

Questions and Answers Relating to GED/HSED

1. What is the difference between the GED and the HSED?

GED is the acronym for the tests of general educational development that were developed by the American Council on Education and are administered in Wisconsin at testing sites approved by the state superintendent and GED Testing Service. The GED test consists of a battery of tests to measure competency in math, science, social studies, and language arts. Persons who pass only the GED test battery qualify for a GED certificate issued by the Department of Public Instruction. This is the original program, begun after World War II and available for adults. Wisconsin's version has four additional subject areas and is called the HSED. It consists of the GED test battery as well as health, civic literacy, employability skills, and career awareness. Wisconsin also has four additional pathways to the HSED discussed in question #13. High school students accessing the program through a §118.15 contract must prepare for the GED test battery and the four additional HSED requirements.

2. Who is eligible to pursue a GED or HSED in Wisconsin?

A person must reside in Wisconsin for at least 10 days, or be a migrant worker or the child of a migrant worker in order to be eligible for Wisconsin's High School Equivalency Diploma or Certificate of General Educational Development.

A person must also be at least 18.5 years of age or have proof that the class they entered 9th grade with has graduated. Youth 17 to 18.5 years of age may access the HSED only through a §118.15 contract, a juvenile correctional facility, or the Challenge Academy.

3. May a resident of another state or a citizen of another country earn a High School Equivalency Diploma or a Certificate of General Educational Development in Wisconsin?

Yes. If the person satisfies the eligibility requirements listed in question # 2.

4. If I reside in another state, but the closest testing center is in Wisconsin, may I test in Wisconsin?

No. A person must meet the requirements listed in question #2 to test in Wisconsin.

5. My state doesn't offer GED testing; may I go to Wisconsin to earn a GED or one of Wisconsin's HSED credentials?

Only those candidates who meet the requirements listed in question #2 are eligible to earn a Wisconsin credential.

6. Can a person take the GED tests on-line?

No, the official GED tests are not available on-line. They must be taken at an official GED testing center. For the "truth about on-line testing" see this information:

<http://www.gedtestingservice.com/testers/test-fraud>

7. Is there an age requirement for earning a High School Equivalency Diploma or a Certificate of General Educational Development?

Yes. A person must be at least 18 years 6 months of age, or the class with which the person entered grade 9 must have graduated from high school to begin testing.

8. May high school age youth access the HSED or GED?

Wisconsin has special permission from GED Testing Service to allow youth 17 years and older to take the GED tests. There are five options:

- §118.15 contracts between high schools and technical colleges.
- §118.153 (3)(c) contracts between high schools and community based organizations.
- Youth in juvenile correctional facilities (Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake Schools)
- Students enrolled in the Challenge Academy
- Approved GEDO #2 Programs offered in area high schools

9. Who can explain what I will need to do in order to earn a GED certificate or HSED?

Qualified staff at official GED testing centers located at the local technical colleges, correctional facilities or community based organizations that offer GED preparation programs will provide candidates information on eligibility including orientation, counseling and assessment, prior to GED testing. They will also review the possible options for earning a GED or the HSED.

10. Who can provide the required counseling sessions(s)?

The counseling will be provided by one of the following: the professional staff regularly assigned to provide this service at a high school, technical college system, a community-based organization, a college or university; a psychologist licensed by DPI or the Department of Regulation and Licensing; or a school counselor licensed by DPI.

11. What amount of counseling time is needed to fulfill PI 5.03, Wis. Admin. Code, eligibility requirements?

The administrative rule establishes no specific amount of time, although it would be the same for the GED certificate as for the HSED. Professional staff must satisfy their test center's chief examiner that the following has been covered consistent with PI 5.03(4):

- a. Assessment of the persons reading level and career interests and aptitudes
- b. Discussion of the options available to the individual to complete high school, the HSED or the GED and the requirements, expectations, benefits and limitations of each option.
- c. Development of a plan for completion of one of the options discussed and subsequent activities necessary to work toward an identified goal, career or occupation.

12. What is meant by the phrase "a discussion of options available to the individual"?

The required counseling session should clearly inform candidates of the options available to them, including high school completion. They should be informed of the five (5) options available to earn an HSED and that they can earn the GED certificate. Candidates should also understand the difference between the two credentials.

The counselor should stress the requirements, expectations, benefits, and limitations of each option.

13. What are the five options available to earn an HSED?

- 5.05 HSED** is based on passing the GED tests and completing additional requirements in citizenship, health, career awareness and employability skills;
- 5.06 HSED** is based on attainment of 22 high school credits including 11.5 specific credits; post-secondary credits may be substituted for high school credits;
- 5.07 HSED** is based on 24 semester or 32 quarter post-secondary credits; the candidate must have post-secondary credit in each area where they did not meet state high school graduation requirements, except physical education.
- 5.08 HSED** is based on a foreign high school or post-secondary diploma and requires that the candidate be a US citizen or meet both of the following: speaks, reads and writes ordinary English and passes the citizenship course or satisfies required education in US history and forms of government;
- 5.09 HSED** is a competency based program approved by the state superintendent.

Please refer to PI 5, Wis. Admin. Code, for more detailed descriptions of each option. PI 5 is available here: http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/pi/5.pdf

Note: As of July 1, 2016, all five options must also complete the civics test described in Questions 18 and 19.

14. What is meant by "development of a plan for completion" of one of the options discussed?

With the assistance of his or her counselor the candidate will develop a personalized written plan which clearly outlines the activities needed to accomplish a specific, identified goal; career objective; or occupation.

15. Do candidates who are only interested in earning a GED certificate have to go through the counseling session, assessment of reading level, and assessment of career interests and aptitudes?

Yes. These requirements apply to all candidates in Wisconsin.

16. Do persons who are only interested in earning a GED certificate have to discuss available options with a counselor? Will a plan for completion of one of the options in the administrative rule be discussed with them?

Yes. These requirements apply to all candidates in Wisconsin.

17. The administrative rule requires an assessment of reading levels; how is this accomplished?

There are two ways this can be accomplished. A certified transcript of a reading achievement test administered when the candidate was in school is acceptable. If this is not available the candidate would be required to obtain an assessment of their reading level from a qualified person. Test centers typically use the TABE tests to fulfill this requirement.

18. Why is a civics test required for both the GED and HSED options?

2015 Act 55 and amended by 2017 Act 59, requires that all persons who earn a high school equivalency diploma (HSED) or certificate of general education development (GED) in Wisconsin pass the civics test that is required for high school graduation with a score of 65 correct out of 100 questions.

19. Which civics test?

The 100 questions that may be asked of a person applying for U.S. Citizenship given by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services. Here is the link:

<https://www.uscis.gov/citizenship/teachers/educational-products>

20. In the past a student had a choice between the civics test, three credits of social studies or an approved course, is that still an option?

The legislation only permits the civics test to be used.

21. How can an HSED candidate satisfy the health competency requirement?

Three options exist for a student to meet the health requirement:

- a student may have completed a ½ credit of health in grades 7-12, or
- a student successfully completes an approved course in health, or
- a student passes the health test.

The approved health course must include at least 30 hours of instruction in mental and emotional, personal, family, community and environmental health.

22. If a candidate fails to earn a passing score on a health or civic literacy test how long must he or she wait before re-testing on a different version of the tests?

There is a 30-day retest-waiting period for both the health and civic literacy tests. This policy has been established for the following reasons. First, it discourages instructional staff and examinees from using the official tests as a practice test. Second, 30 days allows adequate time for candidates who failed to earn a passing score to pursue serious preparation/instruction.

Third, there are only three forms of each test. Each time a candidate retests, a different form of the test must be used. If a candidate fails all three forms of one of these tests he or she must successfully complete an approved course or earn the required high school credits.

23. How does a candidate who is participating in a program leading to an HSED meet the requirement to be instructed "in career awareness, including instruction in setting short-term and long-term career goals"?

Professional staff are assigned these duties in the HSED preparation program. The purpose of this requirement is to provide candidates an opportunity to identify and/or match career interests and aptitudes with realistic goals and to provide information related to post-secondary education and training, financial aid, career clusters and specific occupations.

24. How does an HSED candidate satisfy the requirement "has attained employability skills, including skills in job seeking, applying for work, retaining a job, and self-development and awareness skills"?

An employability class taught by a qualified professional should be available for candidates

who have not completed this requirement during their high school experience. The purpose of this requirement is to satisfy the high school graduation standard and to provide students with job search skills, including completing a job application, writing a cover letter, creating a resume, defining skills and performing in an interview.

25. Is it true that HSED candidates who are 55 years of age or older can be exempted from the career awareness and employability skills requirement?

Yes. Candidates who are 55 years of age or older may be exempted from this requirement. These candidates must request, in writing, to be excused from completing the requirements for instruction in career awareness, employability skills and related components.

26. Are candidates for an HSED required to be citizens of the United States?

No. But candidates must document that they are able to speak, read, and write in the English language.

27. What high school credits are required for an HSED based on high school credits?

At least 22 high school credits including at least 4 in English or communications, 3 in social studies, including citizenship; 2 in mathematics, 2 in science and 0.5 in health. {PI 5.06(1), Wis. Admin. Code}

28. Do candidates seeking an HSED based on attainment of high school credits who have completed the 11.5 core high school credits listed in question #27 required to take any specific courses to qualify for the HSED?

No, but candidates should be encouraged to take elective courses in an area related to their career interests and aptitudes, once they have met the core credit requirements.

29. Are high school and/or post-secondary credits earned at schools outside of Wisconsin recognized by the state of Wisconsin?

Yes. Credits awarded by schools in other states can be verified by presenting an official transcript.

30. Can candidates who have earned a GED certificate upgrade to the HSED?

Yes. Candidates who have been awarded a "certificate of general educational development" may complete the additional requirements to obtain the HSED. They are not required to surrender their GED certificate. The additional requirements are health, civics, career awareness and employability skills.

31. What are the "passing" scores on the GED battery of tests?

A minimum score of 145 on any single test and a total of 580 for all four tests.

32. What are the "passing" scores on the health and civic literacy tests?

The minimum passing score for the health test is 55.

The minimum passing score for the civic test is 65 out of 100.

33. When can §118.15 contract students finish testing?

Seventeen and eighteen year old students in a contracted arrangement may complete GED testing "no sooner than three weeks prior to the end of the semester in which the person turns 18 years of age or three weeks prior to the graduation date of the class in which the person entered grade 9". "Semester" is defined as the semester of the contracting high school. { PI 5.035(b). Wis. Admin. Code }

34. What if the birthday falls in June, July or August?

Guidelines established by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) interpret this rule to allow contracted students who turn 18 during the summer months of June, July, or August to complete their GED testing no sooner than three weeks prior to the end of the semester preceding these three summer months. A candidate is eligible under this interpretation only if they have been "continuously enrolled and attending a program under a contracted arrangement between the local high school of residence and a Wisconsin technical college system (WTCS) district or a community based organization (CBO) which leads to a high school equivalency diploma and meets the requirements under s. 118.15(1)(c)2, Wis. Stats."

35. Should contracted students be allowed to complete GED testing early?

Under very rare circumstances the Chief Examiner may request an age waiver to allow a student to complete testing early. Generally these waivers fall into three categories:

- Significant family or medical reason
- Entry into the military
- Entry into post-secondary education or training
- Full time employment

The student should prepare a letter requesting the age-waiver after completion of the second or third test and give it to the Chief Examiner for further processing. A letter of support from the high school is also required.

36. How do GED candidates who have not completed testing obtain records on the tests they have completed?

Candidates must obtain partial records from the official test center that administered the tests or from their account on www.ged.com

37. May a 17 year old student confined to a county jail prepare for, and take the GED/HSED tests?

A student who is in a county jail and at least 17 years of age may begin to prepare for, and take, GED tests leading to an HSED. Instruction designed to prepare such students for the tests may be provided by a public school teacher assigned to the county jail if the school district has a GEDO #2 program. If a public school district is not a GEDO #2 district, then the public school must enter into... "a contracted arrangement between the local high school of residence and a technical college district or a community-based organization which leads to a high school equivalency diploma..." before a 17 year old student can officially begin preparation or testing.

A seventeen year old who begins testing while incarcerated can be administered all six GED/HSED exams and receive his or her HSED credential without waiting until "three weeks prior to the end of the semester in which the person turns 18 years of age or three weeks prior to the graduation date of the class in which the person entered grade 9."

38. What is the policy for 17 year old youth who are released from incarceration prior to completing GED testing?

Seventeen (17) year old students who successfully complete one or more of the GED exams while incarcerated in a secure correctional facility, county jail, juvenile detention center or Type 2 facility can complete preparation and testing at a Wisconsin Technical College System school. Since compulsory school attendance laws still apply to such students, enrollment in the WTCS requires a written, no cost contract between the youth, parent/guardian, the youth's local school board and the WTCS school. {§118.15(1)(cm), Wis. Stats.}

Seventeen year old students who continue pursuing an HSED after incarceration can be administered all five GED exams and receive their diploma without waiting until their class graduates or they reach 18 years 6 months age.

39. Are 17 year old graduates of the National Guard Challenge Academy eligible to prepare for, and take, the GED/HSED tests?

Due to a statewide waiver granted by the state superintendent, seventeen year old students who successfully complete the 22-week portion of the National Guard's Challenge Academy can complete all four of the GED exams as soon as they are prepared to do so. The waiver also allows Academy graduates to receive their high school equivalency diploma (HSED) as soon as they complete all of the requirements of s. PI 5.05 of Wis. Admin. Code.

The Challenge Academy's waiver pertains to students while enrolled in the 22-week on-campus portion of the Challenge Academy and during the 12 month mentoring phase, which follows. Cadets who drop out prior to successful completion of the 22-week on-campus portion are not entitled to the waiver provisions.

Challenge Academy graduates who do not successfully complete all of the exams required for their HSED during the 22-week on-campus portion of the program cannot continue to pursue their HSED unless their school district enters into, and pays for, a §118.15 contract for them or admits the student into a GEDO #2 Program. Most school districts will have signed a formal agreement to do this before a youngster is accepted into the program.

40. Are seventeen (17) year old youth eligible to earn the GED Certificate?

No. The HSED is the **only** legitimate goal for a 17-year-old candidate. The "certificate of general educational development" is an option for a candidate who is at least 18 years 6 months of age or older. Every effort should be made to make sure that a 17 year old candidate completes the four HSED requirements before one or more GED tests are taken.

41. Where can candidates who took the GED test while serving in the military obtain transcripts of their test scores?

Two possible sources for GED tests taken as part of the military exist:
USAFI/Thompson Pro-Metric 877/471-9860 (for records before 1974)
DANTES: 850/452-111, ext. 3118 (for records after 1974)

42. Can scores on the 2002 GED Tests be combined with partial scores on previous or future series of the GED Tests?

No. GED Testing Service policy states that scores earned on previous versions of the test may not be combined with other versions of the GED Tests. If a candidate did not successfully complete the battery by the end of 2013, his or her scores will be invalidated and he or she must start again with the 2014 series tests.

43. Are candidates seeking a GED credential required to provide their Social Security number?

GED or HSED candidates cannot be required to provide their social security number. Candidates are encouraged to provide their number, but cannot be required to provide it. Remembering the alternate number a candidate selects is the responsibility of the candidate. It may be needed in order to obtain an official transcript.

44. Are accommodations available to candidates with a disability who take the GED Tests? If so, what are they?

Yes, accommodations based on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) are available for candidates with documented disabilities. The need for accommodations must be fully documented by a qualified professional. The most common accommodations are listed below:

- Extended Time: 25%, 50%, and 100%
- Stop-the-clock breaks
- Private room
- Calculator
- Scribe
- Reader
- Braille
- Paper test is available only for a documented disability that makes computer testing impossible. It is not available for comfort, convenience or a lack of computer skills.

For description of each of the available accommodations please refer to the GED Testing Service website on accommodations for greater detail:

<http://www.gedtestingservice.com/testers/computer-accommodations>

45. What accommodations are available without documentation of a disability?

- Highlighting
- Color Contrast
- Adjustable font

Students are encouraged to let the test center know, in advance, that they might need modifications or adjustments to their computer.

DPI Contacts & Resources:

Alternative Education and GED/HSED Administration
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
125 S. Webster, P.O. Box 7841
Madison, WI 53707-7841
Fax: 608-267-9275

Websites:

DPI forms: <https://apps5.dpi.wi.gov/formcoll/>

Accommodations forms from GED Testing Service:

<http://www.gedtestingservice.com/testers/computer-accommodations>

DPI Alternative Education: <http://dpi.wi.gov/alternative-education>

GED Testing Service: <http://www.gedtestingservice.com/ged-testing-service>
ged/hsedadmin@dpi.wi.gov

For duplicate credentials: <http://dpi.wi.gov/ged/transcripts> or call: 608-267-9245.

Employment Verification:

Fax the candidate's name(s) at time of testing, complete date of birth and complete social security number along with confirmation of a signed release to: 608-267-9275. In most cases, confirmation will be faxed back within two business days.