

SGA Graduation Credits Policy

1. Purpose:

St. George Academy has adopted this policy to specify standards and credit requirements for graduation from the Academy and to provide for differentiated diplomas or certificates of completion consistent with state law and rules.

2. Philosophy:

2.1. The primary goal of education is the development of individuals who possess the knowledge, skills, and human characteristics necessary to enable them to live meaningfully as individuals and as positive contributors to society. To achieve this ultimate goal, the individual must be provided experiences to develop skills in language and thinking, scientific understanding, mathematics, historical perception, aesthetic appreciation, social interaction, movement, fitness and health, career competencies and citizenship.

3. Procedure:

The State Board of Education is authorized under Utah Constitution Article X, Section 3, which vests general control and supervision of the public education system in the Board and, Section 53A-1-402 (1)(b) and (c) which directs the Board of Education make rules regarding competency levels, graduation requirements, curriculum, and instruction requirements, and Section 53A-1-401(3) which allows the Board to adopt rules in accordance with its responsibilities.

3.1. Diplomas and Completion Certificates

3.1.1. St. George Academy shall award a high school diploma to all students that successfully complete all state and Academy course requirements for graduation.

3.1.2. Completion Certificates shall be awarded to all "Special Education" students who complete all requirements included in their Individual Education Plan (IEP) if they did not complete all state and Academy course requirements for graduation.

3.2. Academic Requirements for Graduation: Students in grades 9 through 12 must earn a minimum of 28 units of credit through course completion or through competency assessment consistent with Utah Administrative Rule R-277-705 and Academy policy. Credit may be awarded for coursework through examination, assessment, or experience at the discretion of the Director.

CREDITS REQUIRED FOR GRADUATION:

A. Language Arts 4.0 units of credit

Ninth grade level (1.0)

Tenth grade level (1.0)

Eleventh grade level (1.0)

Applied or advanced Language Arts (1.0) from the list of courses determined by the Board and approved by USBE

B. Mathematics 4.0 units of credit

Secondary Math I
Secondary Math II
Secondary Math III

or applied or supplemental courses from the list of courses determined by the Academy and approved by and the student's SEOP.

*Students who successfully complete calculus have met graduation requirements regardless of the number of credits they have taken.

C. Science 4.0 units of credit at a minimum, two credits from the USBE approved foundation courses list and two additional units of credit from the foundation courses or the applied or advanced science list determined by the Academy and approved by USBE and the student's SEOP.

D. Social Studies 4 units of credit.

Geography (.5)
World History (.5)
U.S. History (1.0)
U.S. Government and Citizenship (.5)
History elective as determined by the Academy and approved by USBE (1.5)

E. Fine Arts 1.5 units of credit

F. Physical and Health Education 2.0 units of credit

Health (0.5)
Participation Skills (0.5)
Fitness for Life (0.5)
Individualized Lifetime Activities (0.5) or other elective Physical Education credit (0.5).

Elective credit can be awarded for participation in a team athletic sports program. A maximum of 1.0 units of credit can be earned in this way, but documented school approval is required.

Students may earn 0.5 credits for a full season of participation in a school sponsored competitive sports program, associated with and approved by the Utah High School Activities Association (UHSAA).

G. Career and Technical Education 1.0 unit of credit

H. Digital Studies 0.5 units of credit

I. General Financial Literacy 0.5 units of credit

J. Economics (.5)

4. UNITS OF CREDIT

4.1. A unit of credit or fraction thereof shall be given upon satisfactory completion of a course or learning experience in compliance with state course standards. In some cases, course credit may also be completed on a performance basis in which case assessment of mastery will be the responsibility of the faculty and administration of the Academy.

4.2. The Academy may grant credit from among the following:

4.2.1. Successful completion of a course offered by the Academy; approved by the Academy but taken outside of the regular school day or school year; approved by the Academy for concurrent enrollment and offered by an accredited post-secondary institution; or offered by correspondence or extension that is approved and accredited by the State of Utah and Academy.

4.2.2. Demonstrated proficiency by way of an Academy approved test developed by the state or Academy; performance appraisal; or portfolio.

4.2.3. Successful completion of a course from an accredited secondary school, accredited special purpose school, accredited supplemental education school, and the Utah Electronic High School, or other approved online course.

4.2.4. Students enrolled in grades 9 through 12 will be allowed to earn credit by enrolling in and completing online courses offered by state approved and accredited online programs. The number of credits allowable under this law will change from year to year.

5. HOME INSTRUCTION

Students released for home instruction may seek approval for St. George Academy credits. Credit is awarded at the discretion of the Director.

6. EARLY GRADUATION OPTION

The option for early graduation is available to any secondary student who has completed all required courses or demonstrated mastery of required skills and competencies as required by the Utah State Board of Education. Early Graduates with less than 28 credits will be awarded a state diploma. Early graduates are ineligible for valedictorian or salutatorian graduation status.

7. POST SECONDARY CREDIT

Students who can demonstrate readiness for college level work may be eligible to pursue post-secondary coursework while still enrolled at the Academy. Credit earned in post-secondary courses will count toward high school graduation.

8. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities shall meet graduation requirements with appropriate accommodations, curricular modifications and amendments as determined by their Individualized Education Program (IEP's). The student's transcript must not identify special education classes.

8.1. Graduation issues must be addressed by the IEP team on an individual basis. The IEP is the vehicle for making changes to the graduation requirements to meet the unique educational needs for students with disabilities. The IEP must document the nature and extent of modifications, substitutions, and or exemptions made to accommodate a student with disabilities.

8.2. Graduation with a regular high school diploma constitutes a change of placement, which requires written prior notice and terminates services as per the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

8.2.1. A regular diploma indicates that:

8.2.1.1. All USBE and Academy graduation requirements are complete.

8.2.1.2. All requirements are met as per IEP amendments, which maintain the integrity and rigor expected for high school graduation, up through the age of 22. (A cumulative record of amendments must be maintained).

8.2.2. When all diploma requirements have been met, the student must be awarded the diploma. Once earned, the diploma may not be withheld in order to provide additional special education services to a student.

8.3. If all graduation requirements as per the IEP, are not completed due to factors that are not a direct manifestation of the student's disability, as determined by the IEP team, the student is not eligible to participate in graduation ceremonies.

8.4 Graduation with a certificate of completion indicates a record of completed competencies and does not constitute a change of placement, until the student ages out and/or exits the program. This certificate may not identify the student as a student with a disability.

8.4.1. A certificate of completion or differentiated diploma includes:

8.4.1.1. Students whose IEP team has determined that his/her participation in state-wide testing is through Utah's Alternate Assessment (UAA/Dynamic Learning Maps (2014)). This student may participate in graduation ceremonies.

8.4.1.2. Students who have completed their senior year; however, have not met the graduation requirements and whose IEP Transition Plan (beginning approx. grade 9), includes a state approved Post-High School Program. This student may participate in the graduation ceremonies. This student may receive a Certificate of Completion (or possibly diploma) as per the IEP up through the age of 22.

8.4.1.3. Students with disabilities who pass the GED Test and earn a Utah High School Completion Diploma are eligible to return to the school system as this type of diploma does not qualify as a "regular high school diploma" and does not end the LEA's responsibility to provide FAPE as per IDEA.

9. TRANSFER STUDENTS

9.1. The Academy will approve credits and grades received from an accredited public or private school. Credit earned at a school accredited by the Utah State Board of Education or the Northwest Accreditation Commission is accepted at face value at St. George Academy. Students transferring from outside the State of Utah and/or schools accredited by other bodies must present their earned courses to the Academy for consideration.

10. GED CREDIT

The GED can only be taken by students who are 16 years of age and older, who are no longer enrolled in public, charter or private school or whose class has already graduated. Sixteen-year-old, out of school youth, must attend an Adult Education program to gain verification to take the GED. Upon successful completion of the GED, the State of Utah shall award the student a Utah High School Completion Diploma. Since the student has completed high school at that point, the student will not be allowed to return to public, charter, or private high school and continue to work on a traditional diploma. No credit earned from passing the GED can be applied toward a traditional high school diploma from a district traditional high school.

11. ADULT HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

11.1. All students who seek an adult high school diploma through Washington County Adult Education shall:

11.1.1. Meet all eligibility requirements necessary to become an enrollee in accordance with federal and state requirements and pay the enrollment fee.

11.1.2. Complete a minimum of 1/2 credit in a core academic subject in the Washington County Adult Education program;

11.1.3. Earn at least 24 units of credit as outlined in the state Adult Education Policy and Procedures Manual in core and other required areas. All courses required for graduation must be completed. The reduction of credits, as compared to the 28 (or 36) required for a general high school diploma, shall be in elective credits only.

11.2. Adult Education Students are eligible only for an adult education diploma and shall become graduates of Southwest Adult High School.

11.2.1. Adult education students are eligible only for an adult education secondary diploma.

12. FOREIGN EXCHANGE AND PRIVATELY PLACED FOREIGN STUDENTS

The intent of the Foreign Exchange program is to provide a cultural experience in an American high school without the pressure of meeting the same set of standards expected of our students. As such, Foreign Exchange (J-1) students are not eligible for a St. George Academy high school diploma.

12.1. Foreign students shall not be allowed to enroll if they have already graduated in their home country or they are 18 years of age and above.

12.2. Foreign students with J-1 and F-1 status will not be considered for graduation and are therefore not eligible to receive a high school diploma. They may receive a transcript and Certificate of Completion and participate in graduation ceremonies if approved by school administration.

12.3. Foreign students with J-1 and F-1 status who intend to submit transcripts in languages other than English, must bear the responsibility and cost for translation of their transcripts. Transcript evaluations for all foreign students will be completed by the district counseling coordinator.

13. GRADUATION CEREMONY

St. George Academy recognizes that a student's graduation is a culmination of years of planning and successful completion of state and Academy requirements. The wearing of the cap and gown and participation in the ceremony awarding the certificate of completion or diploma shall be reserved for students who have met those requirements. The Academy recognizes the importance of the completion of the requirements for a certificate of completion or diploma from St. George Academy and views it as an achievement that improves the community as well as the individual. The Academy wishes to recognize that achievement in a publicly celebrated graduation exercise.

13.1. Participation in the graduation ceremony is an opportunity and not a protected property right. Participation may be denied as a disciplinary measure, or if student refuses to comply with graduation ceremony standards established and developed by the Academy.

13.2. Participation in the graduation ceremony is optional and is not required.

13.3. Caps and gowns will be worn in the proper manner as designated by the administration.

13.4. Special needs students shall be provided with the opportunity to participate in ceremonies utilizing criteria based upon their unique circumstances as outlined in section 8 of this policy.

DEFINITIONS

"Accredited" means evaluated and approved under the Standards for Accreditation of the Northwest Accreditation Commission or the accreditation standards of the State Board of Education.

"Dual enrollment" means a student who is enrolled simultaneously at St. George Academy school and another accredited public school. (e.g.; Success Academy, an online school)

"Early Graduation" means any secondary public-school student, with the approval of the student, the student's parent or guardian, and an authorized local school official, who has completed all required courses or demonstrated mastery of competencies, graduates prior to the conclusion of the twelfth grade.

"Transcript" means an official document or record generated by one or several schools which includes, at a minimum; the courses in which a secondary student was enrolled, grades and units of credit earned. The transcript is usually one part of the student's permanent or cumulative file which also may include birth certificate, immunization records and other information as determined by the school in possession of the records.

REFERENCES

Utah Code Ann. § 53A-1-603 - Duties of State Board of Education.

Utah Code Ann. § 53A-1-611 - Standards and assessment processes to measure student performance - Basic Skills Competency Test.

Utah Code Ann. § 53A-13-108.5 - Acceptance of credits and grades awarded by accredited schools.

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Utah Administrative Rule R277-700 - The Elementary and Secondary School Core Curriculum and High School Graduation Requirements.

Utah Administrative Rule R277-705 - Secondary School Completion and Diplomas Courses meeting the criteria for graduation requirements beginning with the Class of 2011.

Utah State Board of Education Special Education Rules - III.X Graduation.