
Issued: 12/09, 3/26/10, 07/08/10

PROCEDURE FOR GENERAL DIPLOMA OPTION

The General diploma program for Orange County Schools is a means of addressing the needs of some of our students who are choosing the option of a General diploma as opposed to earning a regular high school diploma.

1. All students will begin high school with a four-year plan to earn a 27 credit diploma.
2. Students must completely meet the North Carolina State Board of Education requirements for graduation.
3. Students are not eligible for the General Diploma until the end of their first full year of high school.
4. Students exhibit multiple at-risk characteristics (see list of characteristics).
5. Must be at least 17 years of age to be considered.
6. Students who have dropped out of high school or who approach a counselor or administrator to drop out of high school.
7. Once students complete the required credits (students will be permitted to participate in Commencement and receive a diploma).
8. Students may not graduate ahead of their original ninth grade class (with consideration of previous elementary and middle school retentions).
9. Student participation in extra-curricular activities may be limited.
10. Students will discuss with their high school counselor how this reduced-credit diploma may affect post-secondary options.
11. Students will indicate a full understanding that to enroll in a post-secondary institution, they must obtain credit for all required courses from such institution.
12. Students will indicate a full understanding that to enroll in the University of North Carolina System, they must earn (2) credits in a foreign language and (1) math credit beyond Algebra II upon completion of the General Diploma.
13. Before students are approved for this diploma option, parent(s) or guardian(s) and the student will participate in the development of a written plan for meeting graduation requirements.
14. Students will be allowed to pursue the 27-credit diploma after acceptance into the General Diploma option.
15. Student participation in the General Diploma Program requires approval by the principal and the Chief Academic Officer.

Characteristics of At-Risk Students:

Students will have or demonstrate several of the conditions listed below to be considered for the General Diploma.

- Chronic attendance or truancy issues
- Chronic behavior problems
- Significant academic deficiencies
- Failed a grade level at least once, often twice (age appropriateness)
- Seventeen years of age or older
- Environmental, psychological, and/or physiological challenges, such as:
 - Chronic substance abuse
 - Depression
 - Teen pregnancy
 - Parental responsibilities
 - Socially delayed
 - Emotionally delayed
 - Anger management problems
 - Homeless

If accepted for participation in the General Diploma option in Orange County Schools, I understand and agree to all of the following:

- I understand that student participation in extra-curricular activities may be limited.
- I cannot graduate ahead of my original ninth grade class with consideration of previous elementary and middle school retentions.
- I have discussed with my high school counselor how this reduced-credit diploma may affect my post-secondary options.
- I fully understand that to enroll in the university college system I must obtain all the courses required from such institutions.
- The various courses of study have been explained to me by a counselor or administrator.
- My application must be approved by the team designated by my high school principal, and final approval by the principal and the Chief Academic Officer.
- Before I am placed in this diploma option, my parent(s) or guardian(s) and I will participate, along with representatives from the school, in development of a written plan for meeting graduation requirements.
- I understand these requirements include all requirements set forth by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction including but not limited to 21 units of credit and all testing requirements.
- I will be allowed to pursue the 27 unit diploma (if desired) after acceptance into the General Diploma option, but not after graduating from high school with a general diploma.

_____	_____
Student	Date
_____	_____
Parent	Date
_____	_____
Counselor	Date
_____	_____
Principal	Date
_____	_____
Chief Academic Officer	Date

All students will begin high school with a four-year plan to earn a 27-credit diploma.

Screening Criteria

- A student is showing multiple at-risk characteristics (see list of characteristics).
- Must be at least 17 years of age to be considered.

Guidelines

- Promotion of students (students will be permitted to participate in Commencement and receive their diploma).
- Limited participation in extracurricular activities unless it is curricula related.

Referral Process

- Student has to be referred to a designated school committee by one of the following: guidance counselors, dropout prevention coordinator, teachers, parents, or administrators.
- Counselor will meet with student and/or parent.
- Counselor and student will complete referral form.

Screening Process

- Review applicant’s transcript to determine credits needed for graduation.
- Student and parent(s) must receive documented counseling/advisement from the school counselor and the principal regarding the student’s needs, goals, and plans and options for graduation as well as the pros and cons of choosing the General Diploma Program.
- Parent and student must complete referral form with signature from principal, counselor and Chief Academic Officer.
- A team comprised of the high school principal or designee, school counselors and the Director of Student Services or designee will review the referral form. Students served by the Exceptional Children Program will obtain input from the Exceptional Children staff before a decision is made.
- All students selected for the General diploma will participate along with their parents in a written plan for how graduation requirements will be met (which courses, where, when).

Procedures for General Diploma Option

Procedure Number: 3460-P

**ORANGE COUNTY SCHOOLS
GENERAL DIPLOMA REFERRAL FORM**

Student’s Name: _____ School: _____ ID #: _____

Grade Level: (current year) _____ (last year) _____ School Attended Last Year: _____

Sex: Male Female

Birth date: _____ Race: Caucasian African-American Asian/Pacific Islander Hispanic Multiracial

Referring Person: _____

Reason for Referral: _____

Does this student have an IEP or 504 Plan? No Yes - area of disability: _____

Has this student ever had an IEP or 504 Plan? No Yes - area of disability: _____

Has this student repeated any grades? No Yes - repeated grade(s): _____

Student Lives with: (check one)

01 - Mother & Father

02 - Mother & Stepfather

03 - Mother Only

04 - Father & Stepmother

05 - Father Only

06 - Guardian

07 - Grandparent(s)

08 - Foster Home

09 - Group Home

10 - Student has own residence

11 - Other (specify) _____

Parent/Guardian Name(s): _____

Physical Address: _____

Mailing Address (if different from above): _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Other Phone: _____

Reason for Referral:

Primary reason code: _____ Secondary reason code: _____

01 - Academic

02 - Discipline Violations

03 - Attendance/Truancy

04 - Pregnancy

5 - Other

The following information should be attached to this form:

•Discipline history

•Attendance summary

•Transcript

Reviewed by:

Counselor: _____

Approved Not Approved Reason: _____

Principal: _____

Date: _____

Chief Academic Officer: _____

Date: _____