

## Dual Enrollment

There is a new way of completing high school that some students may not be aware of. Dual enrollment is the idea of being enrolled at a high school while attending higher learning courses at a university or college level. Dual enrollment has slowly become the norm as more and more states begin to accept it through educational legislation. Not all high school students can dual enroll, though, as above average grades are required to join the program, but dual enrollment is a great opportunity for students who are able to go. It does have both its benefits and its disadvantages, and some may suggest to graduate high school early instead; however, dual enrollment is an easy way for students to establish their higher learning careers with little to no repercussions. Therefore, as long as the requirements are met, dual enrolling during high school is an experience that no student should miss out on, because it allows for an easy way for high school students to see how college environment will operate, gives students a head start on their college careers, and will ultimately provide students with the foundation to their adult lives.

Dual enrollment has been on the rise within the past decade. By 2005 42 states out of 50 had adopted policies governing dual enrollment programs, which was an increase from 23 states in 2000 (Swanson, 2008, p.58). It is easy to see that dual enrollment programs across the country are indeed well-established. Dual enrollment has also been embraced by Michigan

Islamic Academy, with its recent alumni also being dual-enrolled students. Dual enrollment is making its way all over the country so that anyone with decent academics can dual enroll, yet many are still unaware of what dual enrolling is. It is, as the name implies, enrolling in two academic establishments at the same time. Dual enrollment is a contract between high schools and colleges allowing a student to attend both simultaneously (The Glossary of Education Refor, 2013) An example of dual enrolling would be a student attending 3 of their elective high school classes at their high school, while also taking 2 or 3 more core classes at a college or university within the same semester. Dual enrollment programs are established to give students the opportunities to take college courses, adding credits to both the students' high school and college transcripts. Since not many know what dual enrolling is, they do not know how to get into dual enrollment programs.

The application process for dual enrollment is very similar to applying for colleges, so it gives students a skill that will be necessary in the future. Applying involves filling out a form that is almost identical to a college application, so it must include addresses, high schools attended, majors/minors, citizenship information, etc. It is also essential to notify the high school that the student will be dual enrolling, and the best way is to speak to a school counselor. The requirements to join the program include having a grade point average of 3.0 or higher as well as an ACT score of 24 or higher. These are the requirements to dual enroll at University of Michigan Dearborn and different colleges may have varying requirements. If the requirements are met and if there is enough ambition, a high school student can be dual enrolled as early as 10<sup>th</sup> grade (UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN-DEARBORN, 2015). The rates that the colleges charge dual-enrolling students range depend on what kind of high

school a student is applying from. Depending on the college, students who attend a private high school will receive a discounted rate compared to public high school students. A public high school student may be intimidated by the high prices of a college course, but the founding chair of the Department of American Studies at St. John Fisher College in Rochester, New York, Mark Rice, helped fundraise \$40,000 for a local high school so the students will be able to afford to attend honors classes whilst dual enrolled (Rice, 2014).

Dual enrolling also offers financial benefits to those who take advantage of it. Depending on the college's dual enrollment program, universities will actually cover the tuition cost or a portion of the tuition for dual-enrolled students (UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN-DEARBORN, 2015). Personally half of the tuition charges for the classes at university were waived because of the dual enrollment program. Despite the lack of government financial, students could potentially dual enroll without having the burden of paying for the courses. Only some dual enrollment programs offer to cover all tuition costs, but dual enrolling has many benefits that are not limited to tuition costs.

The experience as a dual-enrolled student brings about a significant amount of both temporary and long-term benefits. According to Elizabeth Redden (2007) from Inside Higher Ed, high school students who are well-equipped see an academic boost in grade point average after attending classes at a college. Taking classes in college while in high school also lead students to pursue a bachelor's degree or higher (Redden, 2007). This gives a strong footing to dual-enrolled students establishing their college grade point average and some basic credits

for their college career. This is just a firm example of dual-enrolled students establishing a strong footing in their early and late college careers.

In the case of dual enrolling, the benefits far outweigh the disadvantages. Speaking from experience as a dual-enrolled student, it is much easier to see the expectations required in a college course: In some courses it can be very easy to fail if the class is not taken seriously throughout the semester, and it can take more effort to get a full mark in the class than with a high school class. In addition, although there are high school responsibilities to juggle with college classes, dual enrolling as a part-time student can provide college experience without the stress of having a full-time schedule. Also speaking from experience, the worst aspect about being dual enrolled is the travel distance between the two schools, although this issue may not be a problem for everyone. Scheduling can also be a problem. High school schedules and college schedules may sometimes conflict, but this could be remedied by changing courses. It can be easily seen why one would want to be dual enrolled. The disadvantages of dual enrolling are little to none, yet there is a large amount of benefits for being dual enrolled.

Some may ponder at the notion of dual enrolling and suggest to simply graduate early. Early graduation has been growing as dual enrollment has been growing and as much as 3% of high school students graduate early (Railey, 2013). Early graduation and dual enrollment are very similar in the sense that they have both grown in popularity in recent years. They also give high school students an opportunity to experience college a year or more earlier than the average student would. The application for both are also very similar (UNIVERSITY OF

MICHIGAN-DEARBORN, 2015). The main differences between the two depend on scheduling: a dual-enrolled student would be considered a part-time student whereas an early graduating student will usually have a full-time schedule. This is especially useful for students who want to experience college at an early age but lacked all of the requirements to graduate early. Most dual enrollment programs require less for the student to be a part of than the aforementioned early graduation. For this reason many more people are able to become dual enrolled rather than graduate early. In some cases you can even graduate college earlier by dual enrolling than by graduating early. Karina Madrigal, once a dual enrolled high school student, was able to receive her graduate's degree in two years instead of four because of dual enrollment. If she would have graduated high school earlier I would have taken her 3 years to receive her graduate's degree (Madrigal, 2014). This was possible for her as well as many other students because they were able to dual enroll by the time they were in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade of their high school (UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN-DEARBORN, 2015).

It is important for all students to become acquainted with adult life and a good way for high school students to get a strong footing in adult life is experiencing upper education. In Joni Lynne Swanson's thesis titled *AN ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF HIGH SCHOOL DUAL ENROLLMENT COURSE PARTICIPATION ON POST-SECONDARY ACADEMIC SUCCESS* she discusses how students who dual enrolled had much more success in their post-academic life. This is reflected in the multiple studies that were conducted (Swanson, 2008). Karina Madrigal was able to establish 50 college credit hours as well as graduate with a Graduate degree in 2 years because of her involvement in dual enrollment programs as a high school student. As Karina herself had said "I reaped the benefits of a well-planned educational

program designed by many innovators” (Madrigal, 2014). Karina is just an example of what a dual enrolled student has the potential to accomplish. Dual enrollment can help establish responsibility in students by giving them experiences that cannot be experienced in high school. These experiences include scheduling classes during different times of the day, taking courses with professors that fit the preference of the student, and gaining insight on how the college academic system works by students experiencing it for themselves. These and many more experiences can be the first steps they take into their adult lives.

It is important to understand how introducing people to dual enrollment can benefit them, considering not many people are aware of what dual enrollment is. Introducing people to knowledge that they would otherwise not be aware of has many Islamic benefits. Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) as saying: “He who called (people) to righteousness, there would be reward (assured) for him like the rewards of those who adhered to it, without their rewards being diminished in any respect. And he who called (people) to error, he shall have to carry (the burden) of its sin, like those who committed it, without their sins being diminished in any respect” (Muslim, 47:30). This hadith shows that if people are called to the righteous, then they will receive the reward as if they are doing the righteous action. Similarly to a teacher, whoever is able to call people to seek out to further their education by pursuing the opportunities of dual enrolling, then that person will receive the reward for the righteous things that they will do with the information they have received.

Dual enrolling allows for the opportunity to receive higher education, and knowledge is something Muslims should seek regardless of where they are in their lives. In the Quran

chapter 20, verse 144, Allah (SWT) is addressing Prophet Muhammad (SAW), saying, “So high [above all] is Allah, the Sovereign, the Truth. And, [O Muhammad], do not hasten with [recitation of] the Qur'an before its revelation is completed to you, and say, "My Lord, increase me in knowledge.”” The Prophet (SAW) is being told to ask to increase his knowledge. High school students can attain a higher level of knowledge through the use of dual enrollment, and as Muslims this is something that should be always sought out. Dual enrollment also allows for students to be financially sound by experiencing college without having to deal with the risk of getting into student loans that could very easily lead to interest. Allah (SWT) addresses interest in the Quran chapter 2, verse 275:

Those who consume interest cannot stand [on the Day of Resurrection] except as one stands who is being beaten by Satan into insanity. That is because they say, "Trade is [just] like interest." But Allah has permitted trade and has forbidden interest. So whoever has received an admonition from his Lord and desists may have what is past, and his affair rests with Allah. But whoever returns to [dealing in interest or usury] - those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide eternally therein.

It is very easy to see that interest is something that is to be avoided in Islam. Many students can have the opportunity to experience college without having to deal with the issues of student debt with use of some of the dual enrollment programs.

When I began to dual enroll I knew it was to benefit myself and I understood the opportunity that was given to me is not always available to all other high school students because of financial or academic issues. For that I plan to help others try to engage in these

dual enrollment programs that will help them in the long run. By the end of this year I would have a semester of college under my belt and I would like to give others the opportunity to do the same. From an Islamic perspective this will also be to my benefit. Not only am I seeking out knowledge, but also calling others to do good. As in the Hadith mentioned above, “He who called (people) to righteousness, there would be reward (assured) for him like the rewards of those who adhered to it”(Muslim, 47:30) . I myself plan to help many other students in their academic careers by introducing them to dual enrollment. Many are not aware of this opportunity and people should get the chance to at least be aware of what dual enrollment is. Dual enrollment allows for students to establish their college careers and their adult foundation, as well as give them insight on how college operates.