



Kentucky Department of
E D U C A T I O N

**Minimum High School Graduation Requirements
Frequently Asked Questions
2021**

Graduation Requirements: Frequently Asked Questions

[This document references 704 KAR 3:305: Minimum requirements for high school graduation.](#)

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Acronyms Used in this Document:

AP	Advanced Placement
CAI	Cambridge Advanced International
CPE	Council on Postsecondary Education
CTE	career and technical education
EG	early graduation/early graduate
EOC	end-of-course exams
HAVPA	History and Appreciation of the Visual and Performing Arts
JROTC	Junior Reserves Officers' Training Corps
IB	International Baccalaureate
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individual Education Plan
ILP	Individual Learning Plan
KAS	Kentucky Academic Standards
KBE	Kentucky Board of Education
KDE	Kentucky Department of Education
PE	physical education

Section 1: Definitions

Q: What are the minimum high school graduation requirements?

A: The minimum high school graduation requirements can be found on the [Minimum High School Graduation Requirements webpage](#).

Q: What is Early Graduation?

A: Early Graduation (EG) is a deliberate program for students in grades 9-11 who wish to move on when ready, receive a diploma from their district and be eligible for acceptance into Kentucky public universities and nonprofit independent colleges and universities. This program was established by [KRS 158.142](#), and provides a financial scholarship, known as the Early Graduation Certificate, to support this action. Students participating in the program must meet the requirements set forth by [704 KAR 3:305\(5\)](#), including those listed below.

Students must

- Notify the school principal within the first thirty (30) days of the school year in which they intend to graduate;
- Enter the Early Graduation Program prior to October 1 of the year in which they intend to graduate early;
- Graduate in three years or less (students exceeding three years do not qualify for the incentives identified with the Early Graduation Program);
- Take the state-administered college readiness exam and meet the college readiness exam benchmarks as set by the Council on Postsecondary Education in [13 KAR 2:020](#) for placement in credit-bearing courses without the need for remediation. This exam is currently the ACT; and
- Take and score proficient on all required end-of-course (EOCs) assessments. To meet this requirement, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) will provide EOCs for those students participating in the Early Graduation Program during the 2021-2022 school year.

*For more information about Early Graduation, please review Section 5 of this document and/or the [EG Guidance Document](#).

Q: What are essential workplace ethics?

A: Essential workplace ethics are characteristics critical to success in the workplace. Implementation of essential workplace ethics instructional programs began in the 2019- 2020 school year. [KRS 158.1413](#) states that each student in elementary, middle and high school shall receive essential workplace instruction. By January 2019, each school district must collaborate with its local workforce investment board, in conjunction with local economic development organizations from its state regional sector, and other economic, workforce or industry organizations the workforce investment board deems necessary to establish workplace ethics indicators for middle and high school students aligned with the essential workplace ethics characteristics listed in [KRS 158.1413](#).

Local districts must design and adopt a diploma seal, certificate, card or other identifiable symbol to award students deemed as having minimally demonstrated attainment of the local board's essential workplace ethics indicators. Local districts are responsible for implementing the requirements of this

program and must **report biannually to KDE.**

Q: What is an Individual Education Program?

A: An Individual Education Program or “IEP” is a written statement for a student with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised in accordance with [707 KAR 1:002](#) and [707 KAR 1:320](#).

Section 2: Individual Learning Plans

Q: What is an Individual Learning Plan?

A: The Individual Learning Plan (ILP) is a student-directed, multi-year, dynamic tool that maps academic plans, personal/social growth and career development activities while considering the student's unique, self-defined interests, needs and goals for the attainment of postsecondary success.

ILP implementation supports district and school goals such as completion of the program of study for the student's chosen career and technical education (CTE) pathway, increasing student attendance and engagement, and increasing high school graduation rates.

The development of an ILP is required for ALL students beginning in 6th grade and can be thought of as both an instrument and a process to engage students in planning, while simultaneously deepening their understanding of the relevance of course selections and learning opportunities (in and out of school) aligned with their career interests, postsecondary education/training and attainment of career and life goals. As an instrument, an ILP provides a place to organize and record progress related to academic, personal/social and career development information. As a process, it encourages students to set realistic goals based on individual interests and strengths, while identifying actions necessary to achieve those goals. The ILP process promotes relevant communication between students, school staff, parents and other influential adults. The ILP process also supports school and district improvement efforts to be responsive to students' interests and needs.

Q: What happened to Career Cruising?

A: The Career Cruising software contract ended in June 2018.

Q: What are the minimum requirements for the ILP?

A: All students in grades 6-12 are required to participate in their district's ILP program in order to meet the district's requirements. All districts minimally must meet the requirements indicated in the [ILP self-implementation rubric](#). As a reminder, the rubric contains the minimum requirements for helping students reach their post-secondary plans.

Q: Why is there so much flexibility?

A: Local school districts have the flexibility to design an ILP program or process to best meet the needs of its students. With a well-designed program/process, districts and schools have an opportunity to offer a robust advising system to enable all students in grades 6 to 12 learn about and plan for postsecondary goals.

Q: What does an effective Individual Learning Plan entail? How do we know if our process is effective?

A: Section 2(2) of the minimum requirements for high school graduation regulation, [704 KAR 3:305](#), states that each district should have an ILP team that includes students, parents and school staff in order to properly evaluate an ILP. Districts should seek feedback from these stakeholders annually to ensure their processes hold value and engage their students. School districts also should use the [self-implementation rubric](#) to ensure they have a high quality ILP that meets the requirements in [704 KAR 3:305](#).

Section 3: Minimum High School Graduation Requirements for Students Entering High School in 2018-2019 and Prior

Q: Have the minimum high school graduation requirements changed for students entering on or before the first day of the 2018-2019 school year?

A: No.

Q: What are the minimum high school graduation requirements for students who entered high school on or before the first day of the 2018-2019 school year?

A: See the first row of the *Minimum High School [Graduation Requirements Freshmen Classes 2018-2019 through 2020-2021](#) chart.*

Q: Are course standards documents still available for the minimum high school graduation requirements for students entering on or before the first day of the 2018-2019 school year?

A: Yes. Course standards documents are available on the [Course Standards webpage](#). Courses that are no longer a part of the new graduation requirements will continue to appear on this page until most students who entered high school on or before the first day of the 2018- 2019 academic year graduate.

Section 4: Minimum High School Graduation Requirements for Students Entering High School in 2019-2020, 2020-2021 and After

General Questions

Q: Are there different requirements for freshmen entering high school in 2019-2020 vs. 2020-2021?

A: Just one! Students entering high school in the 2020-2021 school year must successfully complete a course or program in financial literacy.

Q: What are the new graduation requirements?

A: The new graduation requirements can be found in the [Minimum Graduation Requirements For Students Entering High School in 2019-2020 and Thereafter](#) chart.

Q: Where can I find the most current information?

A: *The Minimum High School [Graduation Requirements Freshmen Classes 2018-2019 through 2020-2021](#) chart* provides guidance that offers you a simplified way of understanding the minimum graduation requirements for students entering high school in and before 2018-2019, during and after 2019-2020, and during and after the 2020-2021 school year.

Q: Can schools offer online or virtual courses that meet minimum graduation requirements?

A: Yes. A high school student's enrollment should be captured in Infinite Campus via the course setup. Students taking courses online should be enrolled in a course with a state course code that corresponds to the content of the online course they are taking (for example, Algebra 1 should be coded 270304 Algebra 1). The teaching method should be set to either 10-Digital Learning Provider or 14-Credit Recovery-Digital Learning Provider. Per the [Digital Learning Guidelines](#), courses provided by digital learning providers should cover the standards aligned to the course. Any standards not covered by the digital learning provider should be supplemented by an on-site classroom teacher. You may also categorize the course as 06-Blended Learning or 05-Online under Instructional Settings in Infinite Campus.

Q: Can a career and technical education (CTE) teacher teach a mathematics, science or social studies course?

A: CTE teachers may teach a mathematics, science or social studies course if they are team teaching the course with a certified content teacher (certifications for courses can be checked in the [Searchable State Course Code Database](#)). Students may get credit for both the content area and CTE pathway in this scenario.

Interdisciplinary career and technical/core academic courses require that a teacher certified in the content area and a CTE teacher certified in the respective career and technical area work together in planning, teaching and evaluating student learning to ensure all aspects of the *Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS)* for the specific academic course is addressed. The [Utilizing Interdisciplinary Courses in Compliance with Highly Qualified Teacher Policies](#) document can be accessed for additional information.

Q: What are foundational courses and personalized courses?

A: Foundational courses consists of 10 courses that all Kentucky students must take to graduate from high school. Personalized courses are a minimum of 12 courses every Kentucky student must take based on his or her ILP and individual needs.

More information on foundational and personalized courses can be found on the [Minimum Graduation Requirements For Students Entering High School in 2019-2020 and Thereafter chart](#).

Q : 704 KAR 3:305 states that 3rd and 4th years of English and mathematics can be personalized. Is this really the case?

A: With the implementation of Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), as described in 704 KAS 3:305, schools have the flexibility to offer 3rd and 4th year English and mathematics that meet the needs of students and incorporate the remaining required KAS of that content. The content for the credit must be taught by a teacher certified in the corresponding content area.

Q: How do we know what standards should be covered in a required course?

A: Course standards documents are available for all required courses on the [Course Standards webpage](#). All courses must be aligned to the *Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS)*.

Q: Will there be documents available detailing the standards that must be covered during personalized course options for the different content areas?

A: Yes. Documents are available on the [Course Standards webpage](#) that detail the KAS required through a combination of foundational and personalized course options for the different content areas.

Q: For students who do not meet the college readiness benchmarks for English, reading and/or mathematics, what courses qualify as transitional or intervention courses?

A: Districts and schools have the autonomy to develop and offer intervention courses to meet the needs of their students.

Q: Where can I find a list of certifications that allow a teacher to teach a certain course?

A: The certifications that allow a teacher to teach a certain course can be found in the details box for each course listed in the [Searchable State Course Code Database](#).

Q: Why do some districts have different graduation requirements than the minimum graduation requirements listed on the KDE website?

A: The state sets minimum graduation requirements, but districts may include any requirements over and above the minimum requirements the state has set.

Q: Do private schools need to follow the state's minimum graduation requirements?

A: No. However, students wishing to be admitted to a public postsecondary institution in Kentucky are still required to meet the same pre-college standards as public school students. Therefore, students must be afforded the opportunity to complete the required pre-college curriculum as established in [13 KAR 2:020](#).

Q: The minimum graduation requirements state that students must show demonstrated performance-based competency in technology. What are those requirements?

A: A district may create its own competency requirements based on the [KAS for Technology](#).

Q: Are students required to have 120 hours of seat time in order to receive credit for a course?

A: According to [704 KAR 3:305](#), Section 5 (1), a board of education may award credit toward high school graduation for satisfactory demonstration of learning based on content standards described in the *Kentucky Academic Standards* and a rigorous performance standards policy established by the board of education. A school shall establish performance descriptors and evaluation procedures to determine if the content and performance standards have been met. Additional information can be found in the [KDE Performance-Based Credit Guidance Document](#).

Q: Do foundational courses such as English 1, English 2, Algebra 1 and/or Geometry need to be taken in sequence or can they be taken out of order?

A: While courses are recommended to be taken in a specific order to optimize student learning and outcomes, a student who does not pass one of these courses may move on to the next course while completing the course he or she did not pass. If the local school district has a policy pertaining to the sequencing of courses, then this policy must be followed.

English

Q: Can students receive one of their required English credits for taking the English or reading transitional course?

A: Students who do not meet benchmarks in reading (20) or English (18) on their ACT may take a transitional course or intervention before they graduate. The English or reading transitional course may be embedded into an English course or courses. However, a transitional course in English or reading does NOT satisfy the English credit for graduation. It is important to remember that this transitional intervention should be measured and monitored to address the student's needs around college readiness in reading and likewise in English.

Mathematics

Q: Algebra 2 is no longer required, so do these standards still need to be taught?

A: Although a course entitled Algebra 2 is no longer a requirement, there are additional standards not aligned to Algebra 1 or Geometry courses still required for all students. These remaining required standards must be taught during the 3rd course, the 4th course or through a combination of 3rd/4th courses. For guidance regarding the required *KAS for Mathematics*, consult the [High School Mathematics Matrix Standards by Course for 2019-2020 and Beyond](#) document. This document illustrates the standards covered in Algebra 1 and Geometry and the additional standards which then would need to be covered in the 3rd and/or 4th courses.

Schools now have flexibility as to how 3rd/4th courses will address those required standards. Schools can

continue to offer Algebra 2 courses to cover those remaining required standards; however, Algebra 2 is no longer the only path for students to follow that will cover those standards. At the local level, educators may choose to develop a crosswalk that shows how all standards will be met through their specific courses. Also, note that districts can choose to go beyond the minimum high school graduation requirements, such as requiring Algebra 2 for all students, if they choose to do so.

Q: Can any mathematics course be used as a 3rd and 4th year personalized mathematics course?

A: Any high school mathematics course outside of the two foundational courses (Algebra 1 and Geometry), can be used as a personalized 3rd or 4th year course provided that the remaining required *KAS for Mathematics* are completely addressed during the 3rd year course, the 4th year course or through the combination of the 3rd/4th year courses. For guidance regarding the specific *KAS for Mathematics* that need to be addressed, refer to the [High School Mathematics Matrix Standards by Course for 2019-2020 and Beyond](#).

Keep in mind that how schools/districts cover those remaining required standards will be a local decision. Schools/districts may continue to teach those standards within an Algebra 2 course, but since that may look different around the state based upon the local decisions made, those standards may be listed as “additional required standards” as opposed to being labeled under a specific course heading such as Algebra 2.

Q: Can we use Financial Literacy as a 3rd or 4th year mathematics course?

A: Any mathematics course outside of the two foundational courses (Algebra 1 and Geometry), can be used as a personalized 3rd or 4th year course provided that the remaining required *KAS for Mathematics* are completely addressed during the 3rd year course, the 4th year course or through the combination of the 3rd/4th year courses. For guidance regarding the specific *KAS for Mathematics* that need to be addressed, see [the High School Mathematics Matrix Standards by Course for 2019-2020 and Beyond document](#).

See the [Financial Literacy section of this document](#) for more information on this topic.

Q: Can transition courses count as mathematics requirements?

A: Students who do not meet the benchmark in mathematics (19) on their ACT may take a transitional course or intervention before they graduate. The mathematics transitional course does **NOT** satisfy the mathematics credit for graduation. Furthermore, it is important to remember this transitional intervention should be measured and monitored to address students’ needs around college readiness in relation to mathematics.

Q: If high school level courses, such as Algebra I, Geometry or Algebra II are taken in middle school or through Virtual High School, will a high school credit be given and will the course be accepted toward graduation?

A: According to [KRS 158.622\(3\)\(b\)](#), each school district shall accept for credit toward graduation and completion of high school course requirements an advanced placement, a high school equivalent, or a Kentucky Virtual High School course taken by a student in grades 5, 6, 7, or 8 if that student attains performance levels expected of high school students in that district as determined by achieving a score of "3" or higher on a College Board Advanced Placement examination or a grade of "B" or better in a high

school equivalent or a Kentucky Virtual High School course.

Science

Q: The state assessment for accountability in science occurs in grade 11, which would be the third year of high school. How can we personalize a third credit in science while still ensuring students have had meaningful learning experiences around all of the KAS?

A: Third year courses can be personalized to meet the needs of students based on their Individual Learning Plans. These personalized 3rd year science courses must ensure that students have access to all remaining KAS for this subject that are not associated with the identified foundational courses. These remaining KAS should be embedded within the curriculum so all students are prepared for the state-required assessments.

Q: Which science courses meet minimum graduation requirements?

A: [704 KAR 3:305](#) states that students have three (3) credits two (2) of which incorporate lab-based scientific investigation experiences) and include the content contained in the *Kentucky Academic Standards for Science*. Several possible sequences are available. When determining what courses a school/district requires for graduation, it is important to ensure that all students have access to and are taught all *Kentucky Academic Standards for Science*.

Q: Is there a sequence that schools could offer that would provide access to all the *Kentucky Academic Standards for Science*?

A: Yes, there are several offerings that schools could give that provide access to all the *Kentucky Academic Standards for Science*: Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Earth/Space (note: this is a four-course offering) 2. Biology, Introduction to Chemistry and Physics, and Earth/Space 3. Biology with Earth/Space, Chemistry with Earth/Space, and Physics with Earth/Space 4. Integrated Science I, Integrated Science II, and Integrated Science III 5. Conceptual Science I, Conceptual Science II, and Conceptual Science III

While the first three offerings may be in any sequence, Integrated Science and Conceptual Science should be provided in the order given to ensure students have the proper background knowledge to be successful at the next level of the sequence. In addition, it is not recommended that schools offer an Integrated Science or Conceptual Science course with traditional science courses.

Social Studies

Q: The state assessment for accountability in social studies occurs in grade 11, which would be the third year of high school. How can we personalize a third credit in social studies while still ensuring students have had meaningful learning experiences aligned to the KAS?

A: Third year courses can be personalized to meet the needs of students based on their Individual Learning Plans (ILPs). These personalized 3rd year social studies courses must ensure that students have access to the KAS for this subject. The *KAS for Social Studies* should be embedded within the curriculum so all students are prepared for the state-required assessments.

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Q: How should districts configure the credit bearing social studies course offerings?

A: Districts and schools can arrange the essential high school social studies content within the three-credit requirement to best meet the needs of their students. A local board of education may substitute an integrated, applied, interdisciplinary, or higher-level course for a required course if the alternative course provides rigorous content and addresses the same academic expectations.

Q: What must be included in the three credits required for social studies?

A: The reference to the three-credit requirement refers to this statement: three credits for social studies are required for high school graduation. These credits must incorporate the inquiry practices of questioning, investigating, using evidence and communicating conclusions and the four social studies disciplines of civics, economics, geography and history and the standards therein. Districts and schools can arrange the essential content within the three-credit requirement to best meet their need. Course codes aligned to standards have been provided to meet a traditional approach as well as an integrated approach. Both the traditional approach and the integrated approach allow for students to cover all adopted KAS during the course sequence.

Physical Education/Health Education

Q: Can Junior Reserves Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) count as the .5 P.E. credit requirement?

A: Per [KRS 156.160](#), JROTC courses can count as a P.E. course.

Q: Must CPR be taught in PE or Health?

A: Yes. [KRS 158.302](#), Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation Training Required for High School Students, establishes that every public high school shall provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation training to students as part of the health course or the physical education course that is required for high school graduation or the Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps course that meets the physical education requirement. The training shall: (a) Be based on the American Heart Association's Guidelines for CPR and Emergency Cardiovascular Care or other nationally recognized, evidenced based guidelines; (b) Incorporate psychomotor skills training to support cognitive learning; and (c) Make students aware of the purpose of an automated external defibrillator and its ease and safety of use. **The training does not have to be provided by a certified instructor or result in students being certified in cardiopulmonary resuscitation.**

Q: Can JROTC count as the .5 Health credit requirement?

A: JROTC may only count as a Health credit if all *KAS for Health Education* are addressed and the teacher holds the appropriate certification to teach a health education course.

Q: Can marching band count as the .5 PE credit requirement?

A: In order for a district to determine if a course can be substituted for a high school graduation requirement, [704 KAR 3:305](#) specifies that a local board of education can examine the possibility of substituting an integrated, applied, interdisciplinary, occupational, technical or higher-level course for a required course if the alternative course provides rigorous content aligned to the *KAS for Physical Education*. In order to

award performance-based credit, the district must have a performance-based policy in place. Whether a specific course or experience may be substituted for a required physical education course depends on the content contained within this course or experience. For example, marching band only may be substituted for a required physical education course if all standards found in the *KAS for Physical Education* are addressed and the teacher holds the appropriate certification to teach a physical education course. Additionally, districts must define how they will assess the standards and related performance descriptors.

Q: Can students who participate in sports have the option of counting that as their .5 PE credit requirement?

A: In order to award performance-based credit, the district must have a performance-based policy in place. Whether a specific course or experience may be substituted for a required physical education course depends on the content contained within this course or experience. For example, sports participation only may be substituted for a required physical education course if all standards found in the *KAS for Physical Education* are addressed and the teacher holds the appropriate certification to teach a physical education course. Additionally, districts must define how they will assess the standards and related performance descriptors. For additional clarity, please consult Section 7 of [704 KAR 3:305](#), the Minimum high school graduation requirements regulation.

Technology

Q: How do students demonstrate performance-based competency in technology?

A: There are multiple ways this requirement can be satisfied through performance-based demonstrations by students. In order to award successful performance-based competencies, districts (and schools) must establish a policy for student demonstration in performance-based competency in technology. Performance-based competency in technology may be awarded for courses, credits, or programs with the following characteristics:

- technology standards-based student technology leadership program(s), work-based learning experiences including internship, cooperative-learning experience, technology-related CTE pathway completion (including relevant certifications), technology-related apprenticeship, or other supervised learning experiences in the school and the community where learning with technology is demonstrated.
- technology standards-based portfolios, a collection of shared student-created digital products that demonstrate performance-based competency in technology (transformative learning with technology), including 8th grade, senior year or capstone projects
- course work and/or structured content that leads to demonstration and performance of learning competencies in technology
 - technology standards-based online or other technology-mediated courses
 - technology standards-based dual credit or other equivalency courses
 - technology standards-based recognized certifications

Q: Does a Computer Science course have to be offered to satisfy the technology component of the graduation requirements?

A: No. Learning computer science is not a minimum high school graduation requirement.

Q: Are there technology standards that must be addressed to meet the technology component of the minimum graduation requirements (demonstrated performance-based competency in technology)?

A: Yes. Kentucky officially passed the [Kentucky Academic Standards for Technology Grades Kindergarten Through Twelve](#) in 2021. The technology standards are broad and should lead students toward competencies that highlight learning with technology. These competencies include digital literacy skills demonstrating the responsible use of appropriate technology to communicate, solve problems, access, manage, integrate, evaluate and create information to improve learning in all subject areas. The *KAS for Technology*, based on the International Society for Technology in Education Student Standards, provide a framework for integrating technology into all content areas and reflect the basic digital skills required for each student to be competitive in the global economy. The main concepts delivered through the KAS for Technology push for students to demonstrate digital competencies as: computational thinkers, creative communicators, digital citizens, empowered learners, global collaborators, innovative designers, and knowledge constructors.

For students to attain the required technology competencies, it is essential they have access to technology during the school day at all grade levels. Instruction should provide opportunities for students to gain and demonstrate technology skills that build throughout their K-12 educational experiences.

Q: If a Computer Science class is offered, does it have to count as an elective?

A: Based on course standards, the teacher of record, and district board decisions, a computer science course CAN qualify as an elective science course or as a 3rd or 4th mathematics personalized course if the KAS for those content areas are met. Many computer science courses fit in career pathways as well. If these classes are part of the pathway and not used as a personalized science or mathematics class, they would be considered electives.

Virtual Courses

Q: Are all virtual courses considered performance-based?

A: No. Performance-based courses (PBC) are often connected to a lack of Carnegie units (defined as at least 120 hours of instructional time in one subject) and defined as credits earned by a student outside of the traditional structure of a 120-hour instructional course. Virtual courses may or may not be offered in a traditional, 120-hour instructional course.

Q: What guidance/support can KDE provide to districts on alternate ways technology can serve as curriculum/assist in content areas without certified teachers.

A: [KRS 156.395](#) defines instructional materials as tools that are used to facilitate student learning as
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defined in administrative regulation. [704 KAR 3:455](#) defines instructional resources as any print, non-print, or electronic medium designed to assist student learning.

[KRS 160.345 \(2\)\(g\)](#) establishes that school-based decision making (SBDM) councils are responsible for determining which textbooks and other instructional materials shall be used in the schools. The councils provide this information to their local boards of education, and the local boards then determine the allocation of funding for instructional resources to individual schools based upon need. Thus policies and procedures outlining the processes for instructional materials review and purchasing are developed at the school level. The local SBDM council and local board of education establish appropriate school and district policies governing online course enrollment, parameters, course credits, etc.

Each digital learning resource, online and blended learning course must meet or exceed and be aligned in scope and sequence to the approved Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS) in [704 KAR 3:303](#) and [704 KAR 3:305](#) Chapter 8. The local school district assures that all students have had access and opportunity to learn the standards contained in the KAS (General Assurance 40). When appropriate, these resources and courses align with Kentucky course descriptions and bear course code assignments established by [704 KAR 3:540](#).

Digital learning content may be obtained from a vendor, built by a highly qualified content teacher, or a combination of both. A content appropriate, highly qualified teacher should review and endorse all digital learning resources, online and blended course content. Online or blended courses should be reviewed by a local review committee (content specific highly qualified teacher, administrative designee, district technology coordinator designee and a curriculum/instructional coach if available) before enrolling students in the courses. Currently, basal textbooks (print or digital) or individualized learning programs shall follow state guidelines of review and notification as established in [KRS 156.395-476](#) and [704 KAR 3:455](#).

The local school district certifies that the textbook/instructional materials purchasing plans for all schools serving grades P-8 have been approved by the appropriate school councils and the local board of education and are on file in the district office. The plans address the requirements as stated in [KRS 156.439](#) and [704 KAR 3:455](#) (Textbook and Instructional Materials Assurance 1).

Online courses have components that provide access to the course content anytime, anyplace and at the student's own pace. Online courses and digital learning content offer students personalized learning, as well as college- and career-prep courses in a variety of subjects to meet student need regardless of physical location. From a structural and growth perspective, student learning experiences are personalized based on the following: student's diagnostic data, learning style, and learning needs which allow for student choice, voice, and pace. Structures should be in place in each school where online courses and digital content is implemented to achieve such diagnostics and ensure learning progression. Additionally, credit may be given based on performance or seat time. Performance-based classes award academic credit when learning is successfully demonstrated regardless of the number of instructional hours ([704 KAR 3:305](#) Section 5). Additionally, the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) has approved a process where districts may request a waiver to specific sections of the Pupil Attendance Regulation to allow for students (K-12) who are enrolled full-time in a virtual school, program or academy to be counted in attendance for the 2021-2022 school year. This waiver request allows districts to count

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students enrolled full-time in a virtual school to be considered “in-attendance” for purposes of recording daily attendance.

If an online course has been assigned to a highly qualified teacher, then a building level course steward may oversee the implementation of the course if provided within the school building. Teacher course stewards are trained in the delivery of online/blended learning, embedding the principles of the [Model Curriculum Framework](#). As detailed in [Kentucky’s Digital Learning Guidelines](#), students taking an online course or blended learning course have access to a highly qualified teacher or content mentor for two-way communication, collaboration, questions and/or tutoring.

Career Studies

Q: How do I find the standards for Career Studies?

A: [Look no further and click on this link!](#)

Financial Literacy

Q: How can students meet the requirement for financial literacy?

A: Schools may choose to offer different options, depending on a student’s ILP.

- Students choosing a Business or Family and Consumer Science pathway may take a course such as:
 - Money Skills – 201010
 - Personal Finance – 060170
- Students may take one of the following courses as a math credit:
 - Money Skills for Mathematics – 201011
 - Personal Finance (Mathematics Credit) – 080719
- Districts may partner with postsecondary institutions to offer a dual credit or articulated
- credit.
- Schools may develop a program, or combination of course offerings in a variety of instructional formats (e.g., modules, online learning).
- Schools also may choose to implement the standards systematically by section through academic advising or enrichment sessions.
- Please take a look at the [Financial Literacy Standards found within the KAS for Career Studies](#) along with the [Financial Literacy Resources](#)

World Languages

Q: Are world languages included in the minimum graduation requirements?

A: No. World languages have never been part of the minimum graduation requirements as described in [704 KAR 3:305. Pre-college curriculum](#) as specified by the CPE requires two units of a world language or competency equivalent. World languages also may be included as part of a student’s required personalized credits. Local boards of education may include a world language requirement as part of local graduation requirements. Please refer to the [KAS for World Language](#) when designing programs.

Q: Can American Sign Language (ASL) count as a world language credit?

A: Yes. The state of Kentucky officially [recognizes ASL as a world language per KRS 164.4785](#), and the Kentucky Department of Education officially recognizes ASL credits as an elective in High School. [Click here to learn more about the ASL standards and the ASL Survival Kit.](#)

Visual and Performing Arts

Q: Does an art/music/theater/dance class count as the high school graduation requirement?

A: A visual and performing arts course that shows continuity with the student's ILP and includes the standards contained in the [KAS for Visual and Performing Arts](#) may count for the visual and performing arts credit. A visual and/or performing arts course that shows continuity with the student's ILP and includes the standards contained in the *Kentucky Academic Standards* for a specialized art form also may count for the visual and performing arts credit. Recall that the ILP is iterative and can be updated at any point in the student's high school career.

Q: Do students have to take a survey course of the visual and performing arts in order to graduate?

A: Course code 500111 High School Survey Course of the Visual and Performing Arts is one option for the visual and performing arts requirement. Students also may receive credit through the completion of a visual and performing arts course that covers the *KAS for Visual and Performing Arts* and is based on the student's [ILP](#).

Q: Can students receive visual and performing arts credit through another content area course such as social studies or world language?

A: No. The minimum high school requirements [704 KAR 3:305](#) allows for a credit to be earned in the visual and performing arts through the completion of the survey course or a standards-based arts course that is based on a student's ILP.

Q: Can Introduction to Media Arts Course (code 480901) count for the Visual and Performing Arts requirement?

A: A visual and/or performing arts course that shows continuity with the student's Individual Learning Plan and includes the standards contained in the *KAS for Visual and Performing Arts* may count for the visual and performing arts credit.

Section 5: Early Graduation

Q: Does SB 158 impact the Early Graduation Program?

A: No, the Early Graduation Program will stay in effect. [KRS 158.142](#) establishes that Early Graduation is a deliberate program for students in grades 9-11 who wish to move on when ready, receive a diploma from the district and be eligible for acceptance into Kentucky public universities and non-profit independent colleges and universities. The program provides a financial scholarship, known as the Early Graduation Certificate, to support this action. The statute took effect in the June 2013. Section 5 of 704 KAR 3:305 will be reviewed and possibly amended but is still presently a program for students to graduate early.

Q: What are the minimum requirements for the Early Graduation Program?

A: Currently, all early graduation students minimally must meet benchmarks on the college readiness exam, currently ACT (English 18), Mathematics (19), Reading (20) and achieve proficiency on four EOC exams (Algebra II, Biology, English II and U.S. History).

EOC exams will continue to be offered for early graduates in the 2021-2022 school year. Early graduates also will have to meet ACT benchmarks established by the CPE, as established in [13 KAR 2:020](#).

It is important to remember [704 KAR 3:305](#) also states that a student who has indicated an intent to graduate early may participate in the student's state administration of the college readiness exam prior to the junior year, if needed.

Q: Must students in the Early Graduation Program meet all minimum high school graduation requirements?

A: No. After passing ACT benchmarks and EOC exams (during or prior to the 2020-2021 school year), the student may graduate early.

Q: Can a student who goes beyond three years, after June 30, be an early graduate?

A: While district policy may allow students, who have passed all minimum high school graduation requirements, to graduate after June 30st of their 3rd year, these students would not qualify for the Early Graduation Certificate nor the Early Graduation Scholarship. Each public high school shall report all Early Graduation Scholarship Certificate recipients by June 30st for the previous academic year to the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority.

Q: How is funding affected by early graduation versus graduating early?

A: For Support Education Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK) funding purposes, students who complete the early graduation program **would** appear in the Aggregate Average Daily Attendance (AADA) the following year since SEEK base guarantee funding is based on prior year attendance. As a result, the district will get half of the base per pupil guarantee set in the budget for SEEK.

For students who graduate early without being a part of the Early Graduation Program, the district would only receive SEEK funding (the following year) for the attendance funding generated by the days attended by the student.

Q: What if a 3rd-year student meets all minimum graduation requirements, passes all EOC exam benchmarks and ACT benchmarks, but one?

A: There is currently only one state-supported administration of the ACT. Students who do not meet the required benchmarks (set by the Council on Postsecondary Education) would need to re-test on a national exam day (at their own expense or with use of a fee waiver) and meet the benchmark not originally met in order to remain eligible for the Early Graduation Certificate and Early Graduation Scholarship.

If a student misses all but one EOC benchmarks, there is an appeal opportunity for otherwise exceptional students who experienced an extenuating circumstance during testing that could have contributed to their less than typical performance. If the student meets that condition, he/she can appeal to their superintendent for one retake of an EOC exam.

If students ultimately cannot pass that final benchmark but meet all other minimum high school graduation requirements, districts may choose to allow them to graduate unless there is a district policy that does not allow this. The student will not be eligible for the Early Graduation Certificate nor the Early Graduation Scholarship, however.

Q: Could a student who doesn't pass an ACT benchmark use his or her qualifying Kentucky Online Testing (KYOTE) benchmark instead and still qualify for the Early Graduation Scholarship?

A: No. [704 KAR 3:305](#) requires the use of a college readiness exam (i.e. ACT). KYOTE is a college placement exam. The law states that early graduation students shall, "... meet the college readiness exam benchmarks established by the Council on Postsecondary Education in [13 KAR 2:020](#) for placement in credit-bearing courses without the need for remediation." Therefore, the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) does not recognize KYOTE scores and only uses ACT benchmarks as qualifying college readiness exam benchmarks.

Q: How are EOC exams ordered?

A: EOC exams are ordered by the district assessment coordinator (DAC). The DAC runs an Ad Hoc order report in Infinite Campus, adds assessments needed and e-mails the report to shara.savage@education.ky.gov. Detailed directions for this process are located on the EOC webpage of the KDE website.

Q: Will state-required assessments replace EOC exams for early graduates?

A: Not at this time. We will continue to use EOCs and ACT benchmarks for this program.

Q: What do school counselors absolutely need to be aware of in terms of early graduation?

A: All Early Graduation Program students must declare their intent to graduate early by October 1 of the year they intend to graduate. [This form](#) must be completed by the student, his or her parent/guardian, the principal and the superintendent.

All early graduates must have access to a robust advising program. The original intent of this program was to help students matriculate to college earlier. As such, KDE must ensure early graduate students are aware of all college admission requirements and they are given ample opportunities to satisfy those requirements while in high school.

Section 6: Substituting Courses

Q: Can a district substitute a course for a high school graduation requirement?

A: Yes. Substitution of a course is possible, but rigor should not be sacrificed. Section 6 of the regulation states:

Section 6.(1) A local board of education may substitute an integrated, applied, interdisciplinary, occupational, technical, or higher-level course for a required course if the alternative course provides rigorous content. (2) For students with disabilities, a local board of education may substitute a functional, integrated, applied, interdisciplinary, occupational, technical, or higher-level course for a required course if the alternative course provides rigorous content. These shall be based on grade-level content standards and may be modified to allow for a narrower breadth, depth, or complexity of the general grade-level content standards. [Section 6. (1) A student who satisfactorily completes the requirements of this administrative regulation and additional requirements as may be imposed by a local board of education or meets the requirements for early graduation as outlined in Section 9 of this administrative regulation shall be awarded a graduation diploma. (2) The local board of education shall award the diploma.]

All classes used for substitution also must be based on grade-level content standards. How students achieve or master those standards may be differentiated to personalize education for students with IEPs.

Q: Can English 1 or 2 be substituted with a different course?

A: Beginning in the 2019-2020 school year, English 1 and 2 may be substituted; however, the substituted course(s) must cover the *KAS for Reading and Writing*, grade 9-10 standards, for reading literature, reading informational text, composition and language. The *KAS for Reading and Writing* outlines the minimum content standards Kentucky students should learn in each grade-level English course; specifically, the standards establish what students should know and be able to do at the conclusion of a course. Thus, the standards address what is to be learned but do not address how learning experiences are to be designed or what resources should be used.

Q: Can Algebra 1 or Geometry be substituted with a different course?

A: Algebra 1 and Geometry may be substituted, however, the substituted course(s) must cover the *KAS for Mathematics* that have been tagged as Algebra 1 and Geometry in the [High School Mathematics Standards by Course](#) document. The *KAS for Mathematics* outlines the minimum content Kentucky students should learn.

These standards are not a set of instructional or assessment tasks, rather statements of what students should be able to do after instruction. Decisions on how best to help students meet these program goals are left to local school districts and teachers. The *KAS for Mathematics* do not dictate curriculum or teaching methods; learning opportunities and pathways will continue to vary across schools and school systems and educators should make every effort to meet the needs of individual students, based on their pedagogical and professional impressions and information.

Section 7: Performance-Based Credit (PBC)

Q: How is a course being taken for performance-based credit set up in Infinite Campus?

A: For specific guidance on setting up PBC courses in Infinite Campus, consult the [Virtual and Performance Training Document](#).

Q: Can districts offer PBC?

A: A district must have a policy showing how PBC will be implemented and how credits will be awarded. Schools should consider seeking approval from the local district prior to offering or awarding PBC. Additional information specific to districts and schools should be considered as follows:

Districts:

The local board of education must establish a policy for a PBC system that includes the following:

- The conditions under which each high school may grant PBC and the related performance descriptors and assessments;
- Objective grading and reporting procedures;
- The KAS for the corresponding content area;
- The extent to which state-provided assessments will be used in the local PBC system;
- The ability for students to demonstrate proficiency and earn credit for learning acquired outside of school or in prior learning;
- Criteria to ensure internships, cooperative learning experiences and other learning experiences in the school and community are designed to further student progress toward his or her ILP, supervised by an instructor certified in that content area, aligned with state and local content and performance standards, performance descriptors and evaluation procedures to determine if the content and performance standards have been met;
- Standards-based course work that constitutes satisfactory demonstration of learning in any high school course;
- Standards-based course work that constitutes satisfactory demonstration of learning in a course for which the student failed to earn credit when the course was taken previously;
- Standards-based portfolios, senior year or capstone projects;
- Standards-based online or other technology mediated courses;
- Standards-based dual credit or other equivalency courses; or
- Standards-based internship, cooperative learning experience or other supervised experience in the school or the community.

At the school-level, there must be a plan to show how district policy will be implemented. Schools must document the evidence needed in their PBC plan. The content for the credit must be taught by a teacher certified in the corresponding content area.

All schools must be able to offer evidence that students met all content standards.

Section 8: District-Awarded Diploma

Q: What does the regulation mean by “A student who satisfactorily completes the requirements of this administrative regulation ...”?

A: A district shall grant any student a diploma once he or she achieves all minimum high school graduation requirements. Districts also may choose to impose additional requirements before awarding diplomas. Additionally, a district shall grant a diploma to any student flagged for intent to graduate early once they have achieved passing benchmark scores as indicated by CPE on their ACT and successfully passed the EOC exams.

Q: When is the last day I can report a student graduating for a diploma with his/her graduating class?

A: June 30st is the date we are shooting for with kids who don't need summer school. July 31st is the absolute last day to report a summer graduate in order to get credit for him/her graduating with his/her class.

Section 9: Special Recognition

Q: What are the limitations for recognizing students?

A: There are no limitations. Students benefit from special recognition as a result of their diverse accomplishments. However, the decision on whether to award special recognitions is made by local districts.

Section 10: Students with Disabilities

Q: Are students with disabilities required to meet the minimum high school graduation requirements?

A: Yes. Any student earning a regular diploma must meet the minimum high school graduation requirements.

Students eligible to receive special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) are required to meet the graduation requirements prescribed by [704 KAR 3:305](#). However, students with disabilities are entitled to the services and supports set in their Individual Education Programs (IEPs) as required under the IDEA.

Q: How does the Admissions and Release Committee (ARC) ensure that graduation requirements are being met?

A: The IEP is developed by the ARC. The ARC must review a student's IEP and progress at least once a year but may meet as often as necessary. The ARC determines how to best meet the established goals of the IEP and graduation requirements.

Q: How does the requirement for transition services in the Individual Learning Plan (ILP) correspond to the requirement for transition services in the IEP?

A: Nothing in the graduation requirements displaces the rights of a student with an IEP, and this includes transition services outlined in [707 KAR 1:320](#).

While every student must have an ILP that addresses transition requirements, students with IEPs must also have a statement of the transition service needs that includes postsecondary goals based on age-appropriate transition assessments related to education, employment, training and independent living skills. The statement of transition services requirement of the IEP has not changed. The IEP transition services provisions take precedence over the ILP transition requirements for the student.

Q: Do students with disabilities have to pass the civics exam in order to graduate?

A: Yes. [KRS 158.141](#) requires all students seeking to earn a diploma to pass the civics exam. Local boards must prepare and approve a test. Students may take the test as many times as necessary and must answer at least sixty percent (60%) of the questions correctly. If a student passed a similar test within the previous five years, the student does not have to take the civics test. Appropriate accommodations for testing as established by a student's IEP are required by the IDEA and defined in [KRS 158.281](#) or by a Section 504 Plan as defined in [KRS 156.027](#).

Q: Do students with disabilities have to complete a course or program in financial literacy in order to graduate?

A: Yes. [KRS 158.1411](#) requires that, beginning with the entering 9th-grade class of the 2020-2021 school year, successful completion of one or more courses or programs that meet the financial literacy standards will be a graduation requirement for all students, including those students with disabilities pursuing early graduation per [KRS 158.142](#). The Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS) in Career Studies and Financial Literacy can be found in [704 KAR 8:080](#).

Q: Are students with disabilities required to be assessed through the state assessment?

A: Yes. Federal regulation [34 CFR § 200.6](#), "Inclusion of all Students," requires that a student with a disability

working toward a diploma must be assessed with an assessment aligned with the KASs for the grade in which the student is enrolled. As part of Kentucky's assessment system, districts and schools must provide appropriate accommodations for each student with a disability; for example, the ability to use assistive technology consistent with nationally recognized accessibility standards necessary to measure the academic achievement of the student.

Q: Do the minimum graduation requirements apply to those students participating in the Alternate Assessment?

A: No. [KRS 156.160\(1\)\(e\)](#) governs the eligibility for an alternative high school diploma for students with disabilities whose IEP indicates that, in accordance with 20 U.S.C. sec. 1414(d)(1)(A):

- The student cannot participate in the regular statewide assessment; and
- An appropriate alternate assessment has been selected for the student based upon a modified curriculum and an individualized course of study.

[KRS 158.140](#) governs the classifications and awarding of diplomas. Upon successful completion of all state and local board requirements, the student shall receive:

- (a) A diploma indicating graduation from high school; or
- (b) An alternative high school diploma if the student has a disability and has completed modified curriculum and an individualized course of study pursuant to requirements established by the Kentucky Board of Education in accordance with [KRS 156.160](#).

Only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities (i.e., less than 1 percent of the total student population statewide), for whom traditional assessments would be an inappropriate measure of progress, may take Kentucky's Alternate Assessment Aligned with Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (AA-AAAS). The AA-AAAS was developed to provide schools and programs with a valid and reliable means of assessing the instruction provided. Kentucky's AA-AAAS continues to meet federal requirements outlined in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

The Act requires that only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities may take an AA-AAAS and limits the number of students that a state may assess with an AA-AAAS to no more than 1 percent of all students in the grades assessed in a state. ([U.S. Department of Education Policy Memo to States, August 27, 2018](#)). Whether a student should participate in the AA-AAAS is a decision made by the student's ARC.

Only students completing the corresponding modified curriculum and individualized course of study, aligned to the KAS and participating in the AA-AAAS, are eligible to earn an alternative high school diploma.

Appendix

Further information is available on the following topics:

- Accelerated Classes
 - [Advanced Placement](#)
 - [International Baccalaureate](#)
 - [Cambridge Advanced International](#)
- [Benchmark scores](#)
- [Career Pathways](#)
- Dual Credit courses
 - Academic Readiness [Dual Credit Guidance](#)
 - [CTE Dual Credit Guidance](#)
- [Individual Learning Plan KDE webpage](#)
- [Minimum High School Graduation Requirements KDE Web Page](#)
- [Pre-college curriculum](#)