

**NEW MEXICO PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS  
FOR FRESHMAN ENTERING  
2009-2010**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS  
(FAQ)  
March 2009**

**Note: The following information is non-regulatory guidance.**

**COURSE AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

**1. What courses are required for students entering grade 9 in the 2009-2010 school year?**

[HS Graduation Requirements](#)

- A:**
- 4** units in English
  - 4** units in Mathematics, of which 1 unit shall be equivalent to or higher than the level of Algebra 2
  - 3** units in Science, 2 units of which shall have a laboratory component
  - 3** ½ units in Social Science; including: U.S and World History and Geography, Government, Economics, and ½ unit of New Mexico History
  - 1** unit in Physical Education
  - 1** unit in one of the following: a career cluster course, workplace readiness or a language other than English.
  - 7** ½ elective units

**2. Why is it important to know the correct course codes?**

**A:** Districts have the responsibility to report to the state the courses that students are taking. In order to ensure the students are on track for graduation, the following course codes are to be used unless Alternative Credit Courses are approved by PED using the Alternative Credit process.

- I.** 1001 English/Language Arts I  
1002 English/Language Arts II  
1003 English/Language Arts III  
1004 English/Language Arts IV
  
- II.** 2031 Algebra 1  
2041 Algebra 2  
**See PED STARS Manual** for names and numbers of other Mathematics courses. Also, for additional information see Question 10 Math Requirements/Information.
  
- III.** 3 units in Science, 2 units of which shall have a laboratory component.

- IV. 2706 World History and Geography – 1 unit
- 2717 New Mexico History – ½ unit
- 2729 United State History and Geography – 1 unit
- 2730 Government – ½ unit
- 2741 Economics – ½ unit
- OR
- 2739 Principles of Democracy – 1 unit (this unit substitutes for Government and Economics if taken for a year)
  
- V. 2305 Physical Education

**3. Students are required to earn one credit in an advanced placement course, an honors course, a dual credit course or a distance learning course. What is the difference between an honors course and an advanced placement course?**

**A:** Honors courses are developed locally to meet the needs of accelerated students. Honors classes offer the same curriculum that non-honors courses offer, but are more challenging. Honors courses are generally faster paced and cover topics more in-depth. However, these courses are not usually considered equivalent to college-level work. [Section 22-13-1.4 NMSA 1978](#)

Advanced Placement (AP) courses are taught by high school teachers trained in advanced placement course delivery provided through the [College Board](#). These courses are more difficult and involve more work than standard classes. AP courses are considered college-level courses, and may allow a student to earn college credit depending upon college and university policies for the institution the student may later attend.

**4. What is the difference between concurrent enrollment and dual credit?**

**A:** If a high school student is taking a course for credit at an institution of higher education, but not receiving high school graduation credit at the primary enrollment high school location, the student is considered to be concurrently enrolled. If, however, the same student was taking a class for credit at an institution of higher education which also counts for credit toward high school graduation, the student would be considered to be dually enrolled. Students who are enrolled in a dual credit course do so at public expense.

**5. What is distance learning and a distance learning course?**

**A:** Distance learning refers to the technology and educational process used to provide credit or grade bearing courses when the course provider and the distance-learning student are not necessarily physically present at the same time or place. Distance learning does not include educational software that utilizes only on-site teaching. A distance learning course is one where the student and primary instructor are separated by time or space and linked by technology.

Computer Assisted Instruction without an online teacher is not considered a distance learning course. Thus, distance learning does not include educational software that utilizes only on-site teaching and self-paced learning. Online courses that utilize highly-qualified teachers at-a-distance, such as those offered by IDEAL-NM [Welcome to IDEAL-NM - Home](#), do meet the criteria for distance learning courses.

**6. What is the difference between a career cluster course and a workplace readiness course?**

**A:** A career cluster course is an identified career-technical education course. These courses are part of an aligned, sequential series of courses within a related grouping of occupations in a given industry sector. Completing a series of career cluster courses may result in an industry recognized certification or post-secondary degree and add relevance to the high school curricula.

A workplace readiness course is designed specifically to address entry-level career skill requirements, standards and benchmarks as identified under Career-Technical Education in the “Standards of Excellence.” This does not include courses already identified as meeting other specified graduation requirements.

**7. What is the procedure for awarding graduation credit to students who complete specified career technical education courses?**

**A:** The Alternative Credit Process is to be followed.

**OTHER GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

**8. What is a Next Step Plan?**

**A:** Next Step Plans benefit students by helping to outline career plans beginning with the 8<sup>th</sup> grade year and prior to graduation. At the end of grades 8 through 11, each student prepares an interim next-step plan, based on college and career readiness data that establishes the coursework for each grade.

For a student receiving special education support and services, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) transition plan must meet the federal Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requirements, which satisfy the next-step plan requirements.

**9. Do students have to take and pass the New Mexico state standards based graduation examination?**

**A:** Yes. Students are required to take and pass the graduation examination. Students with an IEP and or who are English Language Learners may receive accommodations which could include: the modification of content, instruction, and or learning outcomes for diverse student needs.

## MATH REQUIREMENTS / INFORMATION

### **10. Which math courses count as meeting the requirements for high school math?**

**A:** Math courses that align to the New Mexico 9-12 math standards or higher can be counted.  
For example:

2031 Algebra 1  
2041 Algebra 2  
2046 Geometry  
2080 Interactive Math Program (IMP-I)  
2081 Interactive Math Program (IMP-II)  
2082 Interactive Math Program (IMP-III)  
2063 Probability & Statistics  
2053 Pre-Calculus  
2058 AP Calculus AB

### **11. Some 9<sup>th</sup> grade students enter high school who are not ready to take Algebra 1. What courses can they take?**

**A:** Each district is to monitor student progress in achieving the standards. From the end of grade 8 and in grades 9 through 12, each student must work with his or her school to develop what is known as a Next Step Plan. If a student is not ready to take a particular course or is not making progress toward achieving the standards, then the Next Step Plan must be developed and revised yearly to reflect a course sequence which will lead to achieving the standards. For a student receiving special education (or gifted education services), the IEP transition plan serves as the Next Step Plan.

For students who need extra assistance to master a subject, or more time to develop prerequisite skills, the Next Step Plan may include elective or other classes where they receive more intense help through individual or small-group tutoring, different materials, specialized assignments, or perhaps just more opportunity to practice. This may focus on learning more effective study or organizational skills. In these situations, teachers conduct short cycle assessments, progress checks with students (often using computerized assessments) so they can determine if the more intense level of instruction is resulting in better grades or subject mastery.

### **12. Can credit be awarded for Pre-Algebra?**

**A:** Districts can award credit for a Pre-Algebra course if it is part of the student's Next Step Plan, and the student otherwise meets the requirements of the 4 math units.

### **13. Do intervention math courses count as one of the 4 required math units for graduation?**

**A:** No, an intervention math course does not count as one of the 4 required math units for graduation. Intervention math courses are to be offered in conjunction with a regular course and provide the extra support that some students may need in order to be successful in the regular course. Examples of these courses include:

2008 Pre-Algebra, Intervention  
2009 Algebra 1, Intervention  
2010 Geometry 1, Intervention  
2018 Algebra 2, Intervention

### **14. Do students have to take Geometry?**

**A:** Every student must have the opportunity to achieve all of the 9-12 standards which are assessed on the grade 11 NMSBA. Links for the NMSBA Assessment Frameworks and the Performance Level Descriptors are listed below. Since geometry is one of the three strands in the 9-12 math standards, the recommendation is that every student take Geometry.

Link to the NMSBA Assessment Frameworks:

<http://www.ped.state.nm.us/AssessmentAccountability/AssessmentEvaluation/assessmentFrameworks.html>

Link to the NMSBA grade 11 Performance Level Descriptors:

<http://www.ped.state.nm.us/div/acc.assess/assess/d1/07MathEnglish11.pdf>

Link to the NMSBA grades 3-9 Performance Level Descriptors

[http://www.ped.state.nm.us/div/acc.assess/assess/d1/descriptors\\_2006/index.html](http://www.ped.state.nm.us/div/acc.assess/assess/d1/descriptors_2006/index.html)

### **15. Beginning in school year 2011-12, when a parent submits a written permission for his or her child to complete a lesser math unit than Algebra 2, what math courses can the student take?**

**A:** The student would take the required Algebra 1, recommended Geometry, plus two other math courses (**Section 22-13-1.1 I (2) NMSA 1978**). The PED anticipates publishing Administrative Code that permits a written parental request to complete a lesser math course only after the student has taken the grade 11 NMSBA.

For additional information or clarification on required subjects/graduation requirements for all students in grades K-12 please contact the New Mexico Public Education Department, Humanities Bureau at (505) 827-6573.