## Guidance Document Governing Certain Provisions of the Regulations Establishing Standards For Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia (8VAC20-131)

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## Sequential Electives Required for Graduation with a Standard Diploma

In accordance with 8VAC20-131-50, four standard units of credit in an elective discipline area are required for students seeking graduation with a standard diploma. The regulation states, “*Courses to satisfy this requirement shall include at least two sequential electives as required by the Standards of Quality*.”

### Guidance:

The Standards of Quality at § 22.1-253.13:4(D)(2) in the *Code of Virginia*, as it is effective for students entering the ninth grade prior to the 2018-2019 school year, provide, “*The requirements for a standard high school diploma shall, however, include at least two sequential electives chosen from a concentration of courses selected from a variety of options that may be planned to ensure the completion of a focused sequence of elective courses. Such focused sequence of elective courses shall provide a foundation for further education or training or preparation for employment*.”

“Sequential electives” refers to any series of courses that are used to fulfill the elective requirements for a Standard Diploma in which the content increases or expands in scope and sequence as students move through the various levels of the courses. To further assist local school divisions to ensure that students comply with the requirement, the following guidance is provided:

1. The two sequential electives may be in any discipline as long as the courses are not specifically required for graduation in 8VAC20-131-50 of the standards.
2. Notwithstanding item 1 above, a fine arts or career and technical education course used to satisfy the ~~Foreign Language~~ World Language, Fine Arts or Career and Technical Educationgraduation requirement may be used to partially satisfy this requirement.
3. Guidance for sequential electives in career and technical education programs are available from the Department of Education outlined in the *CTE Administrative Planning Guide* and may be accessed on the [CTE webpage](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/career_technical/index.shtml). Sequential elective information is available for the following programs of study:
   * [Agricultural Education](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/career_technical/agriculture/index.shtml)
   * [Business & Information Technology](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/career_technical/business_infotech/index.shtml)
   * [Career Connections](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/career_technical/career_connections/index.shtml)
   * [Family & Consumer Sciences](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/career_technical/family_consumer_science/index.shtml)
   * [Health & Medical Sciences](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/career_technical/health_medical_sciences/index.shtml)
   * [Marketing](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/career_technical/marketing/index.shtml)
   * [Technology Education](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/career_technical/technology/index.shtml)
   * [Trade & Industrial Education](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/career_technical/trade_industrial/index.shtml)
4. A sequence that includes an exploratory course followed by an introductory course cannot be used to satisfy this requirement; however, an introductory course followed by another level of the same course of study in any content area can be used. Such courses may include any sequence identified in the assignment codes document accompanying the Instructional Personnel Data Collection, which may be accessed at: [SCED Course Codes](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/info_management/data_collection/master_schedule_collection/crosswalk.pdf).
5. Students may take the focused sequence of elective courses in consecutive years or any two years of high school.

*(Adapted from guidance approved by the Board of Education on October 26, 2006)*

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## Sequential Electives Required for Graduation

In accordance with 8VAC20-131-51, four standard units of credit in an elective discipline area are required for students seeking graduation with a standard diploma; three standard units of credit in an elective discipline area are required for students seeking graduation with an advanced studies diploma. Regarding elective credits, the regulation provides, “*Courses to satisfy this requirement shall include at least two sequential electives as required by the Standards of Quality*.”

### Guidance:

The Standards of Quality, at § 22.1-253.13:4(D)(5) in the *Code of Virginia*, provide that the Board’s graduation requirements shall: “[*r*]*equire students to complete at least…two sequential elective courses chosen from a concentration of courses selected from a variety of options that may be planned to ensure the completion of a focused sequence of elective courses that provides a foundation for further education or training or preparation for employment*.”

“Sequential electives” means any series of courses that are used to fulfill the elective requirements for a Standard and an Advanced Studies Diploma in which the content increases or expands in scope and sequence as students move through the various levels of the courses. To further assist local school divisions to ensure that students comply with the requirement, the following guidance is provided:

1. The two sequential electives may be in any discipline as long as the courses are not specifically required for graduation in 8VAC20-131-51 of the standards.
2. Notwithstanding item 1 above, a fine arts course or career and technical education used to satisfy the World Language, Fine Arts or Career and Technical Educationgraduation requirement for the Standard Diploma, or the Fine Arts or Career and Technical Education requirement for the Advanced ~~Studied~~ Studies Diploma may be used to partially satisfy this requirement.
   1. For students seeking to graduate with a Standard diploma or an Advanced Studies Diploma in the 2021-2022 or 2022-2023 cohorts, a World Language course used to satisfy the World Language, Fine Arts, or Career and Technical Education requirement for the Standard diploma or the World Language requirement for the Advanced Studies Diploma may be used to ***partially*** satisfy the sequential elective requirement, so long as the total number of required credits for the diploma are achieved.
      1. If using World Language courses to meet the sequential elective graduation requirement for the Advanced Studies diploma per the flexibility in 2(a) above, students taking three credits of one language would need a total of four credits in World Language to meet both the sequential elective requirement and the World Language graduation requirement; students taking two credits of two languages would require a third year of one of the languages to fulfill both the sequential elective requirement and the World Language requirement.
      2. If using World Language courses to meet the sequential elective graduation requirement for the Standard diploma per the flexibility in 2(a) above, students would need a total of two credits in World Language, as well as one credit in fine or performing arts or career and technical education, to meet both the sequential elective requirement and the World Language, Fine Arts, or Career and Technical Education requirement.
3. Guidance for sequential electives in career and technical education programs are available from the Department of Education outlined in the *CTE Administrative Planning Guide* and may be accessed on the [CTE webpage](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/career_technical/index.shtml). Sequential elective information is available for the following programs of study:
   * [Agricultural Education](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/career_technical/agriculture/index.shtml)
   * [Business & Information Technology](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/career_technical/business_infotech/index.shtml)
   * [Career Connections](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/career_technical/career_connections/index.shtml)
   * [Family & Consumer Sciences](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/career_technical/family_consumer_science/index.shtml)
   * [Health & Medical Sciences](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/career_technical/health_medical_sciences/index.shtml)
   * [Marketing](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/career_technical/marketing/index.shtml)
   * [Technology Education](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/career_technical/technology/index.shtml)
   * [Trade & Industrial Education](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/career_technical/trade_industrial/index.shtml)
4. A sequence that includes an exploratory course followed by an introductory course cannot be used to satisfy this requirement; however, an introductory course followed by another level of the same course of study in any content area can be used. Such courses may include any sequence identified in the assignment codes document accompanying the Instructional Personnel Data Collection, which may be accessed at: [SCED Course Codes](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/info_management/data_collection/master_schedule_collection/crosswalk.pdf).
5. A two credit course, regardless of content and as long as the courses are not specifically required for graduation, can fulfill the sequential elective graduation requirement if course content builds on itself and creates a foundation for further education or training or preparation for employment.
6. 6. Students may take the focused sequence of elective courses in consecutive years or any two years of high school.

*(Adapted from guidance approved by the Board of Education on October 26, 2006)*