

R277. Education, Administration.

R277-705. Secondary School Completion and Diplomas.

R277-705-1. Authority, ~~[and]~~ Purpose and Oversight Category.

(1) This rule is authorized by:

(a) Utah Constitution [Article X, Section 3](#), which vests general control and supervision of public education in the Board;

(b) Subsections [53E-3-501](#)(1)(b) and (c), which direct the Board to make rules regarding competency levels, graduation requirements, curriculum, and instruction requirements; and

(c) Subsection [53E-3-401](#)(4), which allows the Board to make rules to execute the Board's duties and responsibilities under the Utah Constitution and state law.

(2) The purpose of this rule is to:

(a) provide consistent definitions;

(b) provide alternative methods for a student to earn credit and alternate methods for schools to award credit;

(c) provide rules and procedures for the assessment of all students as required by law; and

(d) provide rules for a student to receive an alternative to a traditional diploma if appropriate criteria are met.

(3) This Rule R277-705 is categorized as Category 3 as described in R277-111 ~~[53E-3-501]~~.

R277-705-2. Definitions.

(1) "Alternate Diploma" means a diploma issued in accordance with Section R277-705-5.

(2)(a) "Comparable course" means a course that fulfills the same graduation credit requirements as a course for which a student seeks to improve a grade.

(b) "Comparable course" does not include a course a student completes through the packet method.

30 ~~[(2)]~~(3) "Demonstrated competence" means subject mastery as determined by
31 LEA standards and review. LEA review may include such methods and documentation
32 as: tests, interviews, peer evaluations, writing samples, reports, or portfolios.

33 ~~[(3)]~~(4) "Diploma" means an official document awarded by an LEA consistent
34 with state and LEA graduation requirements and the provisions of this rule.

35 ~~[(4)]~~(5) "FAPE" means a free appropriate public education, which includes
36 special education and related services that are provided at public expense, under public
37 supervision and direction, and without charge in accordance with Board rule and the
38 IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

39 (6) "Grade replacement" means credit a student earns by retaking a teacher-led
40 course for a letter grade to improve a previous grade, which:

41 (a) may raise the student's grade point average if the new grade is higher; and

42 (b) replaces the lower grade on the student's transcript.

43 (7) "Original credit" means credit a student earns through the successful
44 completion of a course for the first time.

45 (8) "Packet" means a collection of instructional materials and assessments used
46 to receive credit through the packet method.

47 (9) "Packet method" means an educational approach where:

48 (a) a high school student receives a collection of instructional materials from an
49 institution, organization, or LEA;

50 (b) the high school student works through the materials independently with
51 minimal or no direct instruction from a teacher; and

52 (c) assessment is primarily based on completion of assignments within the
53 instructional materials.

54 (10) "Replacement credit" means a pass-fail credit a student earns for a course
55 the student did not pass or complete, which:

56 (a) does not affect the student's grade point average; and

57 (b) allows the student to fulfill high school graduation requirements.

58 ~~[(6)]~~(11)(a) "Secondary school" means grades 7-12 in whatever kind of school
59 the grade levels exist.

60 (b) Grade 6 may be considered a secondary grade for some purposes.

61 (6) "Section 504 plan" means a written statement of related aids and services for
62 a student with a qualifying disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in
63 accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

64 ~~[(7)]~~(12)(a) "Special purpose school" means a school designated by a regional
65 accrediting agency, adopted by the Board.

66 (b) "Special purpose school" includes a school:

67 (i) that serves a specific population such as a student with a disability, youth in
68 care, or a school with a specific curricular emphasis; and

69 (ii) with curricula designed to serve specific populations that may be modified
70 from a traditional program.

71 ~~[(8)]~~(13) "Student with a significant cognitive disability" or "SWSCD" is
72 determined by a comprehensive understanding of a whole student, including review of
73 educational considerations and data obtained through the IEP process, including
74 whether a student:

75 (a) requires intensive, repeated, modified, and direct individualized instruction
76 and requires substantial supports to learn, maintain, and generalize skills in the
77 student's grade and age-appropriate curriculum;

78 (b) has special education eligibility documentation indicating the disability
79 significantly impacts intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior;

80 (c) demonstrates cognitive functioning and adaptive behavior in home, school,
81 and community environments, which are significantly below age expectations, even with
82 program modifications, adaptations, and accommodations;

83 (d) has a severe and complex cognitive disability, which limits the student from
84 meaningful participation in the standard academic core curriculum or achievement of
85 the academic content standards established at grade level, without substantial support,
86 modifications, adaptations, and accommodations;

(e) may be eligible to participate in alternate assessments; and

(f) has a disability, which increases the need for dependence on others for many, if not all, daily living needs, and is expected to require extensive ongoing support through adulthood.

~~[(9)](14)~~ "Supplemental education provider" means a private school or educational service provider:

(a) that may or may not be accredited; and

(b) that provides courses or services similar to public school courses or classes.

~~[(40)](15)~~(a) "Transcript" means an official document or record generated by one or several schools which includes:

(i) the courses in which a secondary student was enrolled;

(ii) grades and units of credit earned; and

(iii) citizenship and attendance records.

(b) A transcript is one part of a student's permanent record or cumulative file that may include:

(i) birth certificate

(ii) immunization records; and

(iii) other information as determined by the school in possession of the record.

~~[(44)](16)~~ "Unit of credit" means credit awarded for a course taken:

(a) consistent with this rule;

(b) upon LEA authorization; or

(c) for mastery demonstrated by approved methods.

R277-705-3. Required LEA Policy Explaining Student Credit.

(1)(a) An LEA governing board shall establish a policy, in an open meeting, explaining the process and standards for acceptance and reciprocity of credits earned by a student in accordance with state law.

(b) An LEA policy described in Subsection (1)(a) shall include specific and adequate notice to a student and a parent of all policy requirements and limitations.

116 (2)(a) An LEA shall accept credits and grades awarded to a student from a
117 school or a provider accredited by an accrediting entity adopted by the Board.

118 (b) An LEA policy may establish reasonable timelines and may require adequate
119 and timely documentation of authenticity for credits and grades submitted.

120 (3) An LEA policy shall provide various methods for a student to earn credit from
121 a non-accredited source, course work, or education provider including:

122 (a) satisfaction of coursework by demonstrated competency, as evaluated at the
123 LEA level;

124 (b) assessment as proctored and determined at the school or school level;

125 (c) review of student work or projects by an LEA administrator; and

126 (d) satisfaction of electronic or correspondence coursework, as approved at the
127 LEA level.

128 (4) An LEA may require documentation of compliance with Section [53G-6-204](#)
129 before reviewing a student's home school or competency work, assessment, or
130 materials.

131 (5) An LEA policy for participation in extracurricular activities, awards,
132 recognitions, and enhanced diplomas may be determined locally consistent with the law
133 and this rule.

134 (6) An LEA has the final decision-making authority for the awarding of credit and
135 grades from a non-accredited source consistent with state law, due process, and this
136 rule.

137 (7) An LEA may award a grade for original credit or replacement credit through
138 the packet method if the packet adheres to the standards prescribed in state board rule
139 and:

140 (a) the LEA approves the packet for use as an instructional material in
141 accordance with:

142 (i) Subsection [53G-4-402\(27\)](#) for a district school; or

143 (ii) Section [53G-5-404](#) for a charter school; or

_____ (b) the state board recommends the packet after going through the state instructional materials process described in [Title 53E, Chapter 4, Part 4, State Instructional Materials](#).

_____ (c) Packets for original credit are not “Demonstrated Competence” as defined in [R277-705-2\(2\)](#).

_____ (8) An LEA may not use the packet method, or classify a packet as original credit, to improve a previous course grade of a high school student as described in [Subsection 9](#).

_____ (9) A high school student may improve a grade through grade replacement by:

_____ (a) repeating a course one or more times; or

_____ (b) enrolling in and completing a comparable course that is teacher-led.

_____ (10) The state board shall:

_____ (a) in accordance with [Title 63G, Chapter 3](#), Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act, make rules or policies that:

_____ (i) establish standards for the use of the packet method to award original credit and replacement credit;

_____ (ii) include alignment with core standards the state board establishes under [Sections 53E-3-501](#) and [53E-4-202](#); and

_____ (iii) maintain a comprehensive list of state board approved packets in the state board's Recommended Instructional Materials System on the state board's website; and

_____ (b) report annually to the Education Interim Committee the number of students in each LEA who receive academic credit through the packet method.

_____ (11) An LEA shall:

_____ (a) assign a distinct course name and number for credit earned through the packet method to easily identify the use of the packet method on a student transcript; and

_____ (b) track and record the number of packets an LEA uses to award original credit or replacement credit each school year.

(12) Subsection R277-705-3(11)(b), regarding a report on the packet method, is
repealed July 1, 2028.

R277-705-4. Diplomas and Certificates of Completion.

(1) An LEA shall award diplomas and certificates of completion.

(2) An LEA shall establish criteria for a student to earn a certificate of completion
that may be awarded to a student who:

(a) has completed the student's senior year;

(b) is exiting or aging out of the school system; and

(c) has not met all state or LEA requirements for a diploma.

(3) A student with a disability served by a special education program shall satisfy
high school completion or graduation criteria, consistent with state and federal law and
the student's IEP.

(4) An LEA may award a student a certificate of completion consistent with state
and federal law and the student's IEP or Section 504 plan.

(5) An LEA may not enroll a student with the intent to award a diploma or a
certificate of completion once the student has earned a high school equivalence.

R277-705-5. Alternate Diploma.

(1) An LEA may award an alternate diploma to a student with a significant
cognitive disability if:

(a) the student accesses grade-level Core standards through the Essential
Elements;

(b) the student's IEP team makes graduation substitutions in the same content
area, from a list of alternative courses approved by the Superintendent; and

(c) the student meets all graduation requirements before exiting school at or
before age 22.

(2) An alternate diploma issued in accordance with Subsection (1) may not
indicate that the recipient is a student with a disability.

(3) Notwithstanding the award of an alternate diploma, an LEA may still be obligated to provide FAPE to an eligible student in accordance with the IDEA.

(4)(a) The Superintendent shall provide a list of alternative courses that may be considered for student with cognitive disabilities working to receive an alternate diploma.

(b) An LEA may submit courses to the Superintendent to be considered for possible inclusion on the list required by Subsection (4)(a).

(c) The Superintendent shall annually update the list of alternative courses required under Subsection (4)(a) following review of LEA recommendations made under Subsection (4)(b).

R277-705-6. Career Development Credentials.

(1) An LEA may award a career development credential to a student with an IEP or Section 504 plan:

(a) who meets the requirements of a career focused work experience before leaving school; and

(b) consistent with:

(i) state and federal law; and

(ii) the student's IEP or Section 504 plan.

(2) Before receiving a career development credential, a student shall:

(a) earn the following credits in core content:

(i) English Language Arts (3.0);

(ii) Mathematics (2.0);

(iii) Science (1.0); and

(iv) Social Studies (1.0);

(b) complete 120 hours of community based work experience, to include:

(i) 40 hours of paid employment; or

(ii) documentation of completion of intake with a vocational rehabilitation counselor or the Department of Workforce Services;

- (c) complete an LEA approved transition curriculum class or coursework that includes:
- (i) disability awareness;
 - (ii) accommodations;
 - (iii) self-advocacy training;
 - (iv) career exploration; and
 - (v) workplace soft skills;
- (d) receive .5 credits in a CTE Work Based Learning internship, including accommodations or modifications as appropriate and allowed by industry standards; and
- (e) verify concentration in a CTE pathway in the student's area of interest.

R277-705-7. Adult Education Students.

- (1) An adult education student is eligible only for an adult education secondary diploma.
- (2) An adult education diploma may not be upgraded or changed to a traditional, high school-specific diploma.
- (3) A school district shall establish a policy:
- (a) allowing or disallowing adult education student participation in graduation activities or ceremonies; and
 - (b) establishing timelines and criteria for satisfying adult education graduation and diploma requirements.

R277-705-8. Student Rights and Responsibilities Related to Graduation, Transcripts, and Receipt of Diplomas.

- (1) An LEA shall supervise the granting of credit and awarding of diplomas, but may delegate the responsibility to schools within the LEA.

(2) An LEA may determine criteria for a student's participation in graduation activities, honors, and exercises, independent of a student's receipt of a diploma or certificate of completion.

(3) A diploma, a certificate, credits, or an unofficial transcript may not be withheld from a student for nonpayment of school fees.

(4)(a) An LEA shall establish a consistent timeline for all students for completion of graduation requirements.

(b) A timeline described in Subsection (4)(a) shall be consistent with state law and this rule.

(5) An LEA's graduation requirements may not apply retroactively.

KEY: adult education, high school credits, graduation requirements

Date of Last Change: November 7, 2024

Notice of Continuation: November 15, 2022

Authorizing, and Implemented or Interpreted Law: [Art X Sec 3](#); [53E-3-501](#)(1)(b); [53E-3-401](#)(4)