requested class to take for dual credit and that class in particular does not prepare students for live, in-person public speaking compared to a traditional course on campus. However, I have to agree with Ms. Fullenkamp's observation on the value of the video recording skills being learned considering our current virtual learning situation.

Finally, another issue to consider the department or major plan of study or outline of all the required classes that must be taken sequentially with specific classes each semester. When a student completes too many general courses as dual credit and must wait until the next semester for the next class in the department's sequence, their schedule has to be filled with something...which is often unnecessary classes. My son was told he should declare an additional major or minor to guide choosing additional classes just to remain a full-time student (which is required for scholarships). If students are adding more classes to maintain full-time status, they are not saving money or time by taking dual credit coursework.

The intended benefit of online dual credit courses is to offer high schools and students *additional classes* that the high school curriculum does not offer. It was not intended to replace the high school's current curriculum. High Schools are not required to offer dual credit coursework but many choose to as a supplement and enrich a student's high school academic experience.

Online dual credit classes will continue to be available to students, but they do not replace the national award-winning in-person instruction that is offered by staff in the Canistota School District. For this reason, students at CHS must take a class that is offered at our school before taking a dual credit of the same type unless there is an unavoidable schedule conflict.

If you have additional questions about selecting dual credit classes, please contact me at kerri.cox@k12.sd.us.