



High School Graduation

What are the requirements for high school graduation?¹

To graduate, a student must earn credits in the required high school courses and achieve the required grade point average, with the number of credits, required courses, and required grade point average varying based upon which graduation option the student selects.² The three graduation options (traditional 24-credit option, accelerated 18-credit College Preparatory Program option, and accelerated 18-credit Career Preparatory Program option) are discussed below. Students may also receive a standard high school diploma in Florida by successfully completing the International Baccalaureate (IB) or Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) program curricula.

In addition, to receive a standard high school diploma, each student is currently required to pass the grade 10 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) in Reading and Mathematics or attain concordant scores on either the SAT or ACT tests.³

The following table displays the FCAT passing scores and concordant scores on the SAT and ACT tests for the 2010-2011 academic year:

<i>FCAT Passing and SAT/ACT Concordant Scores⁴</i>			
	<i>FCAT</i>	<i>SAT</i>	<i>ACT</i>
Reading	1926 (developmental scale score) or 300 (scale score)	420	18
Mathematics	1889 (developmental scale score) or 300 (scale score)	340	15

¹ For additional information on high school graduation requirements, see the Traditional 24-Credit High School Graduation Option Fact Sheet and the Accelerated 18-Credit High School Graduation Options Fact Sheet.

² Sections 1003.428, 1003.429, and 1003.43, F.S.

³ Sections 1003.428(4)(b), 1003.429(6)(a), 1003.43(5)(a), and 1008.22(3)(c)6. and (10), F.S.; Florida Department of Education, Office of Assessment and School Performance, *FCAT Graduation Requirements* (Nov. 2009), available at <http://fcats.fldoe.org/pdf/fcatpass.pdf> [hereinafter *FCAT Graduation Requirements*].

⁴ Rule 6A-1.09422(7), F.A.C.; *FCAT Graduation Requirements*, *supra* note 3.

What options do students have for satisfying high school graduation requirements?

There are five options:

- ❖ A traditional 24-credit option that may be completed in 4 years;⁵
- ❖ The IB curriculum may be completed;
- ❖ The AICE curriculum may be completed;
- ❖ An accelerated 18-credit College Preparatory Program option that may be completed in 3 years;⁶ or
- ❖ An accelerated 18-credit Career Preparatory Program option that may be completed in 3 years.⁷

The following table compares the credit requirements⁸ for three options for students entering grade 9 in the 2010-2011 academic year:

	Traditional 24-Credit Option⁹ (s. 1003.428, F.S.)	Accelerated 18-Credit Options	
		COLLEGE PREPARATORY (s. 1003.429(1)(b), F.S.)	CAREER PREPARATORY (s. 1003.429(1)(c), F.S.)
English	4 credits (with major concentration in composition, reading for information, and literature)	4 credits (with major concentration in composition and literature)	4 credits (with major concentration in composition and literature)
Mathematics	4 credits, including: ❖ 1 credit in Algebra I, the equivalent, or a higher-level mathematics course (performance on an EOC in Algebra I constitutes 30 percent of a student's final course grade) ❖ 1 credit in Geometry or equivalent	4 credits, including: ❖ 1 credit in Algebra I or higher level (performance on an EOC in Algebra I constitutes 30 percent of a student's final course grade) ❖ 1 credit in Geometry or equivalent	4 credits, including: ❖ 1 credit in Algebra I (performance on an EOC in Algebra I constitutes 30 percent of a student's final course grade) ❖ 1 credit in Geometry or equivalent
Science	3 credits (2 credits must have a laboratory component)	3 credits (2 credits must have a laboratory component)	3 credits (2 credits must have a laboratory component)

⁵ Sections 1003.428 and 1003.43, F.S.; see also Traditional 24-Credit High School Graduation Option Fact Sheet.

⁶ Section 1003.429(1)(b), F.S.; see also Accelerated 18-Credit High School Graduation Options Fact Sheet.

⁷ Section 1003.429(1)(c), F.S.; see also Accelerated 18-Credit High School Graduation Options Fact Sheet.

⁸ In 2010, the Legislature phased in more rigorous mathematics and science credit requirements and phased in the replacement of high school level FCAT Mathematics and Science with statewide, standardized EOC assessments. Chapter 2010-22, L.O.F. For credit and EOC assessment requirements for students entering grade 9 in past and future years, see Traditional 24-Credit Graduation Option Fact Sheet and Accelerated 18-Credit High School Graduation Options Fact Sheet.

⁹ For the graduation requirements for students who entered high school before the 2007-08 academic year, see s. 1003.43, F.S.

Social Studies / Social Sciences	3 credits in Social Studies, including: ❖ 1 credit in US History ❖ 1 credit in World History ❖ ½ credit in Economics ❖ ½ credit in US Government	3 credits in Social Sciences, including: ❖ 1 credit in US History ❖ 1 credit in World History ❖ ½ credit in Economics ❖ ½ credit in US Government	3 credits in Social Sciences, including: ❖ 1 credit in US History ❖ 1 credit in World History ❖ ½ credit in Economics ❖ ½ credit in US Government
Second Language	None	2 credits in the same second language ¹⁰	None
Fine or Performing Arts / Speech and Debate / Practical Arts	1 credit (three options): ¹¹ ❖ Fine or Performing Arts; ❖ Speech and Debate; or ❖ An approved Practical Arts Course ¹²	None	None
Vocational or Career Education	None	None	Three options: ❖ 3 credits in vocational or career education program; ❖ 3 credits in career and technical certificate dual enrollment courses; or ❖ 5 credits in vocational or career education courses
Physical Education	1 credit (including integration of health) ¹³	None	None
Electives	8 credits in Electives	2 credits	1 credit ¹⁴

¹⁰ If a student is native speaker of, or demonstrates competency in, a language other than English, the student may earn 2 credits in other academic courses. Section 1003.429(1)(b)5., F.S.

¹¹ Completing 2 years in a Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) class simultaneously satisfies 1 credit in fine or performing arts *and* 1 credit in physical education (total of 2 credits). Completing 1 semester with grade “C” or better in a marching band or dance class satisfies ½ credit in performing arts *or* physical education. Section 1003.428(2)(a)6., F.S.

¹² The practical arts course must incorporate artistic content and techniques of creativity, interpretation, and imagination; eligible courses shall be identified through the Course Code Directory. Section 1003.428(2)(a)5., F.S.

¹³ Participation in an interscholastic sport at the junior varsity or varsity level for 2 full seasons and passage (with grade “C” or better) of personal fitness competency test satisfies the 1 credit physical education requirement. Completing 2 years in Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) class satisfies 1 credit but does not satisfy the personal fitness requirement. One semester with grade “C” or better in a marching band or dance class satisfies ½ credit (may not duplicate credit for fine or performing arts and does not satisfy the personal fitness requirement). Section 1003.428(2)(a)6., F.S.; *see also supra* note 11 and Physical Education Fact Sheet.

¹⁴ If a student earns 5 credits in vocational or career education courses, no elective credit is required. Section 1003.429(1)(c)6., F.S.

The following table compares the grade point average required for each of the options:

<i>Graduation Option</i>	<i>Required Grade Point Average (on a 4.0 scale)</i>
Traditional 24-Credit Option	2.0 or equivalent ¹⁵
Accelerated 18-Credit Options:	
College Preparatory Program	3.5 or equivalent ¹⁶
Career Preparatory Program	3.0 or equivalent ¹⁷

May a district school board establish graduation requirements in excess of the statewide requirements?

District school boards are authorized to adopt policies and procedures governing graduation requirements¹⁸ and must adopt rules for admitting, classifying, promoting, and graduating students.¹⁹ School boards are also authorized, in accordance with the guiding principles for secondary school redesign set forth in current law, to address additional course requirements for promotion and graduation in the district's student progression plan.²⁰

District school boards are prohibited from establishing graduation requirements in excess of the statutory requirements for the accelerated 18-credit graduation options.²¹

For a student who enters grade 9 in or after the 2007-08 academic year, state law does not specifically authorize the district school board to establish graduation requirements in excess of the minimum requirements for the traditional 24-credit graduation option.²² However, state law does not prohibit such and school districts retain general statutory authority for adopting graduation requirements.²³

¹⁵ Sections 1003.428(4)(d), F.S.

¹⁶ Section 1003.429(6)(b)1., F.S.

¹⁷ Section 1003.429(6)(b)2., F.S.

¹⁸ Section 1001.43(8), F.S.

¹⁹ Section 1003.02(1)(a), F.S.

²⁰ Sections 1003.413(3)(k), 1003.428(4)(c), and 1003.43(5)(b), F.S.; *see also* s. 1008.25, F.S. (student progression plans).

²¹ Section 1003.429(5), F.S.

²² *See* s. 1003.428, F.S. For a student who entered grade 9 before the 2007-2008 academic year, a district school board may establish graduation requirements in excess of the minimum requirements for the traditional 24-credit graduation option, with two limitations: An increase in academic credit or minimum grade point average requirements does not apply to a student who is enrolled in grades 9 through 12 at the time the district school board increases the requirements and an increase in academic credit or minimum grade point average requirements does not apply to a student who earns credit toward the graduation requirements for equivalent courses taken through dual enrollment. Section 1003.43(4)(c), F.S.

²³ *See, e.g.,* ss. 1001.43(8), 1003.02(1)(a), and 1003.413(3)(k), F.S.

How and when do students decide on a graduation option?

A district school board must provide students in grades 6 through 9 and their parents with information concerning the traditional 24-credit graduation option and both accelerated 18-credit graduation options. This information must include an explanation of the curriculum requirements, timeframes for achieving each graduation option, and the advantages and disadvantages of each option.²⁴

Selection of one of the graduation options must be made before the end of 9th grade and is exclusively the decision of the student and his or her parent.²⁵ If a student selects one of the accelerated 18-credit graduation options, the student and parent must meet with designated school personnel for an explanation of the requirements, advantages, and disadvantages of the accelerated graduation options, and the student must receive his or her parent's written consent.²⁶ If a student and parent fail to make a selection by the end of 9th grade, the student is considered to have selected the traditional 24-credit graduation option.²⁷

A student who selects an accelerated 18-credit graduation option has the right to change to the traditional 24-credit graduation option at any time.²⁸ In addition, a student who selects an accelerated 18-credit graduation option is automatically moved to the traditional 24-credit graduation option if the student:

- ❖ Fails to earn 5 credits by the end of 9th grade;
- ❖ Fails to earn 11 credits by the end of 10th grade;
- ❖ Does not earn a score of 3 or higher on the grade 10 FCAT Writing; or
- ❖ Does not complete the required credits and have the required grade point average by the end of 11th grade.²⁹

Where can I get additional information?

Florida Department of Education

Bureau of Curriculum and Instruction

(850) 245-0423

<http://www.fldoe.org/bii/>

Florida Academic Counseling and Tracking for Students (FACTS)

<http://www.facts.org>

²⁴ Section 1003.429(3), F.S.

²⁵ Section 1003.429(4), F.S. A district school board may extend the deadline for selecting a graduation option through the end of first semester in 10th grade for a student who transfers from a private or out-of-state school or who was prevented from choosing a graduation option due to illness during 9th grade. Section 1003.429(4), F.S.

²⁶ Section 1003.429(2), F.S.

²⁷ Section 1003.429(4), F.S.

²⁸ Section 1003.429(7)(c) and (8)(a), F.S.

²⁹ Section 1003.429(8)(b)-(d), F.S.

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