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## **Dual Enrollment: Implications for Special Education**

Dual Enrollment (DE) is a publicly-funded education initiative designed to encourage and increase postsecondary education continuation rates as part of a student's documented personalized learning plan (PLP) [16 V.S.A. § 944]. The Individual Education Plan (IEP), a required component under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), is a distinctly separate document that articulates the supports and services related to a student's identified disability to ensure they can access a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). In short, PLPs and the Dual Enrollment program are intended for all eligible students while the IEP articulates the supports and services that would help a student in special education access the general education curriculum.

It should be noted that there are no special education services offered through Post-Secondary Institutions (PSI). Instead students would have access to the same services that the student support office/ ADA office offers any matriculating student at the college. However, IEP teams should leverage a student's IEP and PLP to prepare a student for successful participation in Dual Enrollment.

### **CONSIDERATIONS FOR IEP TEAMS**

The Vermont State Dual Enrollment Program provides access to non-remedial college level coursework that becomes part of a student's transcript. Dual Enrollment also presents a great opportunity for students to increase their self-advocacy and self-directed behavior—transferable skills they will need after high school graduation. Having IEP goals in these areas is an excellent way to further support the student's dual enrollment experience.

As a part of supporting access to Dual Enrollment programs for students with IEPs, IEP Teams are encouraged to consider the following:

- How can the IEP support participation in the dual enrollment experience?
- How can the IEP team promote and measure progress toward goal attainment?
- If the student receives approval to participate in Dual Enrollment, has he/she visited the college and met staff from the student support office? What accommodations need to be set up?
- Are there any reasonable accommodations that appear to be very challenging for the college to provide? How will that be addressed?
- How will the student manage their time on campus?
- For students who are deaf or hard of hearing - does the college offer interpreter services?
- For students with mobility impairments, is the college campus accessible?
- What process will the IEP team use to follow up and monitor progress in the dual enrollment course?

## ACCOMODATIONS

In general, Post-Secondary Institutions (PSI) develop prerequisites and academic requirements which can be used by sending school counselors, and special educators in making determinations regarding student readiness. It is important to understand the differences between high school and college-level course work, and the accommodations that are available at the postsecondary (college) level. Postsecondary institutions do not provide IDEA modifications<sup>1</sup>. Students with disabilities who meet the prerequisites of a course may be provided reasonable accommodations through a 504 Plan or ADA Plan that allows equal access. However, colleges will not provide modifications to change course content or performance expectations that would substantially alter the essential elements of the course. Students need to understand that not all accommodations available at a high school will be allowed at a post-secondary institution.

Schools should review or request PSI descriptions of what accommodations and services are offered by the student support office at the college to inform the decision-making process when discussing dual enrollment with any student.

## PRE-APPLICATION STAGE

*A recommended process for IEP teams:*

1. IEP team meets **before** student applies for a DE course to determine if the course presents a good learning opportunity for the student. The case manager or school counselor may wish to talk with the PSI admissions and/or the student support office prior to convening the IEP team.
2. Student shares PLP articulating goal to participate in dual enrollment (and if articulated, specific course) with IEP Team (guidance counselor and/or DE Voucher Coordinator should be invited to this meeting with parental consent if educator is not already on the IEP Team).
3. IEP team members review appropriateness of dual enrollment participation, DE course requirements as well as what is offered through the PSI student support office.
4. IEP team decides whether or not the course offered at the PSI center is an appropriate educational setting for the student based on information provided from the PSI. If the IEP team supports it then the team may recommend that the student apply.

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<sup>1</sup> *Post-secondary institutions such as colleges and universities are not bound by the same laws or in the same manner as the K-12 system. While post-secondary institutions must follow requirements as articulated in the [ADA](#) and [Section 504](#) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#) (IDEA) requirements concerning a [Free Appropriate Public Education](#) (FAPE) do not apply.*

## APPLICATION AND ACCEPTANCE STAGE

5. Approval into the Dual Enrollment program comes from the school principal or designee.

### Approval Considerations:

- *Has the student completed the Student Participation Tool<sup>2</sup> for this potential experience?*
- *Does the student meet established readiness requirements?*
- *Does this course present a good learning opportunity for the student?*
- *Have available accommodations via the college's student support office been considered in this decision?*
- *Does the IEP team support the student in applying?*
- *Will this help the student meet the graduation requirements?*

6. Student applies to take the dual enrollment course through the [Dual Enrollment Voucher System](#).

7. If the student enrolls in a dual enrollment course, the services outlined in the IEP must still be delivered at the home high school. Please remember that special education services do not apply to postsecondary coursework.

8. The PSI or local high school may not deny admission based solely on [disability](#). Admission may only be denied for other, objective reasons (see 1 above) such as not meeting the academic requirements or prerequisites.

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<sup>2</sup> VT Flexible Pathways Tool: Considerations for Student Participation in a Flexible Pathway is designed to support a consistent process for students and their advisors to determine how a flexible pathway opportunity fits within a student's short and long-term goals, how they can prepare for those learning experiences and identify the supports they may need to be successful.