

ALABAMA HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Clarified March 2017

(Alabama Administrative Code 290-3-1-02(8) and (8)(a))

Effective for students in the ninth grade in the 2013-2014 school year, all students shall earn the required credits for the Alabama High School Diploma. A local board of education may establish requirements for receipt of diplomas and endorsements, but any diploma or endorsement shall include the requirements of the Alabama High School Diploma. The Alabama courses of study shall be followed in determining minimum required content in each discipline.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS		
English Language Arts	Four credits to include:	Credits
	English 9	1
	English 10	1
	English 11	1
	English 12	1
	English Language Arts-credit eligible options may include: Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate/postsecondary courses/SDE-approved courses.	
English Language Arts Total Credits		4
Mathematics	Three credits to include:	Credits
	Algebra I or its equivalent/substitute	1
	Geometry or its equivalent/substitute	1
	Algebra II w/Trigonometry or Algebra II, or its equivalent/substitute	1
	Mathematics-credit eligible options may include: <i>Career and Technical Education/Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate/postsecondary courses/SDE-approved courses.</i>	
	One credit from:	
<i>Alabama Course of Study: Mathematics</i> or mathematics-credit eligible courses from <i>Career and Technical Education/Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate/postsecondary courses/SDE-approved courses.</i>	1	
Mathematics Total Credits		4
Science	Two credits to include:	Credits
	Biology	1
	A physical science (Chemistry, Physics, Physical Science)	1
	Science-credit eligible options may include: Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate/postsecondary courses/SDE-approved courses.	
	Two credits from:	
	<i>Alabama Course of Study: Science</i> or science-credit eligible courses from <i>Career and Technical Education/Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate/postsecondary courses/SDE-approved courses.</i>	2
Science Total Credits		4
Social Studies*	Four credits to include:	Credits
	World History	1
	United States History I	1
	United States History II	1
	United States Government	0.5
	Economics	0.5
	Social Studies-credit eligible options may include: Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate/postsecondary courses/SDE-approved courses.	
Social Studies Total Credits		4
Physical Education	Lifelong Individualized Fitness Education (LIFE) or one JROTC Credit	1
Health Education		0.5
Career Preparedness		1
Career and Technical Education (CTE) and/or Foreign Language and/or Arts Education		3
Electives		2.5
Total Credits		24

The Alabama High School Graduation requirements provide the opportunity for students to pursue multiple pathways to earn a diploma. Students will have options to pursue areas of interest through expansion of elective credits. Flexibility in course offerings allows for personalized education plans for all students. Though these options allow increased flexibility, high expectations for Alabama students remain the standard. The ninth graders of 2013-2014 are **required** to follow the new graduation requirements. Alabama has one high school diploma, with three pathways: General Education pathway, Essentials pathway, and Alternate Achievement Standards pathway. Only students who complete the requirements for the General Education pathway will count in the United States Department of Education (USDOE) Four-Year Graduation rate for 2017 and beyond. The ALSDE recognizes that you have students who will graduate with an Alabama High School Diploma (AHS), but will not count in the graduation rate for the USDOE. These students will be considered non-graduates, but will **not** count in the systems drop-out rate.

Each high school student is required to have a four-year plan. It is critical that the plan reflects the student's aspirations for life after high school. Careful consideration should be given to the selection of electives and specific credit-eligible courses to ensure that a student is prepared for postsecondary school, four-year college, and work. Administrators and counselors should continue to review NCAA requirements for prospective student athletes before approving their electives and specific credit eligible courses.

For clarification purposes, the following definition will apply to specific credit eligible courses:

- Credit eligible course – the course is approved as an appropriate replacement, but may not include a 90% match in standards.

The Alabama Department of Education (ALSDE) will continue to expand credit eligible course offerings. Local Education Agencies (LEAs) that would like to have a course considered for a specific credit should follow the process below for approval:

- Locally-developed Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses must be submitted to the CTE Section.
- Locally-developed core courses (Mathematics, English, Science, and Social Studies) must be submitted to the Instructional Services Section.
- Once submitted to either section, a cross-sectional team will review courses for alignment to standards and approval for credit.

Other clarifications:

Mathematics

It is imperative that a student's plans for college or postsecondary should be considered when selecting a mathematics-credit eligible course. The Mathematics Pathways memo <http://www.alsde.edu/sec/sct/COS/Mathematics%20Pathways.pdf> is a document that provides possible mathematics pathways for students, parents, and counselors to consider when preparing for high school mathematics course credits. In an effort to offer more flexibility to school systems, the Flexibility in Awarding Credit for Algebra I and Geometry memo, <http://www.alsde.edu/sites/memos/Memoranda/FY13-2121.pdf#search=Flexibility%20in%20Algebra%20I> explains how Algebra I and Geometry may be offered to students in Grades 7 and 8, respectively, for high school credit and to meet graduation requirements.

If you have questions, please contact Michele Matin at mmatin@alsde.edu or Dawn Morrison at dmorrison@alsde.edu.

Arts (includes Dance, Music, Theater, and Visual Arts)

The current *Alabama Course of Study: Arts Education* was written to satisfy the previous graduation requirements of 0.5 credit for Arts. There are several options (listed below) for students currently wishing to follow an arts pathway and/or take their electives in arts.

- Students may take the half-credit courses back-to-back in one year to meet the one-full credit course.
- Teachers may add new content to the 0.5 credit course to allow it to count as a one credit course. (A sufficient amount of additional/new content must be documented and kept on file.)
- Courses that are used as arts-credit eligible options must contain the three strands—Produce, Respond, and Understand as found in the *Alabama Course of Study: Arts Education*. These courses may serve for any of the three credits required under the “CTE, Foreign Language, or Arts” category. Arts courses lacking these three strands may serve only as a general elective credit (the 2.5 credit category).

Please contact Andy Meadows at ameadows@alsde.edu.

Science

The following Career and Technical Education courses are science-credit eligible. Teachers holding the appropriate science certifications and those with appropriate Career and Technical Education certification may teach the courses below for science credit.

- Forensic and Criminal Investigations (410025)
- Plant Biotechnology (420053)
- Aquaculture Science (420037)
- Introduction to Biotechnology (490041)
- PLTW Principles of Engineering (560016)

The following Career and Technical Education courses contain similar content as courses in the *2015 Alabama Course of Study: Science*. Students may not receive science credit for both courses.

- Chemistry of Food (510013)—similar content as Chemistry (220061)
- Environmental Management (420026)—similar content as Environmental Science (220029)
- Human Body Structures and Functions (490015)—similar content as Human Anatomy and Physiology (220026)
- PLTW Human Body Systems (490043)—similar content as Human Anatomy and Physiology (220026)

Please contact Collie Wells at cwells@alsde.edu or Michal Robinson at mrobinson@alsde.edu for additional information.

Essentials Pathway

Effective with the 2017-2018 school year, only students with disabilities will be allowed to enroll in Essentials courses. Careful consideration should be given before a student is allowed to enroll in one of the Essentials Pathway courses. If a student takes four or more core courses on the Essentials Pathway he or she is required to complete the work component requirements of this pathway. It is important for each student to pursue the coursework that is appropriate for his or her desired post-school outcome. These courses may or may not be accepted by four-year colleges, and will not be accepted by the **National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)**. Students who plan to attend a postsecondary institution must meet the admission requirements of the selected institution. For May 2017 graduates, only students who completed the course requirements for the general education pathway which is fully aligned with the state's academic standards will count in the USDOE 2017 Graduation Rate for Alabama. Students who followed the Essentials Pathway and/or the AAS Pathway will not count as graduates in the USDOE Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate. They will, however, receive an AHSD.

The Courses for the Alabama High School Diploma Pathways and the Work Component Requirements can be found in the Preparing for Life Transition Planning Guide, <http://www.alsde.edu/sec/ses/Pages/transition-all.aspx?navtext=Secondary%20/%20Post%20Secondary:%20Transition>.

The Alabama Occupational Diploma is no longer an option for students after the ninth grade cohort of 2012-2013. Some students under this diploma option may continue to be in schools until they reach the age of 21.

Please contact Cindy Augustine at caugustine@alsde.edu for additional information.

Waivers

Waivers for the LIFE PE course are still required to substitute Band, Athletics, etc. The standards from the LIFE PE course must be included in the course. A student roster is no longer required to be included in the waiver letter. Please contact Nancy Ray with any questions at nray@alsde.edu.

Some districts are pursuing innovative schedules, instructional delivery models, etc., that require permission to waive certain policies. Please contact Shanthia Washington with questions regarding these options at swashington@alsde.edu.

