

Complete Courses and Requirements

Ohio law outlines the course requirements all students must complete to earn a diploma. Ohio students must earn a minimum of 20 course units in specified subject areas. **Districts and schools may have requirements that exceed the state minimums outlined below.**

Complete Courses

Take and earn a state minimum of 20 credits in specific subjects.

General Course Requirements	State Minimum
English language arts	4 credits
Health	½ credit
Mathematics (#MATH)	4 credits
Physical education (#PysEd)	½ credit
Science (#Sci)	3 credits
Social studies (#SS)	3 credits
Electives (/Topics/Ohio-Graduation-Requirements/Graduation-Requirements-2014-2017/Electives-Requirement-for-Graduation)	5 credits

Other Requirements

Students must receive instruction in economics and financial literacy (#FinLit) (in high school) and complete at least two semesters of fine arts (during grades 7-12).

** Beginning with students who enter 9th grade after July 1, 2022, students will need ½ credit of financial literacy. Check back for more updates on this change.*

***Fine arts may not be required for students in career-tech programs unless it is a component of local course requirements.*

Beginning with students who enter 9th grade after July 1, 2022, students must receive instruction on the proper interactions with peace officers. This instruction is required to occur within at least one course required for high school graduation.

MATHEMATICS

Students must earn four mathematics units, which must include one unit of Algebra 2 or the equivalent of Algebra 2. Exceptions: Algebra 2 or Advanced Computer science are not required for students following career-technical education pathways (<http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Ohios-Learning-Standards/Mathematics/Math-Graduation-Requirements/Career-Technical-Pathway-Algebra-II-Replacement-Guidelines.pdf.aspx>) . However, students still need four units in mathematics. A student may choose to apply one unit of Advanced Computer Science to satisfy one unit of Algebra 2 or equivalent. Districts also may use credit in a computer science course approved by the Department to satisfy a student's mathematics credit. See the Department's Computer Science Guidance Document (<http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio/Computer-Science/Resources-for-Computer-Science/Computer-Science-Guidelines.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US>) for more information. See Ohio's High School Mathematics Pathways (<https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio/Mathematics/Resources-for-Mathematics/Math-Pathways>) webpage for a list of some courses that are considered equivalent to Algebra 2.

Notes: Curriculum Choice (<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio/Ohios-Learning-Standards/Ohio-Curriculum-Choices>) expired with the class of 2019 and is no longer an available option for students. Postsecondary institutions may require algebra II, or its equivalent, for college admission.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

School districts may adopt policies that would exempt students who participate in interscholastic athletics, marching band or cheerleading for two full seasons or an approved Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) program for two years from the physical education requirement. Starting with the 2019-2020 school year, districts may include show choir as a permissible activity as part of the PE Waiver policy. Students satisfying the physical education waiver must take another course of study of at least 60 hours of instruction (1/2 unit).

SCIENCE

Science units must include one unit of physical sciences, one unit of life sciences and one unit of advanced study in one or more of the following sciences: chemistry, physics or other physical science; advanced biology or other life science; astronomy, physical geology or other earth or space science. A student can choose to apply one credit in advanced computer science to satisfy one unit of advanced science (excluding biology or life sciences). Here is a link to the Computer Science Guidance Document (<http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio/Computer-Science/Resources-for-Computer-Science/Computer-Science-Guidelines-2.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US>) .

SOCIAL STUDIES

Students must include ½ unit of American history, ½ unit of American government, and ½ unit in world history and civilizations (for students in the classes of 2021 and beyond) in the three required social studies units.

ELECTIVE CREDITS

Elective units must include one or any combination of world language, fine arts, business, career-technical education, family and consumer sciences, technology, agricultural education or English language arts, mathematics, science or social studies courses not otherwise required.

Students who entered the ninth grade on or after July 1, 2010 must earn five elective units for graduation course requirements. They must be selected from “one or any combination of foreign language, fine arts, business, career-technical education, family and consumer sciences, Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps programs, technology, agricultural education, or English language arts, mathematics, science, or social studies courses not otherwise required.”

If a district chooses to require elective units in addition to the five required for state graduation requirements, those additional credits and the allowable course areas are subject to locally determined policy. Credits earned from coursework such as additional physical education, or additional health courses may not be used to meet the five units of electives requirement.

Note: While not a state requirement for graduation, many four-year colleges and universities require a minimum of two years of sequential world language study at the secondary level as a college admissions requirement. This is the case for many in-state and out-of-state colleges and universities.

Completion of a driver education course, if made available to high school students by the school district, may be substituted for the above electives for up to ½ unit.

FINANCIAL LITERACY

Ohio law requires students to receive instruction in financial literacy (<https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio/Financial-Literacy/Financial-Literacy-in-High-School>) as part of the high school graduation requirements. However, it is up to local districts to determine how to best meet the needs of their students. For example, the financial literacy content may be incorporated into another course, or some districts may require students to take a standalone financial literacy course for a half credit that can meet either a graduation requirement for social studies or an elective. Beginning with students who begin 9th grade after July 1, 2022, students will be required to receive ½ credit of financial literacy to graduate. Check back for more updates on this change.

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