



State Graduation Requirements

A high school diploma is more than a rite of passage. It should signify to anyone — college admissions counselors and professors, employers and families — that a student worked hard, was challenged and is prepared for the next steps in life. To help ensure that, Washington’s graduation requirements were changed. Now, ALL public high school students, regardless of their ambitions after high school, are expected to show they have a solid foundation of skills and knowledge.

The state’s graduation requirements, as established by the State Board of Education, represent a portfolio of a student’s high school career. That portfolio, composed of four elements, is proof that the student has acquired the necessary skills to succeed both personally and professionally in an increasingly complex world.

State & Local Requirements

School districts may have additional graduation requirements, such as community service. Students and their families should be aware of all state and local graduation requirements when they begin high school.

Students are held to the graduation requirements that are in place when **they first enter ninth grade**. The requirements do not change even if the student’s graduation year changes.

The Four State Graduation Requirements

The state’s four high school graduation requirements began with the Class of 2008. New graduation requirements (a third credit of math and the requirement to pass a state math exam) begin with the Class of 2013. Students in the Class of 2013 and beyond must earn Certificate of Academic (or Individual) Achievement in order to be eligible to graduate.

Through the Class of 2012: Students must fulfill the four following requirements as outlined in state statute [WAC 180-51-061](#). The requirements under WAC 180-51-061 are for all students in the classes of 2008 and 2012.

Class of 2013 and Beyond: Students in the Class of 2013 and beyond must fulfill the four following requirements as outlined in state statute [WAC 180-51-066](#) and state law [RCW 28A.655.066](#).

I. Earn High School Credits

Through the Class of 2012: The state requires a minimum of **19 credits** to graduate, but school districts have the authority to require students to take and pass additional courses for graduation. According to a survey conducted by the State Board of Education in 2008, most school districts in the state require about 23 credits to graduate.

Class of 2013 and Beyond: Beginning with the Class of 2013, the state minimum requirement rises to **20 credits** with the addition of a third credit of high school math. See [WAC 180-51-066](#).



2. Complete a High School and Beyond Plan

To graduate, students must develop a plan on how they will meet the high school graduation requirements and what they will do following high school. A student's plan, which ideally should be started in eighth or ninth grade and be revised as he/she moves forward, should include the classes needed in preparation for a two- or four-year college, apprenticeship, career or technical school, certificate program or the workforce. Each school district determines the guidelines for the [high school and beyond plan](#). Questions about the guidelines should be directed to the high school or school district office. **Note:** This requirement does not change with the Class of 2013.

3. Complete a Culminating Project

To graduate, all students must complete a [culminating, or senior, project](#). Each school district determines the guidelines students must follow to complete this requirement. Questions about the culminating project guidelines should be directed to the high school or school district office. **Note:** This requirement does not change with the Class of 2013.

4. Pass State Tests OR State-Approved Alternatives

Beginning in the 2009-2010 school year, the high school Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) was replaced by the High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE). If students through the Class of 2012 previously passed the WASL in a specific content area (e.g., reading), they are not required to pass the HSPE. Visit www.WAtesting.com for more information.

Students receiving special education services must pass state-approved special education in reading, writing and math alternate assessments. Download the handout "*How Students in Special Education Participate in State Testing*" at: www.k12.wa.us/Resources.

Students in the Class of 2013 are required to pass three state exams (reading, writing and math) and earn a Certificate of Academic Achievement, or Certificate of Individual Achievement for students in special education. Beginning with the Class of 2015, students must pass reading, writing, two end-of-course math exams and one science end-of-course exam to earn a CAA or CIA.

READING and WRITING

Through the Class of 2012: Students can meet the reading and writing graduation requirement by:

- Passing the reading and writing high school WASL/HSPE OR
- Passing a state-approved alternative, also known as CAA Option (**see Page 7**)

Class of 2013 and beyond: Students can meet reading and writing graduation requirement by:

- Passing the reading and writing high school HSPE OR
- Passing a state-approved alternative, also known as CAA Option (**see Page 7**)



MATH

Through the Class of 2012: Students can meet the math graduation requirement by:

- Passing the math high school WASL/HSPE or **one** of two end-of-course exams OR
- Submitting a score of 19 or higher on the math ACT, 470 or higher on the math SAT, or 3 or higher on calculus or statistics Advanced Placement course exams OR
- Submitting a GPA comparison (this is not considered a math assessment, and students must still take a legislatively approved math assessment) OR
- Earning two credits of math after the 10th grade

A student must take the math WASL/HSPE at least once before using any of the above alternatives. The math collection of evidence is not an option for students through the class of 2012. (**See Page 7**)

Class of 2013 and 2014: Students can meet the math graduation requirement by:

- Passing **one** math end-of-course exam (algebra I or geometry), or their integrated math equivalents OR
- Submitting scores on the math ACT or math SAT (to be determined by summer 2012), or 3 or higher on calculus or statistics Advanced Placement course exams OR
- Submitting a GPA comparison (this is not considered a math assessment, and students must still take a legislatively approved math assessment) OR
- Submitting a successful math Collection of Evidence

Class of 2015 and beyond: Students can meet the math graduation requirement by:

- Passing **two** math end-of-course exams (algebra I and geometry), or their integrated math equivalents OR
- Submitting scores on the math ACT or math SAT (to be determined by summer 2012), or 3 or higher on calculus or statistics Advanced Placement course exams OR
- Submitting a GPA comparison (this is not considered a math assessment, and students must still take a legislatively approved math assessment) OR
- Submitting a successful math Collection of Evidence

Note: The option of earning two credits of math after the 10th grade is no longer available for students in the Class of 2013 and beyond because it is not a CAA Option.

SCIENCE

Through the Class of 2014: Passing a state science exam (WASL/HSPE/EOC) is not required for high school graduation.

Class of 2015 and beyond: Beginning with the Class of 2015, students must pass a biology end-of-course exam, which debuts in spring 2012.

For more information: Visit www.k12.wa.us/GraduationRequirements