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Questions about the graduation exit exam:

- Q1:** For students who dropped out and then returned, or students who take more than four years to graduate: What high school exit exam are students who did not graduate with their class required to take?
- A1:** Students should complete the graduation requirements of the year in which they would have graduated.

Note: For testing purposes for the high school diploma, the student’s grade level at the time he/she takes the test applies.

Example: A high school senior in 2010-2011 does not graduate in 2011 and returns to school as a senior again in 2011-2012. That student is required to pass the New Mexico High School Competency Exam, even if he/she graduates in 2012.

- Q2:** If students do not meet the cut score for the High School Graduation Assessment on the 11th grade Standards Based Assessment (SBA), what should they do?
- A2:** Students may retake the SBA in the fall and winter of their senior year, or they may create an Alternate Demonstration of Competency (ADC) portfolio. Please see <http://www.ped.state.nm.us/highschoolredesign> for the ADC General Guidance Document. An ADC Toolkit with more information will be available through this webpage later this summer.

Questions about Electives (continued):

- Q3: Is passing the SBA/High School Graduation Assessment and Alternate Demonstration of Competency a requirement in the 2011-2012 school year?
- A3: No. Senate Bill 360 temporarily suspends certain state assessments in 2011-2012 to balance the state budget and reduce general appropriations for state government and public schools.

Note: 2011-2012 will be a pilot year for the SBA/High School Graduation Assessment (HSGA) and the Alternate Demonstration of Competency (ADC). Scores from the spring 2011 test will be reported to schools for planning ADCs, though the class of 2012 will not be required to pass the test or the ADC. No SBA/HSGA retests will be available in 2011-2012. The SBA/HSGA will be administered to the class of 2013 in the spring of 2012. The class of 2013 will be the first class that must pass the SBA or complete demonstrate competency through an ADC.

Questions about English and mathematics courses required for graduation:

- Q4: What are the courses that satisfy the English requirements?
- A4: The Courses designed to meet the English requirements can include:
- STARS 1001 English/Language Arts I
 - STARS 1002 English/Language Arts II
 - STARS 1003 English/Language Arts III
 - STARS 1004 English/Language Arts IV

Note: Elective English courses that align to the New Mexico 9-12 English standards or higher may count towards fulfilling the requirements for graduation.

Note: Districts must follow the procedures for requesting permission from the Secretary to issue [Alternative Credit](#) when elective courses are offered for graduation credit.

Note: Districts may develop policy to allow Dual Credit English courses that require a student to meet a cut score on a postsecondary placement test to count toward the required 4 English units as long as the course meets or exceeds NMPED's standards. (All Dual Credit courses must meet or exceed the NMPED's standards and benchmarks.)

- Q5: What are the courses that satisfy the mathematics requirements?
- A5: The courses designed to meet the mathematics requirements include:
- STARS 2031 -- Algebra 1
 - STARS 2041 -- Algebra 2
 - STARS 2034 -- Geometry
 - STARS 2080 -- Integrated Math Program (IMP-I)
 - STARS 2081 -- Integrated Math Program (IMP-II)
 - STARS 2082 -- Integrated Math Program (IMP-III)
 - STARS 2029 -- Probability & Statistics
 - STARS 2053 -- Pre-Calculus
 - STARS 2058 -- AP Calculus AB
 - STARS 2097 -- Financial Literacy-Math

Q5: What are the courses that satisfy the mathematics requirements? (continued)

Note: Mathematics courses that align to the New Mexico 9-12 math standards or higher may count towards fulfilling the requirements for graduation. For students entering grade 9 in the 2009-2010 school year or thereafter, 4 units of mathematics are required, one of which is equivalent to or higher than the level of Algebra 2. In addition, districts can award credit for a Pre-Algebra course if it is part of the student's Next Step Plan and the student otherwise meets the requirements of the 4 math units.

Note: Districts may develop policy to allow Dual Credit mathematics courses that require a student to meet a cut score on a postsecondary placement test to count toward the required 4 math units as long as the course meets or exceeds NMPED's standards. (All Dual Credit courses must meet or exceed the NMPED's standards and benchmarks.) Districts must follow the procedures for requesting permission from the Secretary to issue [Alternative Credit](#) when elective courses are offered for graduation credit.

Questions about waiving the Algebra 2 requirement:

Q6: If a parent waives the Algebra 2 requirement, how is that documented?

A6: It is stated in the student's 11th grade Next Step Plan, which the parent signs at the end of the student's 10th grade year. See sections J(2)l and K of the Career and Technical Education Rule ([6.29.1 NMAC](#)) for details.

Questions about the workplace readiness and career cluster courses:

Q7: What is the difference between a career cluster course and a workplace readiness course?

A7: A career cluster course is an identified career-technical education course. These courses are part of an aligned, sequential series of courses within a related grouping of occupations in a given industry sector. Completing a series of career cluster courses may result in an industry recognized certification or post-secondary degree and add relevance to the high school curricula.

A workplace readiness course is designed specifically to address entry-level career skill requirements, standards and benchmarks as identified under [Career-Technical Education in the Standards of Excellence](#). This does not include courses already identified as meeting other specified graduation requirements.

Questions about Electives:

Q8: Which [STARS](#) Codes match the Electives districts are required to offer?

A8: Some examples include:

- Driver Education
 - STARS 0817- Drivers' Education – Classroom Only
- Financial Literacy
 - STARS 2797- Social Studies
 - STARS 0517- Family and Consumer Science
 - STARS 0225- Business
- Student Service Learning

Questions about Electives continued:

- STARS 2212- Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies
- STARS 0851- Community Service
- Student Service Learning can also be an approach to education. STARS Codes for this include:
 - STARS 0137- Agricultural Leadership/Communication
 - STARS 0297- Business Work Experience (Co-op) (formerly Business Work Site Experience Cooperative Education – OJT)
 - STARS 1897- Marketing Mentorship and Internship
- Media Literacy
 - STARS 0805- Media Literacy

Q9: Do the Elective classes listed in A8 have to be offered as one unit?

A9: It is the district's decision whether to offer the courses as one unit or less. Some of the course codes listed above are for one unit and some are for .5 unit courses.

Questions about the financial literacy requirement:

Q10: What is the STARS Code for the Financial Literacy course that satisfies a 1 unit high school mathematics requirement?

A10: STARS 2097 – Financial Literacy – Mathematics

Q11: May a teacher with a Social Studies endorsement teach the STARS 2097 Financial Literacy course?

A11: No, a mathematics endorsement is required for STARS 2097. A social studies endorsement is required for STARS 2797.

Questions about Honors, Advanced Placement (AP), and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses:

Q12: What is the definition of an “Honors” class?

A12: Honors courses are developed locally to meet the needs of accelerated students. Honors classes offer the same curriculum that non-honors courses offer, but are more challenging. Honors courses are generally faster paced and cover topics more in-depth. However, these courses are not usually considered equivalent to college-level work. [\(See Section 22-13-1.4 NMSA 1978\)](#)

Q13: Can Honors courses satisfy the requirement for “academically rigorous” classes in mathematics and language arts?

A13: Yes.

Q14: Can AP or IB satisfy the requirement for “academically rigorous” classes in mathematics and language arts?

A14: Yes.

Q15: Must the Honors, AP, IB courses be offered for one unit?

A15: Yes, the intention is for “academically rigorous” courses to be offered for one unit.

Questions about Dual Credit and Distance Learning:

- Q16: What is the LEA requirement to implement a Dual Credit Program with a local postsecondary institution?
- A16: All LEAs must complete a Dual Credit Master Agreement with at least one local NM public/tribal postsecondary institution. The LEA must submit the Master Agreement to the NMPED according to the directions found at: <http://www.ped.state.nm.us/DualCredit/index.html>.
- Q17: How do LEAs ensure graduation requirements are met that include identifying one of the graduation units as being Honors, AP, dual credit, or distance learning?
- A17: Within the STARS database, courses are identified at a local level as meeting graduation requirements.

Note: A Certification of Compliance indicating the graduating class has met high school graduation requirements is signed by the District Superintendent or Charter School Administrator and submitted to NMPED.

Questions about Languages other than English:

- Q18: Does “2 years of a Language other than English” mean two units of the same Language other than English?
- A18: Yes.
- Q19: Does American Sign Language qualify as a “Language other than English”?
- A19: Yes.

Definitions:

- Unit:** High school measurement of credit. The assigning of credit is outlined by individual district policies.
- Credit Hour:** College measurement of credit. Three college credit hours are equivalent to one high school unit as defined by the Dual Credit rule ([6.30.7 NMAC](#)).

Resources:

[FAQ](#) in the STARS Manual, Volume 2 Reference Materials
(<http://www.ped.state.nm.us/stars/documentation.html>)

High School Graduation Requirements for Students Entering High School in 2009-2010:

<http://www.ped.state.nm.us/Graduation/dl11/Graduation%20Unit%20and%20Exam%20Requirements.pdf>

District Requirements for High School Course Offerings:

<http://www.ped.state.nm.us/Graduation/dl11/District%20Requirements%20for%20HS%20Course%20Offerings%202011.pdf>

Coming soon to the NMPED webpage: FAQ for Assessment & Accountability for answers about New Mexico's assessment and accountability systems, including the A-B-C-D-F School Rating System, compressed spring testing schedule, the SBA/High School Graduation Assessment, teacher/principal evaluations, and suspension of certain assessments.

For technical assistance: Quality Assurance Bureau Help Desk:
<http://www.ped.state.nm.us/qab/contactForm.html> or 505.827.4296

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