

[KRS 158.142](#) establishes the Early Graduation Program (EGP), an optional program in which a student may receive a high school diploma, Early Graduation Certificate and scholarship award from the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) upon successful completion of all EGP requirements provided in [704 KAR 3:305](#) in three (3) academic years or less.

The scholarship award may be used at a Kentucky public two (2) year community and technical college or a Kentucky four (4) year public or non-profit independent institution accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

### Early Graduation Program (EGP) versus “graduating early”

There is a difference between a student who is a graduate of the EGP and a student who “graduates early.” Although the wording is similar, there **are important distinctions between these two options**, as detailed below.

#### ***Early Graduation Program***

704 KAR 3:305, Section 1 defines the EGP as “*an optional, criteria-based program in which a student may receive a diploma from the school district, an Early Graduation Certificate, and a scholarship award upon successful completion of all program requirements provided in Section 5 of this administrative regulation in three (3) academic years or less.*”

The EGP requires the interested student to formally submit an intent form to participate in the program. Upon completion of all EGP requirements in place for the academic year in which the student intends to graduate, the student is awarded a high school diploma, Early Graduation Certificate and scholarship award from KHEAA.

While a student in the EGP is not required to meet the minimum 22 credits for high school graduation provided under 704 KAR 3:305, participants must complete all of the unique requirements of the EGP in three years or less.

For further information, access the [FAQ](#) addressing questions specifically related to the EGP.

#### ***“Graduating early”***

704 KAR 3:305 defines “graduating early” as meaning a student who is “*awarded a diploma from the district, in under four (4) academic years from the start of grade 9, based upon meeting the minimum credit requirements of this administrative regulation and additional requirements as may be imposed by a local board of education.*”

Should the local district offer the option to “graduate early,” the student must still meet all state and local [minimum high school graduation requirements](#) as expected of any traditional four-year high school student, but the student does so on an accelerated timeline. A student who chooses to “graduate early,” is not a participant of the EGP and is not eligible for the EGP Certificate and scholarship from KHEAA. The option to “graduate early” is based on local board policies.

For further information, access the [FAQ](#) addressing questions specifically related to “graduating early.”

## General EGP Requirements and Expectations of Schools and Districts

### *Eligibility and access to participation*

- Students must graduate **in three years or less** in order to qualify for the EGP Certificate and scholarship from KHEAA. Students in grade 12 are not eligible to participate in the EGP.
- Students participating in the EGP must complete all requirements in place for the academic year in which the student intends to graduate.
- Schools and districts cannot deny students an opportunity to participate in the EGP if all requirements have been met for the academic year in which the student intends to graduate.
- EGP students must meet the [college readiness exam benchmarks](#) established by the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) as required pursuant to [13 KAR 2:020](#) without the need for remediation.
- EGP students may take part in the state administration of the college entrance exam prior to the junior year, if needed.

### *Enrollment and declaration of intent*

- A student interested in participating must notify the school principal by submitting the intent form at the beginning of grade 9, or as soon as the intent is known. There is no specific grade-level required in KRS 158.142 in which a student must decide to participate in the EGP so long as it is within the student’s first three academic years of high school.
- Deadline for submission of the intent form:
  - The intent form must be received by the principal **within thirty (30) days** of the academic year in which the student intends to graduate.
- Deadline for flagging the student in Infinite Campus (IC):
  - The school or district shall enter the enrolled EGP student into the student information system by **October 15** of the year in which the student intends to graduate.

## 2023-2024 Implementation Timeline

### *District requirements*

By **July 1, 2023**, the local district must provide schools with a policy, established by the local board of education, for students wishing to participate in the EGP. The policy must include guidance for schools so that students may receive the support needed to successfully complete the program. The district policy addresses the unique needs of EGP students by integrating specific components in the Individual Learning Plan (ILP) to support the successful implementation of the program in local schools.

The district policy must include the following components:

- Support for local school personnel in the development and monitoring of an individual learning plan (ILP) specifically designed to meet the unique needs of EGP students.
- Expectations for goal planning related to the attainment of established district essential workplace ethics programs provided in [KRS 158.1413](#).
- Expectations for the completion of a professional resume based on the [ILP High School Playbook](#).
- Requirements associated with the completion of one postsecondary admissions application that may be used at a Kentucky public two (2) year community and technical college, or a Kentucky four (4) year public or non-profit independent institution accredited by SACS in which the student is interested in applying.

### ***School requirements***

Beginning in the 2023-2024 academic year, the school counselor shall provide support to EGP students in the following areas:

- Utilization of the ILP to assist students in articulating postsecondary goals and career aspirations that make the EGP the best option for the student.
- Guide the student in identifying all remaining EGP requirements and develop a strategy within the ILP for meeting those requirements.
- In collaboration with the student, provide support in the development of an action plan/strategy for meeting the EGP requirements, as documented in the student's ILP, including the attainment of the local workplace ethics program provided in KRS 158.1413.
- Support and prepare the student in the successful completion of an entrance interview articulating post-secondary goals and career aspirations with the principal, or designee.
- Ensure each EGP student completes an entrance interview with the principal, or designee, to discuss postsecondary goals and career aspirations.
- Flag participants in Infinite Campus (IC) by **October 15** of the academic year in which the student intends to graduate.

### ***Student requirements***

Beginning with the 2023-2024 academic year, to successfully complete the EGP and earn an Early Graduation Certificate and scholarship, the student must meet the following requirements:

- **Requirements for entering the EGP and maintaining enrollment**
  - Consultation with the school counselor to discuss the program requirements, postsecondary goals and career aspirations of the student.
  - Collaborate with the school counselor to create a strategy/action plan within the ILP for meeting program requirements within the academic year in which the student wishes to graduate.
  - Communicate intent to the principal within the provisions provided under 704 KAR 3:305, Section 5(5).
  - Complete an entrance interview with the principal, or designee, to discuss postsecondary goals and career aspirations.

- **Applicable minimum graduation requirements as provided in 704 KAR 3:305**
  - Earn [ten foundational credits](#) that shall include the academic content standards as provided in [704 KAR 3:303](#) and [704 KAR Chapter 8](#).
  - Complete one (1) or more courses or programs that meet the school's financial literacy requirement ([KRS 158.1411](#)).
  - Demonstrate established district essential workplace ethics indicators as provided in KRS 158.1413.
  - Obtain a passing grade on the civics test ([KRS 158.141](#)).
  
- **Additional requirements unique to the EGP**
  - Completion of a professional resume.
  - Completion of one (1) postsecondary admissions application to a Kentucky public two-year community and technical college, or a Kentucky four-year public or nonprofit independent institution accredited by SACS that qualifies for the EGP scholarship offered through KHEAA.
  - Attainment of college entrance exam benchmarks established by CPE in [13 KAR 2:020](#) for placement in credit-bearing courses without the need for remediation.

### **2024-2025 EGP Performance-Based Requirement**

For any EGP student who enrolls in the 2024-2025 academic year and beyond, program requirements will include an additional performance-based component. By **July 1, 2024**, 704 KAR 3:305, Section 5 requires each local board of education to establish a policy for expectations of EGP students in completing a performance-based requirement. The local schools shall determine performance descriptors and evaluation procedures for an EGP performance-based project, portfolio, or capstone.

For graduates of the EGP in 2024-2025 and beyond, schools are required to make readily available to the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) the EGP participant's performance-based project, portfolio or capstone for a minimum of five years.

**The performance-based requirement does not impact students who complete the EGP in the 2023-2024 academic year. Additional guidance will be released to support schools and districts in implementing the new performance-based requirement EGP participants beginning in 2024-2025.**

For additional information related to the EGP policy changes provided in 704 KAR 3:305, contact policy advisor, Sarah Peace, at [sarah.peace@education.ky.gov](mailto:sarah.peace@education.ky.gov).

For additional support for schools and districts in implementing the EGP, contact comprehensive school counseling coordinator, Michelle Sircy at [Michelle.Sircy@education.ky.gov](mailto:Michelle.Sircy@education.ky.gov).