

Title of Regulation:

Regulation No.: 43-259

ADULT EDUCATION

Effective Date: 06/26/15

Constitutional and Statutory Provisions:

Section(s):

59-5-60(1), (3), (6).

General powers of [State] Board.

59-39-100.

Issuance of uniform diplomas by accredited high school; units required.

Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976.

20 U.S.C. § 6301 et seq.

No Child Left Behind Act

U.S. Code of Laws

State Board Regulation:

43-259. Adult Education.

I. The State High School Equivalency Diploma

The State Board of Education (SBE) will issue a state high school equivalency diploma to eligible candidates who successfully complete a SBE approved high school equivalency test. The SBE authorizes the administration of approved high school equivalency tests by the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) under policies established by the SBE.

A. Eligibility Requirements for Equivalency Diploma Candidates

1. Service Personnel and Veterans

To be eligible for a state high school equivalency diploma, the candidate must be seventeen years of age or older and must be either a resident of South Carolina or a former resident whose most recent elementary or secondary school attendance was in South Carolina.

2. General Adult Population

a. To be eligible for a state high school equivalency diploma, the candidate must be seventeen years of age or older, must not be currently enrolled in high school, and must either be a current resident of South Carolina or a former resident whose most recent elementary or secondary school attendance was in South Carolina.

b. A candidate for a state high school equivalency diploma who is seventeen or eighteen years of age must submit a "Verification of School Withdrawal" form completed by either the school principal or attendance supervisor of the last South Carolina school he or she attended or from the district superintendent of the school. The "Verification of School Withdrawal" form must verify the candidate's date of birth and the date of his or her last attendance at the school. In the event that the last school he or she attended was outside South Carolina, a person seventeen or eighteen years of age may either submit a letter signed by his or her high school principal or designee verifying his or her date of birth and the date

of last attendance in school or submit a letter from the superintendent of schools in the district in which he or she currently resides indicating that the candidate is not enrolled in any schools within the school district. A copy of the candidate's driver's license, state-issued identification card, or birth certificate must accompany the letter. Verification letters are to be submitted with the application for testing.

c. A candidate over the age of eighteen who has been enrolled in high school during the current school year must submit a "Verification of School Withdrawal" form completed by either the school principal or attendance supervisor of the last South Carolina school he or she attended or from the district superintendent. The "Verification of School Withdrawal" form must verify the candidate's date of birth and the date of his or her last attendance at the school.

3. Juvenile Offenders

Certain juvenile offenders who are under the jurisdiction of the State Department of Juvenile Justice may be granted an exception to the requirement that in order to be eligible for a state high school equivalency diploma, a candidate must be seventeen years of age or older and not be currently enrolled in high school during the current school year.

For a juvenile offender to qualify for this exception, the following criteria must be met:

- a. The juvenile is at least sixteen years of age.
- b. The juvenile is under the jurisdiction of the family court based on an adjudication of delinquent behavior and must be committed to a juvenile correctional institution or committed to participate in community-based alternative programs under the jurisdiction of the Department of Juvenile Justice.
- c. The family court certifies that it is in the best interest of the juvenile for him or her to be exempted from the public school compulsory attendance law.
- d. The juvenile's enrollment in public school or completion of a community-based alternative program would not be feasible upon his or her release from a juvenile correctional institution either because it is necessary that he or she find immediate employment or because he or she will immediately enroll in postsecondary education.

B. Passing Score Requirements

1. Eligible candidates who were initial examinees before July 1, 1991, were awarded a state high school equivalency certificate if they attained an average standard score of 45 or above for the five tests in the GED battery. The South Carolina high school equivalency certificate was not awarded after July 1, 1995.

2. Eligible candidates who were examinees after July 1, 1991, were awarded a state high school equivalency diploma if they attained a minimum-standard score of 35 on each of the five tests in the GED battery and an average standard score of 45 or above for the five tests.

3. Eligible candidates who were examinees after January 1, 1997, were awarded a state high school equivalency diploma if they attained a minimum-standard score of 40 on each of the five tests in the GED battery and an average standard score of 45 or above for the five tests.

4. Eligible candidates who are examinees after January 1, 2002, will be awarded a state high school equivalency diploma if they attain a minimum standard score of 410 on each of the five tests in the GED battery and an average standard score of 450 or above for the five tests.

5. Passing score requirements for all high school equivalency tests authorized by the SCDE after December 31, 2013, will follow test publisher's guidelines and any additional requirements established by the SBE.

C. Testing and Credential Application Procedures

1. High School Equivalency Testing in South Carolina

a. High school equivalency tests may be scheduled and administered at adult education centers, technical or community colleges, and other locations approved by the director of the SCDE's Office of Adult Education.

b. Eligible candidates must submit an application to the SCDE's High School Equivalency Testing Office, or an approved high school equivalency testing center, and pay the required fee set by the SCDE for the testing service and the diploma.

c. Official score reports will be provided to initial examinees only after the completion of the entire high school equivalency test battery.

d. Nonresident individuals who are living temporarily in South Carolina may be permitted to take the high school equivalency tests in South Carolina if they meet minimum age requirements and are not enrolled in high school. Nonresident individuals will not be awarded a state high school equivalency diploma unless their most recent elementary or secondary school of attendance was in South Carolina. Nonresidents must submit an application for testing services to the SCDE's High School Equivalency Testing Office or an approved high school equivalency test center and must pay the required fee set by the SCDE to cover the full costs of the testing and the score report.

e. Guidelines for the re-testing of high school equivalency candidates are outlined in the SCDE High School Equivalency Testing Office Policies and Procedures Manual.

2. High School Equivalency Testing Outside South Carolina

Eligible candidates tested outside South Carolina must submit a diploma application to the SCDE's High School Equivalency Testing Office and must pay the required fee to cover the costs of the diploma. Applicants must arrange for official score reports to be sent to the chief examiner in the SCDE's High School Equivalency Testing Office. Score reports will be accepted as official only when sent directly by an official high school equivalency testing center, by the transcript service of the Defense Activity for Nontraditional Education Support (DANTES), or by the GED Testing Service in Washington, D.C. Eligible candidates who are tested outside of South Carolina must meet the state's passing score requirements in order to receive a state high school equivalency diploma.

II. Adult Education: High School Diploma Program

A. Graduation Requirements

1. The student must earn a total of 24 prescribed units of credit to earn a state high school diploma. The unit requirements are distributed as follows:

Unit Requirements	
English/language arts	4.0
Mathematics	4.0
Science	3.0
U.S. History and Constitution	1.0
Economics	0.5
U.S. Government	0.5
Other social studies course(s)	1.0
Computer science (including keyboarding)*	1.0
Electives	9.0

	24.0 total

* Keyboarding may count up to one-half unit of the computer science requirement.

2. A student may transfer credit earned in the adult education program to a secondary school to count toward the units of credit required for a state high school diploma earned through the regular course of study at a high school, if for each unit being transferred, the student has spent a minimum of 120 hours in class time in that subject at that level and the teacher was properly certified to teach the course.

3. Membership in an adult education program shall be limited to individuals eighteen years of age or older who have left the elementary or secondary school, except when the local school board assigns students under the age of eighteen years who are not officially in membership in a regular school. Students under eighteen may be assigned to an adult education program when they exhibit either an unusual educational need or physical, social, or economic problem that can be served more effectively by the adult education program. Schools should provide counseling regarding all alternatives available to high school students considering dropping out. No student under the age of sixteen may be assigned to the adult education program for any reason.

4. No student shall be graduated from the adult education program prior to the time that he or she would have graduated from a regular high school unless written approval is granted by the high school principal and the SCDE's Office of Adult Education. For a student to be eligible to receive a state high school diploma, he or she must complete one semester in residence (i.e., through actual attendance in the adult education program). This semester in residence is a prerequisite for the state high school diploma and may not be waived. For the purposes of adult education programs, a semester in residence is defined as follows: a minimum of 60 hours of classroom attendance for a student needing only one unit to graduate, and a minimum of 30 hours of classroom attendance for a student who needs only one-half unit to graduate. Completion of a one-half unit or one unit via the virtual school program while enrolled in an adult education program will satisfy the semester-in-residence requirement.

5. The student must complete a study of and pass an examination on the provisions and principles of the United States Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, the *Federalist* papers, and American institutions and ideals.

6. A student may earn an unlimited number of units of credit per school year with a maximum of six earned through classroom attendance.

B. Provisions for Granting Course Credit

1. Course credit shall be accepted when official transcripts are received from schools that are accredited by a state or by one of the following: New England Association of Colleges and Schools, the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, the Western Association of Colleges and Schools, or the Northwest Association of Colleges and Schools.

2. An adult education program may award credit for courses that have been approved by the SCDE in a proficiency-based system, see R.43-234, II.C., Defined Program, Grades 9–12 and Graduation Requirements. Credit shall only be accepted from institutions validated by the SBE or accredited by one of the following: New England Association of Colleges and Schools, the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, the Western Association of Colleges and Schools, or the Northwest Association of Colleges and Schools.

3. High school diploma credit may be granted only by a teacher certified in the specific area in which credit is to be awarded. If the adult education teacher is not certified in the specific area in which the student is seeking credit, another currently employed adult education teacher that is certified in the specific area may review the student's work and award the unit of credit on that basis. Documentation of the high school credit awarded becomes part of the student's permanent record.

4. Adult Education students are eligible to earn high school units through the district's dual credit arrangement, see R.43-234, III., Defined Program, Grades 9–12 and Graduation Requirements.

C. Approved Programs and Granting of Credit

No credit toward a state high school diploma shall be granted to any adult education student unless the program has been officially approved in writing by the Office of Adult Education and the Office of Federal and State Accountability at the SCDE. Program-related requirements include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Each district must provide properly certified administrative, teaching, and supervisory staff for the adult education program. Staff members may be either full-time or part-time, according to the size of the program.

2. Each director must either be certified in one of the acceptable areas of certification for an adult education director or hold both an advanced degree in the field of adult education and a South Carolina teaching certificate.

3. Each adult education program must have a director (full-time or part-time).

4. Each center supervisor or program coordinator must either meet the same qualifications for certification as set forth in item 2 above for adult education directors or have a master's degree or a bachelor's degree and five years of adult education experience.

5. Each adult education teacher must be properly certified and meet the appropriate federal statutory requirements.

6. Each adult education high school subject-area teacher must be properly certified and meet appropriate federal statutory requirements to teach the subject area in which he or she is assigned to teach.

7. Any staff member who is assigned duties in a subject for which he or she is not properly certified must hold a valid teaching credential, must have completed 12 semester hours of credit in the assigned subject, and must have obtained an out-of-field permit in that subject from the Office of Educator Certification. The staff member must earn 6 semester hours toward proper certification each year for renewal of the out-of-field permit. After June 30, 2006, out-of-field permits will no longer be issued to teachers who teach core academic subjects as specified by the appropriate federal statutory requirements. These core academic subjects are English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics, government, economics, history, geography, and the arts. The Director of the Office of Adult Education may waive the requirement of properly certified teachers in instances of critical needs. Critical needs may include but are not limited to the following: there is no certification available in the particular subject area; there is no certified teacher available because of the location of the class or meeting time of the class. Non-certified teachers must work under the supervision of an on-site, properly certified teacher. Non-certified teachers may not provide instruction in courses awarding Carnegie units of credit.

8. In order to earn credit toward a state high school diploma earned through an adult education program, a student must attend class a minimum of 60 hours to receive consideration for a unit of high school credit and 30 hours for consideration for one-half unit of high school credit. Actual course credit will be awarded only after the student has completed all course requirements. Completion of a one-half unit or one unit via the virtual school program while enrolled in an adult education program will satisfy the attendance requirement.

9. Applications for innovative-approach programs must be submitted to the SCDE's Office of Adult Education when a departure from certain established standards is necessary for the implementation of the new program. Requests for prior approval must be made to the Office of Adult Education and must be approved by the SCDE's Office of Federal and State Accountability.

10. An accurate record of the attendance and achievements of each student must be kept and must be stored in locked, fireproof filing cabinets or vaults or in a secure database with backup copies. Records of high school credits earned must be retained indefinitely.

11. Students enrolled in the high school completion program must be given access to appropriate library facilities or the Internet.