

## Virginia's High School Graduation Options

Developed by the Virginia Department of Education

Virginia's State Board of Education offers several graduation options, named and briefly described below. Graduation and diploma information often changes. To learn the most up-to-date information, please visit [doe.virginia.gov/instruction/graduation](http://doe.virginia.gov/instruction/graduation)

### Advanced Studies Diploma

This diploma requires that students successfully complete 26 standard credits and 9 verified credits. Beginning with first time ninth graders in the 2013-2014 school year (SY), these students must take a virtual course which may be non-credit bearing. [doe.virginia.gov/instruction/graduation/advanced\\_studies.shtml](http://doe.virginia.gov/instruction/graduation/advanced_studies.shtml)

### Standard Diploma

To earn a standard diploma, a student must successfully complete 22 standard credits and 6 verified credits. Beginning with first time ninth graders in 2013-2014 SY, students with disabilities do not have the Modified Standard Diploma as an option. Additionally, they must take a virtual course that may be non-credit bearing and earn a CTE credential. [doe.virginia.gov/instruction/graduation/standard.shtml](http://doe.virginia.gov/instruction/graduation/standard.shtml)

### Modified Standard Diploma

This diploma may only be earned by students who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP). These students must successfully complete 20 standard credits and if there is an end of course SOL associated with a course, they must take the assessment. Additionally, the student must pass the eighth grade Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments. Eligibility for FAPE may not end when a student with an IEP earns this diploma. [doe.virginia.gov/instruction/graduation/modified\\_standard.shtml](http://doe.virginia.gov/instruction/graduation/modified_standard.shtml)

## Terms

### Standard credit

A standard credit is associated with taking and successfully completing a course or class.

### Verified credit

A verified credit is associated with taking and passing an assessment after completing a course. Typically, students take the standards of learning assessment (SOL) after completing certain courses. A student may opt to take a substitute assessment for a verified credit. [doe.virginia.gov/testing/substitute\\_tests/index.shtml](http://doe.virginia.gov/testing/substitute_tests/index.shtml)

### Eligibility for Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

"Age of eligibility" means all eligible children with disabilities who have not graduated with a standard or advanced studies high school diploma who, because of such disabilities, are in need of special education and related services, and whose 2nd birthday falls on or before September 30, and who have not reached their 22nd birthday on or before September 30 (two to 21, inclusive) in accordance with the Code of Virginia. A child with a disability whose 22nd birthday is after September 30 remains eligible for the remainder of the school year.

## Applied Studies Diploma

As of July 1, 2015, state legislation eliminated the term “Special Diploma.” In lieu of this language, the term “Applied Studies Diploma” will be used. This diploma is available to students with disabilities who complete the requirements of their IEP and who do not meet the requirements for other diplomas. Like the Modified Standard Diploma, eligibility for FAPE may not end when a student with an IEP earns this diploma.

## General Educational Development Certificates

To earn this credential, an assessment that measures a person’s attainment of abilities associated with the completion of a high school program of study must be successfully completed. At this time, the State Board of Education has approved the Tests of General Educational Development (GED) as the assessment to fill this requirement.

[doe.virginia.gov/instruction/adulted/ged](http://doe.virginia.gov/instruction/adulted/ged)

## General Achievement Adult High School Diploma (GAAHSD) Program

This diploma is intended for individuals who are at least 18 years of age and not enrolled in public school or who do not meet the compulsory school attendance requirements set forth in the Code of Virginia.

[doe.virginia.gov/instruction/adulted/secondary\\_programs/index.shtml#gaahsd](http://doe.virginia.gov/instruction/adulted/secondary_programs/index.shtml#gaahsd)

## Certificate of Program Completion

This option is available to students who complete prescribed programs of studies defined by a local school board but who do not qualify for diplomas.

## Diploma Seals of Achievement

There are a variety of diploma seals of achievement that students may earn along with their diplomas. These include the Governor’s Seal, the Career & Technical Education Seal, the Advanced Mathematics & Technology Seal, the Excellence in Civics Education Seal, and the new Seal of Biliteracy.

[doe.virginia.gov/instruction/graduation/diploma\\_seals/index.shtml](http://doe.virginia.gov/instruction/graduation/diploma_seals/index.shtml)

## Terms

### Credit accommodations

Credit accommodations are pathways to the Standard Diploma for eligible students who have a disability, documented by an Individual Education Program (IEP) or a 504 Plan.

[doe.virginia.gov/instruction/graduation/credit\\_accommodations.shtml](http://doe.virginia.gov/instruction/graduation/credit_accommodations.shtml)

### Career and Technical Education (CTE) Credential

A CTE Credential is earned by successfully completing a State Board of Education approved assessment which may be a state licensure test, industry credentialing test or occupational readiness assessment.

[doe.virginia.gov/instruction/career\\_technical/path\\_industry\\_certification/cte\\_credentials/industry\\_certifications\\_2015.pdf](http://doe.virginia.gov/instruction/career_technical/path_industry_certification/cte_credentials/industry_certifications_2015.pdf)