

Diploma - Q & A: Essential Skills

Students will be required to demonstrate proficiency in certain “essential skills” – skills that are deemed critical for future success – before they are awarded the diploma.

1. What are the Essential Skills?

The Essential Skills are critical 21st century skills needed for success in college, the workplace, and civic life. These process skills enable students to learn content and apply their knowledge across disciplines. These are not new or additional skills; they are embedded in existing content standards, already being taught in Oregon schools.

2. When will the Essential Skills be required for graduation?

The State Board revised the requirements for receiving a high school diploma and the timeline for the phase-in of the Essential Skills in August 2009 as follows:

- 2012: Read and comprehend a variety of text
- 2013: Write clearly and accurately
- 2014: Apply mathematics in a variety of settings

Assessment options are found in the [testing manual](#). Later cohorts will be accountable for the remaining Essential Skills as assessments are identified and approved. (Timeline to be determined)

3. How will Essential Skills be assessed?

Students will have multiple options and opportunities to demonstrate their proficiency in the Essential Skills by meeting state standards through Oregon Statewide Assessments, samples of student work scored by trained teachers, or additional national standards assessments (such as the SAT and ACT). The Office of Assessment and Information Services has developed an FAQ document to address questions regarding the assessment of the Essential Skills which can be found at <http://www.ode.state.or.us/apps/faqs/index.aspx?=151>.

4. How are the Essential Skills and Career-Related Learning Standards (CRLS) related?

In 2002, the career-related learning standards (CRLS) were adopted as a requirement for graduation in 2007. Like the Essential Skills, the CRLS are foundational skills that prepare students for post high school success. They are applied across the curriculum and in a variety of settings. Proficiency levels and assessments, however, are determined locally.

Given the degree of overlap, and the potential record keeping burden and confusion of requiring two sets of similar and overlapping skills, the Essential Skills Task Force recommended merging the Essential Skills and CRLS into one set of skills. In the merger, personal management/teamwork was added to the Essential Skills and the remaining CRLS can be applied to other diploma requirements as follows. Students can demonstrate the Career Development criteria through career guidance and development of their education plan and profile. The Employment Foundations criteria applied to the career-related learning experiences (CRLE) can provide a set of learning goals for the CRLE.