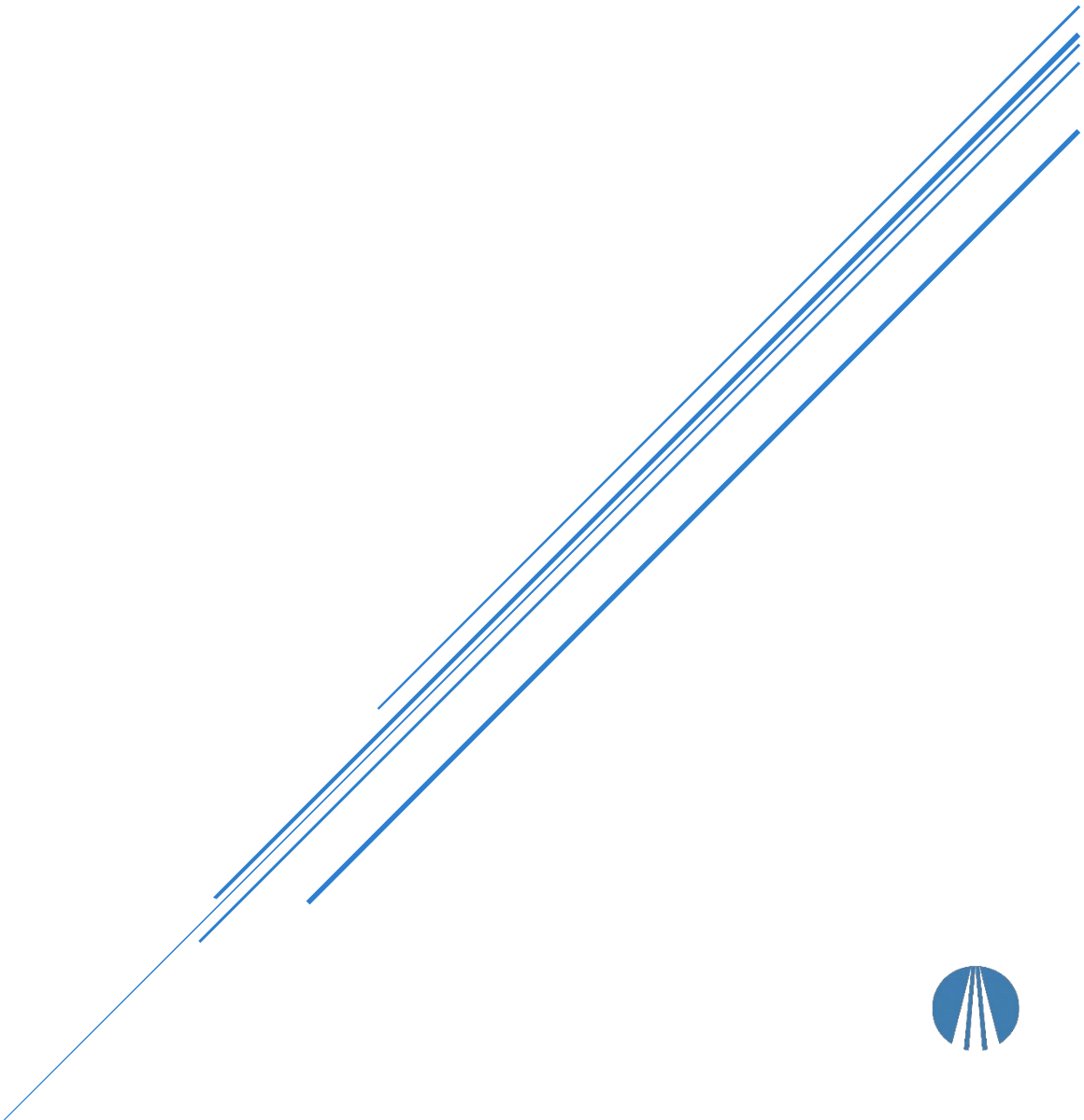


# IDENTIFYING DUAL CREDIT COURSE SECTIONS

From LMS Pattern Recognition to Source-of-Truth Logic



**CLARITY SYSTEMS CONSULTING**  
Case Study | Systems & Data Clarity

## The Situation

A request came in asking whether Dual Credit course sections could be identified from within a learning management system.

At first, the question seemed simple: ***Can we look at the course data and tell which sections are Dual Credit?***

But once the data was reviewed, the answer was not immediately clear.

The learning management system showed course sections, terms, course names, and section codes. However, it did not show Dual Credit as a separate category, semester, or obvious field.

This created an important question: ***Was Dual Credit missing from the system, or was it being represented in a less obvious way?***

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## Understanding the Problem

The issue was not that the system had no useful data.

The issue was that the system did not clearly label the data in the way the request expected.

From the LMS side, Dual Credit did not appear as:

- a separate semester
- a visible flag
- a standalone course type
- a simple report filter

However, some course section codes appeared to follow a pattern.

Certain sections included values such as:

- DC
- DC1
- DC2
- similar DC-based section indicators

This suggested that Dual Credit might be represented through section naming or coding.

But a pattern is not the same thing as proof.

That distinction mattered.

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## Investigating the Data

The first step was to review the available LMS section data and look for consistent indicators.

A possible pattern appeared in the section codes.

Sections that looked like Dual Credit often included a DC-based value in the section indicator.

At that point, there were two possible paths:

1. Treat the pattern as good enough
2. Confirm the official source of truth before building logic around it

The second option was the safer one.

The LMS reflected course and section data, but it was not necessarily the system where the official academic classification was created.

To avoid relying on assumption, the question needed to be traced back to the upstream student records system.

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## What Became Clear

The learning management system was not the source of truth for Dual Credit classification. It reflected course and section structures that came from upstream academic data.

The official meaning of the section indicator needed to be confirmed by the team responsible for the student records data.

Once that confirmation was requested, the source-of-truth team confirmed that Dual Credit sections followed a specific section indicator pattern.

This changed the logic from: *“We think these might be Dual Credit sections.”*  
to: *“These can be identified using confirmed source-of-truth logic.”*

That was the key shift.

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## Where the Real Risk Was

The risk was not technical failure.

The system was showing data correctly.

The risk was interpretation.

If the LMS pattern had been used without confirmation, reporting could have been based on an assumption.

That could lead to:

- incorrect course classification
- unreliable reporting
- confusion between teams
- false confidence in a data filter
- inconsistent answers to future requests

In this case, the important work was not just finding a pattern.

It was proving whether the pattern could be trusted.

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## **Decision Direction**

The direction was to separate what the LMS could show from what the organization could confirm.

The LMS could help identify course sections that appeared to match a Dual Credit pattern.

But the official logic needed to come from the student records side.

Once confirmed, the reporting approach became much stronger:

- use the source-of-truth section indicator logic
- map that logic back to LMS course section data where available
- avoid treating LMS labels alone as authoritative
- document the interpretation clearly for future use

This gave the team a reliable way forward without overclaiming what the LMS itself could prove.

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## **Outcome**

The investigation confirmed that Dual Credit sections could be identified using validated upstream logic.

The LMS did not expose Dual Credit as a clear standalone field, but it did contain section data that could be interpreted once the official coding rule was confirmed.

The result was a cleaner and safer answer:

- Brightspace/LMS data could support identification
- the official classification came from the upstream student records system
- the section-code pattern could be used once validated
- future reporting could rely on confirmed business logic instead of guesswork

Most importantly, the request moved from uncertainty to clarity.

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## What This Work Reveals

This case highlights a common challenge in systems and data work:

The system where data is viewed is not always the system where the meaning of that data is created.

A learning platform may display course information, but the official academic meaning may live upstream in another system.

Good analysis requires more than pulling data.

It requires understanding:

- where the data came from
- what the data means
- who owns the definition
- when a pattern is safe to use
- when confirmation is needed before reporting

In this case, the value was not only identifying Dual Credit sections.

The value was turning an unclear reporting question into confirmed, reusable source-of-truth logic.

This case study is a generalized representation of system analysis work.  
All identifying details have been removed or modified for confidentiality.