

# Tech Snacks: Dual Enrollment, Class 8 Licenses, & Why You Should Care

Around 70 high school students take college courses at MSU-Northern for college credit each semester. There are multiple forms of dual enrollment, and lots of potential benefits to the student, your program, and to MSU-Northern.

## What is Dual Enrollment?

Dual enrollment is the umbrella term for several types of opportunities for high school students to take college coursework while they are still in high school. There are three models:

**Dual Credit** — “Dual Credit” awards both high school and college credit for a college course taken by high school students (either online or on-campus). In order for a course to classify as dual credit, the college faculty member must be in possession of a current Montana educator’s license (Class 2, 4, 5, or 8), and the high school agrees to accept the credit.

**Early College** — “Early College” awards college credit but not high school credit, for a college course taken by high school students. The college course is typically taught online, but can be on campus, by a college faculty member to a class that includes college students and high school students.

**Concurrent Enrollment** — “Concurrent Enrollment” is a college course taught at the high school by a qualified high school teacher. A qualified teacher must meet minimum qualifications for faculty under Montana Board of Regents Policy 730. These courses use our syllabi with the requirement of meeting 80% of the course objectives. If a course has prerequisites, the high school students have to meet the same requirements as any of our college students.

## What is the benefit of Dual Enrollment?

**Students save time.** The dual enrollment option allows high school students to save time and money towards college. Students save time by starting their college general education requirements or taking classes that are degree specific. Depending on how many credits they earn in high school, this could reduce the number of credits they have to take each semester or eliminate a semester or two of college before finishing high school.

**Students save money.** Last fall, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Ed (OCHE) piloted a new program called “One-Two-Free.” The program allows all high school students to take their first

two college courses in Montana (up to six credits) for free. After using their six credits, students are still able to take classes at the discounted rate of \$50 per credit, with most fees waived.

**Dual Enrollment students do better in college.** OCHE has compared MUS students who do not participate in dual enrollment to those who do, and the statistics are eye opening:

- DE students have a 16% higher retention rate in their first year of college (84% DE vs 68% non-DE).
- DE students have a higher GPA in their first year of college (3.1 DE vs 2.8 non-DE).
- DE students earn more credits in their first year of college (4.1 more credits, on average).
- Note: These benefits are independent of high school GPA, and often “B” and “C” students make larger gains than “A” students when compared to non-participating peers.
- 63% of DE students choose the MUS for college (as compared to 38% of Montana high school students in general). And Montana residents who enroll in public higher ed institutions in Montana are much more likely to stay in the state for work after graduating (85% of 2-year and 75% of 4-year graduates).

**Northern gains enrollment and a recruiting opportunity.** High school students who take classes with Northern instructors may get insight into programs that they’re interested in pursuing at Northern and are more likely to enroll at Northern after high school.

## Which subjects or course formats do DE students prefer?

High school students pursuing Dual Credit and Early College tend to enroll in courses that get them a jumpstart in college, such as general education courses. If students know what they want to major in, they may also choose to enroll in program courses. 100-200 level courses are eligible for the various Dual Enrollment options.

Online courses work best with students’ schedules and obviously work best for non-local high school students. Some local students are able to attend face-to-face courses, especially if they are offered later in the day. If there is enough local interest, a qualified instructor could travel to a high school and offer a Concurrent Enrollment course there.

## Should I get a Class 8 Montana Educator license?

OPI meets once per quarter to approve applications, which include: submission of an application form, CV, teaching philosophy, syllabi and related evidence of subject matter competency. There is a background check, and the fingerprinting process can be completed here on campus.

Note: You can ONLY teach in areas that you indicated on your application and were approved for.

The application form is located on the OPI website: <http://opi.mt.gov/Class8DualCredit>.

If a full-time faculty member completes the application, MSUN Dual Enrollment will reimburse all application and related fees. Please contact Holly Haas at [holly.haas@msun.edu](mailto:holly.haas@msun.edu) or 265-3723 for more information.