

**NORTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Policy Manual**

Policy Identification

Priority: High Student Performance

Category: Student Accountability Standards/Graduation Requirements

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Statutory Reference: GS 115C-12(9b); GS 115C-81(b)(4); NC Constitution, Article IX, Section 5

Administrative Procedures Act (APA) Reference Number and Category: 16 NCAC 6D .0503

.0503 STATE GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

- (a) In order to graduate and receive a high school diploma, public school students shall meet the requirements of paragraph (e) and shall attain passing scores on competency tests adopted by the SBE and administered by the LEA. The passing score for the competency test, which is the same as grade-level proficiency as set forth in Rule .0502 of this Subchapter, shall be level III or higher.
- (b) Students who satisfy all state and local graduation requirements but who fail the competency tests shall receive a certificate of achievement and transcript and shall be allowed by the LEA to participate in graduation exercises.
- (c) Special education students other than students who are following the occupational course of study in paragraph (e)(1)(D) of this Rule may apply in writing to be exempted from taking the competency tests. Before it approves the request, the LEA must assure that the parents, or the child if aged 18 or older, understand that each student must pass the competency tests to receive a high school diploma.
- (d) Any student who has failed to pass the competency tests by the end of the last school month of the year in which the student's class graduates may receive additional remedial instruction and continue to take the competency tests during regularly scheduled testing until the student reaches maximum school age. Special education students who are following the occupational course of study in paragraph (e)(1)(D) of this Rule shall not be required to pass the competency test or the exit exam referred to in 16 NCAC 6D .0502(d)(2) in order to graduate and receive a diploma.

- (e) In addition to the requirements of Paragraph (a), students must successfully complete 20 course units in grades 9-12. ~~as specified below.~~

Students who pass courses during grades 6-8 that are described in the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study for Grades 9-12* must achieve level 3 or 4 on an EOC, if available, in order to be given credit for meeting that high school graduation requirement.

High school courses taken in grades 6-8 which do not have an EOC ~~must~~ shall use high school course codes, ~~must~~ shall be aligned to the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study for Grades 9-12*, and follow HSP-M-001 (Policy defining "Course for Credit" ~~will be subject to review.~~

Students ~~must~~ are strongly encouraged to complete at least one unit of mathematics credit in their ~~senior~~ final year. This policy will go into effect with the freshman class of 2008.

- (1) Effective with the class entering ninth grade for the first time in the 2000-2001 school year, students shall select one of the following four courses of study:

NOTE: All students are encouraged, but not required, to include at least one elective course in arts education. Unless included as career/technical education credits in the career preparation course of study, courses in R.O.T.C. qualify for credit as electives in any of the courses of study.

(A) career preparation, which shall include:

- i. four credits in English language arts, which shall be English I, II, III, and IV;
- ii. three credits in mathematics, one of which shall be algebra I (except as limited by G.S. 115C-81(b));
- iii. three credits in science, which shall include biology, a physical science, and earth/environmental science;
- iv. three credits in social studies, which shall be Civics and Economics; U.S. history; and world history;
- v. one credit in health and physical education;
- vi. four credits in career/technical education, which shall be in a career concentration or pathway that leads to a specific career field and which shall include a second-level (advanced) course; or four credits in one of the four disciplines in arts education: theatre, music, visual arts, or dance; or four credits in R.O.T.C.;
- vii. two elective credits; and
- viii. other credits designated by the LEA.

(B) college technical preparation, which shall include:

- i. four credits in English language arts, which shall be English I, II, III, and IV;
- ii. three credits in mathematics, which shall be either algebra I, geometry, and algebra II; or algebra I, technical mathematics I, and technical mathematics II; or integrated mathematics I, II, and III;
- iii. three credits in science, which shall include biology, a physical science, and earth/environmental science;
- iv. three credits in social studies, which shall be Civics and Economics; U.S. history; and world history;
- v. one credit in health and physical education;
- vi. four credits in career/technical education, which shall be in a career concentration or pathway that leads to a specific career field and which shall include a second-level (advanced) course;
- vii. two elective credits; and
- viii. other credits designated by the LEA.

NOTE: A student who is pursuing this course of study may also meet the requirements of a college/university course of study by completing one additional mathematics course for which Algebra II is a prerequisite and, effective with the

class entering the ninth grade for the first time in the 2002-03 school year, two credits in the same second language.

- (C) college/university preparation, which shall include:
 - i. four credits in English language arts, which shall be English I, II, III, and IV;
 - ii. three credits in mathematics, which shall be algebra I, algebra II, and geometry or a higher level course for which algebra II is a prerequisite; or integrated mathematics I, II, and III; however, effective with the class entering the ninth grade for the first time in the 2002-03 school year, this requirement shall become four credits in mathematics, which shall be algebra I, algebra II, geometry, and a higher level course for which algebra II is a prerequisite; or integrated mathematics I, II, III, and one course beyond integrated mathematics III;
 - iii. three credits in science, which shall include biology, a physical science, and earth/environmental science;
 - iv. three credits in social studies, which shall be Civics and Economics; U.S. history; and world history;
 - v. one credit in health and physical education;
 - vi. two credits in the same second language or demonstration of proficiency in a language other than English as determined by the LEA;
 - vii. four elective credits, except that effective with the class entering the ninth grade for the first time in the 2002-03 school year, this shall be reduced to three elective credits; and
 - viii. other credits designated by the LEA.
 - (D) occupational, which shall include:
 - i. four credits in English language arts, which shall be Occupational English I, II, III, and IV;
 - ii. three credits in mathematics, which shall be Occupational Mathematics I, II, and III;
 - iii. two credits in science, which shall be Life Skills Science I and II;
 - iv. two credits in social studies, which shall be Government/U.S. History and Self-Advocacy/Problem Solving;
 - v. one credit in health and physical education;
 - vi. six credits in occupational preparation education, which shall be Occupational Preparation I, II, III, IV, 300 hours of school-based training, 240 hours of community-based training, and 360 hours of paid employment;
 - vii. four vocational education elective credits;
 - viii. computer proficiency as specified in the student's IEP;
 - ix. a career portfolio; and
 - x. completion of the student's IEP objectives.
- (2) Effective with the class entering ninth grade for the first time in the 2006-2007 school year, students who are following the career preparation, college technical preparation, or college/university preparation courses of study shall meet the following exit standards:

- (A) successfully complete a senior project that is developed, monitored, and scored within the LEA using state-adopted rubrics; and
 - (B) score at proficiency level III or above on the end-of-course assessment for English I, U.S. History, Biology, Civics and Economics, and Algebra I. A student who does not score at proficiency level III or above on the end-of-course assessment for any of these courses but who passes the course shall be offered the opportunity to retake the assessment no later than three weeks from the receipt of assessment results. If the student does not score at or above proficiency level III on the retest, school officials shall apply the review process described in Rule .0504 of this Section to provide focused intervention, a second retest opportunity, and a review of the student's documentation to determine whether the student has met the exit standard for the course. The principal shall make the final decision as to whether the student has met the exit standard.
- (3) LEAs may count successful completion of course work in the ninth grade at a school system which does not award course units in the ninth grade toward the requirements of this Rule.
 - (4) LEAs may count successful completion of course work in grades 9-12 at a summer school session toward the requirements of this Rule.
 - (5) LEAs may count successful completion of course work in grades 9-12 at an off-campus institution toward the locally-designated electives requirements of this Rule. 23 NCAC 2C .0305 shall govern enrollment in community college institutions.
- (f) Effective with the class of 2001, all students must demonstrate computer proficiency as a prerequisite for high school graduation. The passing scores for this proficiency shall be 47 on the multiple choice test and 49 on the performance test. This assessment shall begin at the eighth grade. A student with disabilities shall demonstrate proficiency by the use of a portfolio if this method is required by the student's IEP.
 - (g) Special needs students as defined by G.S. 115C-109, excluding gifted and pregnant, who do not meet the requirements for a high school diploma shall receive a graduation certificate and shall be allowed to participate in graduation exercises if they meet the following criteria:
 - (1) successful completion of 20 course units by general subject area (4 English, 3 math, 3 science, 3 social studies, 1 health and physical education, and 6 local electives) under paragraph (e) of this Rule. These students are not required to pass the specifically designated courses such as Algebra I, Biology or United States history; and
 - (2) completion of all IEP requirements.

History Note: Authority G.S. 115C-12(9b); 115C-81(b)(4); N.C. Constitution, Article IX, Sec. 5; Eff. December 1, 1999; Amended Eff. January 2, 2006; April 1, 2005; September 1, 2002; December 1, 2001; December 1, 2000.