



Graduation Program *Overview*



Texas Education Agency Graduation Toolkit

Graduation Program – *Overview*



(a sequence of courses in one of the following areas)

- CTE public-service-related Programs of Study*
- Human services
- Law, public safety, corrections, and security
- Health science

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Distinguished Level of Achievement

Choices Determine Options

Most of the high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand jobs available now and in the future require education and training beyond a high school diploma. Whether you intend to pursue an industry workforce credential from a community or technical college or a traditional four-year degree from a university, the choices you make in high school will determine your future options.

To best prepare yourself now for the transition to postsecondary education and career entrance, choosing and taking the right classes is essential.

Distinguished Level of Achievement

The distinguished level of achievement requires:

- A total of four credits in math, including Algebra II;
- A total of four credits in science; and
- Successful completion of an endorsement in your area of interest.

A student must earn the distinguished level of achievement to be admitted to a Texas public university under the Top 10 percent automatic admission law.

Why it matters

The distinguished level of achievement opens a world of educational and employment opportunities for you beyond high school. The distinguished level of achievement does the following:

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Performance Acknowledgments

Performance Acknowledgments note outstanding achievement in specific areas. These distinctions will be included in your high school transcript and better position you for successful entry into college and/or the workforce.

Performance Acknowledgments Areas

- dual credit courses
- bilingualism and biliteracy
- PSAT, ACT ASPIRE , SAT, or ACT
- Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate exams
- State-, nationally- or internationally-recognized business or industry certification or license

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College and Career Resources

Ask ADVi

<https://www.askadvi.org>

ADVi uses artificial intelligence to answer your questions about attending public colleges and universities in Texas.

Big Future

<https://bit.ly/2EcKdJl>

There are more than 2,000 colleges in the United States. Find the right college for you!

Job's Y'all

<https://jobsyall.com/>

Jobs Y'all is where you can explore meaningful, high-wage careers in growing industries. Here, you will discover rewarding jobs in your hometown and throughout Texas. Find a career that matches your interests and goals.

Texas OnCourse

<https://texasoncourse.org>

Texas OnCourse offers students access to free and trustworthy resources on college and career planning. Featured tools by Texas OnCourse include:

- **MapMyGrad**

<https://texasoncourse.org/tools/mapmygrad/>

Students zero in on skills and interests to explore careers and endorsements and plan a path through high school.

- **Middle Galaxy**

<https://www.middlegalaxy.org/>

Texas middle school students have big decisions to make about their futures, starting in eighth grade! This space-themed game makes it easy to learn about options in high school and beyond.

Road Trip Nation

<https://roadtripnation.com/>

Need a little inspiration? Learn how others got to where they are today from real stories of career and life journeys of people from all walks of life.

Texas Career Check

<https://texascareercheck.com/>

Students can use this interactive tool to search and explore occupations that interest them. Labor market information is provided regarding annual salary and projected job openings and can be filtered by region.

Texas Internship Challenge

<https://www.txinternshipchallenge.com/vosnet/Default.aspx>

This internship connection site enables students to gain valuable work-based learning experience while in high school. Students across the state can search for an internship where they live.

Texas Reality Check

<https://texasrealitycheck.com/>

Students can use this lifestyle calculator to walk through the expenses that they are likely to incur each month and decide how much to spend on their lifestyle. This tool provides a realistic understanding of minimum salary needs and explores occupations that enable students to earn the salary they want.



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Preparing for Your Career

Two-thirds of the high demand jobs openings in Texas will require some postsecondary education. You

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Graduation Checklists

8th Grade

choices offered under the **Foundation High School Program** and the **endorsements** to decide on your future academic path.

the endorsement and CTE Program of Study, if applicable, that best fits your area of personal interest and the major you plan to study in college or the career training you plan to pursue.

that most college admissions processes value rigorous advanced courses including **Algebra II**, higher-level science courses, and languages other than English.

9th/10th Grade

high school credits; be sure to meet all **local and state requirements**

Take dual credit AP courses if possible, to earn college credit while still in high school.

CTE courses related to your career interests.

a list of awards, honors, and extracurricular activities for scholarship and college applications.

colleges or universities you are interested in attending.

admission and application requirements and timelines.

taking SAT/ACT preparation classes.

interests, take advantage of **career exploration** opportunities, and attend site visits during college open house days.

college nights hosted by your high school.

with college representatives about academic programs and financial aid available.

Take the preliminary SAT (PSAT)/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test in your sophomore year for practice. In your junior year, take the PSAT for eligibility for the National Merit Scholarship Competition. Students who take the PSAT or ACT ASPIRE tend to score higher on the SAT or ACT than those who do not.

11th/12th Grade

and take the ACT and/or SAT test preferably in your junior year but no later than the fall of your senior year.

Take dual credit AP courses if possible to earn college credit while you are still in high school.

with your counselor or college advisor about available scholarships. Be sure to apply early and for as many scholarships as possible. Do not limit yourself to local scholarships.

the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) or the TASFA (Texas Application for State Financial Aid) early in the fall of your senior year.

to college during the fall of your senior year.

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Glossary

Advanced Academics

Advanced academics includes courses, programs, assessments, services, and supports that provide opportunities for students to demonstrate college and career readiness and earn postsecondary credit.

Advanced Placement (AP)

College-level coursework designed by the College Board that provides students the potential to earn college credit with a qualifying score on an AP exam.

Course Credit

A unit of measure awarded for successful completion of a course.

CTE Completer

A student who completes, passes, and receives credit for three or more CTE courses for at least four or more credits (course selection must include at least one level three or level four-course).

CTE Concentrator

A student who completes, passes, and receives credit for two more CTE courses for at least two credits within the same CTE Program of Study.

Distinguished Level of Achievement

A high level of academic achievement earned by going beyond the Foundation High School Program. It requires completion of a total of 26-course credits, including Algebra II, four credits in both math and science, and an endorsement. A student must earn this designation to be eligible for Top 10 percent automatic admission to a Texas public college or university.

Dual Credit

Dual credit is a process by which a high school student enrolls in a college course and receives simultaneous academic credit for the course from both the college and the high school.

End-of-Course Exams (EOC)

State-mandated tests given during the final weeks of a high school course. There are five EOC exams required to earn a diploma from a Texas public high school. The five exams are given when a student completes English I and II, Biology, Algebra I, and U.S. History.

Endorsements

Endorsements are areas of specialized study. The areas include science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM); business and industry; arts and humanities; public services; and multidisciplinary studies. (A district or charter school that offers only one endorsement must offer multidisciplinary studies.)

Foundation High School Program (FHSP)

The basic 22-credit graduation program for Texas public school students.

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 texasassessment.gov

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