

# Graduation Requirements Frequently Asked Questions

In June 2014, the Ohio General Assembly created new graduation requirements for students entering the ninth grade for the first time in the 2014-2015 school year. The General Assembly also charged the State Board of Education and Ohio Department of Education staff with creating the many rules and policy decisions needed to guide local implementation. Since then, staff members and the board's Graduation Requirements Committee have worked urgently to craft and adopt these many rules and policies.

On Sept. 16, 2014, the State Board finalized many of the implementation details including two essential elements of the new requirements: the graduation points system and a list of tests student can take in lieu of Ohio's tests.

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## General Questions

### **Is the performance-based test part of the end-of-course test?**

Each tested subject has an end-of-course state test with two parts. Part 1 is the performance-based assessment, where students construct their responses that a trained education professional then scores. Part 2 is the end-of-year test where students respond to items that are then computer scored. The score for the end-of-course test is a combination of Parts 1 and 2.

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### **What is the minimum score students need to get on each end-of-course test to graduate?**

- Students are not required to score a minimum level on any one test. Instead, they must show they are ready to graduate using a series of tests depending on their academic goals. Starting in the 2015-2016 school year, schools may use the end-of-course tests to replace course finals if schools choose to do so.
- Students can earn graduation points based on their performance on end-of-course tests. A student scoring in the highest level, advanced, will earn five points and a student scoring in the lowest level, limited, will earn one point. Students scoring proficient will receive three points.
- If a student wants to graduate using the end-of-course tests and the graduation points system, students must earn 18 graduation points across all end-of-course tests. To ensure the student is well rounded, they must earn a minimum of four points in math, four points in English and six points across science and social studies.

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### **If a student earned credit for Algebra I in the eighth grade last year, does the student have to take the end-of-course test now?**

- No. A student who earned high school credit in any of the above courses before July 1, 2014, automatically will receive a score of three points per course test toward the total points needed for graduation. Students who automatically receive three points may take the test once to earn a higher score.
- A student who took a high school course in the middle school and did not receive high school credit is still required to take the end-of-course test. The department recommends taking the end-of-course test during one of the two 2014-2015 opportunities.
- A student who took a math or English course during the summer and did not complete the course until after July 1, 2014, is still required to take the end-of-course test. The department recommends taking the end-of-course test during the 2014-2015 school year.

- Middle school students this year who take one of these courses for high school credit must take the corresponding state end-of-course test in this school year.

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### **When are students supposed to take the physical science end-of-course test?**

- Like any of the end-of-course tests, the student should take the test soon after completing the coursework. If a student is not enrolled in a course specifically called “physical science,” the student should take the test after the district determines that the student received instruction on the material covered by the test.
- Additionally, the physical science end-of-course test can be replaced with a substitute test. The State Board will be releasing the approved list of these substitute tests soon. Science Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate tests may be able to replace the physical science test for students who do not take the course.
- The State Board is finalizing a rule to allow ninth-grade students earning credit for a physical science, American history or American government course in a fall block schedule to automatically receive three graduation points. This rule will be finalized in December 2014.

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### **Can a student retake a test for a higher score?**

Students who score below proficient on a test may retake it after they receive remediation supports on the material. Students who score proficient or higher on an end-of-course test can retake tests only if, after they’ve taken all the tests, they still have not met the minimum graduation points to graduate (18 points overall or content area minimums). In this case, a student can retake any test after receiving remediation on the material. The same rules apply to substitute tests, which may be used interchangeably with approved tests. There is no subsequent need to score higher than the 18-point minimum (example: honors diploma, etc.).

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### **What substitute tests are approved for students this year?**

- Students in a physical science, American history or American government course may take a substitute test instead of the state's end-of-course test. Substitute tests are not allowed for the math or English tests. The State Board approved the following substitute tests:
  - Physical Science:
    - AP Physics 1: Algebra-based
    - AP Physics 2: Algebra-based
  - American History:
    - AP United States History
  - American Government:
    - AP United States Government and Politics
- The State Board will continue to review potential substitute tests and release a final list of tests in the coming months.
- The crosswalk of scores will only be available after the new state tests are completed and scores are released. The crosswalk may not be finalized until early 2016.

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**What test does a student take in middle school this year if the student is in Algebra I? Is it the end-of-course test or the eighth grade math test?**

Currently, students in an eighth grade Algebra I course will take the Algebra I end-of-course test and the eighth grade math test. However, the department is working with the federal government to change this requirement to allow students to be tested in only the courses they took. While the department is in ongoing conversations with the federal government, this issue will not likely be resolved for several months.

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**If a student wants to graduate using the college admissions test pathway, does the student need to take the end-of-course tests?**

All students must complete the course requirements and assessment requirements in the seven approved courses. This means that all students will take the end-of-course tests for the seven courses and the college admissions test. Students may choose which pathway to pursue after considering their educational goals and their performance on the tests. If a student chooses to use a pathway that doesn't rely on end-of-course test scores (such as the college admissions test), the student must still take the end-of-course tests.

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**What are the college admissions test and job skills assessment? When do they start and will any score count or just the score on the test given by the state?**

- The college admissions test will be selected by the State Board in spring 2015. A student may use his or her highest verifiable score to meet the graduation requirement, regardless of when the score was earned. The college admissions test will begin as a requirement when this year's freshmen reach their junior year (2016-2017). However, there may be a pilot run of the test one year before that.
- The job skills assessment will be selected by the State Board late this fall. Once an assessment is approved, students may request to take it at any time. Schools will be reimbursed for the cost of the test. Like the college admissions test, the highest verifiable score to meet the graduation requirement will count for the student, regardless of when the score was earned.

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**How do the new graduation requirements impact students with disabilities?**

- All students, including students with disabilities, must participate in state assessments. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) team may exempt a student with disabilities from consequences of being proficient on end-of-course tests. When the IEP team determines a student is exempt from being proficient on an end-of-course test, the student may receive three points (equivalent to proficient) for each exempt test toward graduation. There is no alternate assessment for end-of-course tests.
- If a student is eligible to participate in an alternate assessment per the Alternate Assessment for students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities (AASCD) participation guidelines, a proficient score in each of the assessed content areas – English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies – may be used in lieu of attaining the required minimum composite score on the seven end-of-course tests for the graduation requirement.

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**When do students have to take an American history or American government end-of-course test? How does this work for block schedules? Which test do they take?**

- The requirement depends on the student's grade and schedule. Some students will use the interim tests used during the 2013-2014 school year during fall, and others will use the new

state end-of-course tests that will be ready for the spring. The table below shows which tests must be given based on the student's grade and schedule (with graduation requirement in bold).

- The State Board is finalizing a rule to allow ninth-grade students earning credit for a physical science, American history or American government course in a fall block schedule course to automatically receive three graduation points. This rule will be finalized in December 2014.

<b>American History/American Government Tests (2014-15)</b>			
<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>Fall Block Schedule</b>	<b>Spring Block Schedule</b>	<b>Full Year Course</b>
Grade 9	<b>Interim Test</b> (Students automatically receive three points for graduation)	<b>State End-of-Course</b> (Grad - Requirement)	<b>State End-of-Course</b> (Grad - Requirement)
Grade 10	<b>Interim Test</b> OGT – Social Studies (Grad - Requirement)	<b>State End-of-Course Test</b> OGT – Social Studies (Grad - Requirement)	<b>State End-of-Course Test</b> OGT – Social Studies (Grad - Requirement)
Grade 11	<b>Interim Test</b> OGT retake – Social Studies ( <i>if needed</i> )	<b>State End-of-Course Test</b> OGT retake – Social Studies ( <i>if needed</i> )	<b>State End-of-Course Test</b> OGT retake – Social Studies ( <i>if needed</i> )
Grade 12	<b>Interim Test</b> OGT retake – Social Studies ( <i>if needed</i> )	<b>State End-of-Course Test</b> OGT retake – Social Studies ( <i>if needed</i> )	<b>State End-of-Course Test</b> OGT retake – Social Studies ( <i>if needed</i> )

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### **What industry-recognized credentials are on the approved list?**

The State Board recently finalized the criteria for industry-recognized credentials that will qualify a student for graduation. The State Board approved a model that focuses on valuable credentials for in-demand jobs. The department will create the list, but local schools and businesses will have an opportunity to submit their credentials for consideration. The initial list of credentials will be released this winter.

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**What are the graduation requirements for students who transfer into the district after completing some or all of the courses with tests?**

- Students who transfer into a district with no previous scores and only a few courses with corresponding tests will have their graduation point requirement minimum prorated. The table below shows how the points change based on the number of tests remaining:

<b>Graduation Points Requirement for Transfer Students</b>			
Tests Remaining	Points Required	Tests Remaining	Points Required
7	18	4	10
6	15	3	8
5	13	2	5

*Note: Students must earn a minimum of five points across the English II and either the Integrated II or Geometry end-of-course tests.*

- Regardless of the tests remaining, transfer students must earn a minimum of five points across the English II and either the Integrated II or geometry end-of-course tests in order to graduate. So, if a student transfers in with only geometry and American government left to take, the student would be required to take an English II test to reach the five points (unless the student scores a five on the geometry).
- If a student transfers in with only one test or no tests remaining, the student will take the college admissions test right away. If the student does not earn a remediation-free score, then the student must take the English II and Integrated II end-of-course tests and earn at least five points across the two in order to graduate.

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**Are there integrated math end-of-course tests that can be used instead of Algebra I and geometry tests.**

Yes, there will be integrated math tests for schools that have integrated math coursework. These will be available for schools at the same time as the Algebra I and geometry end-of-course tests.

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**Do the new graduation requirements apply to students at nonpublic schools?**

- Yes. All students attending a chartered nonpublic school must meet the course and assessment requirements in order to earn an Ohio diploma. This includes the seven end-of-course tests and the college admissions test. However, a committee of elected officials and stakeholders are meeting to recommend what the graduation requirements for these students will be in the future.
- Students attending a non-chartered, nonpublic schools or are being homeschooled do not need to meet the new graduation or assessment requirements.