

The Arts Graduation Requirement FAQ

Updated February 2012

1. What is the role of the State Board of Education in graduation requirements?
2. What is the arts graduation requirement?
3. What is considered an arts course?
4. What are “visual arts?”
5. What are “performing arts?”
6. Can the arts graduation requirement credit be waived?
7. Who can teach an arts course?
8. Can arts courses taken in middle school count toward high school graduation?
9. What is the arts requirement for public four-year colleges and universities in Washington?
10. Can an arts course count an occupational credit?
11. Where can I get more information about arts in the schools?

1. What is the role of the State Board of Education in graduation requirements?

RCW 28A.230.090 authorizes SBE to establish some of the state’s graduation requirements. SBE has established essential credit requirements, a culminating project, and a high school and beyond plan (WAC 180-51-061, WAC 180-51-066, and WAC 180-51-067).

2. What is the arts graduation requirement?

The state’s arts high school graduation requirement is **one** (1) credit in visual or performing arts aligned to high school [learning standards](#).

WAC 180-51-066 (applicable to the 2012-2015 graduating classes) **specifies**: One **arts** credit that at minimum is aligned with current essential academic learning requirements at grade ten and/or above plus content that is determined by the local school district. The assessment of achieved competence in this subject area is to be determined by the local district although state law requires districts to have "assessments or other strategies" in arts at the high school level by 2008-09. The state superintendent's office has developed classroom-based assessment models for districts to use (RCW 28A.230.095). The essential content in this subject area may be satisfied in the visual or performing arts.

WAC 180-51-067 (applicable to the 2016 and beyond graduating classes) specifies: One **arts** credit. The essential content in this subject area may be satisfied in the visual or performing arts.

3. What is considered an arts course?

An arts course must have a [performance](#) component to be considered an arts class. Creating, performing, and responding are considered the foundations of an arts course. Specifically, this credit may be satisfied in the visual or performing arts—dance, music, theatre and visual arts.

4. What are “visual arts?”

Visual Arts classes include and are not limited to: drawing, painting, ceramic arts/pottery, sculpture, 2-D design, 3-D design, photography, printmaking, graphic arts, media arts (film, video, TV, animation, digital), textiles, jewelry, glass arts, Advanced Placement Studio (AP) courses, International Baccalaureate (IB), etc.

5. What are “performing arts?”

Performing Arts classes include classes that contain a performance component such as: dance, music, and theatre classes, including and not limited to:

Dance such as: contemporary, creative movement, world dance, ballet, jazz, tap, modern, break dance, hip-hop, ballroom, choreography, dance notation, dance history, musical theatre, improvisation, folk, ethnic, step, historical, square dance, etc.

Music such as: general music, choir, band, orchestra, jazz ensemble, guitar, percussion ensemble, music theory, Advanced Placement (AP) Music Theory, technology composition, song writing, piano lab/music keyboards, International Baccalaureate (IB) Music, music history, marching band, drum line, multi-cultural and historical music, ethnic, opera, musical theatre, Mariachi, marimba, steel drums, recording studio, etc.

Theatre such as: acting, theatre, film acting and making, improvisation, mime, puppetry, performed poetry/spoken word, musical theatre, playwriting, technical theatre/stagecraft, theatre production, Shakespeare literature and performance, International Baccalaureate (IB) Theatre, etc.

6. Can the arts graduation requirement credit be waived?

No. The arts credit cannot be waived or met by taking a credit in another subject area.

7. Who can teach an arts course?

Arts classes must be taught by highly qualified Arts certified instructors, or by Career and Technical Education (CTE) teachers if the district has established a course equivalency between a designated CTE course and an arts course. See WSSDA Policy 2413 regarding Equivalency Credit for Career and Technical Education Courses.

8. Can arts courses taken in middle school count toward high school graduation?

Arts courses generally will be taken during the students’ 9th through 12th grade years. If taken in middle school, arts courses must satisfy the requirements for a credit earned before ninth grade, as defined by statute.

6. What is the arts requirement for public four-year colleges and universities in Washington?

The Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board has established a minimum admission requirement of 1 credit of fine, visual, or performing arts - or 1 additional credit in other College Academic Distribution Requirement (CADR) academic subject areas (math, English, social science, lab science, or world languages). Acceptable coursework in the fine, visual, or performing arts includes art appreciation, band, ceramics, choir, dance, dramatics performance and production, drawing, fiber arts, graphic arts, metal design, music appreciation, music theory, orchestra, painting, photography, print making, or sculpture.

Note: The University of Washington and Western Washington University specify one-half credit in fine, visual, or performing arts. The other half may be in the arts or an academic elective.

7. Can an arts course count as an occupational education credit?

Yes, as long as the district has established the course equivalencies, per [RCW 28A.230.097](#).

8. Where can I get more information about arts in the schools?

For more information on the arts in Washington Schools visit the OSPI revised arts website at: <http://www.k12.wa.us/arts/default.aspx>