

Florida Department of Education

Florida's Guide to Public
High School Graduation

For Students
Entering Grade 9
2011-2012 School
Year



High School Graduation Programs Overview

If you are the parent of a Florida middle or high school student, this guide is for you. It is designed to explain Florida's high school graduation programs, including two programs that let students graduate from high school in three years. The guide also provides information to help students and their families as they plan and prepare for postsecondary goals, including information on acceleration options and advanced coursework. For more information about a special diploma and other graduation options for students with disabilities, contact your child's school counselor or exceptional student education teacher, or visit <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/>.

Florida students entering their first year of high school in the 2011–2012 school year may choose from one of five options to earn a standard diploma.

- ◆ A four-year, 24-credit program
- ◆ An International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum
- ◆ An Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) curriculum
- ◆ A three-year, 18-credit college preparatory program
- ◆ A three-year, 18-credit career preparatory program

All of these graduation paths include opportunities to take rigorous academic courses designed to prepare students for their future academic and career choices. All students, regardless of graduation program, must still earn a specific grade point average (GPA) on a 4.0 scale, achieve passing scores on the Grade 10 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test® 2.0 (FCAT) Reading, and meet specific end-of-course (EOC) assessment requirements to graduate with a standard diploma (refer to the chart concerning graduation requirements).



Choosing a Program

The three-year programs are designed for students who are clear about their future goals and are ready to pursue them beyond high school in an accelerated manner. To assist students and parents with this task, each school district shall provide each student in grades 6 through 12 and their parents with information concerning the three-year, 18-credit and the four-year, 24-credit high school graduation options.

To select a three-year graduation program, at any time during grades 9 through 12, students and their parents should meet with designated school personnel to receive an explanation of the requirements, advantages, and disadvantages of each program option. Students must also receive the written consent of their parents. A student may select a three-year graduation program without parental consent if the student is 18 years of age.

24-Credit Program

This program takes the traditional four years to complete high school and requires students to take at least 24 credits in core content areas. Foreign language credit is not required for this program, although it is recommended for Florida college preparation and is required for admission to Florida's state universities.

Three-Year, 18-Credit College Preparatory Program

The requirements of this program are designed to prepare students for entering a postsecondary institution of education. This accelerated graduation program requires fewer credits and focuses more on academic courses. Students must earn at least 6 of the 18 required credits in specified rigorous-level courses. The credits required by this program must satisfy the minimum standards for admission into Florida's state universities which include two credits in the same foreign language.

Three-Year, 18-Credit Career Preparatory Program

The requirements of this program are designed to prepare students for entrance into a technical center, Florida college for career preparation, or the workforce. This accelerated graduation program requires fewer credits and focuses more on academic courses. The three-year career preparatory program requires students to earn specific credits in a single vocational, career, or technical education program.

Credit Acceleration Program (CAP)

Beginning with the 2011–2012 school year, the CAP allows a secondary student to earn high school credit if the student earns a specified score on the corresponding standardized EOC assessment. A school district will permit a student who is not enrolled in the course, or who has not completed the course, to take the EOC assessment during regular administration of the assessment. For more information, contact the school counselor.



Acceleration Programs and Advanced Coursework

Studies show that students who complete a solid academic program in high school, including advanced courses, are more likely to be successful in college. Students in all graduation programs are encouraged to take advantage of advanced course offerings and acceleration programs, such as dual enrollment, early admission, the Advanced Placement (AP) Program, IB, the AICE, and Industry Certification. These programs may not be available in all school districts or high schools. For information, contact a school counselor.

International Baccalaureate Diploma Program

The IB Diploma Program is a rigorous pre-university course of study leading to internationally standardized tests. The program's comprehensive two-year curriculum allows its graduates to fulfill requirements of many different nations' education systems. Students completing IB courses and exams from six subject groups are eligible for college credit. The award of credit is based on scores achieved on IB exams. Students can earn up to 30 postsecondary semester credits by participating in this program at the high school level. Approximately 72 Florida high schools offer an IB Diploma Program. Students in Florida's public secondary schools enrolled in IB courses do not have to pay to take the exams. For information, visit <http://www.ibo.org>.

Advanced International Certificate of Education Program

The AICE Program is an international curriculum and examination program modeled on the British pre-college curriculum. To be considered for an AICE Diploma, a candidate must earn the equivalent of six credits by passing a combination of examinations at either the full (one credit) Advanced Subsidiary Level (AS) or double (two credits) International Advanced Level (A), with at least one course coming from each of the three curriculum areas. Florida's colleges and universities provide college credit for successfully passing the exams. Students in Florida's public secondary schools enrolled in AICE courses do not have to pay to take the exams. For information, visit <http://www.cie.org.uk/qualifications/academic/uppersec/aice> and http://www.cie.org.uk/docs/qualifications/aice/AICE_introduction.pdf.

Dual Enrollment and Early Admission

These programs allow eligible high school students to enroll in postsecondary courses. They earn credit toward high school graduation and, at the same time, earn credit toward a college degree or technical certificate. All 28 Florida colleges and some of the state universities participate in dual enrollment. Students are permitted to take dual enrollment courses on a part-time basis during school hours, after school, or during the summer term. Dual enrollment students do not have to pay registration, matriculation, or laboratory fees. In addition, textbooks for dual enrollment are provided to students free of charge. Dual enrollment courses will be weighted the same as courses taught through other acceleration mechanisms. Students should be aware that grades received through dual enrollment at Florida colleges and universities become part of the permanent postsecondary record. State universities will not admit a student who has less than a 2.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale.

Advanced Placement Program

The College Board's AP Program is a nationwide program consisting of more than 30 college-level courses and exams offered at participating high schools. Subjects range from art to statistics. Students who earn a qualifying grade of three or above on an AP exam can earn college credit, or AP credit, or both, depending on the college or university. Students in Florida's public secondary schools enrolled in AP courses do not have to pay to take the exams. For information, visit <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/about.html>.

International General Certificate of Secondary Education Program (IGCSE)

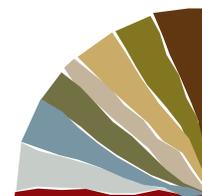
The IGCSE Program is an international curriculum and examination program designed for 14- to 16-year-old students. Participants who obtain an IGCSE qualification from Cambridge are prepared for further academic success, including progression to the British pre-college curriculum "A-Level" study (AICE Program). Students in Florida's public secondary schools enrolled in pre-Advanced International Certificate of Education (pre-AICE) courses do not have to pay to take the exams. For information, visit <http://www.cie.org.uk> and click on Qualifications and Diplomas, then IGCSE.

Industry Certification

Industry Certification provides students who take a concentrated career and technical education program with an opportunity to earn a guaranteed number of college credits in the Florida College System. A list of Industry Certification programs aligned to Associate in Applied Science (AAS)/Associate in Science (AS) degrees can be viewed at http://www.fldoe.org/workforce/dwdframe/artic_indcert2aas.asp.

College-Level Examination Program (CLEP)

Students with strong content background in a subject area can earn credit through an examination program administered by the college they attend. Candidates for the CLEP include students who have completed an AP course but did not take or earn a qualifying score on the AP exam. Other students who have taken several high school courses in one particular subject area may wish to take a CLEP exam. For more information on CLEP testing sites and dates, contact the admissions or registrar's office at the postsecondary institution in your area.



Subject Area	Graduation Requirements of 24-Credit Program	Graduation Requirements of Three-Year, 18-Credit College Preparatory Program	Graduation Requirements of Three-Year, 18-Credit Career Preparatory Program
English	4 credits, with major concentration in composition, reading for information, and literature	4 credits, with major concentration in composition and literature	4 credits, with major concentration in composition and literature
Mathematics	4 credits, one of which must be Algebra 1 or its equivalent and one of which must be Geometry or its equivalent	4 credits, one of which must be Algebra 1 or its equivalent course from the list of courses that qualify for State University System (SUS) admission and one of which must be Geometry or its equivalent	4 credits, one of which must be Algebra 1 or its equivalent and one of which must be in Geometry or its equivalent
Science	3 credits in science, two of which must have a laboratory component and one of which must be Biology 1 or an equivalent course or a series of courses	3 credits in science, two of which must have a laboratory component and one of which must be Biology 1 or an equivalent course or a series of courses	3 credits in science, two of which must have a laboratory component and one of which must be Biology 1 or an equivalent course or a series of courses
Social Studies	1 credit World History 1 credit United States History .5 credit United States Government .5 credit Economics	1 credit World History 1 credit United States History .5 credit United States Government .5 credit Economics	1 credit World History 1 credit United States History .5 credit United States Government .5 credit Economics
Foreign Language	Not required for high school graduation, but required for admission into state universities	2 credits in the same language or demonstrated proficiency in a second language	Not required
Fine Arts or Performing Arts, Speech, Debate, or Practical Arts	1 credit in fine or performing arts, speech and debate, or practical arts (eligible courses specified in Course Code Directory)	Not required	Not required
Physical Education	1 credit in physical education to include the integration of health	Not required	Not required
Electives	8 credits	2 credits	3 credits in single vocational/career education program and 1 elective credit <u>OR</u> 3 credits in single career/technical certificate dual enrollment and 1 elective credit <u>OR</u> *4 credits in vocational/career education (including 3 credits in one sequential career and technical education program)
Total	24 credits	18 CREDITS	18 CREDITS
Grade Point Average (GPA) Requirements	Cumulative GPA of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale	Cumulative GPA of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale in required courses and a weighted or unweighted grade that earns at least 3.0 points or its equivalent in each of the 18 required credits	Cumulative weighted GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale in required courses and a weighted or unweighted grade that earns at least 2.0 points or its equivalent in each of the 18 required credits
State Assessment Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students must earn passing scores on the Grade 10 FCAT 2.0 Reading (or scores that are concordant with the passing scores on the Grade 10 FCAT 2.0 Reading) Students must earn a passing score or attain an equivalent score on the Algebra 1 EOC Assessment in order to earn course credit Geometry and Biology 1 EOC Assessments are required and the results will constitute 30 percent of the student's final course grade 		
Special Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All courses earned toward the three-year, 18-credit college preparatory program must satisfy admission requirements for the SUS. To determine which courses meet SUS admission requirements, use the Comprehensive Course Table. At least 6 of the 18 credits must be completed in courses that include dual enrollment, AP, IB, AICE, or are specifically listed as rigorous by the Florida Department of Education (FDOE). At least one course within the 24-credit program must be completed through online learning. 			
* Pending legislative action			

State University System Admission Requirements

To qualify to enter one of Florida’s public universities, a student must:

- Meet the following minimum requirements:
 - ◆ High school graduation with a standard diploma
 - ◆ Grade point average in high school academic core courses (minimum 2.5 GPA required)
 - ◆ Admissions test scores (minimum requirements)
 - ◇ SAT: Reading 460/Math 460/Writing 440
 - ◇ ACT: Reading 19/Math 19/English with Writing 18

OR

- Qualify for the Talented 20 program

OR

- Be selected through a “student profile assessment” that considers other special factors (e.g., special talents)

The 18 high school credits required for SUS admission are:

- ◆ 4 English (3 with substantial writing)
- ◆ 4 mathematics (Algebra I level and above)
- ◆ 3 natural science (2 with lab component)
- ◆ 3 social science
- ◆ 2 foreign language (in the same language)
- ◆ 2 approved electives (in certain combinations)

The Florida College System Admission Requirements

To qualify to enter an associate degree program at one of Florida’s colleges, a student must:

- Graduate with a standard high school diploma

OR

- Earn a high school equivalency diploma

OR

- Earn a College Placement Test (CPT)-eligible Certificate of Completion

AND

- Take a CPT, such as the Postsecondary Education Readiness Test (P.E.R.T.)

The 18 high school credits recommended for admission to the Florida college system are:

- ◆ 4 English (3 with substantial writing)
- ◆ 4 mathematics (Algebra I level and above)
- ◆ 3 natural science (2 with lab component)
- ◆ 3 social science
- ◆ 2 foreign language (in the same language)
- ◆ 2 approved electives (in certain combinations)

For those students interested in nondegree certificate programs or baccalaureate degree programs, please see an admissions counselor as requirements may vary.

Bright Futures Scholarship Requirements for 2015 High School Graduates

These are subject to change with each legislative session.

- 16 credits in college preparatory courses in the following areas:
 - ◆ 4 English (3 with substantial writing)
 - ◆ 4 mathematics (including 1 credit Algebra I equivalent or higher and Geometry)
 - ◆ 3 natural science (2 with substantial lab and 1 Biology)
 - ◆ 3 social science (United States History, World History, United States Government, and Economics)
 - ◆ 2 foreign language (sequential, in the same language)
- Up to 2 additional credits from courses in the academic areas listed above and/or AP, IB, AICE fine arts courses to raise the GPA
- A 3.5 weighted GPA in the above courses, 100 hours of community service, and a best composite score of 1290 on the SAT Reasoning Test (based on the combined Critical Reading and Math sections only) or 29 on the ACT (excluding the writing section) to be a Florida Academic Scholar (FAS)
- A 3.0 weighted GPA in the above courses, 75 hours of community service, and a minimum score of 1170 on the SAT or 26 on the ACT to be a Florida Medallion Scholar (FMS)

For other ways to qualify for Bright Futures, visit <http://www.FloridaStudentFinancialAid.org/SSFAD/bf>

Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars Award (GSV)

- 16 credits in the following areas:
 - ◆ 4 English
 - ◆ 4 mathematics (including 1 credit Algebra I equivalent or higher and Geometry)
 - ◆ 3 natural science (2 with substantial lab and 1 Biology)
 - ◆ 3 social science (United States History, World History, United States Government, and Economics)
 - ◆ 1 fine art, **OR** 1 identified practical art, **OR** .5 credit in each
 - ◆ 1 physical education to include the integration of health
- A 3.0 weighted GPA in the core credits required for graduation* and 30 hours of community service
- 3 career and technical education credits in one vocational program taken over at least 2 academic years with an unweighted 3.5 GPA in those courses
- A minimum section score listed below on each section of either the SAT or ACT or other approved FDOE test (sections of different test types may not be combined)
 - ◆ SAT: Reading 440/Math 440
 - ◆ ACT: English 17/Reading 18/Math 19

* College or career preparatory diplomas may be used to qualify for GSV, with appropriate career and technical education electives.

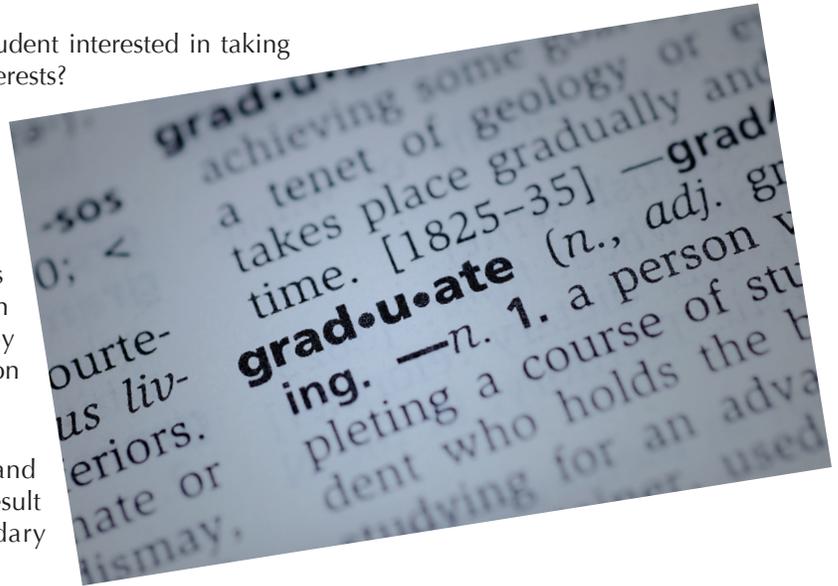
<http://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/SSFAD/bf/gsvrequire.htm>

Making the Right Choice

The right graduation program for a particular student is the one that best fits the abilities, interests, and goals of that student. Families should consider the educational benefits of each program and choose the one that will best prepare the student for postsecondary education or career plan. Here are some things that students and families should consider:

- ✓ What is the student's postsecondary education and/or career goal?
- ✓ Is the student prepared to make a choice about postsecondary education and possible career paths?
- ✓ If the student is planning to attend a postsecondary institution away from home, does the student have the mature decision-making skills needed to make the informed, safe choices required for independent living?
- ✓ Are three electives enough, or is the student interested in taking additional courses to explore his/her interests?
- ✓ Does the student want to participate in sports or other extracurricular activities for four years, or are three years enough?
- ✓ Can the student meet admissions requirements for postsecondary education institutions of the student's choice by choosing a three-year, 18-credit graduation program?
- ✓ Has the family considered expenses and possible financial aid needs that may result from the student starting postsecondary education a year early?
- ✓ Is the student going to compete for scholarships that require certain academic core courses, community service experiences, demonstrated leadership skills, or participation in extracurricular activities?
- ✓ Has the family considered that the student has the option of taking an additional year of academic or technical courses through dual enrollment or to earn additional AP course credit and college credit by choosing the 24-credit program?
- ✓ Is the student planning to play college-level sports and, if so, will the student meet the NCAA course eligibility requirements?
- ✓ If the student is enrolled in a prepaid college tuition plan, can the family pay off the balance of the plan a year early?

Families and students are encouraged to contact the school counselor or career specialist at the student's school for more information about graduation programs, financial aid opportunities, accelerated programs, and college or career plans. Students and parents are also encouraged to continue to discuss their plans with the school counselor on a regular basis during the middle school and high school years. Students need to be interested and involved in their academic progress and in planning for their futures to ensure that they will be prepared to achieve their postsecondary goals.



Points to Remember When Choosing a Graduation Program

- ❑ Students who choose a three-year graduation program may still qualify for acceleration programs (e.g., AP, dual enrollment, IB, AICE, and Industry Certification) and for a Florida Bright Futures Scholarship if they meet the eligibility and/or admissions requirements for those programs and scholarships.
- ❑ Students who choose a three-year graduation program can participate in the National Merit Scholarship Program if they take the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) in either the next-to-last year or the last year they are enrolled in high school. Those who take the PSAT/NMSQT in their last year of high school will be entering competition for awards to be offered as they are completing their first year of college.
- ❑ Students who complete a three-year graduation program cannot remain in school for a fourth year after graduating from high school. Students will lose a year of potential athletics eligibility by opting for a three-year program. Issues such as continued eligibility for high school athletics or other extracurricular activities should be taken into consideration when making the decision.
- ❑ Students entering ninth grade in the 2011–2012 school year who choose a three-year program will automatically move to the four-year, 24-credit program if they do not earn five credits by the end of grade 9 or 11 credits by the end of grade 10; do not achieve a score of three or higher on the Grade 10 FCAT Writing assessment; do not pass the Grade 10 FCAT 2.0 Reading; or do not meet credit or GPA requirements by the end of their third year. Passing the Grade 10 FCAT 2.0 Reading is mandatory.
- ❑ Students entering ninth grade in previous years who choose a three-year graduation program will automatically move to the four-year graduation program if they do not earn five credits by the end of grade 9 or 11 credits by the end of grade 10; do not achieve a score of three or higher on the Grade 10 FCAT; or do not meet credit or GPA requirements by the end of their third year.
- ❑ High school credits awarded before grade 9 can be counted toward the required credits for all graduation programs.
- ❑ The three-year graduation programs are only available to students who will receive a standard diploma.
- ❑ Students who complete the three-year college preparatory program must still satisfy minimum academic core credit requirements for SUS admissions.
- ❑ Students who plan to apply to an out-of-state or private in-state college or university and who are interested in one of the three-year graduation programs should contact those institutions as early as possible for specific admission requirements.



Special Notes

Online Instruction

- ◆ Students are required to earn course credit in at least one course within the 24-credit graduation option through online learning. This requirement may be met through an online course offered by Florida Virtual School (FVS), an online course offered by the high school, or an online dual enrollment course. A high school course taken online during grades 6 through 8 fulfills this requirement. A student who is enrolled in a full-time or part-time virtual instruction program meets this requirement.

Industry Certification

- ◆ Students who take a concentrated career and technical education program have an opportunity to earn a guaranteed number of college credits in the Florida College System by receiving an industry certification.

Middle Grades Forgiveness

- ◆ Students in grades 6–8 who take any high school-level course(s) for high school credit and earn a grade of C, D, or F may replace the grade with a grade of C or higher earned subsequently in the same or comparable course(s) in accordance with the district school board's forgiveness policy.



Florida Department of Education Resources

FACTS.org is Florida's free academic advising website. The site includes services to help students prepare for and succeed in school and beyond. FACTS.org makes it easy for public middle and high school students to be involved in their academic and career planning. By establishing a login ID, students can create an ePersonal Education Plan (ePEP) that maps out high school coursework according to individual goals. Students can also monitor their progress by running evaluations against transcript information and the requirements for high school diplomas, State University System admission, Bright Futures Scholarships, and a new federal grant called the Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG). FACTS.org services support Florida Department of Education initiatives and legislative reforms. For more information, visit <http://www.facts.org>, contact the FACTS.org Help desk toll-free at (866) 324-2618, or email them at facts@admin.usf.edu.

Florida EOC Assessments are part of [Florida's Next Generation Strategic Plan](#) for increasing student achievement and improving college and career readiness. EOCs are computer-based, criterion-referenced assessments that measure the [Next Generation Sunshine State Standards](#) for specific high-school level courses. For information about what is on the assessments, taking the assessments, and frequently asked questions and answers, visit <http://fcit.fldoe.org/eoc/>.

The Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA) administers state-funded and some federally-funded grants and scholarship programs to assist students with the costs of postsecondary education. For information, visit <http://www.FloridaStudentFinancialAid.org> or call toll-free (888) 827-2004.

Federal Student Aid is your source for free information from the U.S. Department of Education on preparing for and funding education beyond high school. Visit <http://www.studentaid.ed.gov>.

The Talented 20 Program provides students in the top 20 percent of their class guaranteed admission, within space and fiscal limitations, into one of Florida's 11 state universities. Please note that although eligible students are guaranteed admission, they may not necessarily be admitted to the campus of choice. These students are given priority for the awarding of funds from the Florida Student Assistance Grant Program although this program provides no scholarships. For more information on how to qualify, visit <http://www.fldoe.org/Talented20/> or call Ms. Kimberly Davis, Bureau of Family and Community Outreach, (850) 245-0551.

The CHOICES website is a comprehensive career information system that uses a flexible approach that combines graphics, multimedia, and search strategies to allow students to explore career and educational options. The site includes links to key websites related to career exploration to help students plan for a career. Visit <http://www.flchoices.org>.



This publication is designed to assist students, parents, and school districts in support of educational programs. For additional information on this publication, or for a list of available publications, contact the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Curriculum and Instruction, 325 West Gaines Street, Room 434, Turlington Building, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400.



Gerard Robinson, Commissioner
Florida Department of Education