

Questions and Answers about the Graduation Assessment Requirements

What are graduation assessment requirements?

In order to be eligible for a diploma from a Minnesota public high school, students must fulfill graduation assessment requirements. Based on the revisions to Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.30, the graduation assessment requirements have changed and depend on what year students were first enrolled in grade 8. Parents/guardians should contact their student's school for further information on requirements for graduation as the school district awards the diploma.

In school year 2015–2016, how do grade 11 students and younger meet graduation assessment requirements?

These students (first enrolled in grade 8 in 2012–2013 and later) are not required to achieve a specified score on an assessment in order to graduate or meet graduation assessment requirements, but districts have a number of requirements to fulfill for students' career and college planning, including:

- Offering students in grades 11 and 12 an opportunity to participate in a nationally recognized college entrance exam on a school day. The state will pay for one college entrance exam for a student.
- Monitoring students' development of and growth in career and college readiness.
- Assisting students no later than grade 9 in exploration and planning activities for career interests or postsecondary education.

Contact your student's school for additional information about career and college planning.

In school year 2015–2016, how do grade 12 students and older meet graduation assessment requirements?

The majority of grade 12 students (first enrolled in grade 8 in 2011–2012 and earlier) took the ACT Plus Writing during the statewide administration in grade 11 to meet graduation assessment requirements. However, if a student did not participate in the ACT Plus Writing in spring 2015, students can meet the graduation assessment requirements in reading, mathematics, and writing through any combination of the three options outlined on the next page as long as requirements are met in each subject.¹

¹ Note that these same three options are also the routes to meeting graduation assessment requirements for students first enrolled in grade 8 in 2010–2011 or earlier (students likely older than grade 12). These students did not participate in a statewide administration of the ACT in spring 2015.

1. Students can meet graduation assessment requirements through the Graduation-Required Assessments for Diploma (GRAD) in reading, mathematics and written composition, which include:
 - Earned a proficient score. If students were proficient (achieved Meets or Exceeds the Standards) on the grade 10 Reading Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) and/or the grade 11 Mathematics MCA, they have met their graduation assessment requirement for those subjects.
 - This also applies to students who took the high school MCA-Modified² or Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS) in place of the MCAs.
 - Earned a passing score on the Written Composition GRAD, Reading GRAD, and/or Mathematics GRAD retests.³
 - The Minnesota Alternate Assessment: Writing can be completed for students who need an alternate assessment to meet the requirements for writing.
 - Meeting GRAD alternate routes, which may include the following:
 - Receive an individual passing score (for students on an IEP or 504 plan)
 - Receive an English learner (EL) exemption
 - Pass another state's accountability assessment that is approved by MDE (reciprocity)
 - Meet mathematics alternate pathway requirements, only for students first enrolled in grade 8 through 2009–2010 (who are likely older than grade 12)

OR

2. Students can take the ACT, the WorkKeys, the Compass, or the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) to meet graduation assessment requirements in reading, mathematics, and/or writing.

OR

3. A school district may also substitute a score from an alternative, equivalent assessment to satisfy the graduation assessment requirements.

For more information, contact:

Statewide Testing
mde.testing@state.mn.us

Minnesota Department of Education
1500 Highway 36 West
Roseville, MN 55113-4266
<http://education.state.mn.us>

December 2015

² 2013–2014 was the last administration year of the MCA-Modified assessments.

³ 2014–2015 was the last administration year of the GRAD retests.