

Florida's Guide to Public High School Graduation

It's a Major Opportunity!

For Students Entering Ninth Grade in 2009-2010



*Florida Department of Education
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HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION PROGRAMS OVERVIEW

If you are the parent of a Florida middle or high school student, this guide is for you. It is designed to explain Florida's high school graduation programs, including two programs that let students graduate from high school in three years. The guide also provides information to help students and their families as they plan and prepare for postsecondary goals, including information on acceleration options and advanced coursework. *For more information about a special diploma and other graduation options for students with disabilities, contact your child's school counselor or exceptional student education teacher, or visit <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/>.*

Florida students entering their first year of high school in the 2009-2010 school year may choose from one of five options to earn a standard diploma. They are:

- A four-year, 24-credit program
- An International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum
- An Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) curriculum
- A three-year, 18-credit college preparatory program
- A three-year, 18-credit career preparatory program

All of these graduation paths include opportunities to take rigorous academic courses designed to prepare students for their future academic and career choices. **And all students, regardless of graduation program, must still earn a specific grade point average on a 4.0 scale and achieve passing scores on the Grade 10 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test® (FCAT) in order to graduate with a standard diploma (refer to graduation options charts).**

CHOOSING A PROGRAM

The three-year programs are designed for students who are clear about their future goals and are ready to pursue their goals beyond high school in an accelerated manner. To assist students and parents with this task, each school district shall provide each student in grades six through nine and their parents with information concerning the three-year, 18-credit, and the four-year, 24-credit high school graduation options.

To select a three-year graduation program, students and their parents must meet with designated school personnel to receive an explanation of the requirements, advantages, and disadvantages of each program option. Students must also receive the written consent of their parents. Prior to the end of ninth grade, the student must select the graduation program that will best address his/her future.



24-CREDIT PROGRAM—IT'S A MAJOR OPPORTUNITY!

This program takes the traditional four years to complete high school and requires students to take at least 24 credits in core content areas. Foreign language credit is not required for this program, although it is recommended for Florida college preparation and is required for admission to Florida's state universities. This program requires students to complete certain "Major Areas of Interest" courses. Major Areas of Interest courses allow students to define their interests and use their high school experience to become better prepared for higher education and/or a career.

THREE-YEAR, 18-CREDIT COLLEGE PREPARATORY PROGRAM

The requirements of this program are designed to prepare students for entering a postsecondary institution of education. This accelerated graduation program requires fewer credits and does not require the student to select a Major Area of Interest. It focuses more on academic courses. Students must earn at least 6 of the 18 required credits in specified rigorous level courses. It also requires higher-level mathematics courses than does either the 24-credit program or the three-year career preparatory program. The credits required by this program must satisfy the minimum standards for admission into Florida's state universities.

THREE-YEAR, 18-CREDIT CAREER PREPARATORY PROGRAM

The requirements of the program are designed to prepare students for entrance into a technical center, a Florida college for career preparation, or entrance into the workforce. This accelerated graduation program requires fewer credits and does not require the student to select a Major Area of Interest. It focuses more on academic courses. The three-year career preparatory program requires students to earn specific credits in a single vocational, career, or technical education program.

ACCELERATION PROGRAMS AND ADVANCED COURSEWORK

Studies show that students who complete a solid academic program in high school, including advanced courses, are more likely to be successful in college. Students in all graduation programs are encouraged to take advantage of advanced course offerings and acceleration programs, such as dual enrollment, early admission, the Advanced Placement Program, the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program, the Advanced International Certificate of Education Program, and the Florida Virtual School. These programs are available to all qualified students, no matter which graduation program they choose. For information, contact your child's school counselor.

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE (IB) DIPLOMA PROGRAM

The IB Diploma Program is a rigorous, pre-university course of study leading to internationally standardized tests. The program's comprehensive, two-year curriculum allows its graduates to fulfill requirements of many different nations' education systems. Students completing IB courses and exams from six subject groups are eligible for college credit. The award of credit is based on scores achieved on IB exams. Students can earn up to 30 postsecondary semester credits by participating in this program at the high school level. Approximately 56 Florida high schools offer an IB Diploma Program. Students in Florida's public secondary schools enrolled in IB courses do not have to pay to take the exams. For information, visit <http://www.ibo.org>.

ADVANCED INTERNATIONAL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION (AICE) PROGRAM

The AICE Program is an international curriculum and examination program modeled on the British pre-college curriculum. To be considered for an AICE Diploma, a candidate must earn the equivalent of six credits by passing a combination of examinations at either the full (one credit) Advanced Subsidiary Level (AS) or double (two credits) International Advanced Level (A), with at least one course coming from each of the three curriculum areas. Florida's colleges and universities provide college credit for successfully passing the exams. Students in Florida's public secondary schools enrolled in AICE courses do not have to pay to take the exams. For information, visit <http://www.cie.org.uk/qualifications/academic/uppersec/aice> and http://www.cie.org.uk/docs/qualifications/aice/AICE_introduction.pdf.

DUAL ENROLLMENT AND EARLY ADMISSION

These programs allow eligible high school students to enroll in postsecondary courses. Students earn credit toward high school graduation and, at the same time, earn credit toward a college degree or technical certificate. All 28 Florida colleges and some of the state universities participate in dual enrollment. Students are permitted to take dual enrollment courses on a part-time basis during school hours, after school, or during the summer term. Dual enrollment students do not have to pay registration, matriculation, or laboratory fees. In addition, text books for dual enrollment are provided to students free of charge. Dual enrollment courses will be weighted the same as courses taught through other acceleration mechanisms. Students should be aware that grades received through dual enrollment at Florida colleges and universities become part of the permanent postsecondary record. State universities will not admit a student who has less than a 2.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) PROGRAM

The College Board's AP Program is a nationwide program consisting of more than 30 college-level courses and exams offered at participating high schools. Subjects range from art to statistics. Students who earn a qualifying grade of three or above on an AP exam can earn college credit, or AP credit, or both, depending on the college or university. Students in Florida's public secondary schools enrolled in AP courses do not have to pay to take the exams. For information, visit <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/about.html>.

INTERNATIONAL GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION (PRE-AICE) PROGRAM (IGCSE)

The IGCSE Program is an international curriculum and examination program designed for 14- to 16-year-old students. Participants who obtain an IGCSE qualification from Cambridge are prepared for further academic success, including progression to the British pre-college curriculum "A-Level" study (AICE Program). Students in Florida's public secondary schools enrolled in pre-AICE courses do not have to pay to take the exams. For information, visit <http://www.cie.org.uk> and click on *Qualifications and Diplomas*, then *IGCSE*.

FLORIDA VIRTUAL SCHOOL (FVS)

The FVS offers high-quality, online high school curricula, including AP courses. The FVS Program can be a resource for students with limited access to AP offerings. For information, visit <http://www.flvs.net>.

ADULT EDUCATION

Many school districts let high school students take courses through their adult education program. Credits earned may be applied to requirements for high school graduation, subject to the local school board's policies. For more information, visit <http://www.fldoe.org/workforce/adulted>.

COLLEGE-LEVEL EXAMINATION PROGRAM (CLEP)

Students with strong content background in a subject area can earn credit through an examination program administered by the college they attend. One such program is the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP). Candidates for the CLEP include students who have completed an AP course but did not take or earn a qualifying score on the AP exam. Other students who have taken several high school courses in one particular subject area may wish to take a CLEP exam. For more information on CLEP testing sites and dates, contact the admissions or registrar's office at the postsecondary institution in your area.

STUDENTS ENTERING GRADE NINE IN 2009-2010 SCHOOL YEAR

Subject Area	Graduation Requirements of 24-Credit Program	Graduation Requirements of Three-Year, 18 credit College Preparatory Program ¹	Graduation Requirements of Three-Year, 18-credit Career Preparatory Program
English	4 credits with major concentration in composition, reading for information, and literature	4 credits with major concentration in composition and literature	4 credits with major concentration in composition and literature
Mathematics	4 credits, one of which must be Algebra I or its equivalent ² , or a higher-level mathematics course	3 credits at the Algebra I level ² or above from the list of courses that qualify for state university system (SUS) ³	3 credits, one of which must be Algebra I or its equivalent ²
Science	3 credits in science, two of which must have a laboratory component	3 credits in natural science, two of which must have a laboratory component	3 credits in natural science, two of which must have a laboratory component
Social Studies	1 credit world history 1 credit American history .5 credit American government .5 credit economics	1 credit world history 1 credit American history .5 credit American government .5 credit economics	1 credit world history 1 credit American history .5 credit American government .5 credit economics
Foreign Language	Not required for high school graduation, but required for admission into state universities	2 credits in the same language or demonstrated proficiency in a second language	Not required
Fine Arts or Performing Arts, Speech, Debate, or Practical Arts	1 credit in Fine or Performing Arts, Speech and Debate, or Practical Arts (eligible courses specified in Course Code Directory)	Not required	Not required
Physical Education	1 credit in physical education to include the integration of health ⁴	Not required	Not required
Major, Minor, or Electives	8 credits ⁵ • 4 credits in a major area of interest • 4 credits in elective courses, which may be combined to allow for a second major area of interest, a minor area of interest (3 credits), individual elective courses, or intensive reading or mathematics intervention courses	3 credits in electives	3 credits in single vocational/career education program and 2 credits in electives <u>OR</u> 3 credits in single career/technical certificate dual enrollment and 2 credits in electives <u>OR</u> 5 credits in vocational/career education (including 3 credits in one sequential career and technical education program)
Total	24 Credits	18 credits	18 credits
State Assessment Requirements⁶	Passing scores on the Grade 10 FCAT or scores on a standardized test that are concordant with the passing scores on the FCAT (ACT or SAT)	Passing scores on the Grade 10 FCAT or scores on a standardized test that are concordant with the passing scores on the FCAT (ACT or SAT)	Passing scores on the Grade 10 FCAT or scores on a standardized test that are concordant with the passing scores on the FCAT (ACT or SAT)
Grade Point Average (GPA) Requirements⁷	Cumulative GPA of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale	Cumulative GPA of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale in required courses and a weighted or unweighted grade that earns at least 3.0 points or its equivalent in each of the 18 required credits	Cumulative weighted GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale in required courses and a weighted or unweighted grade that earns at least 2.0 points or its equivalent in each of the 18 required credits

¹All courses earned toward the three-year, 18-credit college preparatory program must satisfy minimum admission requirements for the state university system. To determine which courses meet state university system admissions requirements, please see the high school counselor for assistance. At least six of the 18 credits must be completed in courses that include dual enrollment, Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE), or specifically listed as rigorous by the Department of Education.

²See high school counselor for assistance with Algebra I equivalents. The series of courses identified as "equivalent" for satisfying Algebra I for graduation purposes (i.e., Algebra Ia and Ib; Applied Mathematics I and II; Integrated Mathematics I and II) count as one of four credits required in mathematics for state university admission purposes.

³Students seeking admission to an SUS institution must complete an additional mathematics academic unit of Algebra 1 or higher (bringing the mathematics requirements to 4 units) [Regulation 6.002, B.O.G.]

⁴For more information on meeting the physical education requirement, please visit <http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-4461/k12-2007-103.pdf> or see high school counselor.

⁵Students may revise major areas of interest each year as part of their annual course registration process.

⁶Students must earn passing scores on the Grade 10 FCAT in mathematics and reading (or scores that are concordant with the passing scores on the Grade 10 FCAT).

⁷Students in grades 6-8 who take any high school-level course(s) for high school credit and earn a grade of "C," "D," or "F" may replace the grade with a grade of "C" or higher earned subsequently in the same or comparable course(s) in accordance with the district school board's forgiveness policy.

STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE ADMISSION AND BRIGHT FUTURES REQUIREMENTS

State University System (SUS) Admission Requirements	The Florida College System Admission Requirements	Bright Futures Scholarship Requirements for 2013 High School Graduate (The Florida Legislature is authorized to change eligibility and funding)
<p>To qualify to enter one of Florida's public universities, a student must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Meet the following minimum requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high school graduation with a standard diploma • grade point average in high school academic core courses • admissions test scores (ACT or SAT) <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Qualify for the Talented 20 program <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Be selected through a "student profile assessment" that considers other special factors (e.g., special talents) <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Obtain an associate of arts degree from a Florida college 	<p>To qualify to enter an associate degree program at one of Florida's colleges, a student must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate with a standard high school diploma <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Earn a high school equivalency diploma <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Have previously demonstrated competency in college credit postsecondary coursework <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Earn a College Placement Test (CPT) eligible Certificate of Completion <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrate achievement of college-level communication and computation skills (per standardized test scores to enroll in credit-bearing education courses) <p>For those students interested in non-degree certificate program or baccalaureate degree programs, please see an admissions counselor as requirements may vary.</p>	<p>Florida Academic Scholars/Florida Medallion Scholars must have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 16 credits in college preparatory courses in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 English (3 with substantial writing) • 4 mathematics (Algebra I level and above) • 3 natural science (2 with lab component) • 3 social science • 2 foreign language (in the same language) <input type="checkbox"/> Up to two additional credits from courses in the academic areas listed above and/or AP, IB, or AICE fine arts courses to raise the GPA <input type="checkbox"/> A 3.5 weighted GPA in the above courses; 75 hours community service; and a best composite score of 1270 on the SAT Reasoning Test (based on the combined Critical Reading and Math sections only) or 28 on the ACT (excluding the writing section) to be a Florida Academic Scholar (FAS) <input type="checkbox"/> A 3.0 weighted GPA in the above courses and a minimum score of 970 on the SAT or 20 on the ACT to be a Florida Medallion Scholar (FMS)
<p>The 18 high school credits required for SUS admission are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 English (3 with substantial writing) • 4 mathematics (Algebra I and above) • 3 natural science (2 with lab component) • 3 social science • 2 foreign language (in the same language) • 2 approved electives (in certain combinations) <p>Students must meet with their school counselor to ensure that courses satisfy SUS admission requirements</p>	<p>The 18 high school credits recommended for admission to the Florida college system are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 English (3 with substantial writing) • 4 mathematics (Algebra I and above) • 3 natural science (2 with lab component) • 3 social science • 2 foreign language (in the same language) • 2 approved electives (in certain combinations) 	<p>Florida Gold Seal Vocational (GSV) Scholars¹ must have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 16 credits in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 English • 4 mathematics (including Algebra I) • 3 natural science • 3 social science (American history, world history, American government, and economics) • 1 fine arts • 1 physical education to include the integration of health <input type="checkbox"/> A 3.0 weighted GPA in above courses (for a four-year graduation program) <input type="checkbox"/> 3 vocational job-preparatory or technology education credits in one vocational program with an unweighted 3.5 GPA in those courses <input type="checkbox"/> A minimum section score listed below on <i>each</i> section of <i>either</i> the CPT, SAT, or ACT (<i>sections of different test types may not be combined.</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPT: Reading 83/Sentence Skills 83/Algebra 72 • SAT: Verbal 440/Math 440 • ACT: English 17/Reading 18/Math 19

¹College or career preparatory diplomas may be used to qualify for GSV, with appropriate vocational job-preparatory or technology education electives.

MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICE

The right graduation program for a particular student is the one that best fits the abilities, interests, and goals of that individual student. Families should consider the educational benefits of each program and choose the one that will best prepare the student for his/her postsecondary education or career plan. Here are some things that students and families should consider:

- ✓ What is the student's postsecondary education and/or career goal?
- ✓ Is the student prepared to make a choice about postsecondary education and possible career paths?
- ✓ If the student is planning to attend a postsecondary institution away from home, does he or she have the mature decision-making skills needed to make the informed, safe choices required for independent living?
- ✓ Are three electives enough, or is the student interested in taking additional courses to explore his/her interests?
- ✓ Does the student want to participate in sports or other extracurricular activities for four years, or are three years enough?
- ✓ Can the student meet admissions requirements for postsecondary education institutions of his/her choice by choosing a three-year, 18-credit graduation program?
- ✓ Has the family considered expenses and possible financial aid needs that may result from the student starting postsecondary education a year early?
- ✓ Is the student going to compete for scholarships that require certain academic core courses, community service experiences, demonstrated leadership skills, or participation in extracurricular activities?
- ✓ Has the family considered that the student has the option of taking an additional year of academic or technical courses through dual enrollment or to earn additional AP course credit and/or college credit by choosing the 24-credit program?
- ✓ Is the student planning to play college level sports and need to meet NCAA course eligibility requirements?
- ✓ If the student is enrolled in a prepaid college tuition plan, can the family pay off the balance of the plan a year early?



Families and students are encouraged to contact the school counselor or career specialist at their student's school for more information about graduation programs, financial aid opportunities, accelerated programs, and college or career plans. Students and parents are also encouraged to continue to discuss their plans with the school counselor on a regular basis during the middle school and high school years. Students need to be interested and involved in their academic progress and in planning for their futures in order to ensure that they will be prepared to achieve their postsecondary goals.

POINTS TO REMEMBER WHEN CHOOSING A GRADUATION PROGRAM

- ❑ Students who choose a three-year graduation program may still qualify for acceleration programs (e.g., AP, dual enrollment, IB, AICE) and for a Florida Bright Futures Scholarship if they meet the eligibility and/or admissions requirements for those programs and scholarships.
- ❑ Students who choose a three-year graduation program can participate in the National Merit Scholarship Program if they take the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) in either the next-to-last year or the last year they are enrolled in high school. Those who take the PSAT/NMSQT in their last year of high school will be entering competition for awards to be offered as they are completing their first year of college.
- ❑ Students who choose a three-year graduation program, complete the 18 credits, earn a cumulative weighted GPA (with individual course credit GPA requirements), and pass the Grade 10 FCAT must graduate at the end of the three years. Students will lose a year of potential athletics eligibility by opting for a three-year program. Issues such as continued eligibility for high school athletics or other extracurricular activities should be taken into consideration when making the decision.
- ❑ Students who choose a three-year graduation program will automatically move to the four-year graduation program if they do not earn 5 credits by the end of grade 9 or 11 credits by the end of grade 10; do not achieve a score of 3 or higher on the Grade 10 FCAT; or do not meet credit or GPA requirements by the end of their third year.
- ❑ Students who meet specified requirements for a comprehensive program of study in career education may be recognized with a career education certification on their high school diploma.
- ❑ High school credits awarded before grade nine can be counted toward the required credits for all graduation programs.
- ❑ The three-year graduation programs are only available to students who will receive a standard diploma.
- ❑ Students who complete the three-year college preparatory program must still satisfy minimum academic core credit requirements for SUS admissions.
- ❑ Students who choose the three-year career preparatory program must take their electives in career and technical education courses.
- ❑ Students who plan to apply to an out-of-state or private in-state college or university and who are interested in one of the three-year graduation programs should contact those institutions as early as possible for specific admission requirements.
- ❑ Students who choose a three-year graduation program must be treated equally in all ways with students who choose the four-year graduation program, including eligibility for valedictorian or salutatorian ranking, Talented 20, and Bright Futures.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESOURCES

FACTS.org is Florida's free academic advising Web site. The site includes services to help students prepare for and succeed in school and beyond. FACTS.org makes it easy for public middle and high school students to be involved in their academic and career planning. By establishing a login ID, students can create an electronic Personal Education Plan (ePEP) that maps out high school coursework according to individual goals. Students can also monitor their progress by running evaluations against transcript information and the requirements for high school diplomas, SUS admissions, Bright Futures Scholarships, and a new federal grant called the Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG). FACTS.org services support Department of Education initiatives and legislative reforms. For more information, visit <http://www.facts.org>, contact the FACTS.org Help desk toll-free at (866) 324-2618, or e-mail them at facts@admin.usf.edu.

Florida Counseling for Future Education Handbook is a comprehensive guide designed for Florida's middle and high school counselors to help counsel students who will enroll in Florida's postsecondary institutions. The Handbook is updated annually with the most current version available on FACTS.org from the *Counselors and Educators* section.

Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA) administers state-funded grants and scholarship programs and federal student loan financial aid programs to assist students with the costs of postsecondary education. For information, visit <http://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org> or call toll-free (888) 827-2004.

Federal Student Aid is your source for free information from the U.S. Department of Education on preparing for and funding education beyond high school. Visit <http://www.studentaid.ed.gov>.

Talented 20 Program provides students in the top 20 percent of their class guaranteed admission, within space and fiscal limitations, into one of Florida's 11 state universities. Please note that while eligible students are guaranteed admission, they may not necessarily be admitted to the campus of choice. These students are given priority for the awarding of funds from the Florida Student Assistance Grant Program although this program provides no scholarships. For more information on how to qualify, visit <http://www.fldoe.org/Talented20> or call the Student Support Services Project office at (850) 922-3727.

FCAT Explorer is a free online practice program for Florida's public school students. The system features three practice programs created especially for middle school students—Reading Island, Interactive Library, and Math Navigator; and two practice programs created for grade 10 students—Reading Timeline and Math Timeline. All five programs offer practice for the skills tested on the FCAT and include features to help students get the most from their study time. Students may use the system on any computer connected to the Internet, whether at school, at the library, or at home. Visit <http://www.fcatexplorer.com>.

CHOICES Web site is a comprehensive career information system that uses a flexible approach that combines graphics, multimedia, and search strategies to allow students to explore career and educational options. The site includes links to key Web sites related to career exploration to help students plan for a career. Visit <http://www.Florida.echoices.com>.

Career Voyages Web site provides information and guided support for students in determining the best career path. The site includes Florida-specific information about high-growth jobs with better wages, including new career fields, video tours for students, and an online interest inventory. Visit <http://www.careervoyages.gov>.

Major Areas of Interest (MAI) is a means by which a student can explore areas of interest in depth. Students entering grade nine will select an MAI as part of their required electives for graduation. A *major* is made up of four elective classes, offered at your school, through dual enrollment, online/virtual education classes, and certain internships and work experience. The possibilities are endless. For more information and to view a list of MAIs available in your school district, visit FACTS.org.

This publication is designed to assist students, parents, and school districts in support of educational programs. For additional information on this publication, or for a list of available publications, contact the Bureau of Curriculum and Instruction, 325 West Gaines Street, Room 434, Turlington Building, Florida Department of Education, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400.



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