



VCU

Office of the Provost

Dual Enrollment Handbook

Virginia Commonwealth University

VCU Dual Enrollment Handbook

2021-2022

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I. Introduction

Virginia Commonwealth University is committed to providing a rigorous academic experience for all enrolled students. By setting forth policies, protocols and best practices, the primary purpose of this handbook is to ensure VCU's dual enrolled students receive the same academic experience as traditional students. This introductory section provides a foundation for the full handbook. Please direct questions to Andrew Arroyo, Ed.D., assistant vice provost for academic programs, at atarroyo@vcu.edu.

Definition

Dual enrollment “refers to courses taught to high school students for which the students receive both high school credit and college credit, regardless of location or mode of delivery” [Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), *Dual Enrollment Policy Statement*, p. 1]. Since dual enrollment results in college credit, careful attention to consistent quality and effectiveness is essential. Dual enrollment courses must match the academic rigor of the on-campus equivalents.

Strategic vision

Vision statement: *VCU engages in dual enrollment partnerships consistent with a focus on academic success, diversity and inclusion, and transformative community engagement. Through targeted dual enrollment initiatives, VCU seeks to address gaps in college access and equity among Richmond-area high school students, and to create pipelines into high-demand careers.*

In alignment with this vision, VCU will ensure each dual enrollment partnership fits within the two roles specified by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) for four-year institutions engaging in the practice:

1. Promote specific pathways to four-year programs, especially in high-demand areas.
2. Support the specialized mission of an individual high school (e.g., Governor's schools, Governors STEM Academies, or district specialty schools).¹

VCU will invest in dual enrollment opportunities that fall within these limits only.

Broader policy context

Dual enrollment at VCU functions within a broader policy context of legislation and accreditation. In combination with VCU's commitment to educational excellence, this broader context provides the rationale for the contents of this handbook. The most recent and relevant SCHEV and SACSCOC policies are located below. In the event of a policy update by either agency, the new policy will replace the former. VCU stakeholders and partner high schools are responsible for familiarizing themselves with this information and adhering to the contents in support of compliance and best practice.

No dual enrollment activity may violate a VCU, SCHEV or SACSCOC policy. Moreover, policies provide required *minimum* standards. They do not preclude setting higher requirements.

- SCHEV policy on [dual enrollment transferability](#)
- SCHEV policy on [dual enrollment at four-year institutions and community colleges](#)
- SACSCOC [dual enrollment policy](#)

¹ *Virginia Public Higher Education Policy on the Offering of “Dual Enrollment” Courses in Public School Districts by Four-year and Two-year Institutions of Higher Education* (2013), p. 3.

Esprit de corps

A dual enrollment course bears the name of VCU and the partner high school. Every effort should be made to maintain a positive relationship by cultivating esprit de corps between each party. By entering into a dual enrollment partnership, each party commits to operate in good faith. Disagreements should be handled collaboratively and in a way that promotes the positive reputation of both parties in the community at-large. VCU and the partner high school recognize that the type and scope of dual enrollment offerings are subject to change year over year. A party might exercise its independence and choose to alter or discontinue the partnership after the current academic year.

II. Operations

In the interest of efficiency, effectiveness and excellence, VCU has created an approach for dual enrollment operations (see Figure 1). This section explains the roles and functions associated with the approach.

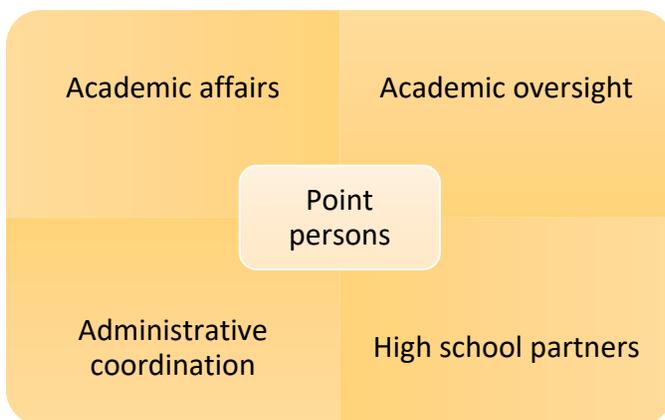


Figure 1. Dual enrollment operational structure.

Academic affairs

The VCU Office of the Provost is responsible for all academic affairs matters and overall strategic leadership for VCU's dual enrollment activities. Functions include:

- Providing direction to ensure compliance and best practice for all dual enrollment activities
- Acting as the key institutional liaison (e.g., with the VCU Office of the President; SCHEV; SACSCOC; VCU academic units; dual enrollment partners)
- Creating and maintaining the dual enrollment handbook, policies, memorandum of agreement (MOA) templates, executed MOAs and other key documents
- Authorizing and executing agreements with partner high schools
- Providing institutional research and decision support
- Convening and/or leading ad hoc work groups and/or standing committee

Academic oversight

With the support of academic affairs, VCU faculty assumes primary responsibility for, and exercises oversight of, dual enrollment education, ensuring both the rigor of programs and the quality of instruction. This responsibility and oversight includes dual enrollment courses and review of faculty credentials to guarantee the highest curricular standards across all sites.

For dual enrollment courses, VCU faculty (typically department chairs or designees) is responsible for the following:

- Completing an official VCU verification of credentials for each dual enrollment instructor
- Issuing letters granting external affiliate status to dual enrollment faculty on a template provided by the Office of the Provost
- Approving all courses offered for dual enrollment
- Ensuring dual enrollment course learning outcomes and content (including equipment in labs) is equivalent to on-campus courses
- Providing subject matter support to dual enrollment instructors as needed
- Reviewing dual enrollment instructor course evaluations and teaching effectiveness

Although academic oversight is primarily a function of individual VCU academic units, the provost's office may establish a standing faculty academic oversight committee. Comprising at least one full-time VCU faculty member from each college/school that offers dual enrollment, the committee shall be charged to provide ongoing comprehensive oversight to dual enrollment sites, courses and instructors to ensure the highest levels of quality, excellence and continuous improvement. The committee will convene as needed. The Office of the Provost's designee for academic affairs is an ex-officio member of the committee.

Administrative coordination

Administrative coordination involves a broad range of centralized support operations delegated by the Office of the Provost to ensure all dual enrollment activities run smoothly. These operations include, but are not limited to:

- Facilitating student registrations
- Coordinating placement testing
- Ensure accuracy and maintenance of student records such as placement test scores, prerequisites, complaints and other student-level data
- Supplying administrative and logistical support
- Providing first-line troubleshooting to dual enrollment instructors and students
- Handling invoicing and billing

High school partners

High school partners provide the necessary administrators, teachers, staff and learning environments for excellent dual enrollment instruction and primary student support services. High school partners are an invaluable cornerstone of VCU's dual enrollment activities.

Point persons

Point persons promote efficient and effective communication within VCU units and between VCU and high school partners. VCU appoints one person to oversee all coordination across dual enrollment operations. This individual will report to the senior vice provost for academic affairs.

Each partner high school also will assign an employee the responsibility of being that school's point person. The point persons receive and disseminate all information to the appropriate parties within their schools. Communication between stakeholders *not* designated as point persons is discouraged to prevent confusion.

Table 1 below summarizes the responsibilities of the aforementioned stakeholder groups and highlights key handbook sections of interest. For the sake of completeness, the table also includes the VCU president, dual enrollment students and parents/guardians.

Table 1. Summary of responsibilities of key stakeholders.

Stakeholder	Responsibilities	Handbook Section*
VCU President	Signs correspondence to community colleges and SCHEV to seek agreement for VCU's dual enrollment partnerships.	III
VCU Senior vice provost for academic affairs in provost's office	Serves as official VCU lead on dual enrollment partnerships to ensure fidelity to the strategic vision, policies and best practices, including compliance with SCHEV and SACSCOC.	II; III
VCU faculty / academic units	Provide primary academic oversight, including courses offered, course content, verification of instructors' credentials and content support for dual enrollment instructors, as needed.	II; V; VI
VCU administrative coordination unit	Provides comprehensive logistical support for dual enrollment activities, including registration, add/drop/withdrawal, and troubleshooting assistance for instructors and students.	II; IV; VII
Partner high schools	Provide appropriate facilities, qualified instructors (unless VCU is providing instructor), primary student support and learning services, primary handling of student conduct issues.	II-VI
Dual enrollment students	Decide whether dual enrollment is the best fit to meet educational goals, remain aware of requirements and perform at their best.	IV; VI
Parents/guardians	Be an integral part of the process in determining whether a student should participate in dual enrollment and supporting student success.	IV; VI

**Sections highlighted for each stakeholder group may not be exhaustive of all stakeholders' responsibilities. All parties should be familiar with the entire handbook to understand their contribution to the whole.*

III. Establishing and maintaining a site

At VCU, establishing and maintaining a dual enrollment site is an institutional commitment that requires appropriate authorization and oversight. Individual units at VCU may not operate independent dual enrollment sites. This section provides a summary timeline of key activities for operating a site, followed by principles, policies and protocols that inform the process.

Summary timeline

Establishing and maintaining a dual enrollment site requires extensive planning. Establishing a new site should begin approximately 24 months in advance of the target academic year, and the process for maintaining or renewing a dual enrollment site begins roughly 15-18 months in advance of the academic

year. The table below provides the steps, actions and responsible entities for establishing and maintaining a site, using the 2022-2023 academic year as an example.

Table 2. Summary timeline for establishing and maintaining a dual enrollment site.

Steps/Approx. Periods	Action	Responsible Entity
STEP 1: 24 months in advance (e.g., August 2020)	<p>Discussion between VCU and potential site regarding proposed relationship, including fit within VCU’s strategic vision, SCHEV’s roles for four-year institutions, adequacy of facilities, course offerings, required instructor qualifications and SACSCOC substantive change as necessary.</p> <p>VCU conducts all required internal reviews/approvals for proposed courses and a preliminary verification of credentials for proposed instructors.</p> <p>Creation of MOA begins.</p>	VCU and potential partner high school
STEP 2: 20 months in advance (e.g., December 2020)	<p>VCU and partner high school agree to dual enrollment plan, expressed in an MOA (not yet signed).</p> <p>VCU initiates correspondence with the community college(s) to seek agreement for new or continuing dual enrollment activity, and other approvals if warranted (e.g., SACSCOC if instruction level is high enough).</p>	VCU
STEP 3: 18-15 months in advance (e.g., March 2021-May 2021)	MOA executed between VCU and partner high school upon receipt of agreement from community colleges.	VCU and partner high school
STEP 4: 15-0 months in advance (After MOA is executed)	<p>Partner high school conducts advertising, advising, registration and orientation.</p> <p>VCU verifies instructor credentials (if changes to instructor roster have been made since original verifications), issues affiliate faculty letters and completes other required tasks.</p>	VCU and partner high schools
STEP 5: Classes begin (e.g., August 2022)	Via the operational structure (academic oversight; academic affairs; administrative coordination), all stakeholders complete their required tasks.	VCU and partner high schools
To maintain a partnership	<p>Repeat steps 2-5 on a rolling basis for subsequent years.</p> <p>Conduct site visits every three years.</p> <p>Monitor activities to ensure they do not trigger a SACSCOC substantive change requirement.</p>	VCU and partner high schools

Broader context

The introduction to this handbook outlined VCU's vision and purposes for engaging in dual enrollment. This section offers a more comprehensive explanation of those purposes within the broader context of the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Virginia Community College System (VCCS). SCHEV outlines six broad purposes of dual enrollment. In Virginia, community colleges are the default providers of dual enrollment education across all six of these purposes.²

1. Provide access to post-secondary education and pathways to the workforce for qualified high school students from all backgrounds.
2. Expose students to rigorous coursework that familiarizes them with the academic and behavioral expectations of colleges and universities.
3. Contribute to the enhanced student success and quality outcomes in postsecondary education.
4. Afford the opportunity to reduce time to completion and cost in post-secondary education.
5. Promote specific pathways to four-year programs, especially in high-demand areas.
6. Support the specialized mission of an individual high school (e.g., Governor's schools, Governors STEM Academies, or district specialty schools).

Dual enrollment is integral to the core access mission of community colleges, giving them first right of refusal for all dual enrollment activities. However, SCHEV policy does allow four-year institutions, such as VCU, to provide dual enrollment in specific circumstances. SCHEV states affirmatively that there is a "valuable role for public four-year institutions...to offer dual enrollment in public high schools."³ This role includes, especially, purposes 5 and 6 outlined above (i.e., promoting specific pathways to four-year programs, especially in high-demand areas; and supporting the specialized mission of an individual high school). As noted in the introduction to this handbook, VCU's dual enrollment activities fit within these two purposes.

Authorization from community colleges

Because SCHEV policy affords community colleges the first right of refusal for all dual enrollment activities in their designated regions, VCU must seek annual agreement from John Tyler Community College and/or Reynolds Community College for all dual enrollment activities before executing a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with any greater Richmond-area high school for the upcoming year. This rule applies to all new and existing partner sites.

To obtain authorization:

- 1) VCU's president sends a letter to the community college president(s) outlining the proposed activities in detail, including a table of course offerings for each dual enrollment site (see Section V), and seeking agreement
- 2) The community college(s) provide a formal response in writing to indicate agreement or disagreement with VCU's proposal
 - a. If the community college(s) agree, VCU proceeds as planned
 - b. If the community college(s) disagree, VCU may adjust the proposal, appeal to SCHEV for a final decision,* or not proceed at all

² *Virginia Public Higher Education Policy on the Offering of "Dual Enrollment" Courses in Public School Districts by Four-year and Two-year Institutions of Higher Education* (2013) and *Virginia Public Higher Education Policy for Dual Enrollment Transferability* (2019).

³ *Virginia Public Higher Education Policy on the Offering of "Dual Enrollment" Courses in Public School Districts by Four-year and Two-year Institutions of Higher Education* (2013), p. 3.

- 3) VCU’s senior vice provost for academic affairs maintains a copy of the correspondence and final decision

*In the event of a dispute between the institutions, SCHEV policy allows VCU to appeal the decision to SCHEV staff. SCHEV takes into account the position of the community college, efficiency, mission appropriateness and relevant special circumstances before issuing a final decision.

Community college and/or SCHEV agreements are separate from potential notifications and/or approvals required by SACSCOC. The VCU SACSCOC accreditation liaison should monitor dual enrollment activities that fall under the VCU policy: [Substantive Change for Regional Accreditation](#).

Credit hour limit

SACSCOC requires notification and/or approval of new off-campus instructional sites, including dual enrollment sites, where any student may earn credits toward an academic credential offered by the university. Off-campus instructional sites that offer less than 25% of a credential do not require notification or approval from SACSCOC. Off-campus instructional sites offering between 25-49% of a credential require advance notification to SACSCOC. Off-campus instructional sites offering 50% or more of a credential require advance approval by SACSCOC, which includes an official site visit and written prospectus (see SACSCOC substantive change policy for details). For dual enrollment sites, a credential may include the baccalaureate degree or an undergraduate certificate. The table below indicates the credit hour limits imposed at an off-campus site for each level of permission (no notification, advance notification only, advance approval by SACSCOC).

Table 3. Credit hour limits and actions.

Credential	No Notification or Approval Required (24% or below)	Notification Required (between 25-49%)	Prospectus and Approval Required (50% or more)
Baccalaureate degree (BA/BS) = 120 credits	Up to 29 credit hours	30-59 credit hours	60 credit hours
Undergraduate certificate = variable credits	Varies	Varies	Varies

The Office of the Provost is responsible for monitoring course offerings relative to established thresholds. VCU, via the Office of the Provost, reserves the right to limit course offerings at a high school site based upon the strategic priorities of the university.

Tuition

VCU sets tuition for dual enrollment based on several guiding principles to include access and equity. Tuition is outlined in the memorandum of agreement for each school

Memorandum of agreement (MOA)

After receiving all applicable external approvals, the Office of the Provost must execute a new memorandum of agreement with each high school partner and/or school division as early as possible prior to the academic year it governs. All parties are responsible for reading and abiding by the MOA after it is executed.

Advertising and recruiting

Upon receiving confirmation from VCU that it is permitted to do so, a partner high school may advertise dual enrollment offerings to recruit and/or inform students and parents/guardians of options. Verbal promises during the advertising or recruiting process that are inconsistent with VCU's authorization and the most current dual enrollment handbook shall be void.

All high school communications intended for print or digital publication or distribution must receive pre-approval from the VCU Office of the Provost. VCU requires a minimum of 14 days to review materials and provide feedback, required edits or approval.

IV. Admissions, registration and advising

This section contains vital information for admissions, registration and advising.

Eligibility

Adherence to strict eligibility standards mitigates the risk of student failure due to under preparation for college-level coursework. Minimum eligibility standards include:

- 11th or 12th grade (grade, not age, is the governing factor)
- Passing grades on all course prerequisites or acceptable scores on placement tests and/or Advanced Placement (AP) examinations, if applicable*
- Recommendation of high school guidance counselor (i.e., school counselor) or principal

*Partner high schools provide VCU with written proof of a student's eligibility in the form of a transcript and/or scores prior to the beginning of the academic year. Students who registered for dual enrollment courses but fail to meet eligibility requirements must be dropped from the class before the first class meeting.

Orientation and advising

VCU is committed to supporting the advising process as it relates to dual enrollment. At its discretion and based upon available resources, VCU may provide information to high school guidance counselors for dissemination to students. The MOA should reflect the details of information to be supplied, if required. VCU does not provide direct advising to dual enrollment students as the high school guidance counselors or school counselors are in a better position to do so.

Although most orientations take place at partner high schools, in certain cases a dual enrollment partnership may involve an orientation on VCU's Monroe Park or MCV campus in collaboration with a VCU academic unit. The purpose of these orientations is to provide incoming dual enrollment students with a firsthand introduction to the VCU campus. The MOA or related documents will reflect the details of on-campus orientations or visits, and all visits must abide by VCU's policies and protocols for minors on campus.

Potential advantages and disadvantages for students

Partner high schools must disclose to students and parents/guardians all potential advantages and disadvantages of dual enrollment. Prior to registration, students and parents/guardians must return a signed form to the partner high school indicating their full understanding and consent to accept the implications of dual enrollment.

Traditionally, high school and college have been distinct academic and developmental experiences that students have completed in succession. *Dual enrollment is not appropriate for every high school student.*

It carries several potential advantages and disadvantages that students, parents and guidance counselors should weigh carefully, as the implications for a student's high school and college career can be significant and permanent. Key advantages and disadvantages are outlined below in accordance with VCU's commitment to transparency and student success.

Potential advantages. A potential advantage, or benefit, of dual enrollment over regular high school courses is the accrual of VCU college credit while in high school. Academically talented dual enrollment students receive credit toward their high school diplomas while automatically receiving college credit that is transcribed under the name of VCU. As opposed to Advanced Placement (AP) courses, dual enrollment courses do not require a separate test score to count as VCU credit. With proper planning, students who attend VCU post-graduation can enter the university with credits earned toward a degree program, which might translate to shorter time-to-degree and lower overall cost of college.

Potential disadvantages. Dual enrollment can carry several disadvantages that might offset the advantages for some students.

- 1) Detriment to college grade point average (GPA). Unlike grades earned from regular high school coursework, VCU dual enrollment grades become part of the student's permanent VCU academic record.
- 2) Reduced chances of entering certain VCU degree programs. Underperformance in dual enrollment courses may have unanticipated adverse effects on students' collegiate options, particularly if they matriculate at VCU. For instance, certain degrees (e.g., B.S., Nursing) have GPA requirements for admission. A student who performs poorly in dual enrollment courses, and who matriculates at VCU, could begin their college career with a cumulative GPA that is lower than required for their targeted degree program.
- 3) Non-acceptance by other institutions. Students should not expect that dual enrollment credits would automatically transfer to all institutions. Receiving institutions set their own transfer of credit policies.
- 4) Non-applicability to a VCU degree. Even if a highly successful student chooses to attend VCU after high school graduation, there is no guarantee a dual enrollment course(s) will apply to the student's degree program. Requirements may vary significantly by degree program, with some being more prescriptive and others being more flexible in terms of courses accepted.

Given the aforementioned advantages and disadvantages, this handbook sets forth policy and procedures to ensure all students and parents/guardians are fully informed prior to enrolling.

Application and registration process

The diversity of dual enrollment activities at partner high schools requires different application and registration processes. For each partner high school, a process must be developed containing the following steps.

Step One: What happens at the high school to prepare registration packet.

Step Two: What happens when VCU receives registration packet.

Step Three: What happens to confirm registration, timeline for VCU eIDs, etc.

V. Courses

This section details policies and protocols regarding dual enrollment courses. It is vital for all stakeholders to recognize that VCU dual enrollment courses are VCU courses. This fact grants VCU the right and responsibility to provide a level of academic oversight identical to its on-campus offerings.

Determining course offerings

VCU provides a list or menu of available courses to each dual enrollment partner. Course offerings must be consistent with VCU’s strategic vision for dual enrollment and SCHEV’s defined role for four-year institutions in dual enrollment (see Section I).

The Office of the Provost will coordinate with the VCU academic units to compile a table of course offerings (see Table for example) and required faculty credentials to teach each course (see Section VI). The table will be signed by the academic unit’s department chair (or equivalent) and the VCU college or school dean. Existing tables are reviewed a minimum of every three years. An example condition that might prompt more frequent or earlier review are course changes made in the VCU Bulletin (catalog).

Table 4. Example blank table of approved dual enrollment courses with instructor qualifications.

<u>DEPARTMENT:</u>		<u>ACADEMIC YEAR:</u>	
Approved dual enrollment course with rubric	Instructor may have master’s degree with minimum 18 hours in teaching discipline	Instructor must have at least a master’s in the teaching discipline	Instructor must have at least a doctorate in the teaching discipline
Chair signature and date:		Dean signature and date:	

VCU courses available for dual enrollment are subject to the approval and oversight of the VCU faculty in deliberation and partnership with the Office of the Provost. Courses available one year may not be available another year. Factors influencing course approval and availability include, but are not limited to appropriateness of a course for dual enrollment, available departmental resources to provide adequate academic oversight, record of students’ success (i.e., students’ performance during the course and/or after matriculation at VCU) or other departmental and institutional priorities.

As a general principle, dual enrollment courses will be lower-division (100- and 200-level). “Topics” courses are not appropriate for dual enrollment due to the requirement to change course content regularly and the difficulty of providing academic oversight. Upper-division courses may be offered with appropriate academic justification.

Partner high schools will be presented with the menu of potentially available VCU dual enrollment courses. After high schools select the courses they wish to offer, VCU will evaluate the requests, compile the final list of courses it is able to offer, and include as tables in letters to the community colleges to be signed and mailed by the VCU President. Courses receiving agreement from the community colleges will be incorporated into the MOA for the school year to which they apply. (See Section III.)

Determining prerequisites

The VCU Bulletin provides a full listing of courses. Prerequisites are located in the VCU Bulletin and should be prominently displayed in all dual enrollment course catalogs and registration materials. Courses, prerequisites and corequisites are approved by faculty at the department, school/college and university level curriculum committees.

Special course requests

A dual enrollment high school partner may request to offer a specific VCU course that is in the VCU Bulletin but not on the VCU-supplied menu of dual enrollment courses (with the exception of topics courses, which are not eligible for dual enrollment). Requests must be made in writing no later than 24 months in advance of the school year to which they will apply. This requirement is in keeping with the timeline outlined in Section III of this handbook. Requests must be sent to the VCU point person for dual enrollment, who will bring the matter to the VCU faculty academic oversight committee for the appropriate internal action.

Operating courses

Operating high-quality dual enrollment courses requires adherence to several policies and procedures.

Mixed classes. As a quality-control measure, classes designated as dual enrollment should contain registered dual enrolled students only. VCU prohibits the operation of courses that enroll both non-dual enrolled students and dual enrolled students, even if each group receives a separate syllabus.

Academic calendar. Dual enrollment courses should follow the high school academic calendar, including observed holidays and closures, not the VCU academic calendar. This rule applies even when a full-time or adjunct VCU faculty member is the instructor of record. However, the MOA shall contain key dates (e.g., Add/Drop; Withdrawal) that VCU sets and partners must adhere to.

Hours of operation. Dual enrollment courses operate during the regular school day only, not before or after school.

Credit hours and approximate student workload. For traditional college courses, [VCU defines a credit hour](#) and approximate student workload as

...a reasonable approximation of one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours out-of-class student work each week for approximately 15 weeks, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time... This definition represents the minimum standard. Student time commitment per credit hour may be higher in individual programs.

Most dual enrollment courses are 3 or 4 college credits. Dual enrollment instructors should be prepared to collaborate with full-time VCU faculty in the teaching discipline to tailor these standards and the course content to the partner high school's specific class schedule.

Progress reports. VCU may require progress reports on dual enrollment students.

Grading and other assessment

Grading scale. VCU assigns letter grades without pluses or minuses. Information about VCU's grading system is located in the VCU Bulletin. Final course grades should match on the high school and VCU transcripts, with the only differences being pluses or minuses on the high school transcript, if allowed by the high school grading scale. For example, a student may receive an A on the VCU transcript and an A-

on the high school transcript. Exceptions to this requirement are rare, and should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis before the start of the school year.

Student learning outcomes. All courses should list the expected student learning outcomes in the syllabus. These learning outcomes should be identical to those on the VCU-approved course syllabus. Assessments of student learning (e.g., papers, projects, tests) should directly map to the student learning outcomes.

Curriculum maps. VCU uses curriculum maps to connect courses and learning activities to program-level student learning outcomes. Although dual enrollment students are not enrolled in a VCU degree program, dual enrollment instructors may find it useful to be familiar with the curriculum map that lists their course, if applicable. This familiarity will help the instructor understand the role the course plays in the curriculum.

Evaluating courses

Course evaluations are an important part of the continuous improvement process at VCU. They offer instructors an opportunity to self-evaluate and make future adjustments based on anonymous student feedback, department chairs a tool for conducting holistic annual evaluations of instructors, and the university the ability to assess dual enrollment activities overall. As summative assessments, course evaluations are distributed to students' VCU email addresses toward the end of the course.

Instructors should ensure students have the opportunity to complete course evaluations. Assigning the task of completing course evaluations as a graded class assignment could constitute a conflict of interest; therefore, that approach is strongly discouraged.

VI. Instructors

Committed, qualified instructors of record are essential for delivering high-quality dual enrollment courses and, ultimately, student success. This section details VCU's policies and procedures for dual enrollment instructors to foster a collegial partnership in the spirit of excellence and shared responsibility.

Statement on VCU faculty credentialing requirements

Faculty credentialing requirements at VCU are guided by two principles. First, as a regionally accredited university under SACSCOC, VCU abides by the minimum standard of a master's degree plus 18 graduate hours in the teaching discipline. Exceptions for noteworthy professional experience are rare and determined on a case-by-case basis as they must be justified to SACSCOC. VCU generally does not make such exceptions for dual enrollment instructors.

Second, as a nationally prominent research university with a strong commitment to teaching and learning, VCU prizes the role of qualified full-time faculty in academic departments to set more stringent credentialing standards than the SACSCOC minimum. Faculty in the same department may set different credentialing requirements for different courses (e.g., lower division versus upper division). A dual enrollment instructor may be qualified to teach one course but not another course in the same teaching discipline, depending on departmental standards. Further, these standards may change over time, based on the decision of the faculty in response to a variety of factors such as student learning outcomes assessment results, academic program review or other factors.

Verification of credentials

The certification of dual enrollment instructors' credentials is within the sole purview of VCU. High school teachers are qualified to provide high school-level instruction, but may not be academically qualified to teach college-level courses. "Provisional" or temporary certifications to teach dual enrollment courses while instructors earn the necessary credits to become academically qualified will not be granted.

When a high school proposes a new dual enrollment instructor, VCU will accept unofficial graduate transcripts for pre-approval. Once the university determines that the instructor is qualified to teach the proposed college course(s), then the instructor must arrange (at their expense) for VCU to receive official copies of all graduate transcripts in order to receive an official letter of affiliate faculty status. International faculty may need to arrange for an external review of their transcript (at their expense) by an agency on a list provided by VCU.

VCU will store official transcripts and verifications of credentials in its designated repository for faculty credentials. High school partners are encouraged to retain copies as well.

Affiliate status

Dual enrollment instructors receive non-compensated "courtesy" appointments as external affiliate faculty at the rank of instructor. This appointment is renewable annually, and is subject to review and revocation at any time at the sole discretion of VCU. Instructors receive notification of this status with an official letter from VCU.

This status requires dual enrollment instructors to be in good standing with the university. Instructors who have been terminated by VCU may not be eligible to teach VCU dual enrollment courses.

Use of graduate students

Graduate students are not permitted to serve as instructors of record or deliver dual enrollment courses under the supervision of an instructor of record. A dual enrollment course must not be offered if a qualified instructor is unavailable to provide for all aspects of course delivery. The occasional special guest speaker is allowable.

Use of mentors

Some dual enrollment courses may incorporate the use of mentors. A mentor is defined as any individual who interacts closely with the students and is not an instructor of record. The use of mentors should be vetted and included in the signed MOA to ensure all legal requirements and safeguards are understood and implemented.

Absences and replacements

Partner high schools must inform VCU of extended instructor absences (i.e., planned or unexpected leave) in a timely fashion. Although VCU certifies instructors, the primary responsibility for locating a suitable substitute or replacement rests with the partner high school. Replacement instructors must go through the verification of credentials process.

Evaluating instructors

High schools conduct annual performance evaluations of their employees according to school district policies and procedures. Although VCU does not conduct annual performance evaluations, all dual enrollment instructors must remain in good standing with VCU in order to teach VCU dual enrollment courses (see "Affiliate status" section above). VCU may work with high school dual enrollment coordinators to arrange teaching observations during routine or special occasion site visits. Observations

should be conducted only with prior notice and mutual agreement of the instructor, in a spirit of collaborative partnership.

Note for VCU faculty

Most dual enrollment instructors are high school teachers employed and compensated by their local school district. In certain cases, a full-time or adjunct VCU faculty member may teach dual enrollment at a high school partner site. In an effort to preserve continuity and quality of service, dual enrollment agreements must follow the process outlined in Section III of this handbook. This process will ensure that all VCU dual enrollment courses are conducted with the necessary reviews, approvals and oversight. If contracted and paid by the high school for teaching a dual enrollment course, VCU full-time faculty must abide by all relevant VCU policies and protocols regarding outside professional activity.

VII. Students

A student's home high school bears primary responsibility for student conduct (academic integrity) and student support and learning services, and VCU acts in a support role. Dual enrollment students should consult with their high school dual enrollment coordinator about available VCU services rather than contacting the university directly. VCU services available to dual enrollment students are detailed in the relevant year's MOA and/or separate guidance document for students and parents/guardians. Certain student support and learning services that are available to traditional VCU students will not be available to VCU dual enrollment students due to legal restrictions and age appropriateness.