

1 **R277. Education, Administration.**

2 **R277-705. Secondary School Completion and Diplomas.**

3 **R277-705-1. Authority<sup>[,]</sup> and Purpose<sup>[,]</sup> ~~and Oversight Category~~.**

4 (1) This rule is authorized by:

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

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

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

12 (2) The purpose of this rule is to:

13 (a) provide consistent definitions;

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

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

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

20 ~~[(3) This Rule R277-705 is categorized as Category 3 as described in Section~~  
21 ~~53E-3-501.]~~

22

23 **R277-705-2. Definitions.**

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

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

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

30            (3) "Core class" means a course in English language arts, mathematics, science,  
31 or social studies, or another course required for high school graduation as described in  
32 Section 53E-4-204.

33            ~~[(3)](4)~~ "Credit recovery" means the same as "replacement credit."

34            ~~[(4)](5)~~ "Demonstrated competence" means subject mastery as determined by  
35 LEA standards and review. LEA review may include such methods and documentation  
36 as: tests, interviews, peer evaluations, writing samples, reports, or portfolios.

37            ~~[(5)](6)~~ "Diploma" means an official document awarded by an LEA consistent  
38 with state and LEA graduation requirements and the provisions of this rule.

39            ~~[(6)](7)~~ "FAPE" means a free appropriate public education, which includes  
40 special education and related services that are provided at public expense, under public  
41 supervision and direction, and without charge in accordance with Board rule and the  
42 IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

43            ~~[(7)](8)~~ "Grade replacement" means credit a student earns by retaking a teacher-  
44 led course for a letter grade to improve a previous grade, which:

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

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

47            ~~[(8)](9)~~ "Original credit" means credit a student earns through the successful  
48 completion of a course for the first time.

49            ~~[(9)](10)~~ "Packet" means a collection of instructional materials and assessments  
50 used to receive credit through the packet method.

51            ~~[(10)](11)~~ "Packet method" means an educational approach where:

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

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

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

58           ~~[(11)]~~(12) "Replacement credit" means a pass-fail credit a student earns for a  
59 course the student did not pass or complete, which:

- 60           (a) does not affect the student's grade point average; and  
61           (b) allows the student to fulfill high school graduation requirements.

62           ~~[(12)]~~(13)(a) "Secondary school" means grades 7-12 in whatever kind of school  
63 the grade levels exist.

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

65           ~~[(13)]~~(14) "Section 504 plan" means a written statement of related aids and  
66 services for a student with a qualifying disability that is developed, reviewed, and  
67 revised in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

68           ~~[(14)]~~(15)(a) "Special purpose school" means a school designated by a regional  
69 accrediting agency, adopted by the Board.

- 70           (b) "Special purpose school" includes a school:

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

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

75           ~~[(15)]~~(16) "Student with the most significant cognitive disability" or "SWMSCD" is  
76 determined by a comprehensive understanding of a whole student, including review of  
77 educational considerations and data obtained through the IEP process, including  
78 whether a student:

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

82           (b) has special education eligibility documentation indicating the disability  
83 significantly impacts intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior which means  
84 typically functioning at least two and a half or more standard deviations below the mean;

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

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

92 (e) has a course of study that addresses the significant impact in adaptive  
93 behavior skills;

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

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

98 ~~[(46)]~~(17) "Supplemental education provider" means a private school or  
99 educational service provider:

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

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

102 ~~[(47)]~~(18)(a) "Transcript" means an official document or record generated by one  
103 or several schools which includes:

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

105 (ii) grades and units of credit earned; and

106 (iii) citizenship and attendance records.

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

109 (i) birth certificate

110 (ii) immunization records; and

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

112 ~~[(48)]~~(19) "Unit of credit" means credit awarded for a course taken:

113 (a) consistent with this rule;

114 (b) upon LEA authorization; or

115 (c) for mastery demonstrated by approved methods.

116 (d) For grades 9 through 12, one unit of credit is at least 83 class hours in an  
117 attendance-validated program, consistent with 53F-2-102(5)(c)(i)(B). Special Purpose  
118 Schools may implement alternative instructional delivery models to meet state  
119 requirements for credit issuance.

120

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

139 (4) An LEA may require documentation of compliance with Section 53G-6-204  
140 before reviewing a student's home school or competency work, assessment, or  
141 materials.

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

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

148           (7) An LEA may award a grade for original credit through the packet method if:

149           (a) the packet adheres to the following criteria:

150           (i) it fully covers the course standards;

151           (ii) it includes adequate opportunities for practice and application;

152           (iii) it includes a variety of assessments; and

153           (iv) it is consistent with Section 53E-3-501; and

154           (b) the LEA approves the packet for use as an instructional material in

155 accordance with:

156           (i) Subsection 53G-4-402(27) for a district school; or

157           (ii) Section 53G-5-404 for a charter school; or

158           (c) the Board recommends the packet after going through the state instructional

159 materials process described in Title 53E, Chapter 4, Part 4, State Instructional

160 Materials.

161           (8) Packets for original credit are not "Demonstrated Competence" as defined in  
162 Subsection R277-705-2(2).

163           (9) An LEA may not use the packet method, or classify a packet as original  
164 credit, to improve a previous course grade of a high school student as described in  
165 Subsection (9).

166           (10) A high school student may improve a grade through grade replacement by:

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

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

169           (11) The Board shall:

170 (a) ensure that packets that come to the Board for review adhere to the following  
171 criteria:

- 172 (i) the packet fully covers the course standards;
- 173 (ii) the packet contains adequate opportunities for practice and application;
- 174 (iii) the packet includes a variety of assessments; and
- 175 (iv) is consistent with Section 53E-3-501; and

176 (b) maintain a comprehensive list of Board approved packets in the Board 's  
177 Recommended Instructional Materials System on the Board's website; and

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

180 (12) An LEA shall:

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

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

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

188 (14) In accordance with Section 53E-4-209, an LEA shall offer and administer  
189 statewide test-out options for core classes.

190 (15) An LEA shall award credit to a student who demonstrates proficiency  
191 through a statewide test-out option for a core class established under Section 53E-4-  
192 209.

193 (16) An LEA shall record credit earned through a statewide test-out option for a  
194 core class on a student's transcript in accordance with Board rules.

195 (17) A statewide test-out option for a core class established under Section 53E-4-  
196 209 is distinct from locally determined demonstrated competence under Subsection  
197 R277-705-2(4).

198           (18) An LEA may not substitute a locally developed assessment for a statewide  
199 test-out option required under Section 53E-4-209.

200

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

215

216 **R277-705-5. Alternate Diploma.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

237

238 **R277-705-6. Career Development Credentials.**

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

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

243 (b) consistent with:

244 (i) state and federal law; and

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

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

247 (a) earn the following credits in core content:

248 (i) English Language Arts (3.0);

249 (ii) Mathematics (2.0);

250 (iii) Science (1.0); and

251 (iv) Social Studies (1.0);

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

253 (i) 40 hours of paid employment; or

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

- 256 (c) complete an LEA approved transition curriculum class or coursework that  
257 includes:
- 258 (i) disability awareness;
  - 259 (ii) accommodations;
  - 260 (iii) self-advocacy training;
  - 261 (iv) career exploration; and
  - 262 (v) workplace soft skills;
- 263 (d) receive .5 credits in a CTE Work Based Learning internship, including  
264 accommodations or modifications as appropriate and allowed by industry standards;  
265 and
- 266 (e) verify concentration in a CTE pathway in the student's area of interest.
- 267

268 **R277-705-7. Adult Education Students.**

- 269 (1) An adult education student is eligible only for an adult education secondary  
270 diploma.
- 271 (2) An adult education diploma may not be upgraded or changed to a traditional,  
272 high school-specific diploma.
- 273 (3) A school district shall establish a policy:
- 274 (a) allowing or disallowing adult education student participation in graduation  
275 activities or ceremonies; and
  - 276 (b) establishing timelines and criteria for satisfying adult education graduation  
277 and diploma requirements.
- 278

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

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

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

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

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

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

292 (5) An LEA's graduation requirements may not apply retroactively.  
293

294 **KEY: adult education, high school credits, graduation requirements**

295 **Date of Last Change: March 1, 2026**

296 **Notice of Continuation: November 15, 2022**

297 **Authorizing, and Implemented or Interpreted Law: Art X Sec 3; 53E-3-501(1)(b);**  
298 **53E-3-401(4)**

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