

COMPETENCY DETERMINATION REQUIREMENTS

Norwell High School will provide students with the opportunity to earn a Competency Determination (CD). As defined by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the "competency determination" shall be based on the academic standards and curriculum frameworks for tenth graders and shall represent a determination that a particular student has demonstrated mastery of a common core of skills, competencies, and knowledge in these areas, by satisfactorily completing coursework that has been certified by the student's district as showing mastery of the skills, competencies, and knowledge contained in the state academic standards and curriculum frameworks in the areas measured by the MCAS high school tests administered in 2023. An additional requirement for mastery in U.S. History will apply to the graduating class of 2027, and beyond.

To earn a Competency Determination, high school students must successfully complete the following courses or coursework equivalent, aligned with state curriculum frameworks, and earned full credit in accordance with the district's grading policy and the requirements outlined below:

- English: English 9 & English 10
- Mathematics: Algebra I or Algebra II & Geometry
- Science: Biology, Chemistry, or Physics
- One year of U.S. History (beginning with the graduating class of 2027)

To show mastery, a student must successfully complete, in accordance with the district's grading policy:

1. A passing grade in the course and on the final assessment; or
2. An equivalent measure identified in the district's CD policy.

In order to be eligible for an alternative equivalent measure, a student who fails to satisfy the requirements of the above competency determination may be eligible to receive an Educational Assistance Plan (EAP) designed within the confines of the foundation budget to impart the skills, competencies and knowledge required to attain the required level of mastery, by either

- earning a passing score on a higher level class in the same content area, or
- earning a passing score on the MCAS test in the same content area as the student failed to demonstrate mastery.

Additional Considerations

Students with Disabilities

Norwell Public Schools must both provide a Free and Appropriate Public Education to students with disabilities and must also determine that the student has met the competency determination and local graduation requirements prior to graduating that student. Students with disabilities who have been placed in out-of-district placements must meet the requirements of the competency determination policy of the placing school district. Discussion of the competency determination must be a part of the IEP Team's transition planning.

English Language Learners

Norwell Public Schools shall, on a case-by-case basis, determine the appropriate courses necessary for English Language Learners to both achieve language proficiency and meet the competency determination requirements.

Late-Enrolling Students

Students who enroll in a Massachusetts public high school after their ninth-grade year may be granted a determination of competency by the Norwell Public Schools in one or more of the following ways:

- Transcript review by District Administrator(s).
- Additional course requirements as determined by District Administrator(s).
- A qualifying MCAS score of at least meeting or exceeding expectations achievement levels on the relevant high school MCAS assessment; or by meeting the standard for a substituted equivalent that the district certifies satisfies the same academic standards.

Appeals Process

Current students and/or parents/guardians may appeal the determination of competency. Additionally, those enrolled in the Norwell Public Schools in the classes of 2003 through 2024 that did not earn a diploma may also appeal the decision. The principal may, on a case-by-case basis, review a student's academic records and determine if the successful completion of a course or coursework constitutes a reasonable equivalent for one of the expectations above for a Competency Determination.

LEGAL REFS:

DESE Graduation Requirements and Related Guidance

DESE Graduation and Transition Planning for Students with IEPs

DESE Competency Determination Guidance & Policy Submission Process

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M.G.L. c.69 § 1D

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Norwell Public Schools
Norwell, Massachusetts