

GRADUATION POLICY

HOW MANY DIPLOMA OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS OF NEW MEXICO?

New Mexico has only one diploma, the New Mexico Diploma of Excellence. Students who meet both coursework and competency requirements will earn a New Mexico Diploma of Excellence. This includes students with IEPs using the modified or ability option who meet the individualized graduation indicators established by their IEP.

CAN WE ASSUME THAT THERE WILL NOT BE ANY CHANGES TO CURRENT POLICY UNTIL WE GET TO THE CLASS OF 2022?

New Mexico Statute 22-13-1.1 NMSA 1978 states, "Once a student has entered ninth grade, the graduation requirements shall not be changed for that student from the requirements specified in the law at the time the student entered ninth grade." The guidelines in the new rule for the class of 2022 can only be changed through rulemaking in accordance with the State Rules Act and 1.24.25 NMAC, Default Procedural Rule for Rulemaking. The [CCRB webpage](#) provides the graduation requirements for the classes of 2021-2025.

COURSEWORK

WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF A UNIT?

A unit is a high school measurement of credit. The assigning of credit is outlined by individual district policies.

WHICH COURSES SATISFY THE ENGLISH REQUIREMENTS?

Courses in the 1000 sequence in the [STARS Manual](#) are generally available for credit. Please refer to the course description in the manual for detailed information.

WHICH COURSES SATISFY THE MATHEMATICS REQUIREMENTS?

Courses in the 2000 sequence in the [STARS Manual](#) are generally available for credit. Please refer to the course description in the manual for detailed information.

Note: Mathematics courses that align to the New Mexico 9–12 math standards or higher may count towards fulfilling the requirements for graduation. For students entering grade 9 in the 2009–2010 school year or thereafter, four units of mathematics are required, one of which is equivalent to, or higher than, the level of Algebra 2.

Note: Districts may develop local policy to allow specific college-level mathematics courses to count toward the four math units required for graduation. For a college course to provide dual credit for a high school graduation requirement, the college and high school course curricula must be cross-walked to address the Common Core State Standards. The cross-walk only requires approval by the local school board and a copy should be on file with the College and Career Readiness Bureau's Dual Credit Coordinator.

Additionally, placement into a college course should include a demonstration of student proficiency. The student should score at or above the established cut score on the postsecondary placement test where the course will be taken; e.g. Next-Gen Accuplacer.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A CAREER CLUSTER COURSE AND A WORKPLACE READINESS COURSE?

A career cluster course is an identified career-technical education course. These courses are part of an aligned, sequential series of courses within a related grouping of occupations in a given industry sector. Completing a series of career cluster courses may result in an industry-recognized certification or post-secondary degree and add relevance to the high school curricula. Career-technical education in the standards of excellence. This does not include courses already identified as meeting other specified graduation requirements.

DO THE ELECTIVE CLASSES HAVE TO BE OFFERED AS ONE UNIT?

It is the district's decision whether to offer the courses for one unit or fewer. Some elective course codes listed in the STARS Course Code manual are worth one unit, and some are worth 0.5 units.

WHAT IS THE STARS CODE FOR THE FINANCIAL LITERACY COURSE THAT CAN SATISFY THE ONE-UNIT HIGH SCHOOL FOURTH MATHEMATICS REQUIREMENT?

STARS 2097—Financial Literacy—Mathematics.

CAN A TEACHER WITH A SOCIAL STUDIES ENDORSEMENT TEACH THE STARS 2097 FINANCIAL LITERACY COURSE?

No, a mathematics endorsement is required for STARS 2097. A social studies endorsement is required for STARS 2797.

DOES TWO YEARS OF A FOREIGN LANGUAGE MEAN TWO OF THE YEARS OF THE SAME LANGUAGE UNITS?

Yes. High school graduation requirements only require one year of a language other than English. However, many colleges require two consecutive years of the same language as part of their admission requirements.

DEMONSTRATIONS OF COMPETENCY

WHAT GRADUATION ASSESSMENTS CAN BE USED TO DEMONSTRATE COMPETENCY?

The Menu of Options to Demonstrate College and/or Career Readiness for each graduation cohort can be found on the [Graduation Requirements webpage](#).

Commented [JB1]: UPDATED LINK

HOW DO STUDENT DEMONSTRATE COMPETENCY ON STANDARDIZED TESTING DURING COVID?

Due to pandemic-related interruptions to standardized testing, PED allows the continuation of the passing of required coursework to demonstrate competency for cohort 2022 and 2023 graduates, as allowed for cohort 2021. [The](#) guidance memo can be found [here](#).

Commented [JB2]: Added this new question and link

PROGRAMS OF STUDY

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PROGRAM OF STUDY OPTIONS?

The [New Mexico Career Clusters Guide](#) on the PED website provides a listing of all 16 career clusters and the programs of study falling under each cluster. The New Mexico Career Cluster Guide is available in English and Spanish.

HOW DO STUDENTS KNOW WHICH PROGRAMS OF STUDY ARE AVAILABLE AT THEIR SCHOOL?

Most schools offer at least one program of study, and the number of options being offered across the state continues to grow. High school counselors and administrators will have the most up-to-date information about which programs of study are currently available.

HOW DO YOU COMPLETE A PROGRAM OF STUDY?

Each program of study is a compilation of four courses that are taken in sequence. In order for a program of study to be used as a demonstration of competency for graduation, students must complete three courses in sequence in the same program of study and earn a GPA of at least 3.0. Students may take the first three courses in the four course series or the last three courses in the four course series.

Both approaches would qualify as a competency-based alternative.

DOES COMPLETION OF A PROGRAM OF STUDY COUNT FOR ALL CONTENT AREAS?

Programs of study may not be used to demonstrate competency in content areas for which they are not approved. For example, a student who has completed a program of study in Computer Science & Cybersecurity could use the program of study as a demonstration of competency in Science and Mathematics only. The program of study would not be accepted as a demonstration of competency in Reading, Writing, or Social Studies.

DUAL CREDIT

WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF A CREDIT HOUR?

A credit hour is an undergraduate college measurement of credit. Three college credit hours are equivalent to one high school unit as defined by the Dual Credit rule (6.30.7 NMAC).

HOW DO STUDENTS FIND OUT WHICH TYPES OF DUAL CREDIT COURSES ARE OFFERED AT THEIR SCHOOL?

Almost all high schools have at least one dual credit Master Agreement with a public college, university, or tribal college. The courses offered vary depending on what is agreed upon between the school or district and the institution of higher learning. High school counselors and/or administrators can provide students with a list of dual credit coursework specific to their school site. In some cases, coursework may be available through distance learning.

HOW DO STUDENTS KNOW IF THEY ARE ELIGIBLE TO TAKE DUAL CREDIT COURSES?

All students who have not yet earned a NM Diploma of Excellence or high school equivalency certificate are eligible to take dual credit courses. Students must be enrolled in one-half or more of the minimum course requirements approved by the PED, or, if enrolled in a high school funded by the Bureau of Indian Education, must be receiving at least three documented contact hours per day. Students must also meet the eligibility requirements for New Mexico dual credit program participation established by the high school and the postsecondary institution. A full explanation of dual credit eligibility requirements is outlined in [6.30.7 NMAC, Dual Credit](#).

WHAT IS THE LEA REQUIREMENT TO IMPLEMENT A DUAL CREDIT PROGRAM WITH A LOCAL POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTION?

All LEAs must complete a Dual Credit Master Agreement with at least one local NM public/tribal postsecondary institution. The LEA must submit the Master Agreement to the NMPED according to the directions found on the [Dual Credit Page](#). Dual credit courses must be listed in the approved MOU between the public school and the college/university before students can take the college course.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT AND DUAL CREDIT?

If a high school student is taking a course for credit at an institution of higher education but not receiving high school graduation credit at the primary enrollment high school location, the student is considered to be enrolled concurrently. If, however, the same student is taking a class for credit at an institution of higher education which also counts for credit toward high school graduation, the student is considered to be dually enrolled. Students who are enrolled in a dual credit course do so at public expense.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP), HONORS, AND DISTANCE LEARNING:

WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF AN HONORS COURSE?

Honors courses are developed locally to meet the needs of accelerated students. Honors classes offer the same curriculum that non-honors courses offer, but they are more challenging. Honors courses are generally faster paced and cover topics more in depth. However, these courses are not usually considered equivalent to college-level work. (See Section 22-13-1.4 NMSA 1978)

CAN HONORS COURSES SATISFY THE REQUIREMENT FOR ACADEMICALLY RIGOROUS COURSES IN MATHEMATICS AND LANGUAGE ARTS?

Yes.

WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF AN ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) COURSE?

Advanced Placement (AP)[®] courses are high school classes, taught by highly qualified secondary teachers on the school campus during the school day. While AP courses meet high school standards and benchmarks, students complete college-level work and at the end of the year, students can take the corresponding AP exam. The New Mexico Higher Education Department's Advanced Placement policy guarantees specific course credit for scores of 3 or higher (on a 5-point scale) at all public universities in the state. Advanced Placement is a program of the College Board, which completes an audit of all AP course syllabi for approval. Course content and pacing are

guided by the College Board's Course and Exam Description (CED) along with a Course Perspective written by an experienced AP teacher.

CAN A PRE-ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) COURSE FULFILL THE AP CREDIT REQUIREMENT?

No. Visit the College Board [AP Central](#) page for more information.

CAN ADVANCED PLACEMENT OR INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE COURSES SATISFY THE REQUIREMENT FOR ACADEMICALLY VIGOROUS CLASSES IN MATHEMATICS AND LANGUAGE ARTS?

Yes.

MUST HONORS, ADVANCED PLACEMENT, AND INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE COURSES BE OFFERED FOR ONE UNIT?

Yes. The intention is for ACADEMICALLY RIGOROUS courses to be offered for one unit. 22-13-1.1. (G). Graduation Requirements. For students entering the ninth grade beginning in the 2009-2010 school year, at least one of the units required for graduation shall be earned as an AP or Honors course, a dual-credit course offered in cooperation with an institution of higher education or a distance-learning course.

CAN STUDENTS MIX AND MATCH COMPONENTS OF THE AP, HONORS, DUAL CREDIT, OR DISTANCE EDUCATION REQUIREMENT?

The intent is that a student receives instruction that spans the entire set of standards for a course, whether a half-unit course or a full-unit course and the one unit required by this law must be delivered by the same delivery method and model (AP or Honors or distance education or Dual Credit).

TO FULFILL THE ACADEMICALLY RIGOROUS REQUIREMENT, CAN STUDENTS TAKE HALF A CREDIT OF DISTANCE ED HEALTH AND HALF A CREDIT OF DISTANCE ED NM HISTORY OR HALF A CREDIT OF DISTANCE ED ECONOMICS AND HALF A CREDIT OF DISTANCE ED GOVERNMENT?

Yes. The purpose of High School Redesign is to ensure that students are exposed to the entire set of standards that guide the specific course. Since these courses are half credit courses, students are exposed to all the standards for the course.

CAN STUDENTS TAKE HALF A CREDIT OF DISTANCE ED US HISTORY AND HALF A CREDIT OF DISTANCE ED ALGEBRA II?

No. The intent of the law is that students receive instruction aligned to the entire set of standards that guide the specific course. These two courses are not in the same discipline, so the student is not exposed to all the standards for the course.

CAN STUDENTS TAKE HALF A CREDIT OF AN AP COURSE AND HALF A CREDIT OF AN HONORS COURSE OR HALF A CREDIT OF AN HONORS COURSE AND HALF A CREDIT OF A DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSE?

No. The intent of the law is that students take one unit of AP, Dual Credit, Honors, or Distance Learning. This is interpreted to mean that the entire unit is in the same course, so the student will receive instruction that spans the entire set of standards or AP content and the same delivery method and model.

HOW DO LEAS ENSURE GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS ARE MET THAT INCLUDE IDENTIFYING ONE OF THE GRADUATION UNITS AS BEING HONORS, AP, DUAL CREDIT, OR DISTANCE LEARNING?

Within the STARS database, courses are identified at a local level as meeting graduation requirements.

WHAT IS DISTANCE LEARNING AND A DISTANCE-LEARNING COURSE?

Distance learning refers to the technology and educational process used to provide credit or grade-bearing courses in which the course provider and the distance-learning student are not necessarily physically present at the same time or place. Distance learning does not include educational software that utilizes only on-site teaching. A distance learning course is one in which the student and primary instructor are separated by time or space and linked by technology.

Computer-assisted Instruction without an online teacher is not considered a distance-learning course. Thus, distance learning does not include educational software that utilizes only on-site teaching and self-paced learning.

Online courses that utilize highly qualified teachers at-a-distance, such as those offered by the Blended Learning Bureau, do meet the criteria for distance learning courses.

CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A CAREER CLUSTER COURSE AND A WORKPLACE READINESS COURSE?

A career cluster course is an identified career-technical education course. These courses are part of an aligned, sequential series of courses within a related grouping of occupations in a given industry sector. Completing a series of career cluster courses may result in an industry-recognized certification or post-secondary degree and add relevance to the high school curricula. Career-Technical Education in the Standards of Excellence. This does not include courses already identified as meeting other specified graduation requirements.

How do students get an internship?

The types of internships available to students vary by region and school. Students should discuss internship opportunities with their high school counselor or administrator. In order for an internship to count as one of the criteria used to pursue a competency-based alternative, the internship must be approved by the school, paid (either in the form of an hourly wage or stipend), taken for at least a 0.5 credit, be documented on the student's transcript, and correlate with a course code for internships in the Student Teacher Accountability Reporting System (STARS).

Which apprenticeships are approved for students to use?

Each district/school will determine which apprenticeships to accept. Students or schools seeking information on apprenticeships currently offered in their area, may use the Department of Workforce Solutions (DWS) as a resource. The DWS approves and adds registered apprenticeships to their website on a rolling basis. The most current list is available at <https://www.dws.state.nm.us/Job-Seeker/Jobs-and-Careers/Apprenticeship/Current-Programs>.

How can I request a change be made to the list of industry-recognized credentials and certificates in Appendix C?

Those seeking to submit a petition should email the College and Career Readiness Bureau at <mailto:grad.questions@state.nm.us>. Petitions should be supported by a rationale (e.g., XYZ certification is a rigorous assessment that is aligned with industry standards, is valued in the field among hiring managers, and assesses high levels of math that correspond with common core algebra I and geometry standards.) Decisions of whether to accept petitions for additional credentials and certificates will be made by the PED on a case-by-case basis.