

Guidelines for Standard Diploma Credit Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The Guidelines for Standard Diploma Credit Accommodations for Students with Disabilities dated September 28, 2017, are revised. This revision was approved by the Virginia Board of Education on September 20, 2018.

Student Eligibility Criteria

Credit accommodations for the Standard Diploma shall be determined by the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team or 504 Plan Committee, including the student where appropriate, at any point after the student's eighth grade year. The school must secure the informed written consent of the parent/guardian and the student, as appropriate, to choose credit accommodations after review of the student's academic history and full disclosure of the student's options.

The student must meet the following criteria to be eligible to receive credit accommodations for the Standard Diploma:

- a. Student must have a current IEP or 504 Plan with standards-based content goals;
- b. Student has a disability that precludes him or her from achieving and progressing commensurate with grade level expectations, but is learning on-grade-level content;
- c. Student needs significant instructional supports to access grade level SOL content and to show progress; and
- d. Based on multiple objective measures of past performance, student might not be expected to achieve the required standard and verified units of credit within the standard time frame.

Assessments Used to Verify Credits

- a. Additional substitute tests may be identified and approved to earn a verified credit. The Board of Education may from time to time approve additional tests that are recommended by the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the purpose of awarding verified credit. The Virginia Department of Education may partner with a local school division in the procedure to nominate an additional test. Such additional tests, which enable students to earn verified units of credit, must, at a minimum, meet the following criteria:
 - i. The test must be standardized and graded independently of the school or school division in which the test is given;
 - ii. The test must be knowledge based;
 - iii. The test must be administered on a multistate or international basis, or administered as part of another state's accountability assessment program; and
 - iv. To be counted in a specific academic area, the test must measure content that incorporates or exceeds the Standards of Learning (SOL) content in the course for which verified credit is given.
- b. Permit the continued use of the Virginia Modified Achievement Standards Test (VMAST) for verified credit purposes for Algebra I and end-of-course (EOC) reading. To take the VMAST for verified credit purposes, a student must meet all

current VMAST eligibility requirements and beginning in the 2014-2015 school year, the student must also meet the following additional criteria:

- i. pass the high school course; and
- ii. score 374 or below on the end-of-course Standards of Learning test after taking the test at least twice.

Beginning in 2014-2015, scores of students who participate in VMAST will no longer be included in the participation rate or pass rate calculations for federal accountability, as required for approval of Virginia's *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)* flexibility application.

Expanded Use of Locally Awarded Verified Credit (LAVC)

According to [Superintendent's Memo 130-18](#), dated May 11, 2018, students with disabilities who are eligible for credit accommodations shall not be subject to the limit on the number of locally awarded verified credits. The following procedures apply:

- a. Students with disabilities who entered the ninth grade for the first time prior to 2018-2019 that require more than three LAVC in any subject must have the eligibility criteria for credit accommodations properly documented in the IEP or 504 Plan.
- b. Students with disabilities entering the ninth grade for the first time in 2018-2019 and beyond that require more than one LAVC must have the eligibility criteria for credit accommodations properly documented in the IEP or 504 Plan.

Expanded Score Range for Expedited Retakes of Standards of Learning Tests

Permit local school boards to offer the opportunity for the expedited retake of end-of-course Standards of Learning tests with the exception of the writing Standards of Learning tests.

Eligible students must:

- a. Have passed the course associated with the test; (or is passing the course at the time of test); and
- b. Have one of the following:
 - i. Failed the test by a narrow margin ("narrow margin" criteria shall be defined as a scaled score of 350-374); or
 - ii. Failed the test by any margin and have extenuating circumstances that would warrant retesting; or
 - iii. Did not sit for the regularly scheduled test for legitimate reasons.

Course Offerings

Approve additional course options available only to students with disabilities to meet the standard credit requirements for the Standard Diploma:

- a. Augment the Personal Finance course (3120) to include the 21 Work Readiness Skills (WRS) for the Commonwealth. Allow this augmented course to meet the Economics and Personal Finance requirement *if* the student has earned at least three standard credits in history and social science. The economics strand in these courses would be deemed a credit accommodation. Upon completion of the augmented Personal Finance course, the student may take the WRS assessment to earn the Board-approved Work Readiness Skills credential. This approach would satisfy the graduation requirements for economics and personal finance, history and social sciences, and the workplace credential.

- b. Establish minimum content courses in the subject areas required for verified credits and provide flexibility in how the courses are delivered. Allow parts I and II of certain required courses to each earn a standard credit towards the total number required in the subject area. The student must successfully complete:
 - i. Four standard credits in English and one verified credit each in Reading and Writing
 - ii. Three standard credits in mathematics that include Algebra I and Geometry, and one verified credit in mathematics
 - iii. Three standard credits in science that include Earth Science and Biology, and one verified credit in science
 - iv. Three standard credits in history and social science that include Virginia and U.S. History and Virginia and U.S. Government, and one verified credit in history and social science

Special Permission Credit Accommodations

This accommodation requires submission of documentation to VDOE.

The VDOE received notification that the Virginia Substitute Evaluation Program (VSEP) would no longer be permissible for use in Virginia's federal accountability system. Due to this new interpretation, the Board of Education approved the use of Special Permission Credit Accommodations to provide those students with disabilities who previously might have used the VSEP with a pathway to earn the necessary locally awarded verified credits to obtain a standard diploma.

The special permission credit accommodation permits local school boards to award locally awarded verified credits in reading, writing, mathematics, science and history, to certain students with disabilities. Eligible students must:

- a. pass the high school course based on a non-modified curriculum;
- b. score below 375 on the SOL test;
- c. have a documented disability that presents a unique or significant challenge to the degree that the student is unable to demonstrate knowledge of the course content on the SOL test using available accommodations; and
- d. demonstrate achievement in the academic content through an appeal process administered at the local level.

The decision to consider a special permission credit accommodation should be made through the IEP and/or 504 review process. School divisions must submit a Special Permission Locally Awarded Verified Credit Accommodation form to the VDOE for each student being considered for a locally awarded verified credit with a SOL scaled score below 375. Documentation regarding the disability that prevents the student from fully demonstrating his/her knowledge of the course content on the SOL test even with accommodations must be included on the form. This documentation should include evidence of the use or consideration of other credit accommodations and other substitute assessment options. The VDOE staff will review the submitted documentation and will return the results of the review to the school division representative.

Additional Credit Accommodations

The Board may, from time to time approve additional credit accommodations.