

Ministry of Education

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MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education
Secretary-Treasurers of School Authorities
Principals of Secondary Schools
Principals of Provincial and Demonstration Schools

FROM: Ben Levin
Deputy Minister

DATE: January 11, 2007

RE: Interim Guidelines for Dual Credits Earned by Students in 2006-07 in
Approved Dual Credit Pilot Projects

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide policy direction for the current school year (2006-07) for dual credit programs approved under Phase 10 of the School-College-Work Initiative (SCWI) and for the recording of credits earned by secondary school students in the 65 pilot projects.

Background

In December 2005, the government, through the Ministry of Education, announced new commitments under Phase 3 of its Student Success Strategy, including a commitment to implement dual credit programs that would allow secondary school students to earn several credits toward the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) through college courses and apprenticeship in-school training. The Ministry, in collaboration with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, has authorized and supported the use of pilot projects under the auspices of the School-College-Work Initiative to engage school boards and colleges in developing and experimenting with dual credit models to help inform stakeholder discussions and operational policy.

SCWI is co-funded by the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, and co-managed under the leadership of the Council of Ontario Directors of Education and the Committee of (College) Presidents. SCWI and its infrastructure of 15 Regional Planning Teams involving high school teachers and administrators and college faculty are building effective school-college collaboration and a strong foundation for progress with our college, ministry and stakeholder partners to further strengthen the formal links between high schools and postsecondary destinations, to provide more opportunities for students to succeed and reach higher.

In 2006-07, SCWI is funding 65 dual credit pilot projects, involving 70 of 72 district school boards, all 24 colleges of applied arts and technology and approximately 2500 secondary school students. **All projects are based on collaboration and partnership between school boards and colleges.** To further the government's commitment to expand dual credit learning opportunities for young people, the

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Ministry of Education and Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, through the SCWI 2006-07 Request for Proposal (RFP) process, **committed to recognizing in 2006-07 college courses and apprenticeship in-school training in the approved projects both for credit toward the OSSD and at the colleges for students who successfully complete these courses or training. Students in the Phase 10 projects have been told they will be able to use their dual credit college courses and apprenticeship in-school training to count toward the completion of their OSSD credit requirements.** For dual credit courses offered by colleges, the same processes will be used that are set out in the Mobility and Transferability Protocol for College-to-College Transfer. This commitment to portability will provide a significant benefit to Ontario secondary school students as they transition to their chosen college or apprenticeship destination.

Stakeholder Consultations

Dual credit programs and how they will be implemented are the subject of ongoing discussions and consultation with our key education and postsecondary stakeholders. The Student Success Commission, the Working Table on Learning to 18 and its Dual Credit Sub-group, among others, are all actively engaged in a consideration of dual credits. At recent meetings of the Student Success Commission (involving teacher federations and school board management representatives) and the Dual Credit Sub-group, there was broad agreement that the ministry and school boards must move quickly to honour the commitment made to students in dual credit programs this year, some of whom may have already applied for admission to a postsecondary program beginning in the new year.

At the same time, the Commission and other key stakeholder groups have called for further dialogue on the next phase of dual credit implementation and reconsideration of these “interim” guidelines before the ministries issue more “final” operational policies. I can tell you that I agree with the view that we need more time to benefit from the experience of our pilot projects and the broad consultation we are engaged in before finalizing program policy. To that end, I anticipate that there will be a further year of dual credit pilot projects in 2007-08. The Ministry of Education, working in consultation with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, will commission in 2007 an independent evaluation of key elements of the Student Success Strategy, including dual credit learning opportunities. Our goal is to ensure that we have the best information about student access, outcomes and effective operational models.

Interim Guidelines for the Recording of Dual Credits in Ministry-approved Dual Credit Pilot Projects for 2006-07

Attached are detailed interim guidelines for use by principals of secondary schools when awarding and recording dual credits in 2006-07. Only students in an approved School-College-Work Initiative Phase 10 (2006-07) dual credit pilot project are eligible to be granted dual credits by their secondary school principals to count toward the OSSD, following the provisions set out in the attached interim guidelines. Under the interim guidelines for 2006-07, three types of dual credit delivery models will be recognized by the Ministry of Education for diploma requirement purposes (see attachment 1).

A student may earn no more than four optional credits toward the OSSD for college or apprenticeship in-school training taught solely by a college professor or instructor. Other courses that are team-taught by a secondary school teacher with a college professor or instructor, and that are based on existing Ontario secondary curriculum with an existing ministry course code, are not subject to the limit of four dual credits for courses taught solely by college professors and instructors. These team taught courses based on existing Ontario secondary curriculum are a vital part of dual credit programming and may also result in credit in the college but are not included in the calculation of the maximum of four dual credits. Principals of secondary schools must recognize dual credit courses taught solely by college professors and instructors within the Phase 10 approved pilot projects and use new ministry-defined course codes (see attachment 2) for the recording of student achievement on the Ontario Provincial Report Card and the Ontario Student Transcript (see attachments 3 and 4). Ministry-defined dual credit course codes for semester two courses will be provided to principals of secondary schools in a separate communiqué from the Ministry of Education once consultations with key stakeholder partners such as the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, the Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (ACAATO), the Ontario College Application Services (OCAS), the Ontario Universities' Application Centre (OUAC) and vendors of student information systems are completed and arrangements finalized to support effective implementation of related data management processes. Every effort is being made to coordinate and automate the inter-related student record keeping and data management and data exchange systems connected with recording dual credits on the Ontario Student Transcript. For students currently enrolled in semester one dual credit learning opportunities, manual entry by school staff of the new course codes likely will be required, and we apologize for this unavoidable situation, with assurances that we are working hard on a more effective and "user-friendly" solution for semester two.

The status of the guidelines for the recording of dual credits in ministry-approved dual credit pilot projects for 2006-07 is strictly interim and non-binding on future operational policy development by the ministry. Discussions are underway and will continue in the coming months with key stakeholders including the Student Success Commission, the Learning to 18 Working Table, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, the Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology, and the Council of Ontario Universities on how best to move forward with system-wide implementation of dual credit learning opportunities for secondary school students. Final operational policies and procedures will be developed at a later stage, informed by these consultations, best practices in the pilot projects, the independent evaluation and other expert advice on the role and scope of dual credit learning opportunities in effectively supporting the government's student success and reaching higher goals.

Credits for External Credentials

Some students may also receive credit for ministry-approved external credentials from music conservatories (see Policy and Program Memorandum No. 133). Students may earn up to two optional credits in this manner and such credits must be included when determining how many dual credits may be granted. Under the interim guidelines for 2006-07, students may earn up to a maximum of four optional credits through: dual credits delivered solely by college professors or instructors, or a combination of such dual credits and up to two credits for external (music) credentials.

Phase 9 Analytic Review

Last year (2005-06), about 360 students participated in 14 dual credit pilot projects approved through the SCWI. Initial evidence coming from a review of the 2005-06 pilot projects shows significant and positive outcomes for students. Some students, by their own testimonials, would have dropped out of school had it not been for the turnaround experience of their dual credit program. I would encourage you and your staff, if you have not yet had a chance, to read the analytic review that was commissioned by the SCWI Co-Management Team. Promising measures are reported such as an overall 86 percent success rate on college credits attempted and achieved, students graduating as a result of the credits earned through their dual credit program opportunities, and inspiring student testimonials about their life changing experiences thanks to the dedicated and caring adults who gave them hope and an opportunity to succeed and see a clear path to a promising future. The full report is available at www.gotocollege.ca.

As always, thank you for your ongoing leadership and support on behalf of Ontario learners. I look forward to continuing in our collaborative efforts to find and implement the most effective ways to reach and support more young people in realizing their full potential. To this end, the dual credit pilot projects hold much promise in my view. I encourage you and your staff to begin to consider and plan for ways in which your board might participate with your local partners in efforts to further advance Ontario's expertise and knowledge-base in this area. Further information will be sent to you in spring 2007, through the School-College-Work Initiative, about dual credit pilot project opportunities for 2007-08.



Ben Levin

Attachments (4)

- c Philip Steenkamp, Deputy Minister
- George Zegarac, Assistant Deputy Minister
- Dominic Giroux, Assistant Deputy Minister
- Janet Mason, Assistant Deputy Minister
- Kevin French, Assistant Deputy Minister
- College Presidents
- College Vice-Presidents Academic
- SCWI Co-Management Team
- SCWI Regional Planning Team Chairs
- School Board Student Success Leaders
- Regional Managers