

Policy Code: 3460 Graduation Requirements

The Board recognizes the importance of setting rigorous graduation requirements along with meaningful community service learning experiences in order to help ensure that students are receiving an education that will prepare them to be productive members of society.

In order to graduate from high school, students must meet the following requirements:

1. successful completion of all course unit requirements
2. successful completion of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) instruction.

The principal shall ensure that students and parents are aware of all graduation requirements. School counselors shall assist students in selecting their high school courses to ensure that students are taking all of the required units and selecting electives consistent with their post-graduate plans. For students who have transferred to the school system during high school, or who for other reasons have completed course work outside of the school system, the principal shall determine what course work will be applied as credit for graduation. The principal shall consider the requirements of the Interstate Compact on Education Opportunity for Military Children ([G.S. 115C-407.5](#)), [G.S. 115C-407.12](#), and the requirements of Section D.4 of this policy in determining the graduation requirements for children of military families.

A. Course Units Required

A “credit” is a course for which credit is awarded toward high school graduation and which qualifies as part of the instructional day. Credit will not be awarded for office, teacher, or laboratory assistance.

All students must fulfill the course unit requirements of the Future-Ready Core Course of Study, unless they are approved for the Future-Ready Occupational Course of Study. The tables below list the course unit requirements for the Future-Ready Core Course of Study and the Future-Ready Occupational Course of Study based on the student’s year of entry into ninth grade for the first time.

In accordance with policy 3101: Options to Earn High School Credit, and State Board of Education requirements, students may:

- earn high school credit for college courses completed;
- earn credit for certain high school courses in the Future-Ready Core Course of Study completed while in middle school, as authorized by the State Board of Education; and
- have the opportunity to meet credit unit requirements without completing the regular period of classroom instruction by demonstrating mastery of the course material in accordance with policy 3420: Student Promotion and Accountability, and State Board of Education requirements.

All awards of high school course credit must be consistent with State Board of Education requirements. Any inconsistency between board policy and State Board graduation requirements will be resolved by following the State Board requirements. While the board endeavors to keep its policy up to date with current State Board of Education graduation requirements, students should verify current requirements with their school counselors when planning course schedules or making other decisions based on graduation requirements.

1. Future-Ready Core Course of Study Credits Required for Students Entering Ninth

Grade for the First Time before 2020-21.

Courses Required*	State Requirements	Local Requirements
English	4 sequential (English I, II, III, and IV)	or AP English Language, or AP English Literature
Mathematics	4 (NC Math 1, 2, and 3 and a fourth math unit/credit aligned with the student's post-high school plans.)** (A principal may exempt a student from this math sequence. Exempt students will be required to pass NC Math 1 and 2 and two other application-based math courses or selected CTE courses, as identified on the NC DPI math options chart.)***	
Science	3 (a physical science course, Biology, and earth/environmental science)	
Social Studies	4 (including: 1) a founding principles course which shall be either American History: Founding Principles, Civics & Economics or Founding Principles of the United States of America and North Carolina: Civic Literacy;**** 2) two American history courses, which shall be either (a) American History I and II, (b) American History I or II and another Social Studies course; and (3) World History)	OR AP U.S. History and one additional social studies elective
Health/P.E.	1	
Electives	6 (2 electives must be any combination of Career and Technical Education, Arts Education, or World Language; 4 must be from one of the following: Career and Technical Education, J.R.O.T.C., Arts Education, or any other subject area or cross-disciplinary course. A four-unit/credit concentration is recommended.)*****	1 elective in Career-Technical Education or Arts Education Students on a math substitution: 4 elective credits required (four course concentration) from one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CTE • JROTC • Arts • Any other

		subject area
Total Credits	22	

* Certain International Baccalaureate (IB), Advanced Placement (AP), and Cambridge International Examination (CIE) courses will satisfy specific graduation requirements. See SBE Policy [GRAD-008](#).

** Students who are learning disabled in math may have other options for meeting the four mathematics credits requirement. See DPI memo of August 24, 2016 available at <http://bit.ly/DPIMemo> and the math options chart linked below.

*** Students seeking to complete minimum courses requirements for UNC universities must complete four mathematics courses, including a fourth math course with Math 3 as a prerequisite. The math options chart is available at: <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/classroom-resources/academic-standards/standard-course-study/mathematics/standard-course-study-supporting-resources>

**** The founding principles courses, American History: Founding Principles, Civics and Economics and Founding Principles of the United States of America and North Carolina: Civic Literacy, must follow the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) in its entirety and may not be satisfied by any other courses. See SBE Policy [GRAD-004](#).

***** Students seeking to complete minimum course requirements for UNC universities must complete two credits of a single world language.

2. Future-Ready Core Course of Study Credits Required for Students Entering Ninth Grade for the First Time in 2020-2021

Courses Required*	State Requirements
English	4 sequential (English I, II, III, and IV)
Mathematics	4 (NC Math 1, 2, and 3 and a fourth math unit/credit aligned with the student's post-high school plans.)** (A principal may exempt a student from this math sequence. Exempt students will be required to pass NC Math 1 and 2 and two other application-based math courses or selected CTE courses, as identified on the NC DPI math options chart.)***
Science	3 (a physical science course, Biology, and earth/environmental science)
Social Studies	4 (including: (1) a founding principles course, which shall be either American History: Founding Principles, Civics, and Economics or Founding Principles of the United States of America and North Carolina: Civic Literacy****; (2) an American History course, which shall be either (a) American History I, (b) American History II, or (c) American History; (3) World History; and (4) Economics and Personal Finance*****)

Health/P.E.	1
Electives	6 (2 electives must be any combination of Career and Technical Education, Arts Education, or World Language; 4 must be from one of the following: Career and Technical Education, J.R.O.T.C., Arts Education, or any other subject area or cross-disciplinary course. A four-unit/credit concentration is recommended *****)
Total Credits	22

* Certain International Baccalaureate (IB), Advanced Placement (AP), and Cambridge International Examination (CIE) courses will satisfy specific graduation requirements. See SBE Policy [GRAD-008](#).

** Students who are learning disabled in math may have other options for meeting the four mathematics credits requirement. See DPI memo of August 24, 2016 available at <http://bit.ly/DPIMemo> and the math options chart linked below

*** Students seeking to complete minimum courses requirements for UNC universities must complete four mathematics courses, including a fourth math course with Math 3 as a prerequisite. The math options chart is available at: <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/classroom-resources/academic-standards/standard-course-study/mathematics/standard-course-study-supporting-resources>

**** The founding principles courses, American History: Founding Principles, Civics and Economics and Founding Principles of the United States of America and North Carolina: Civic Literacy must follow the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) in its entirety and may not be satisfied by any other courses. See SBE Policy [GRAD-004](#).

- Students will take World History (World History, Honors World History, or AP World History) in the first year of their high school Social Studies course sequence due to the nature of the adoption of the new Social Studies Standard course of Study effective in 2021-22.

*****This course must, at a minimum, include the standards established by the second edition of the Voluntary National Content Standards in Economics and the 2013 National Standards for Financial Literacy, as developed by the Council for Economic Education.

***** Students seeking to complete minimum course requirements for UNC universities must complete two credits of a single world language.

3. Future-Ready Core Course of Study Credits Required for Students Entering Ninth Grade for the First Time in 2021-2022 and thereafter.

Courses Required*	State Requirements
English	4 sequential (English I, II, III, and IV)
Mathematics	4 (NC Math 1, 2, and 3 and a fourth math unit/credit aligned with the student's post-high school plans.)**

	(A principal may exempt a student from this math sequence. Exempt students will be required to pass NC Math 1 and 2 and two other application-based math courses or selected CTE courses, as identified on the NC DPI math options chart.)***
Science	3 (a physical science course, Biology, and earth/environmental science)
Social Studies	4 (including: (1) Founding Principles of the United States of America and North Carolina: Civic Literacy****; (2) American History; (3) World History; and (4) Economics and Personal Finance*****)
Health/P.E.	1
Electives	6 (2 electives must be any combination of Career and Technical Education, Arts Education, or World Language; 4 must be from one of the following: Career and Technical Education, J.R.O.T.C., Arts Education, or any other subject area or cross-disciplinary course. A four-course concentration is recommended *****)
Total Credits	22

* Certain International Baccalaureate (IB), Advanced Placement (AP), and Cambridge International Examination (CIE) courses will satisfy specific graduation requirements. See SBE Policy [GRAD-008](#).

** Students who are learning disabled in math may have other options for meeting the four mathematics credits requirement. See DPI memo of August 24, 2016 available at <http://bit.ly/DPIMemo> and the math options chart linked below

*** Students seeking to complete minimum courses requirements for UNC universities must complete four mathematics courses, including a fourth math course with Math 3 as a prerequisite. The math options chart is available at: <http://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/classroom-resources/academic-standards/standard-course-study/mathematics/standard-course-study-supporting-resources>

**** The Founding Principles course must follow the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) in its entirety and may not be satisfied by any other courses. See SBE Policy [GRAD-004](#).

- Students will take World History (World History, Honors World History, or AP World History) in the first year of their high school Social Studies course sequence due to the nature of the adoption of the new Social Studies Standard course of Study effective in 2021-22.

***** This course must, at a minimum, include the standards established by the second edition of the Voluntary National Content Standards in Economics and the 2013 National Standards for Financial Literacy, as developed by the Council for Economic Education.

***** Students seeking to complete minimum course requirements for UNC universities must complete two credits of a single world language.

4. Future-Ready Occupational Course of Study Credits Required for Students Entering

Ninth Grade prior to 2020-21 (only available to certain students with disabilities who have an IEP)

Courses Required	State Requirements	Local Requirements
English	4 (including English I, II, III, and IV)	
Mathematics	3 (including Introduction to Math, NC Math I, and Financial Management)	
Science	2 (including Applied Science and Biology)	
Social Studies	2 (including American History I and American History II* OR (1) American History: Founding Principles, Civics and Economics or Founding Principles of the United States of America and North Carolina: Civic Literacy; and (2) American History I or American History II or American History)**	
Health/P.E.	1	
Career/Technical	4 (CTE electives)	
Occupational Preparation		<p>1 elective in Career-Technical Education or Arts Education</p> <p>Students on a math substitution:</p> <p>4 elective credits required (four course concentration) from one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CTE • JROTC • Arts • Any other subject area
Work Hours***	600	
Electives	0	
Other Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of IEP objectives • Career Portfolio 	

Total Credits	22	
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* Applicable only to students entering the ninth grade for the first time prior to 2017-18.

** Applicable only to students entering the ninth grade for the first time between 2017-2018 and 2019-2020.

*** The work hours must include: (1) 150 hours of school-based training with work activities and experiences that align with the student's post-school goals; (2) 225 hours of community-based training; and (3) 225 hours of paid employment or 225 hours of unpaid vocational training, unpaid internship, paid employment at community rehabilitation facilities, and volunteer and/or community services hours, for a total of 600 required work hours.

5. Future-Ready Occupational Course of Study Credits Required for Students Entering Ninth Grade for the First Time in 2020-2021 (only available to certain students with disabilities who have an IEP)

Courses Required	State Requirements
English	4 (including English I, II, III, and IV)
Mathematics	3 (including Introduction to Math, NC Math I, and Financial Management)
Science	2 (including Applied Science and Biology)
Social Studies	2 (including (1) a founding principles course which shall be either American History: Founding Principles, Civics and Economics or Founding Principles of the United States of America and North Carolina: Civic Literacy and (2) Economics and Personal Finance)
Health/P.E.	1
Career/Technical	4 (Career/Technical Education electives)
Occupational Preparation	6 (including: (1) Occupational Preparation I or Employment Preparation I: Science; (2) Occupational Preparation II or Employment Preparation II: Citizenship IA and Employment Preparation II: Citizenship IB; (3) Occupational Preparation III or Employment Preparation III: Citizenship IIA and Employment Preparation III: Citizenship IIB; and (4) Occupational Preparation IV or Employment Preparation IV: Math)
Work Hours*	600
Electives	0
Other Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of IEP objectives • Career Portfolio
Total Credits	22

* The work hours must include: (1) 150 hours of school-based training with work activities and experiences that align with the student's post-school goals; (2) 225

hours of community-based training; and (3) 225 hours of paid employment or 225 hours of unpaid vocational training, unpaid internship, paid employment at community rehabilitation facilities, and volunteer and/or community services hours, for a total of 600 required work hours.

6. Future-Ready Occupational Course of Study Credits Required for Students Entering Ninth Grade for the First Time in 2021-2022 and thereafter (only available to certain students with disabilities who have an IEP)

Courses Required	State Requirements
English	4 (including English I, II, III, and IV)
Mathematics	4 (including Introduction to Math, NC Math I, Financial Management, and Employment Preparation IV: Math (to include 150 work hours))
Science	3 (including Applied Science, Biology, and Employment Preparation I: Science (to include 150 work hours))
Social Studies	4 (including Founding Principles of the United States of America and North Carolina: Civic Literacy, Economics and Personal Finance, Employment Preparation II: Citizenship IA (to include 75 work hours), and Employment Preparation II: Citizenship IB (to include 75 work hours))
Health/P.E.	1
Career/Technical	4 (Career/Technical Education electives)
Additional Employment Preparation*	2 (including Employment Preparation III: Citizenship IIA (to include 75 work hours) and Employment Preparation III: Citizenship IIB (to include 75 work hours))
Electives	0
Other Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of IEP objectives • Career Portfolio
Total Credits	22

* The work hours included in Employment Preparation I, II, III, and IV are as follows: (1) 150 hours of school-based training with work activities and experiences that align with the student's post-school goals; (2) 225 hours of community-based training; and (3) 225 hours of paid employment or 225 hours of unpaid vocational training, unpaid internship, paid employment at community rehabilitation facilities, and volunteer and/or community services hours, for a total of 600 required work hours.

B. High School End-of-Course and Other Testing

High school students must take all end-of-course (EOC) tests and Career and Technical Education (CTE) State Assessments required by the State Board of Education and pursuant to policy 3410, Testing and Assessment Program.

C. Additional Local Board Requirements

1. Student Course Load

Students are generally required to be enrolled in seven (7) courses or six (6) courses and a study period. Students are not allowed to take more than three (3) Advanced Placement courses per year without informed parental consent. Students may be enrolled in no more than eight (8) courses per academic year (including summer), including NCVPS courses.

D. Special Circumstances Regarding Graduation

The Board adopts the following policies to address special circumstances regarding graduation:

1) Honor Graduates

Honor graduates may be designated by the principals on the basis of criteria established by the superintendent. Recognition of honor graduates may be included in graduation programs. This includes recognition of students who earn designation as North Carolina Academic Scholars. Honor graduates may wear tassels or other cords signifying this honor.

2) Students with Disabilities

Graduation requirements must be applied to students with disabilities to the extent required by state and federal law and State Board policy.

3) Graduation Certificate

a) A student who does not earn a high school diploma shall receive a graduation certificate and shall be allowed to participate in graduation exercises provided the following:

(1) has been identified as a “child with a disability” as defined by [G.S. 115C-106.3\(1\)](#); and

(2) has completed the course requirements or reached the maximum age of entitlement (22 years old).

b) A Principal may recommend a graduation certificate to any student.

c) After completing four years of high school, a student may participate in graduation exercises before they begin an approved externship transition program. Participation in graduation exercises will not waive a student’s right to return to school as permitted by law.

4. Children of Military Families

In order to facilitate the on-time graduation of children of military families, as defined in policy 4050, Children of Military Families, the board adopts the following policy provisions for children of military families.

a. Waiver Requirements

Specific course work required for graduation will be waived if similar course work has been satisfactorily completed in another school system. If a waiver is not granted, school administrators shall provide the student with reasonable justification for the denial. If a waiver is not granted to a student who would qualify to graduate

from the sending school, the superintendent or designee shall provide the student with an alternative means of acquiring the required coursework so that graduation may occur on time.

b. Testing Requirements

The superintendent shall accept the following in lieu of local tests required for graduation: 1) exit or end-of-course exams required for graduation from the sending state; 2) national norm-referenced achievement tests; or 3) alternative testing. If these alternatives are not feasible for a student transferring in his or her senior year, section c below will apply.

c. Transfers During Senior Year

If a child of a military family transferring at the beginning or during his or her senior year is ineligible to graduate from the school system after all the alternatives listed above have been considered and the student meets the graduation requirements at his or her sending school, then school officials from the school system and the sending school system shall collaborate to ensure that the student will receive a diploma from the sending board of education.

5. Early Graduation

Graduation prior to that of one's class may be permitted on the basis of criteria approved by the board upon recommendation by the superintendent.

6. Diploma Endorsements

Students will have the opportunity to earn one or more of the following diploma endorsements identifying a particular area of focused study including: (1) Career Endorsement, (2) College Endorsement, (3) North Carolina Academic Scholars Endorsement, and/or (4) Global Languages Endorsement. No endorsement is required to receive a diploma, and a student may earn more than one endorsement.

E. Notification and Support

Students who seek assistance or are identified as likely to need assistance in meeting an academic requirement must be provided opportunities for remedial or additional instruction in accordance with Board Policy 3420: Student Progression and Placement.

The Board may require that students successfully complete additional graduation requirements. Students and their parents/guardians will be notified of any change in local graduation requirements at least by the spring of their sophomore year.

Legal References: [G.S. 115C-12\(40\)](#), [-47](#), [-81.25\(c\)\(10\)\(c\)](#), [-81.45\(d\)](#), [-81.65](#), [-174.11](#), [-276](#), [-288](#), [-407.5](#), [-407.12](#); [16 N.C.A.C. 6D .0309](#); State Board of Education Policies, [CCRE-001](#), [GRAD-004](#), [GRAD-007](#), [GRAD-008](#), [GRAD-010](#), [TEST-003](#)

Cross References: Goals and Objectives of the Educational Program (Policy 3000), Options to Earn Course Credit for Graduation (Policy 3101), Testing and Assessment Program (Policy 3410), Student Progression and Placement (Policy 3420), Class Rankings (Policy 3450), Citizenship and Character Education (Policy 3530), Children of Military Families (Policy 4050), *District Course Catalog

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Chapel Hill-Carrboro Schools
