



Frequently Asked Questions

State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.15 AWARDING UNITS OF CREDIT AND ACCEPTANCE OF TRANSFER CREDIT AND/OR GRADES.

Frequently Asked Questions

State Board of Education (SBOE) Rule 160-5-1-.15 *Awarding Units of Credit and Acceptance of Transfer Credit and/or Grades* was amended and approved by the State Board of Education on April 5, 2013. The following information includes the most frequently asked questions from education stakeholders regarding the implementation of the amendments to the SBOE Rule 160-5-1-.15 *Awarding Units of Credit and Acceptance of Transfer Credit and/or Grades* beginning in school year 2013-2014. The responses provided below are intended to further clarify the Rule and Rule Guidelines. Use the following link on the Standards and Curriculum webpage to access SBOE Rule 160-5-1-.15 *Awarding Units of Credit and Acceptance of Transfer Credit and/or Grades*, Rule Guidelines, and the referenced Mathematics Decision Rubric <http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Curriculum-and-Instruction/Pages/default.aspx> .

DEFINITIONS

1. The definition of “unit of credit” in State Board of Education (SBOE) Rule 160-5-1-.15 *Awarding Units of Credit and Acceptance of Transfer Credit and/or Grades* credit is different from the definition of “unit of credit” in State Board of Education (SBOE) Rule 160-4-2-.48 *High School Graduation Requirements for Students Enrolling in the Ninth Grade for the First Time in the 2008-09 School Year and Subsequent Years*. Which rule should be used in determining if a unit of credit can be awarded?

Response: State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.15 *Awarding Units of Credit and Acceptance of Transfer Credit and/or Grades* should be used in determining if a unit of credit can be awarded. Local boards of education shall apply the requirements of this rule to all students regardless of the date they first entered ninth grade. In other words, the definition of “unit of credit” and the methods of earning credit as described in this rule will take precedence over the definition of a “unit” as indicated in SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.48 *High School Graduation Requirements for Students Enrolling in the Ninth Grade for the First Time in the 2008-09 School Year and Subsequent Years*.

SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.48 and other rules detailing high school graduation requirements requires high schools to offer a minimum of 150 clock hours of instruction, 135 hours of instruction in an approved block schedule, or a minimum of 120 clock hours of instruction for summer school prior to awarding a unit of credit. While school districts must continue to offer the minimum amount of clock hour instruction, SBOE Rule 160-5-1-.15 *Awarding Units of Credit and Acceptance of Transfer Credit and/or Grades* clarifies that the “seat time” requirement in SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.48 *High School Graduation Requirements for Students Enrolling in the Ninth Grade for the First Time in the 2008-09 School Year and Subsequent Years* does not apply to individual students. Accordingly, the local board of education may award units of credit upon the student’s demonstration of subject area competency through completion of a course without regard to the amount of time the student spent in the course. Local boards of education may develop local policies consistent with this rule regarding the awarding of credit.

Awarding Units of Credit for Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE) courses with Embedded Academic Core Standards

2. Which CTAE courses can be used to earn two units of credits for one course, i.e., one unit of credit for the CTAE course and one unit of credit for the core academic course?

Response: Currently, the Georgia Department of Education does not have any CTAE courses with all of the standards from a core academic course embedded. When this type of course is developed, it will be submitted for approval to the State Board of Education to be included in the list of state-funded courses.

Awarding Units of Credit for Mathematics Courses for Students Receiving Special Education Services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

3. When will the alternate course sequence option be available for students receiving services under IDEA?

Response: The alternate course sequence will be available beginning in the 2013-2014 school year for identified high school students enrolled in a Georgia public school. SBOE Rule 160-5-1-.15 *Awarding Units of Credit and Acceptance of Transfer Credit and/or Grades* will apply to all public high school students regardless of when the student entered the ninth grade.

4. Does a Local Education Agency (LEA) have to offer the two year math class? I am concerned about not having enough highly qualified (HQ) special education teachers at our high schools to offer the class at every school.

Response: No, SBOE Rule 160-5-1-.15 *Awarding Units of Credit and Acceptance of Transfer Credit and/or Grades*, Rule Guidelines, and Mathematics Decision Making Rubric offer the recommendation for providing a math course over a two-year period. This option is not required. It is a local school district decision whether or not to move forward with the Mathematics Decision Making Rubric in providing for an alternative course sequence for Advanced Algebra. The Guidelines for Georgia SBOE Rule 160-5-1-.15 *Awarding Units of Credit and Acceptance of Transfer Credit and/or Grades* and the Mathematics Decision Rubric can be found on the Standards and Curriculum webpage at <http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Curriculum-and-Instruction/Pages/default.aspx>.

5. Will Mathematics III delivered over two years affect Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) since special education students are the only ones taking Math III over two years? Will or can this be a general education class that special education students can participate in?

Response: No. Delivering Mathematics III over two years will not affect Least Restrictive Environment. No, there is nothing in SBOE Rule 160-5-1-.15 *Awarding*

Units of Credit and Acceptance of Transfer Credit and/or Grades that would prohibit **any** student from participating in Mathematics III over a two year period.

6. How can you co-teach a class that is only for special education students?

Response: The Mathematics III course offering over two years is not exclusively for special education students.

7. Is there any flexibility with the Individualized Education Program (IEP) documentation required in the 8th grade IEP for students who could benefit from this flexibility as rising 10th, 11th or 12th graders?

Response: Yes, the current waiver of the graduation rule requirements would be the route to follow. There would be no separate waiver for a student with disabilities who has participated in the alternate course sequence and did not meet the conditions specified on the decision making rubric.

8. How are we supposed to handle out-of-state transfer students with regard to the documentation of instruction in Math I/II, GPS Algebra/Geometry or CCGPS Algebra/Geometry?

Response: The student's transcript would be evaluated at the local school district level and credits awarded as with any students who moved to Georgia from out of state as described in the SBOE Rule 160-5-1-.15 *Awarding Units of Credit and Acceptance of Transfer Credit and/or Grades*.

9. When the Rule takes effect in the fall for the 2013-14 school year, to whom does it apply - only students entering ninth grade in 2013 or beyond or is there a "grandfathering in"?

Response: This Rule applies to current high school students and students entering ninth grade in 2013 and subsequent years. The Mathematics Decision Rubric that the Individualized Education Program Team may use to consider the alternate course sequence for students with disabilities, can be used at any time **after** the student has successfully completed Math I and Math II or CCGPS Coordinate Algebra and CCGPS Analytic Geometry. It is not bound to a grade or entering class year.

10. If an Individualized Education Program (IEP) decision has already been made at the local school level indicates a student was going to complete only the four lower level mathematics courses before this rule and Mathematics Decision Rubric were approved, is the IEP decision still valid or do we have to meet again and use the new criteria and rubric?

Response: That is an individual IEP Team decision. Please note that students entering ninth grade in school year 2011-2012 and subsequent years are required to earn four core units of credits in mathematics unless the student meets the criteria associated with the alternate course sequence for students with disabilities.

11. SBOE Rule 160-5-1-.15 *Awarding Units of Credit and Acceptance of Transfer Credit and/or Grades* states that the requirements will apply to all students regardless of the date in which they first entered ninth grade. Can a student with an Individualized Education Program (IEP), in any year of high school, who is now taking CCGPS Coordinate Algebra Support and CCGPS Coordinate Algebra, be awarded two math credits total for passing both classes, even though the current course catalog lists CCGPS Coordinate Algebra Support as an elective?

Response: Yes, two course credits should be awarded, one core and one elective. The support class should be offered in conjunction with the standard course.

12. In referring to SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.48 *High School Graduation Requirements for Students Enrolling in the Ninth Grade for the First Time in the 2008-09 School Year and Subsequent Years*, regarding to mathematics, the 2011-12 and 2012-13 school years are not specifically stated when explaining that the Mathematics support courses can be used as core math credit (The CCGPS Coordinate Algebra course nor the associated Support Course is listed at all). I want to clarify that the rule has been in place since the 2008-09 school year and that the CCGPS support mathematics classes are included when determining core mathematics credit for students with disabilities with appropriate documentation.

Response: The Mathematics Decision Rubric and SBOE Rule 160-5-1-.15 *Awarding Units of Credit and Acceptance of Transfer Credit and/or Grades* Rule Guidelines state that both the Mathematics I and Mathematics II support classes can be counted as courses in meeting graduation requirements in the area of mathematics.

13. There is nothing in SBOE Rule 160-5-1-.15 *Awarding Units of Credit and Acceptance of Transfer Credit and/or Grades* that prohibits any student from participating in Mathematics III over a two year period. This implies that any student can receive two credits for Mathematics III if taken over a two-year period. If that is the case, will we be issuing two new numbers for Mathematics III with each course earning a full core credit for both student with disabilities and regular students?

Response: No, a course taken over two years would only earn one unit of credit. The same course number can be used for both years.

14. Will students who successfully complete the alternate course sequence and graduate be considered as having completed the appropriate mathematics curriculum for admission to a USG or TCSG institution?

Response: Students who successfully complete the alternate course sequence and do not take another approved advanced mathematics course **may not** meet minimum admission requirements for entry into a USG institution or other post-secondary institution without additional course work in mathematics.

Note: Remember that you must collect data on students who are participating in the alternate course sequence to meet graduation requirements. This will be collected in the Student Record collection annually. Please establish a local procedure to collect students with disabilities electing to participate in the alternate course sequence.

Subject Area Competency to Receive Course Credit

An important memorandum entitled “**Guidance Letter – Subject Area Competency (“Testing Out”) to Receive Course Credit Using the End-of-Course Tests (EOCT)**” has been posted to the Georgia Department of Education website in two locations. Please see below:

- In the “*For Educators*” section of the GaDOE website under “*Memoranda and Announcements*” at: <http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Assessment/Pages/Information-For-Educators.aspx>

and

- In the “*EOCT Guidance Letters*” section of the EOCT webpage at: <http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Assessment/Pages/EOCT.aspx>

This memorandum provides information regarding the opportunity for students to receive course credit by demonstrating subject area competency through the End-of-Course Tests (EOCT) as provided for in amendments to State Board of Education Rule (SBOE) Rule 160-5-1-.15 *Awarding Units of Credit and Acceptance of Transfer Credit and/or Grades* adopted by the State Board of Education in April 2013. This new opportunity for students becomes available in August 2013.

15. Can middle school students participate in the testing-out option?

Response: Yes, middle school students can participate in the testing-out option for high school courses taught in middle school. There is not a grade or age limit.

16. Can a local board of education policy be written to limit the End-of-Course Tests (EOCT) testing-out option for middle school students? In other words, can a 6th or 7th grader opt-out on an EOCT course? If so, are there limits we can place on this?

Response: No, a local school district must provide for the test-out option for all eligible students regardless of the grade level as indicated on page eight of the Guidelines.

17. Will the “Exceeds” score for students who were able to earn a unit of credit through demonstration of subject area competency by testing-out of courses using the End-of-Course Tests (EOCT) be reported on the transcript and counted for the HOPE scholarship calculation?

Response: Yes, the “Exceeds” score will be included on a high school student’s transcript and yes, the Georgia Student Finance Commission will allow this score to be included in the calculation for the HOPE Scholarship Program. **Please note that the Georgia Student Finance Commission will only calculate HOPE grade point average (GPA) for students enrolled in 9th through 12th grades.** Student scores below the “Exceeds” performance level should not be reported on the student transcript.

18. Will the “Exceeds” score for students who were able to test-out of a course be included in the students’ grade point average (GPA)?

Response: This is a local school district decision as to whether or not to include the “Exceeds” score in the students’ GPA. This decision is not made at the State level.

19. The rule allows for a student to only test-out of three courses. The rule also allows a student to earn three core credits through CTAE courses, once developed. While improbable, does this mean a student could opt-out of six combining both rules or is it three total, mixing and matching?

Response: Yes, a student could attain up to three units of credits if they test-out of three courses and could be awarded three additional units of credit for the embedded courses when they become available.

20. The raw score that translates into the “Exceeds” score on the End-of-Course Tests (EOCT) seems to vary by course. Can you give us an average raw score that gets translated into “Exceeds” so that we might better explain the process to the parents?

Response: No. Providing an average raw score associated with Exceeds across all EOCTs assumes all courses and EOCTs are equal. This is just one of the reasons test results are reported in terms of scales scores rather than raw scores. While the raw score may vary, for legitimate psychometric reasons, across two or more forms of the same test, each form is statistically equated so that the scale score associated with Exceeds is always the same: 450. Districts and schools should use the scale score and/or grade conversion score when discussing results with parents and students.

21. SBOE Rule 160-5-1-.15 *Awarding Units of Credit and Acceptance of Transfer Credit and/or Grades* mandates that a student must have a teacher recommendation and a B average in a previous course in the same subject/content area to qualify for the testing-out option. SBOE Rule 160-5-1-.15 *Awarding Units of Credit and Acceptance of Transfer Credit and/or Grades* does not say preceding course, so does this mean, for example, a student could get a teacher recommendation from his 9th grade Geography teacher for his 12th grade Economics test-out? What about for our middle school students?

Response: Yes, you can use recommendations from previous teachers from the same content area or relevant subject. Yes, this also applies to middle school students.

22. Will the University System of Georgia (USG) and the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) consider units of credit earned through demonstration of subject area competency via testing out of courses using the End of Course Tests for admission decisions?

Response: Yes, the USG and TCSG will consider units of credit earned through demonstration of subject area competency by testing-out of courses using the EOCT. TCSG is an open access system of technical colleges. Earning credits by testing-out of courses should not impede your admission into a TCSG institution. However, the ability of a student to succeed in a program at a Technical College is greatly determined by the math and language skills possessed by that student. All students applying for diploma, degree, and certificate programs must be assessed prior to acceptance to a program of study at a Technical College. Students will then be admitted in accordance with the academic standards applicable to that program.

23. How will testing-out of core courses affect a student's eligibility for dual enrollment?

Response: Testing-out of core courses through demonstration of subject area competency should not affect a student's eligibility to participate in dual enrollment opportunities.

24. Will the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) accept units of credit earned through the demonstration of subject area competency by testing out of courses using the End-of-Course Tests?

Response: No. Under NCAA legislation, units of credit earned through demonstration of subject area competency by testing-out of courses using the End-of-Course Tests **will not** count as a core course credit for athletic aid for any student seeking NCAA Division I or II athletic scholarships. However, based on NCAA Division I requirements, only 16 core units of credit are required for graduation. Division II schools will have the same 16 core course requirements beginning August 1, 2013. Therefore, since NCAA requirements of 16 core credits are less than the 23 units currently required for graduation from a Georgia public high school, Georgia's high school student athletes will be able to participate in the opportunities earning units of credit through the test-out option. Also, note that current Georgia code only allows each student to earn up to three units of credit through demonstration of subject area competency by testing-out of courses.

25. Can testing-out be used for dual enrollment credit or funding?

Response: No, dual enrollment credit or funding cannot be used for testing-out credit.

26. How many times can a student attempt an EOCT under the test- out option?

Response: Eligible students only have **one opportunity per course** to demonstrate subject area competency through testing-out.

27. Will course code numbers change for courses completed by testing-out?

Response: No, the same course numbers corresponding to the courses in the list of state-funded courses from State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.20 *List of State-Funded K-8 Subjects and 9-12 Courses for Students Entering Ninth Grade in 2008 and Subsequent Years*.

28. Students are provided one opportunity to test-out per course and can earn up to three credits by testing-out. Does this mean that a student could attempt a total of eight EOCT's (1 for each EOCT)? EX: I fail to make "Exceeds" on Ninth Grade Literature and Composition, I fail to make "Exceeds" on Coordinate Algebra, I score "Exceeds" on Physical Science, can I still take Biology and US History?

Response: Yes, the student can attempt to test-out of more than three different courses but can only earn a total of three units of credit by testing-out. The first three courses that the student scores "Exceeds" on by testing-out will be all the units of credit that the student can earn by testing-out. The limit of three units of credit by testing-out is in the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A.) § 20-2-159.4 (c) (5).

29. Is a student who transfers from a Home School eligible to participate in the testing-out option?

Response: Yes, all students who are enrolled in a Georgia public school and meet the eligibility requirements listed on page eight in the SBOE Rule 160-5-1-.15 *Awarding Units of Credit and Acceptance of Transfer Credit and/or Grades Guidelines* are allowed to participate.

30. Can students receive credit for "Honors" Ninth Grade Literature and Composition if they score "Exceeds" on the Ninth Grade Literature and Composition End-of-Course Test (EOCT)?

Response: No, the student will receive a unit of credit for the Ninth Grade Literature and Composition not "Honors" Ninth Grade Literature and Composition. The term "Honors" is not included in the title of courses listed in State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.20 *List of State-Funded K-8 Subjects and 9-12 Courses for Students Entering Ninth Grade in 2008 and Subsequent Years*. The use of the term "Honors" is a local school district decision.