

05-071 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Chapter 225: HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION

1. Definitions

- A. Adult High School Diploma Programs are secondary educational offerings leading to a high school diploma under the auspices of the local school department, approved by the State Department of Education according to procedures outlined in Section 2 of this Chapter, and operated in accordance with the provisions of Sections 2 and 3 of this Chapter. One component of the High School Diploma Program is the External Credit Option (ECO) defined as being individually planned and supervised by an instructor with mandatory student completion of related assignments; student completion of initial, periodic, and final testing; and a minimum of five student-teacher contacts.
- B. A General Educational Development (GED) Program is authorized to test for and issue high school equivalency certificates to residents of Maine who meet the requirements set forth below. GED tests will be administered in accordance with Examiner's Manual, Tests of General Educational Development, GED Testing Service of the American Council on Education. The standards for issuance of high school equivalency certificates are set forth in section 4.
 - 1. Issue. The Commissioner shall issue high school equivalency certificates to residents of the State who:
 - a. Are at least 18 years of age;
 - b. Are 17 years of age and have:
 - (1) a documented, immediate need; and
 - (2) written approval from the local superintendent or his designee;
 - 2. Have not been in attendance for one year or more at a public school or a private school approved by a state department or accredited by a regional association of colleges and secondary schools; or
 - 3. Have completed a formal training program as set forth in section 4(A)(2) which has been approved by the commissioner; and

4. Demonstrate through procedures prescribed by the Commissioner that they have attained a general educational development comparable to that of secondary school graduates.

The Commissioner shall issue the certificates required by this subsection upon completion of the requirements of this subsection or as soon thereafter as accessible.

1. Certificate status. Certificates shall have the legal status of high school diplomas.
2. Fees. The Commissioner may charge a fee sufficient to defray operating costs for a certificate. An honorably discharged or released veteran of the Armed Forces of the United States or a person judged by the Commissioner to be economically disadvantaged shall be exempt from payment of a fee. That fee shall be paid from the income of the Permanent School Fund.

2. Adult High School Diploma Guidelines

- A. Local Education Agencies (LEA's) seeking approval to issue high school diplomas to adults and out-of-school youth will be required to submit a Diploma Program Plan in accordance with the following criteria prior to receiving approval. This Diploma Program Plan will be reviewed every five years in conjunction with the LEA's Adult Education Program Review. The Diploma Program Plan will include:
 1. a statement of program philosophy approved by the local Board of School Directors or LEA governing body;
 2. policies approved by the local Board of School Directors specifying total number of credits required, required subjects, and eligibility requirements;
 3. a description of the grandfathering process used locally to address the number of credits required of persons born prior to October 15, 1970 if differentiation is made locally;
 4. a description of the process used by the LEA to determine competency of diploma teachers deemed qualified to teach adults;
 5. a description specifically addressing efforts to provide students with experiences in the areas of Fine Arts, Computer, Health, Consumer Economics, and Career Exploration/Personal Development; the nine required credits; utilization of the External Credit Option; counseling services; and records maintained;

6. a description of the local process for testing out;
7. a description of the process developed locally to determine the awarding of credits based on out-of-school experiences.

The DE shall approve Adult Education Diploma Programs based on plans which meet their criteria.

- B. The course of study for adult students leading to a high school diploma is to include a minimum of sixteen (16) credits, such credits to include the following:

English: Four (4) credits in English to include reading comprehension; appreciation of literature; writing; listening and oral communication skills; the structure and uses of the English language; and research and reporting skills;

Social Studies: Two (2) credits in social studies, one(1) credit of which will be a comprehensive course in American History which includes instruction in government, the importance of voting, the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship, the Constitution of the United States and the Declaration of Independence; and one (1) credit which may include instruction in economics, geography, political science, history, government, sociology, anthropology, psychology, or career exploration/personal development;

Mathematics: Two (2) credits in mathematics which shall include addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of whole numbers; fractions; decimals; percents; simple equations and formulas; measurement; ratios and proportions; graphing; and basic geometry concepts. Students demonstrating proficiency in these basic math skills may substitute Recordkeeping/Accounting for one math credit;

Science: One(1) credit in science instruction shall be required with laboratory study recommended.

Every effort should be made to provide students with experiences in the areas of Fine Arts, Computer, Health, Consumer Economics, and Career Exploration/Personal Development as their educational plans are being developed.

Of these sixteen (16) credits, a maximum of six (6) may be awarded for out-of-school experiences. For each credit required locally in excess of sixteen(16), an LEA may authorize one additional credit to be awarded through out-of-school experiences.

Persons enrolled in a Maine Adult Education Diploma Program prior to July 1, 1988, may graduate under the subject requirements in that Adult Education Diploma Program as they existed immediately prior to July 1, 1988. All students who first enroll in a Maine Adult Education Diploma Program after July 1, 1988 must meet the subject requirements of this subsection. Persons transferring from a Maine Adult Education Diploma Program in which they were enrolled prior to July 1, 1988, to another Adult Education Diploma Program within Maine shall maintain their "previously enrolled status."

- C. Teachers are deemed qualified to teach adults either by holding current State of Maine teaching certificates or by demonstrated competency as determined by LEA developed criteria. This subsection may be superseded by rules adopted by the State Board of Education pursuant to 20-A MRSA Chapter 502, Certification of Education Personnel.
- D. The adult student's individual program must be planned by the director or the director's designee as duly authorized LEA officials. Each person in a High School Diploma Program will have counseling services available. Student records must be maintained and will include the following:
 - 1. a written description of the student's goals and objectives and the procedure by which the student plans to attain his/her goals.
 - 2. academic records including any previous transcript;
 - 3. documentation for credits received through work experience, testing out of courses, apprenticeship programs, volunteer programs, and any other information pertaining to the awarding of credits.
- E. Each student will complete a minimum of forty-five (45) instructional hours for each credit pursued in the Adult Education Diploma Program with the exception of credits pursued through the External Credit Option.
- F. Each course offered for credit will have a curriculum on file outlining minimum competencies as determined by the local education agency.
- G. Each student's progress will be evaluated during and at the end of each course.
- H. Credits based on participation in secondary school, business school, trade school or other educational programs approved locally may be accepted or awarded upon receipt and evaluation of transcripts or certificates.

- I. No person will be awarded a high school diploma unless he/she has earned a minimum of one (1) credit through participation in a classroom or ECO learning experience offered by a Maine adult education program.
- J. Provided "I" is met, students may be allowed to test out in a maximum of four (4) required and/or elective courses in which they feel competent.
- K. Provided "I" is met, a maximum of six(6) credits may be awarded from the following out-of-school experiences. For each credit required locally in excess of sixteen (16), an LEA may authorize awarding one
 - (1) additional credit from the list below in accordance with locally developed criteria:
 - 1. a maximum of two(2) credits from Correspondence Schools;
 - 2. completion of a Maine State Apprenticeship Council approved apprenticeship program, the maximum number of credits to be established locally;
 - 3. one (1) credit may be awarded for military service of not less than two (2) successive years resulting in an honorable discharge or separation; the military experience criterion also covers candidates who have spent a minimum of six (6) years in the National Guard or in the Reserves and who hold an honorable discharge;
 - 4. one (1) credit may be awarded for three (3) consecutive years of work experience in no more than one occupation and two (2) credits for work experience of five (5) years or more in length in no more than two (2) occupations; military experience in excess of the criterion established in number three (3) above may be considered as work experience and may pertain to persons currently on active duty who are in good standing; homemaking experience based on independent living skills may be substituted for paid work experience using the work experience criterion; the maximum number of credits will be established locally;
 - 5. one (1) credit may be awarded a person participating in a forty-five (45) hour volunteer work activity planned and supervised by the director or the director's designee; maximum number of credits will be established locally;
 - 6. credit may be earned by a student through independent study; maximum number of credits will be established locally;

7. career exploration is a concept which allows diploma candidates to earn one (1) credit based on forty-five hours of observation/practicum experience in business, industry, institutions or agencies, maximum number of credits will be established locally.

3. External Credit Option

- A. Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) in recognition of the scheduling hardships encountered by students 18 years of age or older relating to problems of time, costs, distance, or lack of child care, may seek authorization to become approved sites for the delivery of the External Credit Option. Conditions for site approval are as follows:
 1. Each LEA must have in existence a State approved High School Diploma Program;
 2. Each LEA must participate in a training session relating to the ECO process prior to site approval;
 3. Each LEA must submit to the Division of Adult and Community Education an application for ECO approval; the form for this application is available through the Division of Adult and Community Education; notification of action taken will be made within 60 days of submittal. Items to be detailed are as follows:
 - a. State of need
 - b. Staff pre-service plan
 - c. Assurance that the Director and identified ECO staff have participated in an approved training session; for this purpose, approved is construed to mean offered through or approved by the Adult Education Staff Development Project; Directors without prior ECO training subsequent to initial site approval must attend an approved training session; a trained Director may provide in-house training to replacement staff after initial site approval
 - d. Curriculums to be adopted, adapted, or developed
 - e. Counseling, Testing, Reading Evaluation and Placement Plan
 - f. Sample student recordkeeping forms

- g. Must agree to submit one-year follow-up plan to the Division of Adult & Community Education
- 4. Student eligibility for BOO will be:
 - a. minimum of 18 years of age and not enrolled in a public or private day school;
 - b. minimum of sixth grade reading level;
 - c. ability to work as a self-directed learner.
- 5. Student recordkeeping will include:
 - a. completion of the Personal Educational Plan by Director/Counselor with student and instructor input and periodic follow-up;
 - b. completion of the Curriculum Record Sheet detailing course activity and periodic follow-up;
 - c. student completion of course activity sheets for each credit with progress notation by both student and teacher.
- 6. Guidelines for adopting existing curricula and/or development of new curricula are as follows:
 - a. each curriculum will be based upon an anticipated range of student completion time of 45-60 clock hours;
 - b. a component of each curriculum will be a written statement of specific course goals, instructional objectives, materials, estimated completion time, and evaluation methods;
 - c. a second curriculum component will be a series of planned "learning experiences" which are specific experiences undertaken by the student during each credit course;
 - d. each student will receive blank activity sheets to record completion of assignments, time, and progress notation by both student and teacher;
 - e. a minimum of five student/teacher contacts will be required for each course credit;

- f. designation of suggested time frame for completion of each credit is part of the Personal Educational Plan.

4. GED Guidelines

A. Requirements for issuance of diploma (High School Equivalency):

1. Minimum test scores: A standard score of 35 on each of the five tests and an average standard score of 45 on all five tests.
2. Minimum age: Must meet provisions of Title 20-A MRSA Section 257. A formal training program approved by the Commissioner is defined as:
 - a. A GED preparation course
 - b. A regular high school diploma course
 - c. Satisfactory results on the GED practice test

3. Fees:

The \$20 fee or evidence of waiver must be presented before any testing is started.

The Commissioner judges that individuals who meet the following criterion will have these fees waived and those fees will be paid from the Permanent School Fund.

- a. An honorably discharged veteran (with DD 214)
- b. Meeting income guidelines to qualify for any Federal or State program of assistance as: AFDC, Food Stamps, Medicaid, Unemployment, Job Corp, Social Security, Incarcerated, and JTPA.

B. Records: The local testing center will be responsible to maintain and send to the State GED Office the following:

- a. Permanent record cards (including failures and incompletes)
- b. Fees or waivers (Waiver evidence must be kept on file locally)
- c. These should be forwarded to the State GED Office within 30 days from the start of testing (record cards)

C. Requirements for retesting are to be decided upon on an individual basis.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Title 20-A MRSA Sections 257 and 8602

EFFECTIVE DATE: June 21, 1979 (EMERGENCY)

EFFECTIVE DATE OF PERMANENT RULE: August 30, 1979

AMENDED: July 1, 1988

EFFECTIVE DATE (ELECTRONIC CONVERSION): May 19, 1996

APAO WORD VERSION CONVERSION (IF NEEDED) AND ACCESSIBILITY CHECK:
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