

N.J.A.C. 6A:20, Adult Education Programs

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Chapter 20, Adult Education Programs

Subchapter 1. General Provisions

6A:20-1.1 Purpose and function

- (a) The Adult Education Unit within the Office of Career Readiness in the New Jersey Department of Education is responsible for:
1. Providing educational leadership for the programs cited in this chapter;
 2. Supervising NJHSEA testing centers;
 3. Evaluating college transcripts of persons applying for a State-issued high school diploma, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:20-1.4(a)2;
 4. Awarding State-issued high school diplomas to applicants meeting the requirements for diploma issuance; and
 5. Reviewing data on adults without high school diplomas to help ensure programming is meeting their needs.

6A:20-1.2 Definitions

The following words and terms shall have the following meanings when used in this chapter, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

“Accredited” means a traditional high school, a private career school, or a traditional or online college or university has met the criteria and standards set by an appropriate accrediting agency, such as the Middle States Association.

“Adult high school” means a district board of education school that conducts supervised educational activities in the day or evening to provide persons 16 years of age or older with the necessary instruction to enable them to complete the requirements for a locally issued, State-endorsed diploma. Each adult high school has a separate County District School (CDS) System code from the school district.

“County District School (CDS) System” means an information system located on the New Jersey Department of Education’s website that collects and tracks data about educational entities in New Jersey that receive State or Federal funds.

“DD-214” means a United States Department of Defense form issued to all members of the military that describes their service record.

“Disability” means, with respect to an individual, a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a record of such an impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment.

“Educational plan” means a signed and dated document developed by the student and a professional staff member of the adult high school.

“Emancipated minor” means a person 16 or 17 years of age who resides in an independent housing arrangement and is not responsible to a natural or resource family parent(s) or guardian(s).

“English language learner” or “ELL” means a student whose native language is other than English. The term refers to students with varying degrees of English language proficiency in any one of the domains of speaking, reading, writing, or listening and is synonymous with limited English-speaking ability as used at N.J.S.A. 18A:35-15 through 26.

“English language proficiency” means the full command of language skills, including proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing of the English language. English language proficiency is defined operationally as the passing score on an English language proficiency test. To attain proficiency in the English language requires more time than to attain fluency.

“Full-time employment” means work that is at least 30 hours per week.

“New Jersey High School Equivalency Assessment” or “NJHSEA” means any of the assessments approved by the State Board of Education for achieving a New Jersey State-issued high school diploma.

“Occupational license” means the license required to ensure that only qualified individuals work in occupations that affect the health and safety of the public in the State. Individuals seeking such a license must meet specific qualifications mandated by State law, rules, or regulation.

“Official transcript” means a person’s record of high school, adult high school, or college courses, grades, and credits awarded, or a record of an NJHSEA or other assessment approved by the State Board of Education.

“Part-time employment” means work that is more than 15 hours but less than 30 hours per week.

“Proficiency” means an explicitly stated and demonstrable knowledge and/or skill used to define a desired learning outcome.

“Proprietary school” means a privately owned school, such as a private career and technical school.

“Remedial college courses” means courses taken at an accredited college or university that are not applied toward graduation and for which no college academic credit is awarded.

“Senior standing” means one year or less of credit hours remaining in order to meet high school graduation requirements.

“State-endorsed diploma” means a locally issued document awarded to an exiting student indicating successful completion of high school graduation requirements.

“State-issued high school diploma” means a high school diploma provided by the New Jersey Department of Education to persons 16 years of age or older and no longer enrolled in school to document the attainment of academic skills and knowledge equivalent to a high school education.

“Statement of responsibilities” means an agreement signed by both the student and a representative of an adult high school establishing the requirements of the student and the representative to engage in a successful academic program.

“Traditional course” means a course that has specified lengths of time for a specific number of class meetings and the completion of activities necessary to achieve the accepted level of proficiencies for the award of credit.

6A:20-1.3 Eligibility requirements to earn a State-issued high school diploma

- (a) To participate in programs that lead to a State-issued high school diploma, a person shall be a New Jersey resident at least 16 years of age and no longer enrolled in school and shall have not yet obtained a high school diploma in New Jersey or any other state.
- (b) Requests to participate in programs that lead to a State-issued high school diploma from persons 16 or 17 years of age residing with a natural or resource family parent or guardian shall be accompanied by a [Certificate of Consent](https://www.nj.gov/education/adulted/) (available at <https://www.nj.gov/education/adulted/>) signed by a natural or resource family parent, guardian, probation or parole officer, State rehabilitation counselor, or a judge.
- (c) Requests to participate in programs that lead to a State-issued high school diploma from persons 16 or 17 years of age residing in a State, county, or municipal institution, or in a residential program, shall be accompanied by a Certificate of Consent signed by either a natural or resource family parent or guardian, or a surrogate parent when neither is available.
 - 1. Each institution shall ensure the rights of persons 16 or 17 years of age are protected through the provision of a surrogate parent who shall assume all parental rights under this chapter, when either:
 - i. The parent(s) cannot be located after reasonable efforts; or
 - ii. The person 16 or 17 years of age is a ward of the State of New Jersey, as determined by the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, Division of Child Protection and Permanency.
 - 2. Each institution shall establish a method for selecting and training surrogate parents.
 - 3. The person serving as a surrogate parent shall have:

- i. No interest that conflicts with the interests of the person 16 or 17 years of age he or she represents; and
 - ii. Knowledge and skills to ensure adequate representation of the person 16 or 17 years of age.
 4. A surrogate parent may be paid solely to act in that capacity. Persons serving as surrogate parents may not otherwise be employees of the institution.
- (d) Requests by emancipated minors to participate in programs that lead to a State-issued high school diploma shall be accompanied by a Certificate of Consent signed by a judge appointed in the State of New Jersey.
- (e) Programs that lead to a State-issued high school diploma shall accept, as space allows, all requests to participate from persons eligible under this section. Participation in programs shall not be limited in any way, except with respect to the availability of facilities and teaching personnel. Participants shall not be denied access to a program because of their place of residency, as long as they are a New Jersey resident.

6A:20-1.4 Application, evaluation, and validation for a State-issued high school diploma

- (a) The following methods may be used to apply for a State-issued high school diploma:
1. Take and pass an NJHSEA.
 - i. Statewide standard scores for passage of an NJHSEA shall be set by a resolution of the State Board of Education.
 - ii. To request a copy of an NJHSEA transcript and diploma verification a person shall submit to the Department of Education (Department) a signed, written request.
 2. To request a State-issued high school diploma based on the evaluation of college coursework, a person shall submit to the Department a signed [Commissioner-provided application](#) (available at <https://www.nj.gov/education/students/adulted/30ccapp.pdf>).

Persons seeking evaluation of college coursework shall provide to the Department an official transcript from each academic institution from which coursework is to be evaluated, as well as documentation of New Jersey residency as set forth at N.J.A.C. 6A:22-3.4(a). A person who qualifies will have 30 general education credits leading to a degree at an accredited institution of higher education. Persons meeting these requirements will receive a State-issued high school diploma.

- i. Included in the 30 general education credits must be a minimum of three credits each in: English language arts; mathematics; science; and social studies; and a total of six credits from one or more of the following subjects: visual and performing arts; comprehensive health and physical education; world languages; technology; and 21st century life and careers. The remaining 12 credits may be taken from any other elective college courses.
- ii. Remedial college courses shall not count toward the requirement.
- iii. The minimum average grade for the 30 credits shall be a C or 2.0.

6A:20-1.5 Fees for a State-issued high school diploma

- (a) Persons submitting applications for a State-issued high school diploma by examination or reexamination shall pay a fee appropriate to the NJHSEA(s). Upon application to take or retake an NJHSEA, the test center or test vendor shall provide the applicant with a document verifying payment of the appropriate fee and designating a six-month time frame during which the applicant may take the test or retest(s). The applicant shall present the payment certification document at the time of testing.
- (b) By contractual agreement with the Department of Education, the New Jersey Department of Corrections, the Juvenile Justice Commission, and the Department of Children and Families may agree to pay for and administer the test to persons housed under the agencies' custody and supervision without charge to the candidate.

Subchapter 2. Adult High Schools

6A:20-2.1 General provisions

- (a) A district board of education may open and operate adult high schools, which shall offer students opportunity, accessibility, and flexibility while maintaining high standards inherent in the awarding of a high school diploma pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:50-1 et seq. Courses shall be sufficiently varied to meet the educational needs of students and shall be designed to challenge students to achieve their highest level of educational ability.
- (b) An adult high school program shall develop for each student an educational plan reflecting the student's past academic record, an analysis of past experiences for which credit may be awarded pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:20-2.6, graduation requirements, and a proposed schedule of courses for the current school year leading to completion of graduation requirements.

6A:20-2.2 Eligibility for enrollment

- (a) To qualify for enrollment in an adult high school, a person shall:
 - 1. Be a New Jersey resident at least 16 years of age.
 - i. A student enrolled in secondary school with senior standing who lacks an opportunity to take at his or her secondary school courses that are available in an adult high school shall be eligible to take courses at the adult high school provided the chief school administrators of both the sending and receiving school districts approve in a written joint agreement the participation of the student on a space-available basis in the adult high school. The written approval shall explicitly state the course(s) to be taken, the credits offered for each subject, and the time frame covered by the agreement. Tuition established by the receiving school district on a cost-recovery basis may be charged to the sending school district for students enrolled under this exception, if applicable;

2. Have not earned a State-endorsed or a State-issued high school diploma;
 - i. Persons holding State-endorsed high school diplomas may enroll in an adult high school on a space-available basis for the express purpose of supplementing their high school record. Tuition established by the host school district on a cost-recovery basis may be charged to persons enrolling under this exception; and
3. Complete and sign a locally created application for enrollment, including a statement of responsibilities.

6A:20-2.3 English language learners

- (a) English language learners shall be required to demonstrate language proficiency on a State-approved English proficiency assessment at a score level determined by the State Board of Education.
 1. English language learners shall be referred to appropriate classes in the adult high school to attain English language proficiency. If the language improvement needs of the individual cannot be met by the adult high school, then the principal shall refer the person to a New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development [Career Connections site \(https://careerconnections.nj.gov/\)](https://careerconnections.nj.gov/).

6A:20-2.4 Individuals with disabilities

- (a) For an individual with a previous individualized education program (IEP) seeking similar services at an adult high school, the principal of the adult high school shall request, with the written consent of the individual, the most recent evaluation and IEP for the individual from the high school of last attendance, provided the evaluation was made within the last three years.
 1. The principal shall review the IEP to determine the services required by the plan and the availability of such services at the adult high school.

- i. If the IEP can be carried out, it shall serve as the instructional guide for the individual.
 - ii. If the principal determines the IEP cannot be carried out, the principal shall promptly refer the individual to the nearest adult high school with staff available to offer the special services required in the IEP or to the appropriate county or State agencies or institutions with resources and personnel able to serve the individual's needs.
 2. If the evaluation was made more than three years prior to application to the adult high school, the IEP may not serve as a guide for the individual's instructional program at the adult high school. The individual shall be referred to the IEP team for a reevaluation in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14, Special Education.
- (b) For an individual who previously had a 504 plan, the principal of the adult high school shall request, with the written consent of the individual, the most recent 504 plan for the individual from the high school of last attendance, provided the evaluation was made within the last year. The school district shall determine if the 504 plan needs to continue, be discontinued, and/or updated. The principal of an adult high school may request a doctor's note with a rationale and treatment plan to verify the continued need for the 504 plan.
- (c) An individual with a disability who does not qualify for special education and related services, pursuant to (a) above and N.J.A.C. 6A:14, and who does not have a previous 504 plan shall be counseled regarding educational options that would lead to a high school diploma.

6A:20-2.5 Graduation

- (a) A district board of education operating an adult high school shall adopt policies for adult high school graduation requirements pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1. Policies shall include passing the Statewide assessment for graduation pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1.

1. Students who are enrolled in an adult high school and are unable to pass the Statewide assessment for graduation, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1, shall receive further evaluation through the portfolio appeal process, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1.
 2. English language learners who are enrolled in an adult high school and are unable to pass the Statewide assessment for graduation, required at N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1, shall receive further evaluation pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(h), and shall demonstrate English language fluency on a Department-approved English proficiency assessment. The portfolio appeals process shall be undertaken in the English language learner's native language, when available.
- (b) A district board of education operating an adult high school shall ensure that students meet the requirements for high school graduation pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.
 - (c) The staff of each adult high school shall distribute to each entering student a copy of all State and local adult high school graduation requirements. At the beginning of each course, all students shall receive a list of proficiencies required for successful completion of the course.
 - (d) Successful completion of the requirements set forth at (a) and (b) above, and the requirements established by the district board of education, shall be required as conditions for awarding a locally issued, State-endorsed diploma.
 - (e) No district board of education shall issue a State-endorsed high school diploma without State approval of the adult high school program.
 - (f) No district board of education shall issue a State-endorsed high school diploma without signed verifications for all credit awarded for experience and an official transcript(s) being on file.

6A:20-2.6 Award of credit

- (a) A district board of education operating an adult high school shall annually adopt, at a public meeting, policies that provide for the awarding of credit, subject to the following:

1. Credits verified by an official transcript may be transferred from accredited or State-approved high schools or institutions. Experiences being considered for transferred credit from proprietary schools or public vocational training programs shall be assessed in terms of proficiencies for school district courses offering similar experiences.
 - i. An official transcript shall have either of the following indicators: a raised seal or the original signature of a school administrator.
2. Courses taken at an accredited college that lead to a degree and are not remedial courses shall be verified by an official transcript. One and two-thirds credits may be awarded for each college credit.
3. Credits may be awarded for physical education and basic military training with the following limitations:
 - i. Up to 15 credits may be awarded for previously earned high school physical education credits verified by an official transcript;
 - ii. Up to 10 credits verified by a DD-214 form may be awarded for basic military training; and
 - iii. The combination of (a)3i and ii above shall not exceed 15 credits.
4. A maximum of two and one-half credits in health and safety may be awarded for the possession of a valid New Jersey driver's license if credit for driver's education has not been awarded.
5. Credit may be awarded for work experience with the following limitations:
 - i. Two and one-half credits may be awarded for each 12 months of full-time employment verified by a signed statement from an employer(s);
 - ii. Two and one-half credits may be awarded for each 24 months of part-time employment verified by a signed statement from an employer(s); and

- iii. The combination of (a)5i and ii above shall not exceed 10 credits and may not duplicate credits awarded for apprentice training, an occupational license or on-the-job training.
6. Credits may be awarded for completion of apprentice training with the following limitations:
 - i. The apprentice training must be approved by the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development;
 - ii. Completion of training, which includes related technical instruction (RTI) and on-the-job training (OJT), shall be verified by a signed document from the registered apprentice sponsor;
 - iii. The award shall not exceed 20 credits and shall not duplicate credits awarded for work experiences, an occupational license, on-the-job training, or transferred credit from an official transcript; and
 - iv. The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development periodically announces the apprenticeship titles eligible for the award of credit and the amount of credit to be awarded.
7. Credit may be awarded for possession of a current occupational license issued by a State agency, with the following limitations:
 - i. A maximum of five credits may be awarded for a current occupational license;
 - ii. The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development periodically announces the occupational titles eligible for the award of credit;
 - iii. Credit may be awarded for only one occupational license; and
 - iv. Credit awarded for an occupational license shall not duplicate credit awarded for work experience, on-the-job training, apprenticeship, or transferred credit from an official transcript.

8. Credits may be awarded for on-the-job training and advanced military training with the following limitations:
 - i. Five credits may be awarded for each 120 hours of on-the-job training that is formally supervised, follows a prescribed training outline, and is verified by a signed statement from the employer;
 - ii. One credit for each week of advanced military training that is verified by the Military Occupational Specialty designation on the DD-214 form not to exceed 10 credits; and
 - iii. The combination of (a)8i and ii above shall not exceed 20 credits and may not duplicate credits for work experience, apprentice training, or an occupational license.
9. The cumulative award of credit for (a)5, 6, 7, and 8 above shall not exceed 30 credits.
10. Credit may be awarded for passing a comprehensive examination with the following limitations:
 - i. The award shall not exceed five credits;
 - ii. The comprehensive examination shall be part of an approved course and may be used only to award credit for a single course; and
 - iii. The comprehensive examination may not be a standardized test, such as an NJHSEA.
11. Credit may be awarded for remedial coursework in English language arts and mathematics only to persons who have demonstrated reading, writing, or mathematical proficiency below the ninth grade level on a commercially available, nationally normed, standardized test for adults or to persons unable to pass the Statewide assessment for graduation pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1.
 - i. The award of credit may not exceed 20 credits in English language arts and 20 credits in mathematics.

12. Credit may be awarded for coursework in English as a second language (ESL).
 - i. The award of credit in ESL may not exceed 20 credits.
 - ii. ESL courses shall be offered only as traditional courses.

6A:20-2.7 Awarding credit for foreign studies

Credit for the equivalent of American secondary school studies experienced in a foreign country shall be reviewed by the school district operating the adult high school. If the school district cannot review the secondary studies experienced in a foreign country, the secondary studies shall be reviewed by a recognized foreign credential evaluation expert or service. The cost of the foreign credential evaluation expert or service shall be borne by the student.

6A:20-2.8 Maintaining student records

Each adult high school shall have the responsibility to compile, maintain, and retain student records, including daily attendance records, and to regulate access to and security of such records.

6A:20-2.9 Staffing

- (a) The adult high school shall have an adequate number of professional staff, properly certified for their respective assignments; however, persons involved in adult advisement shall be certified as either a principal, supervisor, counselor, or teacher.
- (b) District boards of education shall assign to professional staff members only position titles recognized in N.J.A.C. 6A:9B, State Board of Examiners and Certification.

6A:20-2.10 Special conditions

The rules set forth elsewhere in N.J.A.C. 6A governing the operation of a high school within a school district shall govern the operation of an adult high school, unless otherwise explicitly stated in this subchapter.