

State Minimum Course Requirements

Minimum set of courses required for high school graduation.

Beginning in the 1986-87 school year, California *Education Code (EC) 51225.3* has specified a minimum set of courses to meet state requirements to graduate from high school and receive a diploma. The governing boards of local education agencies (LEAs) have the authority to supplement the state minimum requirements at the local level.

EC 51225.3 states that all pupils receiving a diploma of graduation from a California high school must have completed all of the following courses, while in grades nine to twelve, inclusive:

Unless otherwise specified, each course shall have a duration of one school year:

Three courses in [English](#)

Two courses in [mathematics](#), including one year of Algebra I (*EC Section 51224.5*)

Two courses in [science](#), including biological and physical sciences

Three courses in [social studies](#), including United States history and geography; world history, culture, and geography; a one-semester course in American government and civics, and a one-semester course in economics

One course in [visual or performing arts](#), [foreign language](#), or commencing with the 2012-13 school year, career technical education. For the purpose of satisfying the minimum course requirement, a course in American Sign Language shall be deemed a course in foreign language

Two courses in [physical education](#), unless the pupil has been exempted pursuant to the provisions of *EC Section 51241*

Other coursework adopted by the local governing board of the LEA

The local governing board of the LEA with the active involvement of parents, administrators, teachers, and pupils, shall adopt alternative means for pupils to complete the prescribed course of study, which may include:

Practical demonstration of skills and competencies

Supervised work experience or other outside school experience

Career technical education classes offered in high schools

Courses offered by regional occupational centers or programs

Interdisciplinary study


Independent study

Credit earned at a postsecondary institution

Requirements for graduation and specified alternative modes for completing the prescribed course of study shall be made available to pupils, parents, and the public.

The University of California and the California State University systems have established a uniform minimum set of courses required for admission as a freshman.

[Courses Required for High School Graduation and University Admission \(English\)](#)
[Available Translations of the Courses Required for High School Graduation and University Admission](#)

The entire California *Education Code* may be found in the [California Law](#)  library.

Questions: High School Innovations and Initiatives Office | 916-319-0893

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