



# Department of Education & Workforce

## Honors Diploma Seal



### Guidelines for Schools and Districts

Under Ohio's long-term graduation requirements, students must demonstrate readiness as a part of their pathway to earning a high school diploma. To demonstrate readiness, students must earn at least two seals, one of which must be a state-defined seal. The Honors Seal is a state-defined seal. Students will earn the Honors Seal by satisfying the requirements for one of six honors diplomas.

### Honors Seal – General Requirements

*Ohio Revised Code Sections 3313.61(B)* (<http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/3313.61>), and *3313.6114(C)(6)* (<http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/3313.6114>); *Ohio Administrative Code Rule 3301-16-02* (<http://codes.ohio.gov/oac/3301-16-02v1>).

To receive the Honors Seal, students must earn one of six honors diplomas outlined below:

1. Academic Honors Diploma;

**Download the  
Honors Seal**



(<http://getattachment/Topics/Ohio-s-Graduation-Requirements/Ohio-s-Graduation-Requirements/Graduation-Seals/HD-btn.png.aspx>).

**Print Guidelines**

2. Career-Tech Honors Diploma;
3. International Baccalaureate Honors Diploma;
4. STEM Honors Diploma;
5. Arts Honors Diploma;
6. Civics and Social Sciences Honors Diploma.

## ACADEMIC HONORS DIPLOMA

Students must meet all but one of the following criteria for the honors diploma (but must also meet the minimum state and local number of units required for graduation):

Math: 4 units

Science: 4 units, including 2 units of advanced science

Social Studies: 4 units

GPA: 3.5 on a 4.0 scale

ACT/SAT:

- ACT: Score of 27 or higher
- SAT: Score of 1280 or higher

Fine Arts: 1 unit

World Languages: 3 units of one world language, or no less than 2 units of each of two world languages studied

## CAREER-TECH HONORS DIPLOMA

Students must meet all but one of the following criteria for the honors diploma (but must also meet the minimum state and local number of units required for graduation):

Math: 4 units

Science: 4 units, including 2 units of advanced science

Social Studies: 4 units

World Languages: 2 units of one world language

Electives: 4 units of career-technical courses

GPA: 3.5 on a 4.0 scale

ACT/SAT/WorkKeys:

- ACT: Score of 27 or higher,
- SAT: Score of 1280 or higher,
- WorkKeys: Score of 6 or higher on Reading for Information and 6 or higher on Applied Math

Field Experience: Complete a field experience and document the experience in a portfolio specific to the student's area of focus

Portfolio: Develop a comprehensive portfolio of work based on the student's field experience or a topic related to the student's area of focus.

Additional Assessments: Earn an industry-recognized credential or achieve proficiency benchmark for appropriate Ohio Career-Technical Competency Assessment or equivalent

## INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE HONORS DIPLOMA

Students must meet all but one of the following criteria for the honors diploma (but must also meet the minimum state and local number of units required for graduation):

Math: 4 units

Science: 4 units, including biology, chemistry, and at least 1 unit in an additional advanced science

course

Social Sciences: 4 units

World Languages: 4 units, with at least 2 units of each of two world languages studied

Fine Arts: 1 unit

GPA: 3.5 on a 4.0 scale

ACT/SAT:

- ACT: Score of 27 or higher,

- SAT: Score of 1280 or higher

Field Experience: Complete a field experience and document the experience in a portfolio specific to the student's area of focus

Portfolio: Develop a comprehensive portfolio of work based on the student's field experience or a topic related to the student's area of focus

## **STEM HONORS DIPLOMA**

Students must meet all but one of the following criteria for the honors diploma (but must also meet the minimum state and local number of units required for graduation):

Math: 5 units

Science: 5 units, including 2 units of advanced science

Social Studies: 3 units

World Languages: 3 units of one world language, or no less than 2 units of each of two world languages studied

Fine Arts: 1 unit

Electives: 2 units with a focus in STEM (science, technology, engineering, math)

GPA: 3.5 on a 4.0 scale

ACT/SAT:

- ACT: Score of 27 or higher,
- SAT: Score of 1280 or higher

Field Experience: Complete a field experience and document the experience in a portfolio specific to the student's area of focus

Portfolio: Develop a comprehensive portfolio of work based on the student's field experience or a topic related to the student's area of focus

## **FINE ARTS HONORS DIPLOMA**

Students must meet all but one of the following criteria for the honors diploma (but must also meet the minimum state and local number of units required for graduation):

Math: 4 units

Science: 3 units, including 1 unit of advanced science

Social Studies: 3 units

World Languages: 3 units of one world language, or no less than 2 units each of two world languages studied

Fine Arts: 4 units

Electives: 2 units with a focus in fine arts

GPA: 3.5 on a 4.0 scale

ACT/SAT:

- ACT: Score of 27 or higher,
- SAT: Score of 1280 or higher

Field Experience: Complete a field experience and document the experience in a portfolio specific to the student's area of focus

Portfolio: Develop a comprehensive portfolio of work based on the student's field experience or a topic related to the student's area of focus

## **CIVICS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES HONORS DIPLOMA**

Students must meet all but one of the following criteria for the honors diploma (but must also meet the minimum state and local number of units required for graduation).

Math: 4 units

Science: 3 units, including 1 unit of advanced science

Social Studies: 5 units

World Languages: 3 units of one world language, or no less than 2 units each of two world languages studied

Fine Arts: 1 unit

Electives: 3 units with a focus in social sciences and/or civics

GPA: 3.5 on a 4.0 scale

ACT/SAT:

- ACT: Score of 27 or higher,
- SAT: Score of 1280 or higher

Field Experience: Complete a field experience and document the experience in a portfolio specific to the student's area of focus

Portfolio: Develop a comprehensive portfolio of work based on the student's field experience or a topic related to the student's area of focus

## Frequently Asked Questions

### GENERAL

Are districts required to include joint vocational school districts in the process of developing policies for the honors diplomas? ([#FAQ4648](#)).

Are districts responsible for communicating with parents and students about the option to earn an honors diploma? ([#FAQ4649](#)).

Can a single course fulfill multiple requirements? ([#FAQ4662](#)).

Can a student fulfill the world languages requirement by taking classes in more than one language? ([#FAQ4655](#)).

Can a student use weighted GPAs to fulfill the GPA requirement? ([#FAQ4654](#)).

Can courses taken in middle school fulfill the fine arts requirement? ([#FAQ4652](#)).

Can courses taken in middle school fulfill the fine arts requirement? ([#FAQ4653](#)).

Do “exploratory” and “culture-based” courses count toward the world languages requirement? ([#FAQ4656](#)).

Do financial literacy courses count toward the social studies requirement? ([#FAQ4658](#)).

Do financial literacy courses count toward the social studies requirement? ([#FAQ4659](#)).

Should world languages courses be sequential? ([#FAQ4657](#)).

What are the requirements for a field experience? ([#FAQ4651](#)).

What are the requirements for a portfolio? ([#FAQ4650](#)).

What are the specific requirements for math units? ([#FAQ4661](#)).

What are the specific requirements for science units? ([#FAQ4660](#)).

What is new for students in the classes of 2021 and beyond? ([#FAQ4663](#)).

Will the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce provide districts with materials to recognize students who have obtained honors diplomas? ([#FAQ4647](#)).

### DIVERSE LEARNERS

What accommodations are available to English learners and students with disabilities on the Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Tests? ([#FAQ4645](#)).

Do Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate test scores earned in another district, state or country satisfy the requirements for the seal? ([#FAQ4646](#)).

## ACCOUNTABILITY AND SCHOOL REPORT CARDS

[How will honors diplomas affect district report cards? \(#FAQ4644\)](#)

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[What are some additional resources to refer to? \(#FAQ4664\)](#)

---

## General

### **Are districts required to include joint vocational school districts in the process of developing policies for the honors diplomas?**

Yes. Districts must include joint vocational school districts in the development of policies, guidelines and procedures for the honors diploma. At least annually, joint vocational school districts also must update districts on the status of students enrolled at their schools with respect to the honors diplomas. (*Ohio Administrative Code Rule 3301-16-02(G)*) (<http://codes.ohio.gov/oac/3301-16-02>).

[Back to Top \(#top\)](#)

---

### **Are districts responsible for communicating with parents and students about the option to earn an honors diploma?**

Yes. Districts must communicate to parents and students about the option to earn an honors diploma and the criteria required for students to earn each of the six honors diplomas. (*Ohio Administrative Code Rule 3301-16-02(D)*) (<http://codes.ohio.gov/oac/3301-16-02>). School districts cannot require students to apply for or declare their intent to earn honors diplomas. (*Ohio Administrative Code Rule 3301-16-02(C)*) (<http://codes.ohio.gov/oac/3301-16-02>).

[Back to Top \(#top\)](#)

---

### **Can a single course fulfill multiple requirements?**

Yes. A single course can meet multiple criteria if it addresses the standards of the relevant subject areas. Learn more about [integrated coursework and awarding simultaneous credit](#) (<http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Quality-School-Choice/Credit-Flexibility-Plan/Integrated-Coursework-Guidance.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US>).

[Back to Top \(#top\)](#)

---

### **Can a student fulfill the world languages requirement by taking classes in more than one language?**

If a student is pursuing the Career-Tech Honors Diploma, in which only 2 units of world languages are required, both units must be completed in the same language. If a student is pursuing one of the other honors diplomas, the student may fulfill the requirement in more than one language. If a student opts to complete this criterion by taking *two units each of two world languages studied*, a student must complete a total of four world language units. This means two sequential, proficiency-based units in two different languages.

[Back to Top \(#top\)](#)

---

**Can a student use weighted GPAs to fulfill the GPA requirement?**

GPAs must be calculated on a 4.0 scale.

[Back to Top](#) ([#top](#)).

---

**Can courses taken in middle school fulfill the fine arts requirement?**

Courses taken in middle school may meet the general graduation requirement of two semesters of fine arts, but a course must count for high school credit (be high school-level work or above) to count for the honors diploma. Dance, drama/theatre, music and visual art courses all count as fine arts courses.

[Back to Top](#) ([#top](#)).

---

**Can courses taken in middle school fulfill the fine arts requirement?**

Courses taken in middle school may meet the general graduation requirement of two semesters of fine arts, but a course must count for high school credit (be high school-level work or above) to count for the honors diploma. Dance, drama/theatre, music and visual art courses all count as fine arts courses.

[Back to Top](#) ([#top](#)).

---

**Do “exploratory” and “culture-based” courses count toward the world languages requirement?**

No. Units from language courses coded as “Foreign Language Exploratory” do not count toward the honors diploma requirement. Units from culture-based courses do not count toward the honors diploma requirements.

[Back to Top](#) ([#top](#)).

---

**Do financial literacy courses count toward the social studies requirement?**

If a district counts financial literacy as a social studies course, students can use it as an elective to meet the requirement. If the district counts financial literacy as a family consumer science or business education elective, it does not count.

[Back to Top](#) ([#top](#)).

---

**Do financial literacy courses count toward the social studies requirement?**

If a district counts financial literacy as a social studies course, students can use it as an elective to meet the requirement. If the district counts financial literacy as a family consumer science or business education elective, it does not count.

[Back to Top](#) ([#top](#)).

---

**Should world languages courses be sequential?**

Yes. Only credits from world languages courses that are sequential and proficiency based (for example, Spanish levels I, II, III or German I and II and French I and II) should fulfill the honors diploma requirement. Sequential classical (for example, Latin, Ancient Greek) and visual (for example, American Sign Language) languages DO fulfill the honors diploma requirement.

**[Back to Top](#)** ([#top](#)).

---

### **What are the requirements for a field experience?**

Review the Department's information on [field experiences](http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Ohio-s-Graduation-Requirements/Honors-Diplomas/International-Baccalaureate-Honors-Diploma/Field-Experience-guidance.pdf.aspx) (<http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Ohio-s-Graduation-Requirements/Honors-Diplomas/International-Baccalaureate-Honors-Diploma/Field-Experience-guidance.pdf.aspx>). .

**[Back to Top](#)** ([#top](#)).

---

### **What are the requirements for a portfolio?**

Review the Department's information on [portfolios](http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Ohio-s-Graduation-Requirements/Honors-Diplomas/International-Baccalaureate-Honors-Diploma/Portfolio-guidance.pdf.aspx) (<http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Ohio-s-Graduation-Requirements/Honors-Diplomas/International-Baccalaureate-Honors-Diploma/Portfolio-guidance.pdf.aspx>). .

**[Back to Top](#)** ([#top](#)).

---

### **What are the specific requirements for math units?**

Students must take algebra I, geometry, algebra II (or equivalent), and one other higher-level course OR a four-course sequence that contains equivalent or higher content. Students can meet the math criterion for the STEM Honors Diploma through successful completion of coursework that contains content equivalent to five units.

**[Back to Top](#)** ([#top](#)).

---

### **What are the specific requirements for science units?**

Students must earn credit in physical science, life science and in an advanced science. Advanced science refers to courses that are inquiry based with laboratory experiences. They must align with Ohio's Learning Standards for Science in grades 11-12, an Advanced Placement science course or entry-level college course (clearly preparing students for a college freshman-level science class, such as anatomy, botany or astronomy). Students can meet the science criterion for the STEM Honors Diploma through successful completion of coursework that contains content equivalent to five units, with two of the five units being in advanced science.

**[Back to Top](#)** ([#top](#)).

---

### **What is new for students in the classes of 2021 and beyond?**

Students in the classes of 2021 and beyond must meet the [revised criteria](http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Ohio-Graduation-Requirements/Graduation-Requirements-2014-2017/Criteria-for-Diploma-with-Honors/Honors-Diploma-Revised-Grid.pdf.aspx) (<http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Ohio-Graduation-Requirements/Graduation-Requirements-2014-2017/Criteria-for-Diploma-with-Honors/Honors-Diploma-Revised-Grid.pdf.aspx>). to earn an honors diploma.

[Back to Top](#) ([#top](#)).

---

### **Will the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce provide districts with materials to recognize students who have obtained honors diplomas?**

Local school district boards of education determine how to issue these students' honors diplomas. The honors diploma bears the date of its issue and contain the signatures of the president and treasurer of the district board of education, superintendent of schools and principal of the high school.

[Back to Top](#) ([#top](#)).

---

## **Diverse Learners**

### **What accommodations are available to English learners and students with disabilities on the Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Tests?**

The Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate tests are not Ohio's State Tests; therefore, the features and accommodations in Ohio's Accessibility Manual do not apply. Refer to the Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate tests resources for resources for additional information:

[Advanced Placement Tests Accommodations](https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/ap-coordinators/preparing-exam-day/accommodations) (<https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/ap-coordinators/preparing-exam-day/accommodations>);

[International Baccalaureate Accommodations](https://www.haef.gr/~media/Files/HAEF/IB/pdf/Info_for_parents/Candidates_with_SpecialAssessmentNeeds_2011.ashx?la=en) ([https://www.haef.gr/~media/Files/HAEF/IB/pdf/Info\\_for\\_parents/Candidates\\_with\\_SpecialAssessmentNeeds\\_2011.ashx?la=en](https://www.haef.gr/~media/Files/HAEF/IB/pdf/Info_for_parents/Candidates_with_SpecialAssessmentNeeds_2011.ashx?la=en)).

[Back to Top](#) ([#top](#)).

---

### **Do Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate test scores earned in another district, state or country satisfy the requirements for the seal?**

Yes. Official test scores for Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate tests will satisfy the requirements if they meet the proficiency requirements of the seal.

[Back to Top](#) ([#top](#)).

---

## **Accountability and School Report Cards**

### **How will honors diplomas affect district report cards?**

The Prepared for Success component looks at how well districts are equipping Ohio's students to take advantage of future opportunities. A district earns one point on the measure for every student who earns any of the following: an honors diploma, a college entrance exam remediation-free score, or 12 points through an industry-recognized credential or group of credentials.

[Back to Top](#) ([#top](#)).

---



# Additional Resources

## What are some additional resources to refer to?

### Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Test Fee Reimbursement

(<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio/Advanced-Placement-and-International-Baccalaureate>) – For the 2019-2020 school year, eligible low-income students will have no test fees. More information is available on the Department's website.

Advanced Placement Tests Accommodations (<https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/ap-coordinators/preparing-exam-day/accommodations>).

Expanding Opportunities for Each Child Grant (<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/District-and-School-Continuous-Improvement/Expanding-Opportunities-for-Each-Child-EOEC-A>) – A direct student services grant designed to give greater access to advanced coursework and career pathways and increase enrollment for low-income students in Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate opportunities. This grant aligns to local continuous improvement plans. Applicants may request up to three years of funding.

Field Experience Guidelines (<http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Ohio-s-Graduation-Requirements/Honors-Diplomas/International-Baccalaureate-Honors-Diploma/Field-Experience-guidance.pdf.aspx>).

### International Baccalaureate Accommodations

([https://www.haef.gr/~media/Files/HAEF/IB/pdf/Info\\_for\\_parents/Candidates\\_with\\_SpecialAssessmentNeeds\\_2011.ashx?la=en](https://www.haef.gr/~media/Files/HAEF/IB/pdf/Info_for_parents/Candidates_with_SpecialAssessmentNeeds_2011.ashx?la=en)).

Honors Diploma Guidelines (<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Ohio-s-Graduation-Requirements/Honors-Diplomas>).

### Portfolio Guidelines

(<file:///C:/Users/10052995/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/Content.Outlook/XEDOLN6B/education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Ohio-s-Graduation-Requirements/Honors-Diplomas/International-Baccalaureate-Honors-Diploma/Portfolio-guidance.pdf.aspx>).

**Back to Top** (<#top>).

---