

Frequently Asked Questions: 2018 Additional Graduation Options

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 a diploma 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 the [Ohio 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.

We expect that most students will meet one of the three existing pathways, and districts should continue to work with students, as appropriate, to meet these requirements. However, the recent budget bill authorized two additional options only for students who entered grade 9 between July 1, 2014, and June 30, 2015. These options provide an opportunity for those students who do not otherwise meet one of the three existing pathways to graduation to earn a diploma. These alternative options also apply to students with disabilities. Click [here](#) to learn more about the new options to earn a diploma for the class of 2018.

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 that they have the knowledge and skills needed to be successful after they leave high school. Each criterion provides students the opportunity to demonstrate readiness in some way. We understand that there are many ways a student may satisfy these additional options and that each student may be at a different point as they work towards earning their high school diploma. Districts and schools should use professional discretion based on the criteria provided below to determine if a student has satisfied the new graduation options and are prepared to be successful in college and a career.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Who is eligible to earn a diploma under the alternative graduation options provided in House Bill 49?

Only students who entered grade 9 between July 1, 2014, and June 30, 2015, are eligible to use the new graduation options authorized in HB 49.

Are students required to satisfy one of the new graduation options if they already have met one of the existing pathways to graduation for the class of 2018?

No. The new options provided in HB 49 are available to students 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 new 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.

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

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.

How should districts and schools calculate attendance?

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

What is the required GPA to satisfy the criteria under the new graduation options for the class of 2018?

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?

The GPA calculation must include grades for all courses 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.

CAPSTONE

What are the requirements for the senior capstone project?

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, 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 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.

WORK OR COMMUNITY SERVICE EXPERIENCE

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

Students must complete at least 120 documented hours through a work or community service experience. 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 and should be deliberate in how they are structured and in documenting student accomplishments.

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 [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. 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 that the student may have taken prior to the senior year.

Please note: Because the scoring scales differ between versions 1 and 2 of the WorkKeys test, students must complete and pass all three sections of the WorkKeys test from the same version of the assessment. If you have students who would like to retest on all or part of the original WorkKeys assessment or would like to complete a section of the original WorkKeys that they have not yet taken, those students must test on WorkKeys version 1 by Sept. 30, 2017. "Superscoring" between test versions is not permitted.

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](#).

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 creation of the OhioMeansJobs Readiness Seal was authorized under HB 49. More information will be coming soon regarding the requirements to earn the seal.