

Graduation Requirements

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1. What is the role of the State Board of Education (SBE) in graduation requirements? What other governing bodies are responsible for setting graduation requirements?

[RCW 28A.230.090](#) authorizes SBE to establish state graduation requirements. SBE has established 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](#)).

The legislature has established the current state assessment system, which includes high school assessments that students must pass to earn a high school diploma. SBE identifies the scores students must achieve to meet standard on statewide assessments ([RCW 28A.305.130](#)). Students who meet standards on high school assessments required for graduation earn a certificate of academic achievement or a certificate of individual achievement.

Local districts and tribal schools may add other requirements. Private schools must offer a curriculum in sufficient units to meet state graduation requirements, but private school students do not need to complete a Culminating Project or High School and Beyond Plan, nor take or meet standard on state assessments ([RCW 28A.195](#)).

See more information on the [OSPI website](#).

2. How do you determine which graduation requirements are in effect for a student?

Students are assigned an expected graduation year at the time they enter ninth grade ([WAC 180-51-035](#)). They are held to the graduation requirements of that graduation year regardless of the year they actually complete high school. For example, a student who enters 9th grade in 2009 would be assigned a graduation year of 2013 and would be expected to meet requirements for the graduating class of 2013. If the student graduates early—in 2012 instead of 2013—she or he still needs to meet the requirements for the class of 2013.

This also applies if a student stays in high school longer than four years. A student who entered ninth grade in 2008 would be assigned a graduation year of 2012. But if the student did not actually graduate until 2013, she or he would still be held to the graduation requirements of 2012.

3. How is a credit defined for graduation?

SBE adopted a new definition of a credit in November 2011. The new language of WAC [180-51-050](#) reads:

(1) Grades nine through twelve or the equivalent of a four-year high school program, or as otherwise provided in RCW [28A.230.090](#) (4):

(a) Successful completion, as defined by written district policy, of courses taught to the state's essential academic learning requirements (learning standards). If there are no state-adopted learning standards for a subject, the local governing board, or its designee, shall determine learning standards for the successful completion of that subject; or (b) Satisfactory demonstration by a student of proficiency/competency, as defined by written district policy, of the state's essential academic learning requirements (learning standards).

Credits can be awarded only for work that is at an academic level of ninth grade (or higher). More information on the [state's academic standards and grade level expectations](#) is available on the OSPI website.

4. What are the 2012 state-mandated graduation credit requirements?

SBE has established 19 state-mandated graduation credit requirements for students in the class of 2012. WAC [180-51-061](#) determines the distribution of credits required for these classes.

Subject	Credits
English	3.0
Math	2.0
Science (At Least 1 Lab Credit)	2.0
Social Studies	2.5
Health & Fitness	2.0
Occupational Education	1.0
Arts (visual or performing)	1.0
Electives	5.5
Total	19

5. What are the 2013-2015 state-mandated graduation credit requirements?

SBE has established 20 state-mandated credits for the classes of 2013-2015. WAC [180-51-066](#) determines the distribution of credits required for these classes.

Subject	Credits
English	3.0
Math	3.0*
Science (At Least 1 Lab Credit)	2.0
Social Studies	2.5
Health & Fitness	2.0
Occupational Education	1.0
Arts (visual or performing)	1.0
Electives	5.5
Total	20

* Math credits are specified to be Algebra 1 or Integrated Mathematics 1, Geometry or Integrated Mathematics 2, and Algebra 2 or Integrated Mathematics 3. Students may take a different third credit of math under circumstances defined in WAC [180-51-066](#).

6. What are the 2016 and beyond state-mandated graduation credit requirements?

SBE has established 20 state-mandated credits for the class of 2016 and beyond. WAC [180-51-067](#) determines the distribution of credits required for these classes.

Subject	Credits
English	4.0
Math	3.0*
Science (At Least 1 Lab Credit)	2.0
Social Studies	3.0
Health & Fitness	2.0
Occupational Education	1.0
Arts (visual or performing)	1.0
Electives	4.0
Total	20

* Math credits are specified to be Algebra 1 or Integrated Mathematics 1, Geometry or Integrated Mathematics 2, and Algebra 2 or Integrated Mathematics 3. Students may take a different third credit of math under circumstances defined in WAC [180-51-067](#).

These requirements are in effect unless a district passed a local board resolution by June 1, 2012 and notified the State Board of Education that the district is delaying implementation of the new English and Social Studies requirements until the class of 2018.

7. What are the state-mandated noncredit-bearing graduation requirements for the classes of 2012 and beyond?

There are three state noncredit-bearing requirements for graduation for the classes of 2012 to 2015:

1. A High School and Beyond Plan
2. The Culminating Project
3. Proficiency on state assessments

For the class of 2016 and beyond, in addition to the 3 noncredit-bearing requirements above, Washington State History and Government also becomes a noncredit requirement. This change allows districts to offer Washington State History and Government at a middle school academic level. If offered at a high school academic level, the district may choose to award credit.

The High School and Beyond Plan: Beginning with students graduating in 2008, SBE, through WAC [180-51-061](#), WAC [180-51-066](#), and 180-51-067 has required students to complete a High School and Beyond Plan prior to graduation. More information on the High School and Beyond Plan can be found [here](#).

A Culminating Project: Beginning with students graduating in 2008, SBE, through WAC [180-51-061](#), WAC [180-51-066](#), and 180-51-067 has required students to

complete a Culminating Project. More information on the Culminating Project can be found [here](#).

Proficiency on state assessments. Students must demonstrate proficiency on different content-based state assessments, depending on their graduation year.

2012: Reading, writing, and math state assessments; or, in lieu of math proficiency, earn two additional credits of math.

2013-2014: Reading, writing, and one math end-of-course assessment (either Algebra 1 or Geometry)

2015-2016: Reading, writing, two math end-of-course assessments, one biology end-of-course assessment.

More information can be found [here](#).

8. How are students receiving special education affected by graduation requirements?

Students receiving services through special education will meet graduation requirements as determined by their Individualized Education Program (IEP) team and defined in their IEP. According to WAC [180-51-115](#), districts must have formal, written policies and procedures for meeting the unique limitations of each student.

9. Where can I find the graduation requirements of each district?

SBE has established a spreadsheet of credit requirements for the 247 districts with high schools. The spreadsheet currently contains Washington districts' 2011 graduation requirements. The spreadsheet is available in ([excel](#)) format. If you find any errors with regards to the data presented, please send corrections along with official documents (board policies, student handbooks, etc.) to: [Linda Drake, Senior Policy Analyst](#).

10. Where can I find a printable copy of SBE's-approved Washington State Career and College-Ready Graduation Requirements?

The graduation requirements approved in 2010 are listed [here](#) on SBE's website. SBE initiated some of these changes in a rule adopted in November 2011 (see response to question #6 above). Not all of the requirements are yet adopted in rule.

11. How will the state-mandated credit requirements be different when all of the newly-approved Washington State Career and College Ready Graduation Requirements are in place?

Subject	Credits Class of 2013	Credits Class of 2016	Career and College Ready Requirements (not yet implemented)
English	3.0	4	4
Math	3.0	3	3
Science (At Least 1 Lab Credit)	2.0	2	3 (2 labs)
Social Studies	2.5	3 ¹	3
Health & Fitness	2.0	Health .5, Fitness 1.5*	Health .5, Fitness 1.5*
Occupational Education	1.0	1	1
World Language	0	0	2*
Career Concentration	0	0	2*
Arts (visual or performing)	1.0	1	2*
Electives	5.5	4	2*
Total	20	20	24**

¹3 (.5 credit of civics, including study of the U.S. and Washington Constitutions) per RCW 28A.230.170; RCW 28A.230.090. ²Students must earn credits in fitness unless excused per RCW 28A. 230.050. * Student-choice credits that may be determined by the individual's High School and Beyond Plan. ** Up to 2 credits could be waived by local administrators for students who have attempted 24 credits. Students must earn the designated credits in the mandatory subjects.

12. What changes did SBE approve in November 2010 to the High School and Beyond Plan?

SBE approved the following components as requirements to the High School and Beyond Plan:

- Personal interests, abilities, and relationship to current career goals.
- Four-year plan for course-taking that is related to graduation requirements and the student's interests and goals, including consideration of dual credit opportunities within such a plan.
- Research on postsecondary training and education related to one's career goals, including comparative information on the benefits and costs of available choices.
- Budget for postsecondary education or training and life, based on potential education and training choices.
- Participation in a postsecondary site visit(s).
- Completion of an application for postsecondary education and training.
- Completion of a resume.

- Identify assessments that may assist in planning or are required to achieve educational/career goals.
- Should relate to the student's Culminating Project

13. What changes is SBE still considering for the Culminating Project?

In order to create greater consistency in project expectations among districts, SBE may require all students to complete a portfolio, and a presentation. The project(s) may also include, for example: a research or reflective paper, community service, job shadowing, internship, or other components deemed appropriate by the district.