

**Guidelines for Standard Diploma
Credit Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
March 28, 2013**

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 Standards of Learning (SOL) content and to show progress.
- 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

1. Identify and approve additional substitute tests 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 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:
 - a. The test must be standardized and graded independently of the school or school divisions in which the test is given;
 - b. The test must be knowledge based;
 - c. The test must be administered on a multistate or international basis, or administered as part of another state's accountability assessment program; and
 - d. To be counted in a specific academic area, the test must measure content that incorporates or exceeds the SOL content in the course for which verified credit is given.
2. Permit the continued use of the Virginia Modified Achievement Standards Test (VMAST) for verified credit purposes for Algebra I and 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:

- a. Student must pass the high school course; and
- b. 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.

Locally Awarded Verified Credits

3. Permit local school boards to award locally awarded verified credits in reading, writing, and mathematics, in addition to science and history, to students with disabilities. Use the same criteria for awarding credits currently approved for science and history. Eligible students must:
 - a. Pass the high school course,
 - b. Score within 375-399 scale score range on any administration of the Standards of Learning test after taking the test at least twice, and
 - c. Demonstrate achievement in the academic content through an appeal process administered at the local level.

Course Offerings

4. 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 3 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. 4 standard credits in English and 1 verified credit each in Reading and Writing
 - ii. 3 standard credits in mathematics that include Algebra I and Geometry, and 1 verified credit in mathematics
 - iii. 3 standard credits in science that include Earth Science and Biology, and 1 verified credit in science

- iv. 3 standard credits in history and social science that include Virginia and U.S. History and Virginia and U.S. Government, and 1 verified credit in history and social science

Additional Credit Accommodations

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