



24-Credit Graduation Requirements Pathways to Postsecondary

BACKGROUND

The Washington State Board of Education is revising high school graduation requirements to better prepare students for life after high school – in gainful employment, postsecondary education and citizenship. While students need core knowledge to be productive, engaged citizens who can adapt to new challenges and circumstances, they also need the opportunity to pursue postsecondary pathways that align with their interests and passions and lead to careers.

WHY HAVE GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS?

Equity: State graduation requirements establish credit standards for **all** Washington students. All our students need the opportunity and the access to choose among a full range of postsecondary pathways, including career and technical certificates and degrees and four-year and post-baccalaureate degrees. Without uniform standards, some students in the state will have access and others will not.

Preparation: Washington is one of the top five states in the percentage of jobs requiring a postsecondary education; if we want our students to be prepared for the jobs in our own workforce, they must be ready for postsecondary education when they exit high school. More than 50 percent of recent high school graduates need to take pre-college math when they attend community or technical colleges. This wastes student time, and wastes student and taxpayer money.

Competition: Other states and countries have more rigorous credit and course standards. Washington students will be competing for jobs in a global economy; our students should have equal opportunities as students from other states and countries.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- All students should earn certain foundational high school course credits to meet the intent of basic education.
- In the 21st century, all students need Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) skills. Three credits of math and three credits of science are foundational course credits.
- High school electives are important, allowing choice in course-taking, and providing the opportunity to explore a range of fields of knowledge and pursue particular postsecondary pathways.

- Every student should have a High School and Beyond Plan by ninth grade or earlier, upon which all course-taking decisions will be based; the plan may evolve if the student’s interest and goals change.
- All students should be preparing for their lives after high school. Each student’s High School and Beyond Plan should identify a postsecondary pathway.

POSTSECONDARY PATHWAYS

Personalized postsecondary pathways are locally determined, but should include, at least, the opportunity to:

- To pursue a professional/technical certificate or degree at a community or technical college.
- To pursue a four-year degree at a college, university, or college transfer program. Students’ high school classes should align with the Washington Student Achievement Council’s College Admission Standards.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Subject	Requirements for the Classes of 2016, 2017 & 2018	Career- & College-Ready Graduation Requirements for the Class of 2019 & Beyond
English	4	4
Math	3	3
Science	2 (1 lab)	3 (2 lab)
Social Studies	3	3
Career and Technical Education ¹	1	1
Health and Fitness	2	2
Arts	1	2 (1 can be PPR)
General Electives	4	4
World Language (or) Personalized Pathway Requirement (PPR)		2 (Both can be PPR)
Total Credits	20	24 ²

Personalized Pathway Requirement are related courses that lead to a specific post high school career or educational outcome chosen by the student based on the student’s interests and High School and Beyond Plan, that may include Career and Technical Education, and are intended to provide a focus for the student’s learning.

¹ Or 1 Occupational Education credit, as defined in WAC 180-51-067.
² Up to 2 credits can be waived locally based on a student’s unusual circumstances.

RESOURCES

Information about graduation requirements can be found at: www.sbe.wa.gov/graduation.php. More information about the State Board of Education and its work can be found at www.sbe.wa.gov or by calling 360.725.6025.