



Maryland High School Assessments

Meeting the Maryland Testing Requirement for Graduation & the Bridge Plan to Academic Validation

Marylanders want it. • Teachers built it. • Students can do it!

What is the Maryland testing requirement?

For a student who entered the 9th grade in or after the 2005-06 school year to graduate from high school with a Maryland High School Diploma, he/she must meet the a testing requirement as well as meet the State course requirements, service learning requirements, and local graduation requirements.

How can a student meet the testing requirement?

There are three options to meeting the testing requirement, as follows:

- 1) **Pass each of the four High School Assessment (HSA) tests** – algebra/data analysis, English, biology, and government. These tests are generally taken in the 9th and 10th grade. There are two potential substitutions:
 - Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) Tests – For students who have earned a score approved by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) on the HSA-related AP or IB test
 - Modified HSA – An alternative test for students with disabilities who meet the specific participation criteria based on their IEP process
- 2) **Combined-Score Option** – A student would need to earn a combined total of 1602 points across the four exams to meet the testing requirement. This option allows students to offset lower performance on one test with higher performance on another.
- 3) **Bridge Plan for Academic Validation** – A student who has not passed an HSA after taking the test twice and meets eligibility criteria, including locally-administered or approved assistance, can complete one or more project modules in the content area. The projects modules will be submitted to a local review panel and the local superintendent for approval.

What criteria will a student have to meet to be eligible for the Bridge Plan for Academic Validation?

A student who has not passed an HSA test after two attempts would be eligible for the Bridge Plan if he/she:

- ♦ participated in locally-administered or approved assistance;
- ♦ passed the HSA-related course;
- ♦ is making satisfactory progress toward graduation.

When can a student begin the Bridge Plan for Academic Validation?

Local school systems determine when a student may begin work on a Bridge Plan.

Will the Bridge Plan for Academic Validation be easier than taking an HSA test?

No. The Bridge Plan is a series of challenging projects linked to the Core Learning Goals tested by each HSA. Once a student is deemed eligible by the local school system to participate in the Bridge Plan, he/she must complete one or more projects as determined by the student's highest HSA score in a specific content area.

What happens once a student is eligible for the Bridge Plan for Academic Validation?

A designated school staff member will meet with the student and parent/guardian to design an Academic Validation Project Package. The Academic Validation Project Package includes a number of forms that indicate which project module(s) the student must complete, the assigned work period, and the assigned project monitor. The forms also verify that the student's Academic Validation Project Package will meet the core values of academic integrity.

Who will review and approve the individual student project?

Once a student completes his/her Academic Validation Project Package, a local review panel, established by the local school system, will review the materials and provide a recommendation to the local superintendent. The local superintendent will conduct a final review for approval or refusal of the student's work.

How does the local superintendent's decision effect the student?

If the Academic Validation Project Package is approved, the student will have met the testing requirement for the specific HSA. If the Academic Validation Project Package is refused, written feedback will be provided to the student so he/she can continue work on the Project Package and resubmit at a later date. A student can also submit an appeal of a local superintendent's refusal in writing to the State Superintendent.

Are there alternative paths to meeting the testing graduation requirement?

Yes. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) recognizes that Maryland has a diverse population of students with diverse needs. The Modified HSAs (Mod-HSAs) are being developed for a small portion of students with disabilities. The Mod-HSAs are based on the same course content as the HSAs, but the question format may be altered. The Mod-HSAs will be given for the first time in May 2008.

Visit HSAexam.org for more information or call 1-877-HSA-EXAM

