

Jasmine Kim

From: Jasmine Kim
Sent: Friday, April 22, 2022 11:31 AM
To: Dzelika Daniel
Cc: Vanita Kontrakul
Subject: RE: Question

Hi Dzelika,

Dzelika, thank you for your answer. Your answer has given us, the accreditation team, a deeper sense of responsibility when verifying high school diplomas and communicating the right information to the admissions offices in different campuses. Yes, we are seeing some room for improvement on the processing end. The accreditation team will speak to Sharon and discuss how we can do it better. Sharon has told me to keep a list of things to go over together in June. Sharon will be sure to reach out to you for ideas when we are having this discussion in June. Thank you for your willingness to collaborate! You will hear from all of us soon.

Jasmine Kim
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From: Dzelika Daniel <Dzelika.Daniel@cuny.edu>
Sent: Thursday, April 21, 2022 2:13 PM
To: Jasmine Kim <Jasmine.Kim@cuny.edu>
Cc: Vanita Kontrakul <Vanita.Kontrakul@cuny.edu>
Subject: RE: Question

Financial Aid does not verify the validity of the diploma. We rely on the data from Admissions to know if the diploma meets the standard as acceptable. In the case where a student may be selected for a Federal Verification group that requires confirmation of high school completion, we request proof of high school completion (i.e. a copy of the hs diploma or proof of GED/equivalent) from the student to satisfy the request. However, it is with the understanding that the Admissions department has deemed it acceptable.

Hope this helps. If you know of gaps that exist on the processing end, let me know so we can try to identify and brainstorm resolutions.

Best,
Dzelika

From: Jasmine Kim <Jasmine.Kim@cuny.edu>
Sent: Thursday, April 21, 2022 1:41 PM
To: Dzelika Daniel <Dzelika.Daniel@cuny.edu>
Cc: Vanita Kontrakul <Vanita.Kontrakul@cuny.edu>
Subject: RE: Question

Dzelika,

Thank you for your email. It has cleared many of the questions we had. I have a follow-up question. If a school requires a diploma for admission, then the financial aid office must rely on that copy of the diploma or high school equivalency certificate and not on the student's certification alone. How does the financial aid office know whether a high school diploma is a valid diploma? Are they trained to verify diplomas? Or do they depend on the admissions office to make this determination?

Best,
Jasmine

From: Dzelika Daniel <Dzelika.Daniel@cuny.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, April 19, 2022 11:16 AM
To: Jasmine Kim <Jasmine.Kim@cuny.edu>
Cc: Vanita Kontrakul <Vanita.Kontrakul@cuny.edu>
Subject: RE: Question

Hi Jasmine,

It was nice speaking with you and Vanita.

NYS HESC, the agency that manages NYS Aid Programs. Admissions and requirements to being admitted to a college differs from eligibility for Federal and NYS Aid programs. I highlighted the caveat in your email for reference that alludes to this.

Here's NYS Aid guidance on the HS Graduation Requirement:

f. High School Graduation Requirement

To be eligible for any state-sponsored grant or scholarship award, students who first receive aid in:

1. academic year 1996-97 to academic year 2006-07 must have:
 - a high school diploma, or
 - the recognized equivalent of a high school diploma (e.g., GED), or
 - a passing score as determined by the U.S. Secretary of Education on a federally approved ability-to-benefit test.
2. academic year 2006-07, must have:
 - a U.S. high school diploma, or
 - the recognized equivalent, or
 - a passing score on a federally approved ability-to-benefit test independently administered and evaluated as provided by the NYS Commissioner of Education.
3. academic year 2007-08 and thereafter, must have:
 - a U.S. high school diploma, or
 - the recognized equivalent, or
 - a passing score on a federally approved ability-to-benefit test identified by the NYS Board of Regents and independently administered and evaluated by the Commissioner of Education.

Also, see additional reference from [HESC](#) on HS Diploma:

To be eligible for State student financial assistance, Education Law section 661(4) states that a student first receiving aid in academic year 1996-97 to 2006-2007 must have a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such certificate, or receive a passing score on an approved ability-to-benefit test. For students first receiving aid in academic year 2006-07 and thereafter, the certificate of graduation must be from a recognized school providing secondary education within the United States; or the recognized equivalent of such certificate; or received a passing score on a federally approved ability to benefit test that has been identified by the board of regents and has been independently administered and evaluated as defined by the commissioner.

Therefore, a student without a valid high school diploma must hold a high school equivalency diploma. A student can earn a high school equivalency diploma in New York State in one of three ways: (1) by taking and earning passing scores on a TASC test or (2) by completing 24 semester hour credits in specified subjects as a recognized candidate for a degree in an approved (accredited) institution or (3) through the National External Diploma Program. For more information on High School Equivalency Diploma visit nysed.gov.

Note:

1. The New York State High School Equivalency diploma may also be awarded to those candidates who meet all New York State requirements and who submit an official report of results from a GED® Test taken outside New York State prior to 2014. Candidates will receive a diploma and an official transcript certifying that they were awarded the New York State High School Equivalency diploma based on GED® testing out of state.
2. For financial aid purposes a record of a prior (postsecondary) degree earned by a student is acceptable.

Visit NYSED for more information on the treatment of the HS Diploma and the importance of the ATB test for NYS Aid purposes: [Ability-to-Benefit \(ATB\) Testing Requirements for State Financial Aid | New York State Education Department \(nysed.gov\)](http://nysed.gov)

For [Federal Student Aid](http://nysed.gov) (Title IV programs such as the Pell Grant), students are required to have:

- has a high school diploma (this can be from a foreign school if it is equivalent to a U.S. high school diploma);
- has the recognized equivalent of a high school diploma, such as a general educational development (GED) certificate or other state sanctioned test or diploma-equivalency certificate;
- has completed homeschooling at the secondary level as defined by state law;
- has completed secondary school education in a homeschool setting which qualifies for an exemption from compulsory attendance requirements under state law, if state law does not require a homeschooled student to receive a credential for their education; or
- has completed one of the ability-to-benefit (ATB) alternatives and is either currently enrolled in an eligible career pathway program or first enrolled in an eligible postsecondary program prior to July 1, 2012.

A student may self-certify on the FAFSA that he has received a high school diploma or high school equivalency certificate or that she has completed secondary school through homeschooling as defined by state law. If a student indicates that he has a diploma or high school equivalency certificate, your school isn't required to ask for a copy (except as noted below), but if your school requires a diploma for admission, then you must rely on that copy of the diploma or high school equivalency certificate and not on the student's certification alone.

Hope this clarifies. Let me know if there are additional questions.

Sincerely,

Dzelika Daniel
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From: Jasmine Kim <Jasmine.Kim@cuny.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, April 19, 2022 10:23 AM
To: Dzelika Daniel <Dzelika.Daniel@cuny.edu>
Cc: Vanita Kontrakul <Vanita.Kontrakul@cuny.edu>
Subject: Question

Hello Ms.Dzelika Daniel,

The NYSED resources you shared with us last Thursday in your office was very helpful. We were able to find answers to many of our questions. There is still one burning question:

If a student says he/she does not need financial aid (not just TAP but Pell and all other federal loans and grants) and would still like to matriculate in CUNY. They do not have a proof of high school graduation or the equivalent. Would this student be allowed to matriculate in CUNY? I read the following in SUNY's [website](#) under matriculation section:

"New York State law no longer requires an institution of higher education to admit as matriculated students only persons who have a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent. Campuses must have campus-specific admissions requirements (i.e., high school grade point average, SAT I, ACT, SAT II scores, essay, letters of reference, extracurricular activities) that take into account the student's capacity to undertake a college-level course of study and the capacity of the institution to provide the instructional and other support the student needs to complete the program of study. Home-schooled students may be admitted as matriculated students to University campuses under this policy without proof of a high school diploma or its equivalent. This policy does not change the requirements pertaining to eligibility for state student financial aid."

They were talking about home-schooled students but I figured this is applicable to any student who does not have a high school degree or its equivalent. I did not know that NYS no longer requires higher education to admit a student with a high school diploma. Accepting students who do not need financial aid might be giving more access to those students who can "afford" college out of pocket. Politically, it may be a form of discrimination to those who cannot afford college? Is this the reason why CUNY will adhere to accepting students with high school diplomas?

I am looking forward to your reply!

Best,
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