

Credit Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Factsheet for Virginia's Parents

Verified Credits and Credit Accommodations

In Virginia, students must earn a certain number of **verified credits** to graduate with a **Standard Diploma**. A verified credit is awarded when a student successfully **completes a course and passes the corresponding state assessment**, known as the **Standards of Learning (SOL) test**. For students with disabilities, standardized testing may not reflect their knowledge and abilities. Credit accommodations are **flexible options** that allow students with disabilities to meet graduation requirements and earn verified credits without lowering academic standards. They enable students to show what they have learned in ways that better align with their abilities.

The **Virginia Board of Education** developed credit accommodations to ensure that students with disabilities and other challenges have fair access to earning a **Standard Diploma** and are not unfairly disadvantaged by traditional testing requirements. These accommodations ensure students can **demonstrate their knowledge and skills** in a way that aligns with their individual learning needs and post-secondary goals.

Who Can Receive Credit Accommodations?

Students with an **Individualized Education Program (IEP)** or a **Section 504 Plan** may be eligible for credit accommodations. The IEP or 504 team determines whether students qualify based on their unique needs and learning challenges. Credit accommodations are only available for students pursuing a **Standard Diploma**. Other than **one credit accommodation** to meet the world language requirement for students with an IEP, credit accommodations are **not** applicable to the **Advanced Studies Diploma**.

How Do Credit Accommodations Work?

These are some of the credit accommodations that may be available to students with disabilities.

- **Use alternative courses:** Substitute certain required courses with approved alternatives.
- **Take different assessments:** Use locally approved assessments rather than the state assessment.
- **Earn locally verified credits:** For students who have taken the SOL test twice and scored in a specific range, locally verified credits enable them to demonstrate competency through coursework, career and technical education (CTE) assessments, or other approved methods.
- **Use special permission accommodations:** Students can meet requirements through approved alternatives like portfolio assessments or work-based learning evaluations. They require approval from the Virginia Department of Education.
- **Use work-based learning experiences:** Apply for verified credits through practical, hands-on work experience that aligns with their post-secondary goals.

Credit accommodations can apply to verified credits for English, Math, Science, History, and Social Science.

Credit Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

How Can Parents Request Credit Accommodations?

If you think your child may benefit from credit accommodations, you can:

1. **Talk to the IEP or 504 team:** Discuss how credit accommodations can support your child's learning and graduation goals.
2. **Review available options:** Work with the school to explore alternative courses and assessment methods that fit your child's needs.
3. **Advocate for necessary supports:** Ensure the accommodations align with your child's long-term academic and career goals.
4. **Request written documentation:** Ensure that any credit accommodations are clearly outlined in your child's IEP or 504 Plan for transparency and accountability.

Why are Credit Accommodations Important?

It is important to point out that students with disabilities using credit accommodations must still **meet the overall credit requirements** set by the Virginia Board of Education to earn their Standard diploma. Credit Accommodations do not reduce the number of credits required but provide **alternative ways** to meet those requirements. Parents can start discussing credit accommodations with the school **as early as middle or high school if their child struggles** to pass their SOLs to ensure they have the necessary support for graduation success.

Credit accommodations allow students with disabilities to **stay on track for graduation** while demonstrating their knowledge in ways that reflect their abilities. These accommodations help ensure that all students have a fair opportunity to earn a **Standard Diploma** and prepare for life after high school.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/RESOURCES:

[Credit Accommodations for Students with Disabilities | Virginia Department of Education](#)

[Credits for Graduation | Virginia Department of Education](#)

[Standard Diploma: Graduation Requirements | Virginia Department of Education](#)

[Profile of a VA Graduate.pdf](#) [A PEATC Factsheet](#)

PEATC's mission focuses on building positive futures for Virginia's children by working collaboratively with families, schools and communities to improve opportunities for excellence in education and success in school and community life.

For more information about us, please contact:

www.peatc.org | 703-923-0010 | partners@peatc.org

Hablamos Español. Free and confidential assistance available in 300+ languages.



The contents of this factsheet were developed under a grant from the US Department of Education, #H328M200002. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the US Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government Project Officer. PEATC is not a legal services agency and cannot provide legal advice or legal representation. Any information contained in this factsheet is not intended as legal advice and should not be used as a substitution for legal advice.

