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Dual Credit Implementation Guide



Supporting the Alberta Dual Credit Framework

Dual Credit Implementation Guide: Supporting the Alberta Dual Credit Framework

Alberta Education, Government of Alberta

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The document is available through the Open Government Portal at <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/dual-credit-implementation-guide>.

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Out of date

The *Dual Credit Implementation Guide* supports the [Alberta Dual Credit Framework](#) (2020) and assists school authority, post-secondary, and business/industry partners, along with school authority leaders, teachers, and community members, in the development and implementation of dual credit opportunities for Alberta's high school students.



Additional information can be accessed on the [Alberta Education Dual Credit](#) web page.

What is dual credit?

The *Alberta Dual Credit Framework* identifies dual credit as programming that is authorized and funded by Alberta Education in which grade 10, 11, or 12 students can earn both high school credits and credits that count toward a post-secondary certificate, diploma, or degree, including a journeyperson certificate.

- High school credits earned count toward course and credit requirements of the Alberta High School Diploma or the Alberta Certificate of High School Achievement.
- Post-secondary credits earned may count toward a post-secondary certificate, diploma, or degree through partial or full completion of post-secondary requirements.

What the *Framework* Says

Vision

Students have access to dual credit opportunities to personalize their high school experience and build on or discover their career passions and interests.

Goals

- Increase learner retention and high school completion rates.
- Increase participation of young adults in post-secondary programs.
- Assist students in making meaningful connections to the labour market.
- Effectively operationalize, support, and foster sustainable dual credit programming.

Guiding Principles

- Student-centred: Students are the focus of all decisions pertinent to dual credit.
- Flexibility: Students have increased choice for their learning.
- Accountability: Student success is accurately captured and reported.
- Sustainability: Students are assured stability and continuity of dual credit opportunities.
- Excellence: Students benefit from the integrity of secondary and post-secondary education systems.
(p. 5)

How is the quality and rigour of dual credit programming ensured?

Quality and rigour of dual credit programming is ensured through the structure and criteria established by Alberta Education for high school courses and by Alberta Advanced Education for post-secondary courses.

- Alberta Education authorizes high school dual credit courses that have been aligned with post-secondary curriculum.
- An Alberta certificated teacher is involved in all dual credit programming.
- Alberta Advanced Education approves new post-secondary programs, as well as changes to existing programs, under the authority of the *Post-Secondary Learning Act*, the *Programs of Study Regulation*, and the *Apprenticeship and Industry Training Act*. This includes degrees, certificates, and diplomas.

What is a dual credit pathway?

A dual credit pathway is a course or a selection of courses providing students with opportunities to explore and acquire competencies (attitudes, skills, knowledge, and values) as part of their career journey. Dual credit pathways can help students work toward their post-secondary goals or support them as they move directly into the workforce from high school.

A dual credit pathway is comprised of either single enrolled courses or dual enrolled courses authorized by Alberta Education, as referenced in the *Alberta Dual Credit Framework* (pp. 7–8). These courses fall within the Career and Technology Studies (CTS) program area.

- **Single enrolled** courses are typically taught within a high school context without the need for a post-secondary partner and are instructed by an Alberta certificated teacher who has the credentials required to teach the **curriculum**. Students may also receive credits, exam eligibility, or advanced standing at a post-secondary level.



For example, Career and Technology Studies (CTS) Plumber First Period Apprenticeship courses are taught in a high school by an Alberta certificated teacher who is also a journeyman plumber. Students receive credits for the courses on their high school transcript. Students who successfully complete all courses in the CTS Apprenticeship Pathway are eligible to write the Apprenticeship and Industry Training exam for advanced standing in the first period of technical training for plumbing.

- **Dual enrolled** courses are offered in partnership with a post-secondary institution and are typically taught by a post-secondary instructor in collaboration with an Alberta certificated teacher. Students typically receive both high school and post-secondary credits once they have successfully completed the dual credit course(s).



For example, CTS Health Care Aide courses are taught in partnership with a post-secondary institution (PSI) and are taught by the PSI's qualified instructor in collaboration with an Alberta certificated teacher. Students receive credits for the courses on their high school transcript and will also receive credits on a post-secondary transcript.

Types of Dual Credit Pathways

There are two types of dual credit pathways:

- 1) **Provincial dual credit pathways** are developed by Alberta Education to align with post-secondary curriculum and/or industry standards (i.e., CTS Apprenticeship Pathways).
- 2) **Local dual credit pathways** started in the 2017–2018 school year. School authorities can work with a post-secondary partner to design dual credit pathways that meet the criteria established in the *Alberta Dual Credit Framework* and in this guide, and that meet their local needs. Once a school authority has designed the pathway, they can apply to Alberta Education for dual credit course codes for the associated post-secondary programming.



For example, a school authority could apply for dual credit course codes for an Education Assistant dual credit pathway that they would like to implement with a post-secondary partner. If the proposed dual credit pathway meets Alberta Education's criteria, dual credit course codes will be assigned (e.g., PSI3010: Introduction to Early Childhood).

Depending on the instructional hours associated with the post-secondary course, a dual credit course code will receive either a 3-credit or 5-credit value in alignment with the [Guide to Education: ECS to Grade 12](#).

As dual credit programming falls within the Career and Technology Studies (CTS) program area, these courses may be used to meet the Alberta High School Diploma or Alberta Certificate of High School Achievement requirements. Consult the *Guide to Education: ECS to Grade 12* for additional information on these requirements.

When is a new dual credit course code required?

Under the *Alberta Dual Credit Framework*, school authorities can access provincial dual credit pathways or can design new dual credit pathways that meet student, school, and local needs with an eligible post-secondary partner.¹

- If a school authority accesses an existing provincial dual credit pathway, applying for a dual credit course code **is not required**.
- If a school authority would like to design a new dual credit pathway that meets Alberta Education's criteria, applying for a dual credit course code **is required**.

What the *Framework* Says

To simplify and streamline processes, aligning post-secondary curriculum with high school curriculum outcomes will no longer be required. Instead, **unique dual credit course codes** will be created within the CTS program area by Alberta Education for post-secondary programming that meets the *Framework's* description of dual enrolled courses and is considered authorized dual credit programming under the *Framework*. (p. 8)

How does a school authority apply for a dual credit course code?

A school authority can apply to Alberta Education for dual credit course codes through an online application process that can be accessed on the [Alberta Education Dual Credit](#) web page. An application form, application submission processes, review periods, and deadlines are available on the Alberta Education Dual Credit web page.

How is dual credit programming funded?

For funding details, please refer to the [Funding Manual for School Authorities](#).

¹ A list of eligible Alberta post-secondary institutions can be accessed on the Alberta Education Dual Credit web page.

How is dual credit programming managed at the provincial level?

Alberta Education is responsible for the management of dual credit programming at the provincial level and is committed to

- providing provincial consistency for dual credit programming through the *Alberta Dual Credit Framework* and this guide
- providing school authorities and their partners the flexibility to develop dual credit opportunities that meet local needs
- promoting equitable access of dual credit programming through funding and implementation supports by managing
 - targeted start-up funding through an Alberta Education-established application process between 2017 and 2021
 - distribution of dual enrolled course codes through criteria established in the *Alberta Dual Credit Framework*, this guide, and the *Guide to Education: ECS to Grade 12*
- providing ongoing communication to stakeholders via the Alberta Education Dual Credit web page

Other government ministries, including Alberta Advanced Education, Alberta Labour and Immigration, and Alberta Indigenous Relations, support the Alberta Education-led *Framework* in alignment with their own ministry's priorities and stakeholders' needs.

For example,

- Alberta Advanced Education provides supports through these digital resources:
 - The [Transfer Alberta](#) website provides information on dual credit pathways for students and other stakeholders.
 - The [Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer \(ACAT\)](#) website also provides information on dual credit.
- Alberta Labour and Immigration provides [labour market information](#) on its website, which can be used by school authorities and their partners to support the planning of dual credit opportunities that meet student, school, and local community needs.

How is dual credit programming managed at the local level?

School authorities have the responsibility under the *Alberta Dual Credit Framework* to lead the development and implementation of dual credit programming at the local level.

- The *Alberta Dual Credit Framework* promotes the flexibility for school authorities to work with post-secondary and/or business/industry partners to determine what dual credit opportunities and partnerships are best in their local context.
- When a school authority works with partners, a **formal partnership agreement** must be established to guide the implementation of the dual credit opportunity.
- While school authorities receive funding from Alberta Education for dual credit programming, and are the identified lead where there are partners, there is an expectation that partners will collaborate to support development and implementation of their dual credit opportunity.
- School authorities should develop local policies and practices supporting dual credit programming.
- School authorities should be aware of prohibitions relating to school boards charging tuition and/or unauthorized fees under the *Education Act* and associated regulations. For more information, please see the [Alberta Education](#) website.
- School authorities must ensure compliance with the *Education Act* and *School Fees and Costs Regulation* when developing and maintaining dual credit opportunities, where applicable.
- School authorities have the responsibility of ensuring that all dual credit courses offered to students have received prior approval in accordance with this guide and the *Alberta Dual Credit Framework* and communicating with students regarding the availability, approval status, limitations on, and structure of all dual credit opportunities.

What is a dual credit partnership?

A dual credit partnership may consist of a school authority, an eligible post-secondary institution,² and/or a business/industry partner.

The structure of a dual credit partnership will depend on the structure of the dual credit pathway being pursued.

- A dual credit pathway comprised of single enrolled courses would not require a post-secondary partner.
- A dual credit pathway comprised of dual enrolled courses would require a post-secondary partner.
- While a business/industry partner is not a requirement within the *Alberta Dual Credit Framework*, government acknowledges the value that business, industry, and community-based partners can bring to a dual credit opportunity and encourages their participation.

A dual credit partnership may include more than one school authority, more than one post-secondary institution, and/or more than one business/industry partner.

When is a formal dual credit partnership agreement required?

A formal dual credit partnership agreement is always required when a school authority chooses to offer a dual credit pathway in partnership with a post-secondary institution or with a business/industry partner.

² A list of eligible Alberta post-secondary institutions (including publicly funded post-secondary institutions and First Nations Colleges) can be accessed on the Alberta Education Dual Credit web page.

- Partnership agreements ensure that roles and responsibilities of the various partners are clearly outlined to best support every partner, as well as the students who are involved in the dual credit opportunity.
- Partners have the flexibility to customize roles and responsibilities under their formal agreement to optimize student learning experiences.
- Partnership agreements should be reviewed for accuracy, currency, and relevance within an agreed upon renewal process (e.g., every 3–4 years).
- Local authorities and their partners have the responsibility to obtain any necessary legal advice at the local level when entering into formal partnership agreements.

What the *Framework* Says

Where a post-secondary partner and/or a business/industry partner is included, a **formal dual credit partnership agreement** is required to ensure alignment with the *Framework* and to identify each partner's roles and responsibilities. (p. 10)

Experienced dual credit education stakeholders have identified several aspects that are important in developing a formal dual credit partnership agreement. The identified aspects below are intended to guide partners in their planning and are not exhaustive.

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Formal Aspects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision of students • Duty of care and liability insurance • Student supports • Communication with students/parents • Communication between partners • Curriculum/dual credit pathway structure • Delivery of instruction • Assessment and/or evaluation procedures • Grades and reporting • Tuition and/or fees 	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Discussion Aspects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local needs • Planning and recruitment • Marketing/promotion • Coordination • Travel needs • Student engagement • Student expectations • Timetabling and scheduling • Important dates
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What are the roles and responsibilities of dual credit partners?

The *Alberta Dual Credit Framework* encourages partners to work together to determine roles and responsibilities that best align with their needs and the needs of their students.

- The school authority is the designated lead of a dual credit opportunity; however, in dual credit opportunities where there are partners, all partners should collaborate to clarify their roles and responsibilities to be included in the formal partnership agreement.
- Each partner may take on a leadership role for specific tasks that enhance the success of the partnership and the dual credit opportunity.

Experienced dual credit education stakeholders have suggested roles and responsibilities, which are provided in the “Suggested Roles and Responsibilities of Dual Credit Partners” tip sheet on the Alberta Education Dual Credit web page.

How is a dual credit opportunity initiated?

A dual credit opportunity is typically initiated by a school authority, although a post-secondary or business/industry partner can approach a school authority to discuss initiating a potential dual credit opportunity.

- Before initiating a dual credit opportunity, many components should be considered, such as alignment with the *Alberta Dual Credit Framework* and this guide; student interest and/or need; available resources (e.g., facility, instructor, materials); local and/or provincial labour market needs; dual credit pathway type (i.e., if a post-secondary partner is required); transferability; implementation costs; programming and financial sustainability; etc.



Example: A school authority approaches an eligible post-secondary institution to discuss a potential Education Assistant dual credit opportunity after determining there is a local need and student interest. The partners discuss the implications and determine to move forward with a partnership. The school authority would work with the post-secondary institution to determine the post-secondary course(s).

- Once a school authority has received the authorized dual credit course codes from Alberta Education, they could prepare to offer the dual credit pathway to their students.
- Experienced dual credit education stakeholders have indicated that the process of establishing a sustainable dual credit opportunity is complex and needs careful and thoughtful planning. Additional information is provided in the “Suggested Processes and Considerations for Initiating a Dual Credit Opportunity” tip sheet on the Alberta Education Dual Credit web page.

How can a dual credit pathway be delivered?

Dual credit pathways can be delivered through a variety of environments, including face-to-face learning, distributed learning, blended learning, and e-learning at a high school campus or at a post-secondary campus. As with other high school programming, school authorities determine school organization and instructional delivery that best meets the needs and interests of individual students.

In all cases, an Alberta certificated teacher must be involved in the delivery of a dual credit pathway. Additional information on roles and responsibilities of dual credit partners, including the school authority, the school, and the teacher, are provided in the “Suggested Roles and Responsibilities of Dual Credit Partners” tip sheet on the Alberta Education Dual Credit web page.

What the *Framework* Says

Supervision and guidance by an Alberta certificated teacher is a key requirement that leads to student success in a dual credit opportunity, regardless of the delivery model. (p. 10)

Who is responsible for the awarding and reporting of credits earned through dual credit?

Dual credit programming falls within the Career and Technology Studies (CTS) program area; therefore, awarding and reporting of dual credit course credits will follow the same processes as for other CTS high school course credits as per the *Guide to Education: ECS to Grade 12*.

- In all dual credit opportunities, certificated teachers provide students with ongoing guidance and assessment, even if they are not providing direct instruction.
- Only authorized dual credit programming that is approved in accordance with this guide, the *Alberta Dual Credit Framework*, and the *Guide to Education: ECS to Grade 12* will be eligible for dual credit course credits.

Where post-secondary instructors are also involved in delivering dual credit courses, they are responsible for the awarding and reporting of post-secondary credits through their institution's established processes.

- Publicly funded post-secondary institutions are established as board governed entities under the *Post-Secondary Learning Act*. These institutions have authority to operate within their mandates, which includes determining their assessment policies.
- Publicly funded post-secondary institutions are required to annually submit enrolments for all approved programs.
- Alberta Education is not responsible for assessment decisions made by post-secondary institutions while providing dual credit opportunities.



Typically, dual credit pathways comprised of single enrolled courses are taught within a high school by an Alberta certificated teacher and are assessed by the teacher. Course completions and associated marks are reported by the school authority using the Alberta Education course codes.



Typically, dual credit pathways comprised of dual enrolled courses are taught by a post-secondary instructor and are assessed in collaboration with an Alberta certificated teacher. Course completions and associated marks are recorded by the school using the Alberta Education course codes. Course completions and associated marks are also reported by the post-secondary institution as per their established processes.

How can students be effectively supported to succeed in dual credit?

Alberta's education system is built on a values-based approach to accepting responsibility for all children and students. The *Guide to Education: ECS to Grade 12* states that schools "have the responsibility to provide instructional programs that ensure students will meet the provincial high school completion requirements and will be prepared for entry into the workplace or post-secondary studies." (p. 1)

School authorities and their dual credit partners (in dual credit opportunities that include partners) are responsible for ensuring that students are supported so that they can succeed. Several important elements that should be addressed include, but are not limited to, the following:

- safe and caring learning environments
- appropriate supervision of students
- the needs of diverse students
- capabilities of students to participate in a dual credit opportunity
- appropriate orientation for students before they engage in a dual credit opportunity (i.e., as demonstrated through a student's career plan)
- ongoing support to students throughout and after participation in a dual credit opportunity

What the *Framework* Says

It is crucial to ensure that all students are learning in welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environments and are not discriminated against, for any reason. Alberta Education takes into account learners' diverse backgrounds, interests, and experiences to develop the foundation needed for lifelong learning. (p. 11)

Establishing a Career Plan for Dual Credit Students

To support student success, schools should work with students to develop a career plan as part of their dual credit recruitment and orientation processes.

- A career plan encourages students to connect their learning goals to potential dual credit opportunities and will also help schools to determine student interest, needs, and suitability.
- Career planning is an ongoing and sequential process of learning about students' attributes, specific career fields of interest, and students' personal priorities.

- Schools are encouraged to access the comprehensive career planning resources on the Government of Alberta's [ALIS website](#). ALIS is the provincial gateway to career, learning, and employment information that helps Albertans achieve success. The website provides information related to career planning, post-secondary education and training, educational funding, job searches, labour market trends, and workplace issues.

For example, [CAREERinsite](#), within the ALIS website, supports schools and students in career planning and suggests a four-step process to career planning:

1. Know yourself
2. Explore options
3. Get ready
4. Take action

CAREERinsite also provides [A Guide for Career Counsellors and Educators](#) on the use of the website's features.

Communicating with Students and Parents/Guardians

Clear, consistent, and timely communication is a key element to student success. Dual credit programming involves complex systems and processes, so school authorities and their dual credit partners, when applicable, need to effectively communicate with students and parents/guardians to provide effective support.

- For example, students and parents/guardians should understand the ways in which information, including attendance records, will be shared between the high school and the post-secondary institution, where applicable, in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. This includes communicating the method for obtaining a copy of the student's post-secondary record.
- Additionally, students and their parents/guardians need to have a functional understanding of the potential benefits and challenges of participating in dual credit programming.
 - Participating in dual credit can increase student confidence, increase awareness of post-secondary opportunities, focus interest, and highlight labour market and future career opportunities that students may not have originally considered. However, students may also face challenges, such as meeting post-secondary expectations and course requirements, accessing first-year post-secondary scholarships, and experiencing limited transferability of some post-secondary programs.

- Students should always consult with their high school advisor as they make decisions about their high school programming.
- Any disputes regarding the administration of dual credit programming will be resolved in accordance with the *Guide to Education: ECS to Grade 12* procedures.

What if my questions are not answered in this guide?

Additional information is available on the [Alberta Education Dual Credit](#) web page.

Out of date

Glossary

ACAT – Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer, reporting to the Minister of Advanced Education and responsible for leadership, advice, and oversight regarding learner pathways and mobility in Alberta’s post-secondary system with a focus on admissions and transfer

Advanced standing – When high school students have achieved the educational requirements or have passed the entrance exam for a trade, and have successfully completed the required courses in a CTS Apprenticeship Pathway, they may attempt prior learning assessment examinations for advanced standing in an apprenticeship program.

Authorized dual credit programming – high school programming that meets Alberta Education’s criteria as outlined in the *Alberta Dual Credit Framework* and in the *Dual Credit Implementation Guide*. Authorized dual credit programming is funded and managed by Alberta Education.

Career and Technology Studies (CTS) – a provincially authorized curriculum for Alberta secondary schools designed on a pathways model to offer flexible programming

Career plan – a process through which a student can identify attributes, specific career fields of interest, and personal priorities to guide their high school programming and transitioning from high school to post-secondary and/or the workplace. A career plan is an important component to support student success in dual credit and should be part of the recruitment and orientation process.

Curriculum – Alberta’s provincial Kindergarten to Grade 12 curriculum, or programs of study, is defined as what students are expected to know, understand, and be able to do in each subject and grade; typically referred to as the content taught in a school or in a specific course or program.

Dual credit – programming that is authorized and funded by Alberta Education in which Grade 10, 11, or 12 students can earn both high school credits and credits that count towards a post-secondary certificate, diploma, or degree, including a journeyman certificate

Dual credit course – a high school course that has been approved by Alberta Education to align with post-secondary or industry-specific curriculum and receives a unique Career and Technology Studies (CTS) course code that identifies it as dual credit on a student’s high school transcript

Dual credit course codes – unique course codes assigned by Alberta Education for post-secondary programming that meets the criteria established in the *Alberta Dual Credit Framework* and the *Dual Credit Implementation Guide*

Dual credit opportunity – a specific dual credit pathway that a school authority and its partners, as applicable, implement at the local level

Dual credit pathway – a course or a selection of courses that provides students with the opportunities to explore and acquire the competencies (attitudes, skills, knowledge, and values) for a career journey

Dual enrolment flag (DEF) – The DEF within the Provincial Approach to Student Information (PASI) system will be used to identify dual enrolled courses.

Education stakeholder – a person, entity, or organization invested in the welfare and success of a school and its students, including administrators, teachers, staff members, students, parents, families, community members, local business leaders, and elected officials

Eligible post-secondary institutions – Alberta Education has identified an approved list of Alberta public post-secondary institutions and First Nations Colleges in Alberta for authorized dual credit programming. This list can be accessed on the Alberta Education Dual Credit web page.

External credential – a document that students can earn, typically external to their school, which recognizes their successful completion of a course/program that has been reviewed and approved for credit toward secondary school graduation. This typically refers to external credentials that are aligned with the CTS courses (refer to [CTS Credentialed Pathways](#) document).

Formal partnership agreement – a formal agreement of intent (e.g., a memorandum of understanding (MOU)) between two or more institutions (i.e., a school authority and a post-secondary institution) to accept courses (or clusters of courses) for credit. A formal dual credit partnership agreement will ensure alignment with the *Alberta Dual Credit Framework* and the *Dual Credit Implementation Guide* and will identify each partner's roles and responsibilities.

Journeyman certificate – a document that recognizes that a journeyman has met the required standard of training and performance for a designated trade, either through successful completion of an apprenticeship training program or other training and assessment. All trade credentials for a trade and/or designated occupation must be issued by recognized regulatory authorities. Awarding of trade and designated occupation certificates in Alberta is regulated by the Ministry of Advanced Education.

Labour market information – a variety of data, facts, and knowledge associated with the state of the labour market used by individuals and organizations to make informed choices and decisions related to education, training, career development, employment, and workforce strategies. This includes information on the characteristics of labour force, employers hiring workers, occupations in demand, wages, and skills required for specific occupations.

Local dual credit pathway – a course or series of courses identified by a school authority and its post-secondary partner to best support specific student, school, and community needs at the local level. Local dual credit pathways are typically comprised of dual enrolled courses that have received unique course codes from Alberta Education and that align with eligible post-secondary programming.

New dual credit opportunity – a dual credit opportunity that is new to the school authority and is not the same or similar to a dual credit opportunity for which the school authority previously received government grant funding (i.e., through the Provincial Dual Credit Strategy or through dual credit pilot projects)

Provincial dual credit pathways – a series of specific courses (within the CTS Programs of Study) developed by Alberta Education to provide opportunities for students to achieve a credential or credit awarded by a recognized community or industry organization or post-secondary institution. These pathways include all CTS apprenticeship pathways along with the 4th Class Power Engineering, 5th Class Power Engineering, and Health Care Aide pathways.

Transferability – a student's ability to successfully receive transfer credit for an applicable course(s) and/or program(s) when he/she moves between post-secondary institutions and/or between program areas