



The effects of accelerated college credit programs on educational attainment in Rhode Island

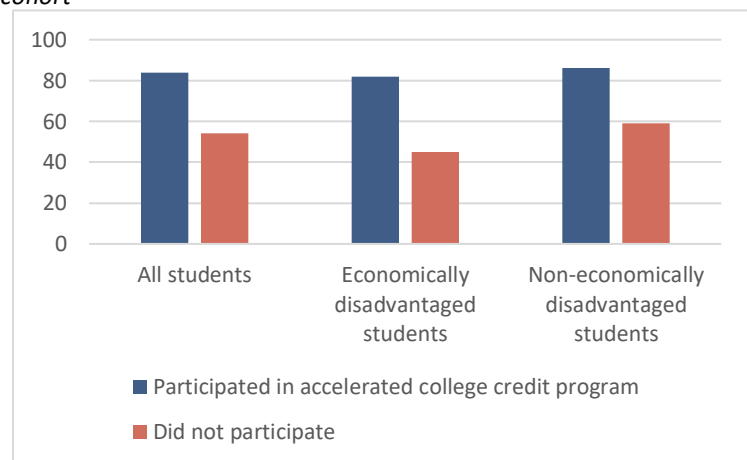
The Rhode Island Department of Education, the Rhode Island Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner, and state legislators sought evidence of the effects of state-funded programs for students to earn college credit during high school. Using data on the 2013/14 statewide grade 9 cohort, this quasi-experimental study examined participation in accelerated college credit programs—dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment, and Advanced Placement test-taking—in Rhode Island high schools to understand the programs’ effect on the rate of high school completion and postsecondary outcomes.

Key findings

- **Students who participate in accelerated college credit programs are more likely to graduate from high school, enroll in college within a year of graduating, and avoid enrollment in developmental education courses during their first year at Rhode Island public colleges than are nonparticipating students.** Participating in these programs increases a student’s probability of graduating from high school by an estimated 21 percentage points and the probability of enrolling in college within a year of high school graduation by an estimated 30 percentage points.
- **Economically disadvantaged students and their non-economically disadvantaged peers are estimated to benefit to a similar degree.** The programs’ effects did not differ depending on the student’s eligibility for the national school lunch program.

This study contributes to the literature on the effects of accelerated college credit programs on high school and postsecondary outcomes. State leaders can use this information to provide evidence for their efforts to plan and support access to all types of accelerated college credit programs. Researchers can build on the results of this study, coupled with an examination of the costs of the three accelerated college credit programs in relation to their benefits, to further investigate the effects of each program type on student outcomes.

Accelerated college credit program participation has a positive effect on enrollment in college within a year of graduating
Predicted probability (percent) based on model, 2013/14 grade 9 cohort



Note: The sample size is 3,916 students in a matched sample drawn from students who were first-time ninth graders in Rhode Island public schools in 2013/14. Predicted probabilities were estimated using a statistical model.