

Frequently Asked Questions: Additional Graduation Options – 2018-2020

INTRODUCTION

Students in the class of 2018 who entered grade 9 after July 1, 2014, will make up the first cohort of Ohio students who will earn diplomas under the college and work ready assessment system, as required by state law. In addition to satisfying the high school curriculum requirements, including any local requirements, students in Ohio must satisfy one of three pathways to graduation. The pathways include:

1. Earn 18 graduation points on [Ohio's State Tests](#);
2. Earn an [industry-recognized credential](#) or group of credentials totaling 12 points and earn a cumulative score of 13 on the [WorkKeys test](#); or
3. Earn [remediation-free scores](#) in math and English language arts on the ACT or SAT.

To support the transition to new requirements, the General Assembly approved temporary graduation options for students in the class of 2018. **Recent legislation extended additional graduation options to the classes of 2019 and 2020. Please note, state law modified the criteria available for the class of 2020 and not all of the original criteria are available to students in the class of 2020.** These options provide an opportunity for all students who do not otherwise meet one of the three existing pathways to graduation to earn a diploma.

[Click here to learn more about the graduation options available for the classes of 2018 and 2019.](#)

[Click here to learn more about the graduation options available for the class of 2020.](#)

The additional graduation options are intended to provide a meaningful opportunity for students, who have struggled to meet one of the existing graduation pathways, to demonstrate they have the knowledge and skills needed to be successful after they transition to the next steps post-high school. Each criterion provides students the opportunity to demonstrate readiness in some way. We understand there are many ways a student may satisfy these additional options and each student may be at a different point as he or she works toward earning a high school diploma. Districts and schools should use professional discretion based on the criteria provided below to determine and evaluate if a student has satisfied the new graduation options and is prepared to successfully transition out of high school to a career, college, the military, or a self-sustaining vocation.

GENERAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Who is eligible to earn a diploma under the alternative graduation options provided in state law?

Students entering high school between July 1, 2014, and June 30, 2016, are eligible to use the additional graduation options as outlined here.

Students entering high school between July 1, 2016, and June 30, 2017, are eligible to use the additional graduation options as outlined here.

NOTE: The use of graduation options should be determined based on the date the student enters grade 9, regardless of when the student graduates — earlier or later. Districts need to consider their local policies for grade placement when looking at the criteria that must be completed during the senior year.

Are students required to satisfy one of the new graduation options if they already have met one of the existing pathways to graduation?

No. The graduation options are available to students in the classes of 2018-2020 who have not otherwise satisfied one of the three existing pathways to graduation. A student who has met one of the three existing pathways does not need to satisfy the requirements under the additional graduation options.

Are districts and schools required to implement programming for students to satisfy each of the nine criteria?

No. However, the Department encourages districts to offer programming and support opportunities for students who have not met one of the three pathways to graduation to earn a diploma under the new options provided by state law.

Are out-of-state, out-of-country or homeschool transfer students eligible to utilize the new graduation options?

Yes. Transfer students who have not otherwise met the graduation requirements outlined in the [transfer student guidance](#) are eligible to utilize the new graduation options.

These students must take all required Ohio's State Tests, as outlined in the transfer student guidance found [here](#). They must retake any required math or English language arts Ohio's State Tests for which they scored a one or two.

Example: Based on an out-of-state transfer student's prior completed courses, we have determined the student must take three tests – ELA II, Geometry and American Government – and earn 8 graduation points, five of which must come from ELA II and Geometry. If the student does not meet these requirements, the student must retake the ELA II and Geometry tests if he scored a one or two in order to utilize the new graduation options.

How is the “senior year” or “12th grade” defined?

Each district has local policy regarding student grade-level assignment. Districts and schools should follow their established local policies for determining grade level and placement when determining the senior year for each student.

ATTENDANCE

For students in the classes of 2018 and 2019, state law requires a total attendance rate of 93 percent during the senior year to satisfy this criterion.

For students in the class of 2020, state law removes attendance as a criterion that can be used as a graduation option.

For students in the classes of 2018 and 2019, does the 93 percent attendance rate include excused and unexcused absences?

Yes, state law requires students to have a total attendance rate of 93 percent during the senior year. To satisfy this criterion, students must attend school at least 93 percent of the time during the senior year.

For students in the class of 2019, does the attendance rate include the full school year (fall semester)?

Yes, state law extends the graduation options that were available to the class of 2018 to the class of 2019 with no modifications. The attendance criteria requires a 93 percent attendance rate for the entire senior year.

How should districts and schools calculate attendance for students in the class of 2019?

Attendance should be calculated based on the period of time a student is enrolled and assigned to grade 12 during the current school year.

- If a student is not enrolled for the entire school day, then only the part of the school day when the student is expected to be in attendance is included in the rate calculation. If a student completed

requirements and graduates before the end of the school year, the part of the school year after graduation and withdrawal from the district would not be included.

- If a student moves to another district, the student's attendance record should follow the student to the enrolling school.

GRADE POINT AVERAGE

For students in the classes of 2018 and 2019, state law requires a 2.5 GPA during the 12th-grade year to satisfy this criterion.

For students in the class of 2020, state law requires a 2.5 cumulative GPA during the 11th and 12th grade years to satisfy this criterion.

Students must earn at least a 2.5 on a 4.0 unweighted scale to satisfy this criterion. The following scale is an example of what may be used to determine the GPA on a 4.0 scale.

GPA CALCULATION CHART

A+, A	4.0
A-	3.7
B+	3.3
B	3.0
B-	2.7
C+	2.3
C	2.0
C-	1.7
D+	1.3
D	1.0
D-	0.7
F	0.0

How many courses must be included in the GPA calculation for students in the classes of 2018 and 2019?

The GPA calculation must include grades for all courses (including core content areas, electives, etc.) taken during the 12th-grade year. A student must take at least four full-year **or equivalent** courses to satisfy this criterion.

Equivalent courses may include block courses that satisfy one Carnegie unit, units earned through credit flexibility, credit recovery or College Credit Plus courses equivalent to one Carnegie unit or two semester-long courses that equal one unit. Students must earn a minimum of four credits to meet this requirement.

For students in the class of 2019, does the GPA include courses taken during the fall 2018 semester?

Yes, state law extends the graduation options available to the class of 2018 to the class of 2019 with no modifications. The GPA criteria must include grades for all courses taken during the 12th-grade year, including courses completed during the fall semester.

How many courses must be included in the GPA calculation for students in the class of 2020?

The GPA calculation must include grades for all courses taken during the 11th and 12th-grade years. A student must take at least four full-year **or equivalent** courses to satisfy this criterion.

Equivalent courses may include block courses that satisfy one Carnegie unit, units earned through credit flexibility, credit recovery or College Credit Plus courses equivalent to one Carnegie unit or two semester-long courses that equal one unit. Students must earn a minimum of four credits to meet this requirement.

CAPSTONE

What are the requirements for the senior capstone project for the classes of 2018 and 2019?

State law provides that districts and schools are responsible for defining the requirements for all aspects of the senior capstone project. This includes items such as content approval, documentation, grading rubrics and presentation and evaluation processes.

Districts may want to offer certain options to students, like capstone projects, but may not know how to structure such offerings. Fortunately, in Ohio, there are many districts doing these types of activities. Additionally, there are many online resources that can help. A good resource on capstone projects can be [found here](#). This is provided strictly for illustrative purposes only. Districts have complete discretion around these requirements for students in the classes of 2018 and 2019 and should be deliberate in how capstones are structured and in documenting student accomplishments.

Should the local board of education approve capstone requirements?

Districts and schools should consult local district policy to determine if the local board of education must approve the criteria for the senior capstone project.

What are the requirements for the senior capstone project for the class of 2020?

For students in the class of 2020, state law requires that the capstone project must comply with Ohio Department of Education guidance on the components of a successful capstone project and the process for evaluating each component. The guidance must ensure that each capstone project is designed as a culmination of the student's high school experience. **State law requires the Department to provide this guidance no later than May 31, 2019.**

WORK OR COMMUNITY SERVICE EXPERIENCE

What are the requirements for the work experience and/or community service experience for the classes of 2018 and 2019?

Students must complete at least 120 documented hours through a work or community service experience during the 12th grade year. State law provides that districts and schools are responsible for defining the requirements for the work experience or community service experience. This may include participation agreements, requirements for the documentation of hours and evaluation of work experience objectives.

Districts may want to offer work experience options to students but may not know how to structure such offerings. Fortunately, in Ohio, there are many districts doing these types of activities. Additionally, there are many online resources that can help. A sample of a work experience approach is [available here](#). This sample is provided strictly for illustrative purposes only. Districts have complete discretion around these requirements for students in the classes of 2018 and 2019 and should be deliberate in how they are structured and in documenting student accomplishments.

What are the requirements for the work experience and/or community service experience for the class

of 2020?

For students in the class of 2020, state law requires that the work/community service hours would have to comply with Department guidance on approval and verification of the hours. **State law requires the Department to provide this guidance no later than May 31, 2019.**

COLLEGE CREDIT PLUS

Can a student take any College Credit Plus course to satisfy this criterion?

Yes. State law requires students to earn three credit hours of college credit through the College Credit Plus program. This includes any course(s) the student may have taken during high school. Find more information about the College Credit Plus program on the Ohio Department of Higher Education's [website](#).

ADVANCED PLACEMENT AND INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE

Are districts and schools required to offer Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses if current programming is not in place?

No. However, districts and schools should work to provide opportunities for students who have not met one of the three pathways to graduation to earn a diploma under the new options provided by state law.

Are students required to complete AP or IB courses and tests during their senior year?

No. State law requires students using this option to pass an AP or IB course and earn a score of 3 or higher on the corresponding AP test or 4 or higher on the corresponding IB test. This includes any AP or IB courses and tests that the student may have taken prior to the senior year.

WORKKEYS

How can students access the WorkKeys test?

Ohio's districts, schools and joint vocational school districts administer the WorkKeys test. Districts and schools that currently are not administering the WorkKeys test may contact the Office of Assessment at (614) 466-1317 or email statetests@education.ohio.gov to begin the registration process.

State law provides the opportunity for districts and schools to administer the WorkKeys test one time at no cost for any student that opts to take it. The Department will [reimburse districts](#) for the cost of one full administration of the test for all students. Students should contact their local school districts to request to take this test.

Where can I find WorkKeys testing resources like practice tests?

More information about the WorkKeys test can be found on the ACT WorkKeys website. The OhioMeansJobs webpage offers free practice tests for each of the three core sections of the WorkKeys test. Click [here](#) to access the WorkKeys practice tests.

Are students required to take WorkKeys during the senior year?

No. State law requires that students using the new options must earn at least 3 points on each of the three core sections of the WorkKeys test. This includes any administration of the test the student may have taken prior to the senior year.

INDUSTRY-RECOGNIZED CREDENTIALS

How can students earn a 3-point credential or group of credentials during the senior year? The Department has identified a list of credentials that can be earned in one year or less. Search the credentials list [here](#) and look for the (•), which identifies those a student can earn in one school year. Each credential links to the credentialing organization for more information on how a student can earn that credential.

Districts and schools interested in offering a Senior Only program will find [more information here](#).

Are students required to earn industry-recognized credentials at the career-technical education center?

All students can earn an industry-recognized credentials. A student doesn't have to attend a career-technical education center to be enrolled in approved CTE courses to earn industry credentials.

Opportunities to earn credentials can be integrated into existing school programming or students can earn credentials through a work-based learning experience or on their own through the credentialing agency. While not required, the Department recommends credentials be aligned to the students' career interests and post-high school plans.

OHIO MEANS JOBS WORKFORCE READINESS SEAL

What is the OhioMeansJobs Workforce Readiness Seal and how can students satisfy the requirements to earn the seal?

The [OhioMeansJobs-Readiness Seal](#) is a formal designation all students can earn on their high school diplomas and transcripts indicating they have the personal strengths, strong work ethic and professional experience that businesses need.

To earn the OhioMeansJobs-Readiness Seal, motivated high school students [must demonstrate certain professional skills](#) and competencies required for success in the workplace and college. Students work with at least three experienced and trusted mentors who validate the demonstration of these skills in school, work or the community.

STUDENTS IN CAREER-TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

What options are available to students in career-technical education programs?

Students in career-technical education programs have additional options available to satisfy graduation requirements. In order to satisfy the career-technical education option, students must take and pass courses that constitute the curriculum requirements and take all seven end-of-course exams. Students must finish a career-technical program that includes at least four courses in a single career pathway and complete at least **one** of the criteria below:

- Earn a total score of proficient or better based on all career-technical exams or test modules;
- Earn an industry-recognized credential or credentials that equal 12 points;
- Complete a workplace experience totaling 250 hours with evidence of positive evaluations

Are students required to retake the mathematics and English Language Arts tests (for which a score of 1 or 2 was earned) to qualify for the additional options available to career-technical education students?

No. If a student is satisfying the career-technical education option, the student is not required to retake the state assessments in English language arts and mathematics tests for which the student earned a 1 or 2. Instead, the student must complete the career technical program that includes at least four courses in a single pathway.

What tests are included in the requirement to score proficient or better on all career-technical exams or modules?

Students must complete a test for all courses in the student's approved program sequence defined in the ODE CTE Program and Assessment Matrix. All tests are administered electronically through a web-based application or through approved industry credential providers. All career-technical education end-of-course tests are developed and administered by The Ohio State University, CETE through a proprietary system called [WebXam](#)®.

DIVERSE LEARNERS

If a student whose IEP excuses him or her from the consequences of state assessments is now going to graduate via one of the options, does the IEP team have to meet and remove the excusal from the IEP?

IEP teams must determine at least annually how a student will participate in state assessments and, for students in high school, how they will meet graduation requirements. If a student who is excused from the consequences of graduation tests for graduation purposes will instead graduate using one of the additional graduation options, the IEP team should amend the IEP to reflect the change and remove the excusal.

Do students, whose IEPs excuse them from the consequences of state assessments, have to retake the English language arts and math tests if they want to satisfy one of the additional graduation options?

Yes. A student who is excused from the consequences of tests for graduation is not excused from taking tests for graduation. All students must meet all the requirements in the options, including test retakes.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND THE SCHOOL REPORT CARD

If a student fulfills one of the new graduation options, will the student be included as a graduate on the school's or district's report card?

Yes. Students who fulfill one of the new graduation options available to the classes of 2018 and 2019 or the class of 2020 will be considered graduates in the state graduation rate included on Ohio's School Report Cards.

Will a student who is exempt from an end-of-course test by an IEP but who qualifies through the new graduation options be included as a graduate on the school's or district's report card?

Yes. If the student meets graduation requirements through one of the three pathways or one of the additional options for the classes of 2018 and 2019 or the class of 2020, the student will count as a graduate both for school/district report cards and for federal reporting purposes.

If a student retakes an exam to fulfill one of the new graduation options, will the retake be included in the Achievement component of the school's report card?

Yes. End-of-course exams that are retaken are included in school/district report cards, specifically under the End-of-Course Improvement Indicator. However, end-of-course retakes are not included in either the regular test indicators or the Performance Index.