Oregon GED Option Program for Selected Secondary Students
Questions and Answers

1. **What is the GED Option Program?**
   The General Education Development Testing Service (GEDTS) enables approved states to provide access to the GED Option for selected secondary students, 16 and 17 years of age, who are still enrolled in school. This authorization is from the American Council on Education. School districts and alternative education providers with an approved GED Option application are given the opportunity to retain enrollment of 16 and 17-year-old youth in K-12, while they take GED subtests; an Exemption from Compulsory Attendance would not be required.

2. **Why is the Oregon Option Program Needed?**
   ♦ The State Board of Education, the Oregon Department of Education (ODE), and the Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development (CCWD) are committed to offering educational options to ensure success for all students.
   ♦ Policy alignment is needed for in-school GED instruction and GEDTS testing eligibility.
   ♦ Without the GED Option, GEDTS requires an “Exemption from Compulsory Attendance” for individuals under the age of 18 to test.
   ♦ Oregon adults are allowed to take each of the five GED subtests, one at a time; schools requested the same option for students under the age of 18 while enrolled in school.
   ♦ Senate Bill 217 changed the GED completion status from a “dropout” status to a “completer” status for the Oregon Dropout Report; this change assures that GED completers will not be reported as dropouts.
   ♦ A student who earns a GED is reported as a “completer”, not a graduate and not a dropout. In order for a district to count a student as a GED “completer” and not a dropout, the district must have evidence. If evidence is not provided, the student will count as a dropout.

3. **What is required to be a GED Option student?**
   A candidate for the GED Option must be:
   ♦ At least 16 years of age.
   ♦ A full year’s academic credit behind their 9th grade cohort.
   ♦ For other reasons specifically identified in the local plan, unable to complete their diploma with their cohort.
   ♦ Able to read at a sufficient level to successfully complete GED instruction and testing.
   ♦ Required to complete the approval process as identified in the local plan.

4. **How will students benefit?**
   Students who meet the criteria for GED Option will benefit through the opportunity for:
   ♦ informed choice.
   ♦ quality instruction.
   ♦ adequate support services.
   ♦ testing on GED subtests while still enrolled in school.
5. Who must submit a local application to the Department of Education?
   ♦ Public school districts on behalf of their schools and the entities with which they contract for their educational services
   ♦ Education Service Districts that offer GED instruction and supervise home school services

6. How can a GED Option application be developed regionally?
   ♦ Regional/consortia planning can increase the simplicity and consistency of program design for regional alternative providers
   ♦ Regional/consortia planning should include alternative providers such as community colleges, Workforce Investment Act Title 1B Youth providers, Oregon Youth Authority, 504 and IEP planners

7. What are the district application requirements?
   ♦ See pages 2 and 3 of Program Requirements in Oregon’s state plan for Oregon Option for Selected Secondary Students

8. What happens to a student whose district does not choose to be a GED Option district?
   ♦ Students of the public school district or their alternative providers, who are 16 and 17 years of age, may not take the GED tests over time while enrolled in school
   ♦ Release and re-enrollment for the purposes of continued receipt of school funding will not be allowed
   ♦ An “Exemption from Compulsory Attendance”, which follows the process outlined in OAR 581-021-0076, will be required for students of the district to take the GED tests

9. Who will approve district applications?
   ♦ ODE, in partnership with CCWD
   Contact: Rendy Jantz, ODE: 503.947.5695; rendy.jantz@state.or.us

10. Does each school district need to provide an in-house GED instruction program?
    ♦ It is not necessary for a school district to provide an in-house GED instruction program; existing district alternative instructional systems may well serve the district’s needs

11. How will the district GED Option program be monitored?
    ➢ Oregon Department of Education:
      ♦ Annual assurances
      ♦ Fall report
      ♦ School monitoring review
      ♦ School financial monitoring system
    ➢ Community Colleges and Workforce Development:
      ♦ GED Test reports
      ♦ Information Services Unit monitoring
12. When will the GED Option be in effect?
♦ January 2, 2002, all test sites will begin implementing this testing policy

13. How will GED Waiver schools be tracked?
♦ The NCES school code is identified as the tracking code by GEDTS
♦ Evaluation of that process in Oregon is under review

14. Where did the recommended student/teacher ratio come from?
♦ The GEDTS state plan guidelines
♦ OAR 581-022-1630 requires district policy addressing student/teacher ratio to be in place

15. Why is there a reading criterion?
♦ The GED test is normed on graduating seniors
♦ Individuals who do not read at a secondary level will have great difficulty in passing the GED
♦ To assist students in determining that the GED is the appropriate alternative and that they have the reading skill level to succeed
♦ Students with low reading skills will require additional skill building before being identified as a GED Option student

16. Why is a team required to establish student eligibility?
♦ Teams build upon existing Oregon formats for alternative program planning such as Individual Education Plans (IEPs), 504 Plans and “Exemptions from Compulsory Attendance”

17. Why must a student be one full credit year behind their 9th grade cohort or have clearly identified reasons for not being able to complete their diploma with their cohort to qualify for the GED Option program?
♦ Early exit from school is not encouraged by GEDTS

18. How long do students have to earn a GED Credential?
♦ Three (3) full years from the date of the first GED test

19. How do home school students access the GED Option?
♦ Local Education Service Districts (ESD) will serve as GED Option providers for home school students. Authorized ESDs will release registered home school students to participate in GED Option programs

20. How do districts handle students who are new to the district and do not wish to enroll in school?
♦ The GED Option is intended to provide assistance to struggling students who are attending high school and will be able to access all support services available and required to ensure their success in a GED program.
♦ Students under the age of 18 who are not registered in a public school should be registered at their local ESD as home school students. Authorized ESDs will provide the evaluation and support needed for those students to participate in a GED Option program
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♦ Students who move into a school district and choose not to enroll in the Oregon Education System will be excluded from GED testing until the age of 18.

21. Will students who complete the GED option be required to participate in high school graduation ceremonies?
♦ A recognition ceremony is required
♦ The school graduation is one option, but remains a local district decision
♦ Alternative programs and community colleges may conduct their own ceremonies

22. How can districts ensure that school personnel have access to GED test scores and completion information?
♦ Properly recorded student identification numbers allow for tracking of information from the GED Test Centers or the state GED database
♦ A written parental release of information must be on file with authorized GED test centers which authorizes the student to sign the confidentiality release on the US Demographic form

23. How will GED testing sites know which districts are GED Option Program districts?
♦ Letterhead identifies the district on the GED letter of authorization
♦ The test sheet supplied to the GED Option districts identifies the authorized NCES code
♦ Lists of approved districts by name and NCES number (available December 2001 and monthly thereafter) will be issued by CCWD

24. Do districts have to pay a fee to participate in the GED Option Program?
♦ No local fee will be charged for 2001-2003
♦ Fees may be instituted for 2007-2009