

**Policy GRAD-007: High School Diploma Endorsements**

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**NORTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Policy Manual**

Item	Description
<b>Policy Title</b>	High School Diploma Endorsements
<b>Policy Category</b>	Graduation Requirements and Related Policies (GRAD)
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<b>Statutory Reference</b>	G.S. 115C-12(40); 115C-83.32

Students enrolled in North Carolina high schools shall have the opportunity to earn Endorsements to their High School Diploma that identify a particular area of focused study. The earning of endorsements shall be based on the following criteria:

1. Students shall meet all requirements set forth in State Board Policy, "State Graduation Requirements" (GRAD-004) related to earning a high school diploma.
2. Students may earn a Career Endorsement, a College Endorsement, a College/UNC Endorsement, a North Carolina Academic Scholars Endorsement, and/or a Global Languages Endorsement.
3. Beginning with 2024-25, students may also earn an Arts Proficiency Endorsement and/or a Citizenship Proficiency Endorsement.
4. Students may earn more than one Endorsement.
5. Students are not required to earn an Endorsement in order to receive a diploma.
6. The implementation of this policy is required for all Local Education Agency (LEA) high schools. This policy is optional for charter school boards of directors.
7. The requirements for earning high school diploma endorsements are defined below:

**I. Career Endorsement:**

- a. Except as limited by N.C.G.S. §115C-81(b), the student shall complete the Future-Ready Core mathematics sequence of Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Math I, II, III or Integrated Math I, II, III and a fourth mathematics course aligned with the student's post-secondary plans. Acceptable fourth math courses for the Career Endorsement include any math course that may be used to meet NC high school graduation requirements, including applied math courses found in the Career and Technical Education (CTE) domain;
- b. The student shall complete a CTE concentration in one of the approved CTE Career Pathways;
- c. The student shall earn an unweighted grade point average of at least 2.6;

- d. The student shall earn at least one industry-recognized credential. Earned credentials can include Career Readiness Certificates (CRC) at the Silver level or above from WorkKeys assessments or another appropriate industry credential/certification; and
- e. The student shall earn at least the benchmark reading score established by a nationally norm-referenced college admissions test. The student may retake the nationally norm-reference test as many times as necessary to achieve the required benchmark score.

## **II. College Endorsement:**

- a. The student shall complete the Future-Ready Core mathematics sequence of Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Math 1, 2, 3; and a fourth mathematics course aligned with the students post-secondary plans. The fourth math course must meet University of North Carolina system Minimum Admission Requirements or be acceptable for earning placement in a credit-bearing college math class under the North Carolina Community College System's Multiple Measures Placement policy;
- b. The student shall earn an unweighted grade point average of at least 2.6; and
- c. The student shall earn at least the benchmark reading score established by a nationally norm-referenced college admissions test. The student may retake the nationally norm-references test as many times as necessary to achieve the required benchmark score.

## **III. College/UNC Endorsement**

- a. The student shall complete the Future-Ready Core mathematics sequence of Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Math 1, 2, 3, and a fourth mathematics course that meets University of North Carolina system Minimum Admission Requirements;
- b. The student shall complete three units of science including at least one physical science with a lab, one life science and one additional science course;
- c. The student shall complete U.S. History or equivalent coursework;
- d. The student shall complete two additional academic courses from English, mathematics, science, social studies, world languages, or computer sciences;
- e. Students shall earn a weighted grade point average of at least 2.5; and
- f. The student shall earn at least the benchmark reading score established by a nationally norm-referenced college admissions test. The student may retake the nationally norm-references test as many times as necessary to achieve the required benchmark score.

## **IV. North Carolina Academic Scholars Endorsement:**

### For students entering Grade 9 prior to 2024-25:

- a. The student shall complete the Future-Ready Core mathematics sequence of Math I, II, III; Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II; or Integrated Math I, II, III and a fourth-level mathematics course that meets University of North Carolina system Minimum Course Requirements that include a mathematics course with either Math III, Algebra II, or Integrated Mathematics III as a pre-requisite.
- b. The student shall complete three course credits of science including an Earth/Environmental science course, Biology, and at least one physical science course that must include either physics or chemistry.
- c. For students entering ninth grade in 2012-13 or later, the student shall complete four course credits of social studies.
- d. The student shall complete two course credits of a world language (other than English).
- e. The student shall complete four elective course credits in any one subject area, such as Career and Technical Education (CTE), JROTC, Arts Education, World Languages, or in another content area.
- f. The student shall have completed at least three higher-level courses during junior and/or senior years which carry quality points such as Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Cambridge International, or Dual Enrollment courses; Advanced CTE and CTE credentialing courses; honors level courses, or Project Lead the Way courses.
- g. The student shall earn an unweighted grade point average of at least 3.50.

### For students entering Grade 9 in 2024-25 and beyond:

- a. The student shall complete the Future-Ready Core mathematics sequence of Math 1,2,3, and a fourth-level mathematics course that meets University of North Carolina system Minimum Course Requirements. Students shall complete at least four mathematics courses in high school.
- b. The student shall complete three course credits of science including an Earth/Environmental science course, Biology, and at least one physical science course that must include either physics or chemistry.
- c. The student shall complete four course credits of social studies.
- d. The student shall complete two course credits of the same world language (other than English).
- e. The student shall complete four elective course credits in any one subject area, such as Career and Technical Education (CTE), JROTC, Arts Education, World Languages, or in another subject area.

- f. The student shall have completed at least five advanced level courses (recommended minimum of one in each academic content area and an elective) which carry additional quality points, honors or college-level weighting.
- g. The student shall earn an unweighted grade point average of at least 3.50.

**V. Global Languages Endorsement (Seal of Biliteracy)**

- a. The student shall demonstrate mastery of the English language with one of the following:
  - 1. complete English IV or equivalent course and earn a cumulative, unweighted grade point average of at least 2.5 for all English coursework required for graduation; or
  - 2. use the Credit by Demonstrated Mastery policy to complete the English IV course required for graduation; or
  - 3. take a nationally norm-referenced external exam approved by NCDPI and achieve a score that meets the English requirement as noted on the approved list.
- b. The student shall demonstrate mastery of a World Language by earning Intermediate Mid proficiency or higher on the ACTFL proficiency scale in each language with one of the following:
  - 1. complete a Level IV or higher course in a World Language and earn a cumulative, unweighted grade point average of at least 2.5 for all World Language coursework in that language; or
  - 2. use the Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CCRE-001) to complete a Level IV or higher course in a World Language, including the home and heritage languages used across North Carolina; or
  - 3. take a nationally or internationally norm-referenced external exam approved by NCDPI and achieve a score of Intermediate Mid or higher in that language.

**VI. Arts Proficiency Endorsement**

- a. The student shall complete a minimum of four arts courses.
- b. The student shall earn an unweighted GPA of 3.0 or higher in each arts course.
- c. The student shall complete a minimum of 40 hours of arts-related extracurricular activities.
  - 1. The student shall participate in an arts-related extracurricular activity approved by the LEA/local board of education.
  - 2. The student shall complete all of the required hours outside of instructional hours.
  - 3. The student shall not receive any course credit for participation in the activity.
  - 4. The student shall document the hours on the form provided to the LEA/local boards of education from NCDPI.

**VII. NC Citizenship Proficiency Endorsement**

- a. The opportunity to earn this endorsement shall be offered to interested Grade 12 high school students once/semester.
- b. The PSU shall administer the endorsement test orally, in the format used by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Naturalization Test which is available at: [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration \(USCIS\) Services](https://uscis.gov/naturalization-test).
- c. The PSU shall select 10 questions from those publicly available.
- d. The student shall correctly answer at least 6 out of 10 questions asked from the USCIS Naturalization test to earn the endorsement.