



# **CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

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## **Purpose**

The purpose of the Certificate of Completion Guidelines is to provide complex areas and school staff with information regarding the requirements to earn a Certificate of Completion for students with disabilities. The Certificate of Completion Guidelines is a resource to share important information with all complex areas and school staff in determining the appropriateness of placing a student on track to earn a Certificate of Completion. The following are procedures to assist Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams in determining if a Certificate of Completion is appropriate for the student.

## **How to Determine if a Certificate of Completion is Appropriate**

### **Factors that Indicate the Certificate of Completion Track is Appropriate**

Beginning at age 14, or younger (as appropriate), the IEP team (student is invited) shall consider on an annual basis the following factors to determine if a Certificate of Completion track is or continues to be appropriate for the student:

1. Student has a significant cognitive disability that may include limited adaptive skills, physical or behavioral limitations, and the student requires a highly specialized educational program with intensive modifications and accommodations in order to access the general academic curriculum.
2. Student's difficulty with the general academic curriculum demands is due to student's significant cognitive disability and not due to social, cultural, environmental factors, an expectation of poor performance, or excessive absences.
3. Student is receiving a modified curriculum to the extent that it does not meet the course and credit requirements to earn a high school diploma.

If the student meets all three (3) factors, a Certificate of Completion track may be appropriate.

**NOTE:** The school must invite the student to attend the IEP meeting if the purpose of the meeting will be the consideration of the postsecondary goals for the child and the transition services needed to assist the student in reaching those goals under §300.320(b). 34 Code of Federal Regulations § 300.321(b)(1).

### **Factors that Indicate a Certificate of Completion Track is not Appropriate**

- Student has earned or has the ability to earn credits towards a high school diploma by age 22 at a Hawaii public high school; or
- Student has insufficient credits towards a high school diploma which are not due to the Certificate of Completion track factors listed above.

## **How to Determine if the Requirements for a Certificate of Completion are Met**

If the student is on a Certificate of Completion track, the following requirements must be met for the student to receive a Certificate of Completion:

- Student is at least eighteen (18) years, but not older than twenty-two (22) years of age; and
- Student met his or her IEP goals that support the student’s progress towards his or her Post-Secondary Transition goals; and
- Student has not met the requirements for a high school diploma.

## **Expectations and Implications**

- The expectation is for all students to graduate with a high school diploma or Certificate of Completion with their same-age peers in four (4) years.
- Some students with disabilities may require more than four (4) years to earn their high school diploma or Certificate of Completion and may do so up until the age of twenty-two (22).

## **Other Information**

### **High School Diploma Requirements**

A Hawaii High School Diploma shall be issued to students who meet the following minimum course and credit requirements (Board of Education [Policy 102-15](#)):

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA</b>
English	<b>Four (4) credits</b> including English Language Arts (ELA) 1 (1.0 credit) and ELA 2 (1.0 credit); Expository Writing* (0.5 credit); and Common Core aligned language arts electives or proficiency-based equivalents [ELA basic electives (1.5 credits)]
Social Studies	<b>Four (4) credits</b> including U.S. History and Government (1.0 credit); and World History and Culture (1.0 credit); and Modern History of Hawaii (0.5 credit); and Participation in a Democracy (0.5 credit); and Social Studies basic elective (1.0 credit)

SUBJECT	HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA
Mathematics	<b>Three (3) credits</b> including Algebra 1 (1.0 credit); and Geometry (1.0 credit); and mathematics basic elective (1.0 credit)
Science	<b>Three (3) credits</b> including: Biology 1 (1.0 credit); and science basic electives (2.0 credits)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● World Language (note 1)</li> <li>● Fine Arts (note 2)</li> <li>● Career and Technical Education/JROTC (note 3)</li> </ul>	<b>Two (2) credits</b> in one of the specified programs of study.
Physical Education (P.E.)	<b>One (1) credit</b> including Physical Education Lifetime Fitness (0.5 credit); and Physical Education basic elective (0.5 credit)
Health	<b>0.5 credit</b> in Health Today and Tomorrow
Personal Transition Plan	<b>0.5 credit</b>
Electives (Any Subject Area)	<b>Six (6) credits</b>
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>24 credits</b>

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Question 1.** If a student who is on a Certificate of Completion track withdraws from school at 18 years of age and has not completed their program, should the school give them a Certificate of Completion?

**Answer 1.** It depends; if the student is at least 18 years old and met his or her IEP goals that supported the progress toward his or her Post-Secondary Transition goal(s), then a Certificate of Completion should be awarded.

**Question 2.** If a student is 18 and received a Certificate of Completion but decides a year later to re-enroll in school, what must the school do?

**Answer 2.** A student who has not earned a high school diploma may return to school up until the age of 22. Therefore, the school should schedule an IEP meeting to determine current needs, review and revise the IEP as appropriate, which includes any new Post-Secondary Transition goals.

**Question 3.** If the student attends school until age 22 under a diploma track but fails to obtain all the necessary credits to earn a high school diploma, can the school give the student a Certificate of Completion instead?

**Answer 3.** No. The school cannot give the student a Certificate of Completion unless the IEP team determined the student met the following three (3) factors for a Certificate of Completion:

1. Student has a significant cognitive disability that may include limited adaptive skills, physical or behavioral limitations, and the student requires a highly specialized educational program with intensive modifications and accommodations in order to access the general academic curriculum.
2. Student's difficulty with the general academic curriculum demands is due to the student's significant cognitive disability and not due to social, cultural, environmental factors, an expectation of poor performance, or excessive absences.
3. Student is receiving a modified curriculum to the extent that it does not meet the course and credit requirements to earn a high school diploma.

**Question 4.** What can a parent do if they disagree with the school's offer of FAPE, which includes the student's course of study and program to earn a Certificate of Completion?

**Answer 4.** If a parent(s)/legal guardian(s) disagrees with the school's offer of FAPE regarding the course of study and program to earn a Certificate of Completion, they may exercise their rights as described in the Procedural Safeguards Notice for Parents and Students Under The Individuals With Disabilities Education Act and Hawaii Law and Regulations.

**Question 5.** What if a student wants to earn a General Educational Development (GED)?

**Answer 5.** The Community School for Adults (CSA) offers adult learners who have not graduated with a high school diploma the option to pursue obtaining a High School Equivalency Credential and/or Hawaii Adult Community School Diploma. The CSAs offer two recognized High School Equivalency Tests, General Educational Development (GED) and the High School Equivalency Test (HiSET). Both are aligned to national Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS). If a student wants to earn their GED, they would withdraw from high school and enroll in a CSA. The student would no longer receive special education services and related services while enrolled in a CSA. However, they still may be eligible to receive accommodations under Section 504.

**Question 6.** If a student turns the age of 18 in January and has met their IEP transition goals that supported their progress toward their post-Secondary Transition goal(s), will they receive their Certificate of Completion in January?

**Answer 6.** No. The student will receive their Certificate of Completion after the last day of school for seniors.