

8. GRANTING MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL CREDIT

- References:
- (a) DoDEA Regulation 2000.1, "High School Graduation Requirements," July 29, 2004
 - (b) DoD Instruction 1342.12, "Provision of Early Intervention and Special Education Services to Eligible DoD Dependents," April 11, 2005
 - (c) DoDEA Guide 2500.13, "Special Education Procedural Guide," September 2005

Additional Resource:

- DS7.02 Academic Progress—Instructions for Entering School Information System Data

a. Granting of credit. Credit is granted only upon the completion of a course of study. DoDEA uses the "Carnegie Unit System" for granting credit. A full Carnegie unit (one credit) may be earned for a completed course of study containing 120 instructional hours (i.e., clock hours of student/teacher interaction). One-half Carnegie unit of credit may be earned for completing a course of study of 60 hours of instruction, and one-fourth Carnegie unit of credit may be awarded for a completed course of 30 hours duration. (Note: DoDEA does not issue $\frac{1}{4}$ credits.) Master schedules may be programmed in a variety of ways to ensure that the required instructional clock hours are provided.

b. Length of Courses. Courses vary in length. The duration may be as short as 9 weeks, which is the equivalent of 30 clock-hours. Semester courses scheduled for 18 weeks duration are the equivalent of 60 clock-hours. Year-long courses are 36 weeks in length and require 120 hours of instruction. All grades are to be reported quarterly.

c. Credit Values unit

(1) Semester credit. Semester grades represent two 9-week reporting periods, which make up that period of instruction. Final semester grades represent a completed course of 18-weeks' duration or 60 clock-hours of instruction. One-half credit will be entered on the student's permanent record.

(2) Year credit. The final grade for a completed course of 36 weeks or 120 instructional hours represents student achievement for a year's course as reported for the 9- and 18-week reporting periods throughout the year. The credit value for a year's course is one Carnegie unit.

(3) Repeating a failed course. Courses that are failed may be repeated to earn credit. The student's permanent record will show that the course was "failed" and repeated. If the repeated course is "passed," credit will be given for the course. The grade will be for the most recent course taken. The transcript will indicate that a course is repeated by placing the # sign in front of the course that was first taken. The last course grade earned will be the grade used in computing the grade point average (GPA).

(4) Repeating a credit course. With the permission of the principal, and on a space-available basis, a course for which credit is granted may be repeated for content or skill mastery. Credit will be given only once and the grade will be for the most recent course taken. The student's permanent record will show that the course was repeated. Students repeating a course in which weighted grades are assigned will receive credit only for the most recent course taken. The GPA will reflect the most recent course taken. The most recent grade earned is the grade reported even if the last grade earned is lower than the previous grade earned. Students and parents should be made aware of this guidance when a student is repeating a course for which he or she has already received a passing grade. If the student has received a letter grade of "D" in a course and repeats it to improve and fails the course, the failing course grade of "F" will be recorded as it is the last grade earned.

(5) Repeating courses before graduation. If a course is repeated before the student graduates, the grade received for the repeated course will be entered on the student's permanent record. The grade for the repeated course may alter the student's GPA and class ranking.

(6) Repeating a course as a postgraduate student. If a course is repeated by a postgraduate student, the grade received for the repeated course will be entered on the student's permanent record. The grade for the repeated course may alter the student's GPA, but will not alter the student's class ranking.

(7) Other ways to earn credit. In addition to granting credit for courses taught in scheduled classes, provision is made for credit-by-examination covering the course content ordinarily included in a regular school course in the subject. Provision is also made for college courses, planned programs of independent study, extension and correspondence study, and summer school. All of these have been established as comprising the equivalency of a unit of work, meeting DoDEA curriculum requirements, and being approved by the principal.

(8) Credit by examination unit. Credit by examination requires the teacher to use the same or comparable assessment device and procedure that would be used during the regular class examination period. Such in-house exams should measure a student's mastery level of the course of study. Students who earn credit by examination will receive a mark of "P" for passing the examination. The credit is applicable to graduation requirements but will not be used in computing the student's GPA. Credit may be granted by the principal for satisfactory performance on nationally recognized proficiency examinations, as available, in a student's native language. Such exams should be age-appropriate and assess a variety of communication skills (e.g., speaking, reading, and writing).

(9) College courses for credit prior to graduation. A college level course may be used in place of a high school subject required for graduation, if the course content covers the same course content prescribed by the DoDEA curriculum. If the course does not satisfy DoDEA curriculum requirements, the course may earn students elective credit toward graduation. Students may be excused from school to attend a local college to take a college level course in lieu of a high school course in cases of scheduling conflicts or unavailability of certified instructors, etc. In such cases, high school credit will be granted toward high school graduation requirements. The grade awarded by the college will be used for the GPA and class ranking. In

addition, college courses not taken during school hours may, at the student's request, be used by the student to satisfy DoDEA graduation requirements, GPA, and class ranking. These include evening, summer, and weekend courses.

(10) Course enrollment without credit. With the principal's and teacher's permissions, and on a space-available basis, a student may enroll in an audit status (without grade or credit) for content or skill mastery, or to satisfy an interest. The student's permanent record will record the course with an audit notation, and will not show grade or credit notation. The course will not affect the student's GPA, class standing, or ranking.

(11) Dropping a class. Students may only drop/add courses within the first 10 days of entering a DoDEA school. Principals may—in unusual circumstances—use their discretion to allow a student to drop/add a course outside this 10-day rule. This should be a rare occurrence. A student may withdraw from a course within this 10-day window and upon request of the parent/sponsor of a student under 18, or for a student who is 18 with notification to the parent/sponsor. The request, with justification to withdraw, must be submitted in writing to the guidance counselor. All withdrawals must be documented. Exceptions to the guidance will be determined by the principal with advice from the guidance counselor and/or the teacher of the course.

(12) Transfer of Credits from Non-accredited Educational Programs. It is DoDEA policy that all DoDEA secondary schools will review credits earned by their students from non-accredited educational programs. For the purposes of this manual, a non-accredited educational program is a program of instruction not recognized by one of the 50 state departments of education (not including the departments of education for Guam and Puerto Rico), or one of the six independent regional accrediting associations. It does not create, and does not intend to create, any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable by law.

(13) Placement and Validation Responsibility

(a) The DoDEA principal is responsible for the appropriate placement of a student transferring from a non-accredited school to a DoDEA high school. If the principal has concerns about previous credits that the student has earned in a course, he or she may offer the student one of the following options for validation:

1. Option One. The student must demonstrate mastery of the subject area by receiving a passing grade in an appropriate course assessment. The credit earned by such an appropriate course assessment will be applicable to DoDEA graduation requirements, and the transferred grades may be used in the calculation of the student's GPA.

2. Option Two. The student must perform successfully in a higher level course when the courses are sequential in nature (e.g., English language arts, mathematics, history, science). If the student successfully performs at the higher level, transfer credits and grades earned will be accepted at face value based on the DoDEA grading scale.

(b) All non-accredited transcripts will be reviewed by the respective DoDEA school. The student and/or parent has 10 school days after receiving an official letter from the school, to notify the DoDEA counselor or principal in writing, stating the option they have chosen. If Option One is selected, the student and/or parent should be given at least 30 school days from the date of notification to prepare for the assessments unless the 30-day requirement is waived by the student and/or parent.

(14) Allowable credits. The maximum allowable transfer of non-accredited credits per semester is 4 units.

d. Grade Level Classification

(1) Freshman class (9th grade). A student must have met the requirements for completion of grade 8 and/or must have been previously enrolled in grade 9 and earned less than 6 units.

(2) Sophomore class (10th grade). A student must have earned a minimum of 6 units of credit in preparation for graduation.

(a) An exception may be made if a student enters a DoDEA school after the beginning of the freshman year, provided the student is still able to meet the criteria for normal sequencing of coursework toward graduation as indicated on the student's Six-Year Plan.

(b) DoDEA students participate in a DoDEA-funded PSAT in their sophomore year.

(3) Junior class (11th grade). A student must have earned a minimum of 12 units of credit.

(a) A rising sophomore with 12 credits may be considered a junior if the student's Six-Year Plan indicates 19 credits to be earned by the end of the junior year.

(b) Students who plan to spend the usual four years in high school (grades 9-12) before entering college full-time must take the PSAT/NMQT in their junior year. Although DoDEA students take the PSAT in their sophomore year, they are required to take it again in their junior year if they are spending four years in high school in order to enter the National Merit Scholarship Program.

(4) Senior class (12th grade). A student must have satisfactorily completed grade 11 and earned a minimum of 19 units of credit. However, exceptions to the unit requirement may be made by the principal if it is possible for the student to comply with all graduation requirements by the conclusion of the senior year.

(5) Exceptions. All exceptions should be requested by the student/sponsor via the guidance counselor. The guidance counselor should submit the request for exception to the principal for approval.

(6) Postgraduate students. Those students who have already earned a high school diploma but would otherwise be eligible to attend a DoDEA high school and who still do not meet specific college entrance requirements, may be enrolled in a DoDEA high school in the category of space-available, tuition-paying, in order to meet college requirements.

(a) In most cases, students transferring to DoDEA high schools from high schools in the United States during their junior or senior year, are able to meet the entrance requirements for the type of post-secondary institution they wish to attend. However, there are some students who, because of frequent transfers or having attended high schools where certain college requirements were not offered, are able to earn the required units for high school graduation but are not able to meet specific college entrance requirements. Enrollment for such students should be restricted to those courses that are required for admission to institutions of higher education, or that are determined by the principal as having specific value to the student's future vocational opportunities or educational program.

(b) Students admitted under this policy will be required to maintain satisfactory standards of achievement and conduct.

(c) In no case may a student who has completed 8 semesters of high school or graduated from high school participate in interscholastic activities.

e. Requirements for Graduation

(1) Issuance of a DoDEA diploma. Students who meet the minimum graduation requirements as set forth in DoDEA Regulation 2000.1 (Reference (a)), will receive a DoDEA diploma. Students must be enrolled in a DoDEA high school and complete a minimum of two (2) full year courses during their senior year in order to receive a diploma.

(a) The two types of DoDEA diplomas are Regular and Honors.

(b) Students who elect to receive a high school diploma from a non-DoDEA school will not receive a DoDEA diploma.

(2) Required and elective courses. A required course is one that every student must complete for graduation. An elective course is one that is not required for graduation but is chosen by the student after consultation with the counselor, and/or the faculty advisor, in order to meet future educational and career needs. If, after conferring with the counselor and subject matter teacher, the student and/or sponsor insists on the student taking a course that is not recommended, the counselor should follow up with a message to the parent stating the reasons why the course is not recommended for the student.

(a) DoDEA will make every effort to support the family in its decision and to prepare the student for graduation.

(b) DoDEA has an open enrollment policy for all of its courses.

(3) Graduation requirements. Graduation requirements are found in Reference (a). Students must earn a minimum of 26 credits and a minimum GPA of 2.0 to graduate from a DoDEA school.

(4) Honors diploma criteria

(a) A student must earn unweighted passing course grades and take the requisite exams in a minimum of four Advanced Placement (AP) courses.

(b) A student must obtain a cumulative GPA of 3.8 or higher calculated from student grades attained at the end of the second semester of the graduating year based on DoDEA's GPA calculation. AP courses may be weighted for calculating the GPA only after the requisite AP exam has been taken.

(5) Transfer students. DoDEA will accept the official grades and courses of transfer students.

(a) Courses interrupted by transfer may be continued to completion if, in the judgment of the principal, the time lost in transfer did not impact negatively on the student's chances for successful completion.

(b) Students enrolling in a DoDEA school during their senior year may graduate by meeting the requirements of their previous school if, through no fault of their own, they cannot meet DoDEA graduation requirements.

(6) Early graduation

(a) Generally, students are expected to complete an 8 semester high school program to prepare for graduation. Upon application, students may graduate early after completing graduation requirements if they meet one of the following criteria:

1. They have clearly demonstrated scholastic aptitude or vocational readiness.
2. There is a financial need for early entry into the labor market.
3. Health or other mitigating circumstances would best be served.

(b) An application for early graduation, with parent/sponsor approval, must be submitted in writing to the principal prior to course selection for grade 12 students who wish to graduate at the end of the first semester of their senior year.

(c) All students qualifying for high school graduation will receive an official diploma.

(7) Students with disabilities. Students with disabilities, as defined by DoD Instruction 1342.12 (Reference (b)), may qualify for graduation by either satisfying the requirements stated

above, as applicable, or by meeting the objective for graduation in their Individualized Education Program. (See p. 10-4 of Chapter 10 of the Special Education Procedural Guide (Reference (c)).)

(8) Principal's discretion. Students may graduate when they have met the graduation requirements that usually are scheduled over a 4-year (8-semester) period. In individual cases, the principal may request waivers of graduation requirements if, in his or her opinion, such action is considered to be in the best interest of the student. When a principal requests a waiver for graduation purposes, he or she must complete the DoDEA Graduation Waiver Request form in coordination with the district superintendent.

(a) The principal must forward all DoDEA Waiver Request Forms to the district superintendent by April 1st of the graduating year.

(b) The district superintendent will then review and forward the DoDEA Graduation Waiver Request Forms to the Area pupil personnel services (PPS) coordinator by April 8th of the graduating year.

(c) The Area PPS coordinator will keep a running spreadsheet as the requests are filed and will forward them to the DoDEA HQ PPS coordinator no later than April 15th of the graduating year.

(d) The HQ PPS coordinator will coordinate all waiver information for presentation to the Director of DoDEA by April 22nd of the graduating year. The HQ PPS coordinator will inform the district superintendent of any concerns or approvals by the Director, DoDEA no later than May 1st of the graduating year.

(9) Awarding of diplomas. Graduation diplomas, with covers, will be issued upon completion of high school requirements. DoDEA students who have not completed all requirements by the end of the 8 semesters may be awarded a diploma upon documented completion of required course work at an accredited high school normally within 1 year of withdrawal from the DoDEA high school. The student should make specific arrangements with the school administration prior to withdrawal to include anticipated dates of completion.

(10) Foreign language/mathematics credit for 7th and 8th grade students. Reference (a) authorizes enrollment for 7th and 8th grade students in 9th–12th grade foreign language courses and Algebra I and above mathematics courses. Students enrolled in these courses will be awarded the appropriate units of high school credit for successful course completion. The credits will be considered as fulfilling graduation requirements. However, the grades earned in courses taken in grades 7 and 8 will not be used when computing the GPA or class ranking for high school students.