



Dual Credit Outcomes: A Breakdown by Income

The fifth of six research briefs on dual credit in Kentucky

This research brief examines the effect of dual credit participation on second-year persistence and first-year GPA at Kentucky public four-year universities, broken down by income. It is the fifth of six research briefs exploring the effects of dual credit on postsecondary outcomes.

Low-income* students benefited more from dual credit in second-year persistence

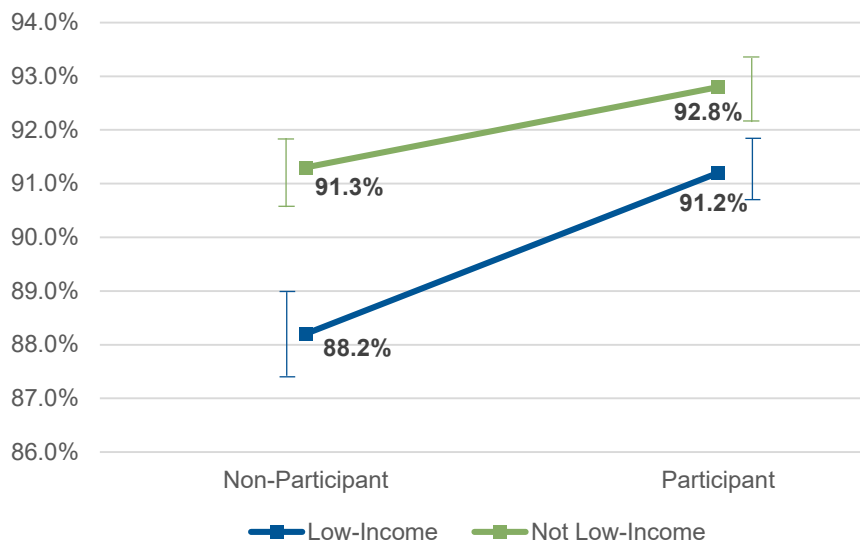
Both low-income and non low-income students who participated in high school dual credit experienced gains in second-year persistence in college. For low-income students, dual credit's effect on persistence was 3 percentage points, increasing from 88.2% to 91.2%. Meanwhile, non low-income students had a 91.3% percent chance of persisting without dual credit, compared to 92.8% with dual credit, a difference of 1.5 percentage points.

With or without dual credit, non low-income students were more likely to persist to a second year of college. However, dual credit participation nearly cut in half the gap between the two groups, which decreased from 3.1 percentage points to 1.6 percentage points (Figure 1).

Low-income students benefited more from dual credit in first-year GPA

Both low-income and non low-income students benefited from dual credit participation in terms of first-year GPA. Without dual credit, low-income students had a 41.4% chance of earning a first-year GPA of 3.0 or higher. With dual credit, the probability jumped to 52.1%. Alternatively, for students who were not low-income, dual credit increased the likelihood of earning a first-year GPA of 3.0 or higher 7.9 percentage points, from 57.3% to 65.2%.

Figure 1. Effect of Dual Credit on Second-Year Persistence, According to Income



Vertical lines represent 95% confidence intervals. Values: low-income non-participants (87.4%-89%) and low-income participants (90.7%-91.9%). Non low-income non-participants (90.6%-91.9%) and non low-income participants (92.2%-93.4%).

* Low-income is defined by receipt of any Pell grant at entry or during specific semesters.

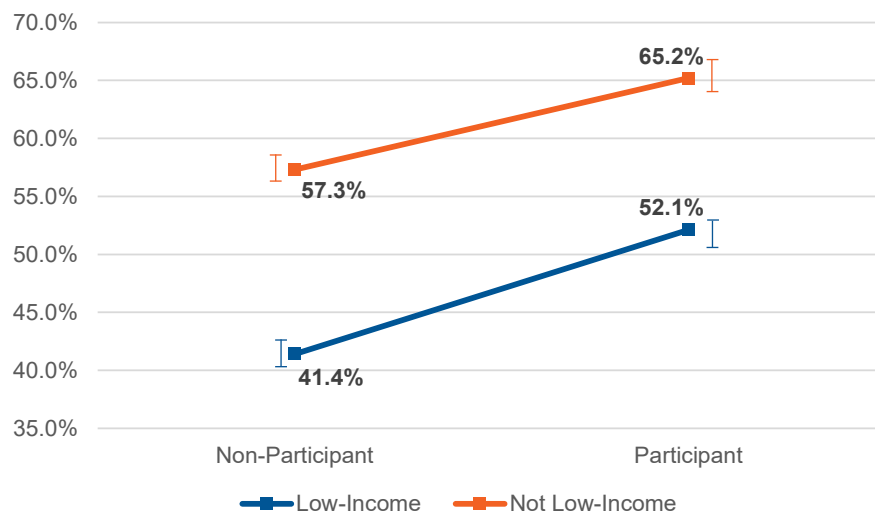
Middle- and high-income students were more likely to obtain a first-year GPA of at least 3.0 than low-income students, without or with dual credit. However, as Figure 2 illustrates, dual credit narrowed the gap between these two groups from 15.9 percentage points to 13.1 percentage points.

The final brief will explore the effects of dual credit on postsecondary educational outcomes for subgroups related to both race and income status.

Summary

Dual credit courses provide benefits for both low-income and non low-income students, but low-income students are particularly helped. Educators should keep these benefits in mind and take steps to ensure low-income students have equitable access to dual credit courses.

Figure 2. Effect of Dual Credit on First-Year GPA, According to Income



Vertical lines represent 95% confidence intervals. Values: Low-income non-participants (40.1%-42.8%) and low-income participants (50.8%-53.3%). Non low-income non-participants (56.2%-58.4%) and non low-income participants (64.2%-66.2%).