

International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma and Advanced Diploma Requirements



Background

On December 3, 2024, the Board of Education approved language to [the Board Approved Courses for Graduation document](#) which provides additional flexibility for IB Diploma students to earn an advanced diploma. This document seeks to support school divisions in providing advanced opportunities for students while ensuring that all graduation requirements are met.

Requirements for an Advanced Diploma

The [Standards of Accreditation](#) states,

“Students who complete Advanced Placement courses, college-level courses, or courses required for an International Baccalaureate Diploma shall be deemed to have completed the course requirements for graduation under these standards, **provided they have earned the total number of standard units of credit and verified units of credit in each discipline area in accordance with the requirements for the Standard Diploma and the Advanced Studies Diploma, as specified in subsections B and C of this section**”.

Discipline Area	Standard Credits	Verified Credits
English	4	2
Mathematics	4	1
Laboratory Science	4	1
History and Social Sciences	4	1
World Language	3	0
Health and Physical Education	2	0
Fine Arts or Career and Technical Ed	1	0
Economics & Personal Finance	1	0
Electives	3	0
Total Credits	26	5

In accordance with [8VAC20-132-110\(B\)](#) of the Standards of Accreditation, a "verified unit of credit" or "verified credit" is a credit awarded for a course in which a student earns a standard unit of credit and completes one of the following:

- Achieves a passing score on a corresponding end-of-course SOL test.
- Achieves a passing score on an additional test, as defined in 8VAC20-132-5, as a part of the Virginia Assessment Program.
- Meets the criteria for the receipt of a locally awarded verified credit (see below) when the student has not passed a corresponding SOL test.

Some school divisions may also permit students to earn a verified credit in English writing by demonstrating mastery of the content of the associated course on an authentic performance assessment that complies with guidelines adopted by the Board of Education.

Verified credits could be awarded through [other approved tests by the Board of Education](#).

The following graduation requirements are still required for an IB Diploma students to earn an advanced diploma:

Discipline Area	Specifications
Mathematics	Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include at least three different course selections from among: Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, or other mathematics courses above the level of Algebra II. The board shall approve courses to satisfy this requirement. Per the Standards of Quality, a computer science course credit earned by students may be considered a mathematics course credit.
Laboratory Science	Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include course selections from at least three different science disciplines from among: earth sciences, biology, chemistry, or physics or completion of the sequence of science courses required for the International Baccalaureate Diploma and shall include interdisciplinary courses that incorporate Standards of Learning content from multiple academic areas. The board shall approve additional courses to satisfy this requirement. Per the Standards of Quality, a computer science course credit earned by students may be considered a science course credit.
History and Social Science	Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include Virginia and U.S. history, Virginia and U.S. government, and two courses in either world history or geography or both. The board shall approve additional courses to satisfy this requirement.
World Language	Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include three years of one language or two years of two languages. A student who is pursuing an advanced diploma and whose individualized education program specifies a credit accommodation for world language may substitute two standard units of credit in computer science for two standard units of credit in a world language. For any student who elects to substitute a credit in computer science for a credit in world language, the student's school counselor must provide notice to the student and parent, or guardian of possible impacts related to college entrance requirements.

Fine Arts or Career and Technical Education	Per the Standards of Quality, a computer science course credit earned by students may be considered a career and technical credit.
Electives	Courses to satisfy this requirement shall include at least two sequential electives as required by the Standards of Quality.
Additional Requirements for Graduation	
Advanced Placement, Honors, International Baccalaureate Course, or Career and Technical Education Credential	In accordance with the Standards of Quality, students shall (i) complete an Advanced Placement, honors, International Baccalaureate, or dual enrollment course; (ii) complete a high-quality work-based learning experience as established by board guidance on work-based learning; or (iii) earn a career and technical education credential approved by the board, except when a career and technical education credential in a particular subject area is not readily available or appropriate or does not adequately measure student competency, in which case the student shall receive satisfactory competency-based instruction in the subject area to satisfy the advanced studies diploma requirements. The career and technical education credential, when required, could include the successful completion of an industry certification, a state licensure examination, a national occupational competency assessment, or the Virginia workplace readiness assessment.
Virtual Course	Students shall successfully complete one virtual course, which may be a non-credit-bearing course or a required or elective credit-bearing course that is offered online.
Training in emergency first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and the use of automated external defibrillators (AED).	Students shall be trained in emergency first aid, CPR, and the use of AED, including hands-on practice of the skills necessary to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation. Students with an IEP or 504 Plan that documents that they cannot successfully complete this training shall be granted a waiver from this graduation requirement, as provided in <u>8VAC20-132-310 B</u> .
Demonstration of the five Cs	Students shall acquire and demonstrate foundational skills in critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration, communication, and citizenship in accordance with the Profile of a Virginia Graduate approved by the board.

Note: IB Sports, Exercise and Health Science does not provide instruction on the Driver Education *Standards of Learning*. School divisions have the option to offer classroom driver education in lieu of 36 class periods (30 hours) of tenth grade health education.

School divisions have autonomy to offer certain courses or pathways to fulfill IB Diploma requirements. School divisions should provide opportunities for students to earn required verified credits where possible, beginning in ninth and tenth grade. This can provide maximum flexibility for IB Diploma students to complete requirements for the IB Diploma while ensuring students meet the total number of verified credits needed for an advanced diploma.

Additional Considerations for Families

To enter the IB Diploma Programme, students must be enrolled in a school authorized to offer the IB Programme, meet academic requirements set by the school, and typically demonstrate strong academic performance in previous grades. Schools or divisions determine requirements for enrollment in their IB Diploma Programme in Grades 11 and 12; these requirements should reflect rigorous academic coursework and performance expectations for students in Grades 9 and 10. When constructing guidelines for IB Diploma Programme enrollment, schools and divisions should consider Grade 9 and 10 coursework needed to prepare students for the IB Diploma Programme and to meet graduation course requirements for advanced diploma.

To ensure families have awareness of these requirements, divisions should provide information on IB Diploma Programme enrollment requirements, suggested course pathways for Grades 9 and 10, and IB Diploma Programme requirements to parents and students interested in pursuing the IB Diploma Programme option. Impacts of not completing all requirements of the IB Diploma Programme should be shared with students and parents as part of the enrollment process.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is a student still required to take Virginia and U.S. History and Virginia and U.S. Government if earning an IB Diploma? What graduation requirement does IB Global Politics fulfill?

Yes, students are still required to take one course in Virginia and U.S. History, one course in Virginia and U.S. Government, and two courses in World History or Geography or both per graduation requirements in the *Standards of Accreditation*. IB Global Politics may count for one World History course.

Is a student still required to earn two credits in Health and Physical Education?

Students are required to earn two credits in Health and Physical Education to meet graduation requirements for both standard and advanced studies diplomas. The Board of Education has indicated courses that may be used as a substitution for the Physical Education graduation requirement to include IB Sports, Exercise, and Health Science. Students that use IB Sports, Exercise, and Health Science as a substitute for Physical Education must take coursework aligned to the Grades 9 and 10 2020 Health Education *Standards of Learning*. Since Driver Education is offered by many schools in Grade 10 Health and Physical Education, students may need to pursue alternative options to take driver education coursework. In accordance with 8VAC20-131-60(F), students transferring above the 10th grade from schools or other education programs that do not require or give credit for health and physical education shall not be required to take these courses to meet graduation requirements.

If a student pursuing an IB Diploma transfers into Virginia from another state, are they still required to meet all the requirements specified by the Standards of Accreditation (8VAC20-132-10.)?

Yes, to receive an advanced diploma in Virginia, all requirements specified in the *Standards of Accreditation* must be met. If a student transfers in during or after their 11th grade year they are only required to earn two verified credits. See [VDOE's Transfer Student webpage](#) for more information.

When do the revisions to the approved course list go into effect?

Revisions are effective immediately.

Can IB exams be used as substitute verified credits?

Verified credits are awarded through the Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments or other [Substitute Tests Approved for Awarding Verified Credit by the Virginia Board of Education](#).

Is a student pursuing an IB Diploma required to complete three the different science discipline requirement for the advanced studies diploma?

If the student completes a sequence of science courses required for the International Baccalaureate Diploma, they are not required to complete courses in three different science disciplines. See the [IB Science Courses and Graduation Requirements document](#) for more information.