



Summary of Changes to Graduation Requirements due to COVID-19

In general, students in New York need to earn 22 credits (44 credits in NYC) and pass 4+1 exams to graduate from high school. For details, see AFC's guides on [New York graduation requirements](#) & [graduation options for students with disabilities](#). However, due to COVID-19, June & August 2020 and January 2021 Regents exams were cancelled. New York State also changed graduation requirements for students who were planning to take the exams that were cancelled.

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) released this [guidance](#) and this [FAQ](#) about how cancelled June & August 2020 Regents exams will affect graduation requirements. NYSED released additional [guidance](#) and an [FAQ](#) about the January 2021 Regents exam cancellations. A summary is below.

Course Credit

- High School students should participate in the blended or remote learning opportunities being offered by their school.
- So long as the student meets the standards assessed in their coursework for the semester, they should be granted diploma credit for the course.

Regents Exams and Other 4+1 Exemptions:

Students in grades 7-12 are permanently exempt from taking a Regents exam that they planned to take in January 2021 if, during the first semester of 2020-21, they:

- Pass a course that ordinarily would end with the January 2021 Regents exam; or
- Complete a make-up program to earn course credit; or
- Need this exam to graduate at the end of the first semester of 2020-21.
→ *NOTE: this is the only way a student can get a January 2021 Regents exemption for a course they are not enrolled in during the first semester of the 2020-21 school year.*

Students in grades 7-12 are permanently exempt from passing Regents exams that they planned to take in June or August 2020 if they passed the associated course by the end of August 2020 and ANY of the following were true:

- In Spring or Summer 2020, they were in a course leading to the exam;
- In Spring or Summer 2020, they received academic intervention, supplemental instruction, or tutoring to prepare for the exam;
- They informed the school they wished to take or retake the exam in June or August 2020; or
- They took or retook the exam in June 2019, August 2019, or January 2020.

Career Development and Occupational Skills (CDOS) Credentials: Students who prepared for a CDOS during COVID-19 can get the credential if they otherwise demonstrate the knowledge and skills outlined in commencement-level CDOS learning standards:

- CDOS OPTION 1:
 - Students on this pathway are exempt from the credits/hours they were planning to fulfill in the Spring 2020 semester;
 - During the 2020-21 school year, schools can provide work-based learning (WBL) and CTE programs virtually. Schools may still award CDOS Credentials even if they are unable to provide a portion of WBL hours due to remote learning.
- CDOS OPTION 2: Students on this pathway who planned to graduate in the 2019-20 school year should have been exempt from the CDOS assessment and awarded the credential so long as they otherwise met CDOS learning standards.
- SUPERINTENDENT DETERMINATION PATHWAY: Students with disabilities can still earn a local diploma through this pathway by working towards a CDOS using the above guidelines.

How will Regents exam exemptions appear on my transcript?

- Students who get an exemption will see a score of “WA” or “E” next to the exam on their transcript.
- Honors/Advanced Regents Diploma determinations will be made without consideration of the exempted Regents exams scores.
- Safety Net options are still available to students with disabilities and English Language Learners. Students with disabilities using the Compensatory Safety Net cannot use an exempted Regents exam to compensate for a lower Regents exam score (45-54).

If I do not want a Regents Exam exemption or CDOS waiver, what can I do?

Parents can decline any COVID-19 exam exemption or CDOS waiver. Parents may wish to decline an exemption or waiver if they want their child to remain in high school rather than graduating with an exemption. To decline a waiver or exemption, parents must:

- Send a letter, email or text to your school. Be sure to include:
 - Student’s name and date of birth
 - Name of school
 - Parent name and contact information (email, phone number, address).
 - List the exams or CDOS requirements you do NOT want your child exempted from.
- OR fill out the form on page 3 of this [NYSED guidance](#).
- For students in NYC Department of Education (DOE) schools, check out this [DOE guidance](#) about declining waivers and exemptions.

Parents may decline some exemptions or waivers and accept others. But, once you decline an exemption or waiver, you cannot request that it be applied later. Students, regardless of age, may not decline an exemption or waiver for themselves

High School Equivalency & TASC

Many TASC test centers are closed due to COVID-19. To see if a test center near you is open, click [here](#).

In general, students who leave high school without a diploma can earn an HSE diploma by passing Regents exams or TASC sub-tests in five areas (reading, writing, math, social studies and science). **Usually, students must pass at least one TASC sub-test.** For details, see this [NYSED FAQ](#).

However, while TASC test centers are closed due to COVID-19, students can earn an HSE diploma without passing any TASC sub-tests or other exams if they:

- Enroll in an approved High School Equivalency program (like P2G);
- In 3 or more sub-test areas, have:
 - Passing Regents exam scores, and/or
 - Regents exam COVID-19 exemptions; and/or
 - Passing TASC or GED sub-test scores;
- For any remaining sub-tests, complete teacher-provided assessments for each subject.

Even beyond this emergency period, if a student's transcript shows that they were exempt from one or more Regents exams due to COVID-19, they will also be exempt from that sub-test of the TASC.

For details about COVID-19 TASC exemptions, see this [NYSED guidance](#).

NOTE: Students can enroll in a free, approved High School Equivalency program in NYC by emailing ReferralCenters@schools.nyc.gov

This fact sheet does not constitute legal advice. This fact sheet attempts to summarize existing policies or laws without stating the opinion of AFC. If you have a legal problem, please contact an attorney or advocate.

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