

Oregon GED Option Program Questions and Answers

(Updated 8-1-2024)

*Oregon GED Option Program for Selected Secondary Students,
aligned with Oregon Content Standards and Diploma Requirements*

Q1: What is the GED Option Program?

- The GED Option Program allows 16- and 17-year-olds who do not have a high school diploma or equivalency to take the GED tests.
- The GED Testing Service (GEDTS) enables approved states to provide access to the GED Option Program for selected students who are under the age of 18; this authorization is from the American Council on Education. Oregon school districts and education service districts (ESDs) with an approved GED Option Program Application are given the opportunity to retain enrollment of 16 and 17-year-old students while they study for and take GED subtests. Because they remain in school, students continue toward achieving the academic credits required for graduation. *In order to receive State School Funds for students pursuing a GED, they must also be earning credit toward their diploma.*

Q2: Who administers the GED Option Program?

- The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) authorizes the State GED Option Program, and schools, school districts, ESDs, and Community-Based Organizations administer local programs and are accountable for outcomes.
- GED transcript requests are available on the [GED Testing Service webpage](#). For questions about transcript requests and more information, please contact the GEDTS: 1-888-906-4031.

Q3: How does a GED compare to a high school diploma?

- In 2014, the GED moved from a pencil and paper test to computer tests. The 2014 series is aligned with Common Core Standards, and demonstrates student strengths and developmental needs and provides results in three levels of performance: 1) high school equivalency, 2) college ready, and 3) college ready + credit.
- GED earners have similar options available to them as do diploma earners when approaching post-secondary education and training. In some cases, a GED earner may need to demonstrate additional skills through a placement test, however, most opportunities afforded to diploma earners also extend to GED earners.

Q4: Why does Oregon provide the GED Option Program?

- The State Board of Education, the Oregon Department of Education (ODE), and the Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development (CCWD) are committed to offering educational options to ensure success for all students.
- While adults 18 years of age and older may take the GED tests at any time, 16- and 17-year-olds can only test through the availability of a GED Option Program. This program allows flexibility for high school completion to those who need it.

Q5: Who may submit a local application to the Department of Education?

- School districts
- ESDs
- Approved private alternative schools and programs
- Charter schools
- Community colleges

Q6: Is there a deadline for GED Option Applications?

- No, the GED Option Program application process is ongoing and addresses the GED preparation process only. The approval of testing sites is separate from the GED Option Program and is facilitated by the HECC: oregon.ged@hecc.oregon.gov

Q7: What happens after an application is submitted to ODE?

- After submission, applicants will receive written approval or a request for revision.
- Approved sites will be notified by email and the site will be added to the GED Options list posted on the ODE website.
- Approved programs will contact the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) for ged.com portal access: oregon.ged@hecc.oregon.gov

Q8: Who will approve district applications?

- The Oregon Department of Education

Q9: How will the district GED Option program be monitored?

ODE has responsibility for:

- the application and assurances;
- district and school student outcomes and
- the school financial monitoring system.

Any one or all of these may be used to monitor the GED Option Program.

CCWD/HECC has responsibility for assuring:

- communication and technical assistance with GED Testing Service

Q10: How will GED Option schools be tracked?

- GEDTS has identified the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) school code is used as the tracking code for Oregon schools.
- Schools or programs without an NCES code are tracked by their Resident/Attending District/School Institution ID Number.

Q11: What is required to be a GED Option student?

A candidate for the GED Option Program must be:

- at least 16 years of age;
- a full year's academic credit behind their 9th grade cohort **or** for other reasons specifically identified in the local plan, unable to complete their diploma with their cohort;
- able to demonstrate their reading level to be 8th grade or above according to local requirements, which is considered sufficient to successfully complete GED instruction and testing;
- approved for participation after completing the local approval process as outlined in the district's GED Option application.

Q12: How will students benefit?

- Students who meet the criteria for GED Option will benefit through the opportunity for:
 - quality instruction aligned with Oregon Standards and Diploma Requirements.
 - adequate counseling and support services; and
 - testing on GED subtests.

Q13: Does each school district need to provide an in-house GED instruction program?

- It is not required for a school/district/ESD to provide an in-house GED program; existing district alternative instructional systems may well serve the district's needs, along with community college preparation programs.
- Students in districts that do not have a GED Option Program may consider other alternatives or community colleges in their area.

Q14: Why is it required to establish a specific student/teacher ratio?

- The requirement for an appropriate student/teacher ratio is included in the GEDTS state plan guidelines.
- This requirement is supported by OAR 581-022-2335, which requires districts to establish

policy addressing student/teacher ratios.

Q15: Why is there a reading criterion?

- The GED test is normed on graduating seniors.
- Individuals who do not read at 8th grade level or above will have difficulty in passing the GED tests.
- To ensure adequate preparation and increase the potential for student success on the GED tests. Students with low reading skills will require additional skill building before they are eligible to take GED tests.

Q16: Why is a team required to establish student eligibility?

- Using a team to establish student eligibility is a requirement by the GED Testing Service for the Oregon GED Option Program.
- Teams build upon existing Oregon formats for alternative program planning such as Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and 504 Plans.

Q17: Why must a student be one full year behind their 9th grade cohort or have clearly identified reasons for not being able to complete their diploma with their cohort to qualify for the GED Option program?

- ODE, CCWD/HECC, and GED Testing Service do not want to encourage early exit from high school for the purpose of taking GED tests, except under compelling circumstances.

Q18: How long do students have to earn a GED Certificate?

- There is not a prescribed length of time to complete a GED Certificate, as test scores do not expire.

Q19: How do homeschooled students access the GED Option?

- Any person 18 years of age or older may take the GED tests at any testing center.

Q20: How can homeschooled students participate in GED testing prior to the age of 18?

- Any youth between the ages of 16 and 18 may take the GED tests with parent/guardian permission.

Q21: How do districts handle students who are new to the district and do not wish to enroll in school?

- The GED Option is intended to provide assistance to selected secondary students who are attending public high school, receiving high school credit and eligible to access those support services required to ensure their success in a GED program.

Q22: Are 18-year-olds eligible to participate in a GED Option Program?

- 18-year-olds who are enrolled in school may prepare for GED tests on their own, or through a GED Option Program. In either case, they may retain enrollment in their school.

Q23: Will schools and programs offering the GED Option Program be required to allow students awarded the GED Certificate to participate in high school graduation ceremonies?

- It is required that the district/program provides a recognition ceremony for students who earn the GED Certificate; however, students are not required to attend.
- The high school graduation ceremony is one opportunity, but GED Option Program student participation in the high school graduation ceremony remains a local district decision.
- GED Option Sites, school district programs and community colleges may conduct their own ceremonies.

Q24: If a student earns a GED Certificate, are they eligible to return to high school and earn a diploma?

- Yes, earning a GED does not exempt a student from a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

Q25: How can school districts ensure that school personnel have access to GED test scores and completion information?

- Properly recorded student identification and institution numbers allow for tracking of information from the GED Test Centers, or the state GED database maintained by the GED Testing Service and accessible by the CCWD/HECC.
- A written parental release of information, which authorizes the student to sign the confidentiality release on the US Demographic form, must be on file with authorized GED testing centers (see samples).

Q26: Do districts have to pay a fee to participate in the GED Option Program?

- There is no fee to participate in the program.