

Minnesota's Adult Diploma Program

Purpose

Secondary credentials are important to an adult's success in postsecondary education, training and careers. Adults that do not have secondary credentials should have access to an adult diploma program that has sufficient rigor and is tailored to an adult's learning needs as a worker, parent and community member.

Definitions

Adult Basic Education (ABE): ABE is a system for providing programming to individuals who are no longer participating in K-12 instruction and is funded and governed federally by Title II of the Workforce Investment Act, which is the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act.

Adult Diploma: A diploma that has competencies adapted for adult students and their needs to include academic, career development and employability skills.

Approved Adult Diploma Program: An Adult Basic Education consortium that has submitted an application to the Minnesota Department of Education and has been rated to be of high quality by state and local reviewers in incorporating identified competency domains and expected practices. The application describes the local model to comply with state standards and provide effective instruction for adult learners that is both rigorous and meets expectations.

Portability: The adult diploma programming should address a set of common competencies across local programs that are standardized by the state and local advisory committee. This allows adult diploma students that move to a new community and ABE program the opportunity to continue their studies and not have to start over or repeatedly demonstrate progress in the same competencies.

Demonstrating Completion: The Commissioner must allow for adult diploma students to demonstrate completion of the subject areas. This can take place in one of four ways:

- Prior Experience-Based Competency Verification
- Test-Verified Knowledge
- ABE Course Completion
- Applied Learning

Adult Diploma Student Eligibility: In order to participate in Adult Diploma Programming, an adult must be eligible for ABE, not eligible for K-12 services, and meet minimum literacy requirements.

In order to serve adults who are ready for diploma work, they must meet minimum reading literacy standards. The program must serve only those students who have a 6.0 or higher grade equivalent according to a state- and federally-approved standardized test in Adult Basic Education.

Should unusual circumstances exist, scores from another state or nationally recognized standardized test(s) and/or an achievement profile may be presented to and deemed sufficient as threshold eligibility by the Minnesota Department of Education state ABE office on a rare and case-by-case basis. If a prospective student scores below this criterion, they are eligible to be enrolled in other, lower-leveled ABE funded programs, but are not eligible to demonstrate competency towards a high school diploma program.

Duties

Commissioner and Minnesota Department of Education

- Facilitate an advisory committee with state and local ABE staff to help ensure high quality standards and implementation on an ongoing basis.
- Working with state ABE staff, approve adult diploma policies and local programs in ABE consortia based on recommendations from the advisory committee.

Approved Adult Diploma Programs in Adult Basic Education Consortia

- Submit an application to the state ABE office that serves as an addendum to the approved five-year ABE narrative and describes the proposed local Adult Diploma Program. Applications will be reviewed by the advisory committee composed of state and local ABE staff.
- Comply with expectations of Commissioner as established in grant assurances and policies.
- Effectively serve appropriate adult diploma students and document efforts.
- Maintain transcripts of work completed and submit final transcripts when complete.
- Resubmit Adult Diploma Program application for reauthorization once every five years with the consortium narrative or in the case of specialized monitoring due to low performance, as determined by state and federal accountability standards.

School Districts

- May issue a diploma for adult students that complete the adult diploma requirements, as established by the Commissioner and approved local ABE program. ABE Consortia that serve a geographic area that includes multiple districts can work with a single district to issue diplomas, which would allow for a regional, collaborative approach.

State and Local Advisory Committee

- This group includes at least one representative from the Minnesota Department of Education that works with Adult Basic Education and multiple local Adult Basic Education practitioners that work with adult diploma programming, as nominated by the Minnesota Department of Education's Adult Basic Education Office.

- Review applications from local ABE consortia and determine which sites are approved as based on an analysis of the instructional program description, the competencies that are addressed in instruction, and procedures that both ensure quality and meet the needs of the adult diploma students.
- Identify best practices in adult diploma programming and develop adult diploma policy recommendations for the Minnesota Department of Education's Adult Basic Education Office.

Minnesota Adult Diploma Competency Domains

Competencies for the Minnesota State Adult Diploma are based on a mix of current competencies identified in the:

- Minnesota's current K-12 graduation requirements;
- College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS), which are based on Common Core State Standards;
- Academic, Career and Employability Skills (ACES); and
- Northstar Digital Literacy Standards.

In order to graduate, an Adult Diploma Student must complete the following in an Adult Basic Education Adult Diploma Program that is approved by the Minnesota Department of Education:

English Language Arts

1. Reading
2. Writing
3. Speaking and Listening
4. Language

Mathematics

1. Number System
2. Expressions and Equations
3. Functions
4. Geometry
5. Statistics and Probability

Career Development and Employability Skills

1. Digital Literacy Skills
2. Learning Strategies and Self-Management
3. Critical Thinking
4. Navigating Systems
5. Career Exploration

Additional competencies may be identified based on the students' learning and career goals and documented in the individualized learning plan.

Minnesota Adult Diploma Procedures

Initial Counseling Session

1. Identify student goals.
2. Assess student skills and experience to determine what competencies that may already be complete for the transcript based on prior learning competency verification.
3. Identify potential career pathway(s) and needs using career and postsecondary preparation assessments, similar to assessments used in Minnesota's K-12 system.
4. Develop an individualized learning plan based on the student' identified goals and skills.

Instruction and Evaluation

1. Implement individualized learning plan based on instruction and preparation on the competency domains.
2. Post-test learners using approved assessments for Minnesota's ABE programming.
3. Track progress towards diploma and goals.
4. Provide additional support services as needed.

Graduating Counseling Session

1. Evaluate students' work in Adult Diploma Program to ensure completion of necessary competencies.
2. Create transitions plan to students' future goals.

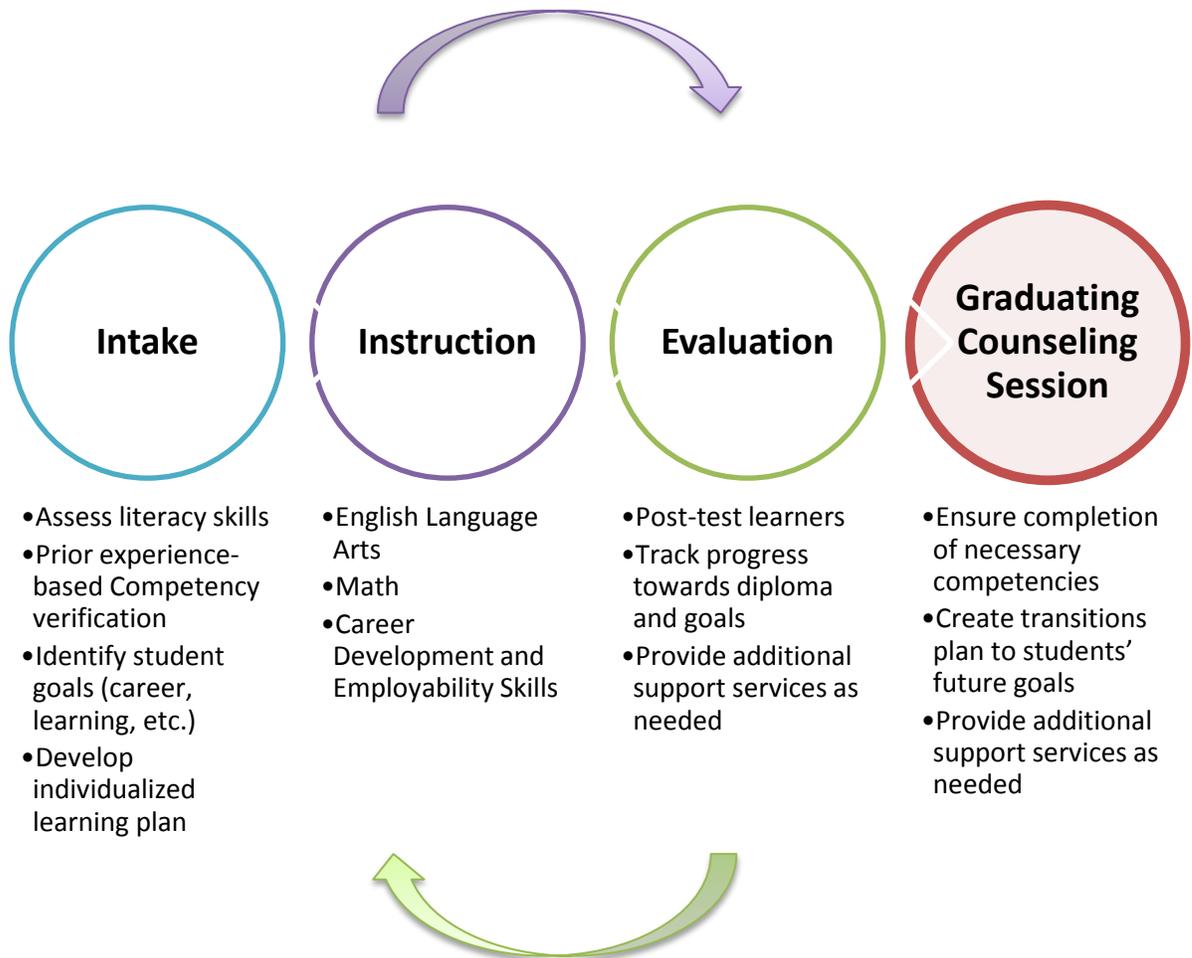
Demonstrating Completion

Adult Diploma students may successfully complete each competency through one of the following ways, as approved by the Commissioner and by the approved local ABE Adult Diploma Program:

- **Prior Experience-Based Competency Verification** (in a K-12 course, postsecondary course, or other approved experience).
- **Test-Verified Knowledge** (in a quality standardized assessment for high schools, secondary credentials, ABE programs and/or postsecondary entrance exams as approved by the state ABE office and local ABE program).
- **ABE Course Completion** (based on skills and competencies as defined in the standards).

- **Applied Learning** (through a project or other method that is approved by the Commissioner and is included in the local ABE Adult Diploma Program's approved application).

Adult Diploma Program Process (Student Perspective)



Minnesota Adult Diploma Transcript

In order to graduate, an Adult Diploma Student must complete the following in an Adult Basic Education Adult Diploma Program that is approved by the Minnesota Department of Education:

Skills, Competencies & Knowledge	Evidence of Completion	Date of Completion
Initial Counseling Session		
Identify student goals		
Assess student skills and experience		
Identify potential career pathway		
Develop individualized learning plan		
English Language Arts		
Reading		
Writing		
Speaking and Listening		
Language		
Mathematics		
Number System		
Expressions and Equations		
Functions		
Geometry		
Statistics and Probability		
Career and Employability Skills		
Digital Literacy Skills		
Learning Strategies & Self-Management		
Critical Thinking		
Navigating Systems		
Career Exploration		
Graduating Counseling Session		
Evaluate students' work in Adult Diploma Program to ensure completion of necessary competencies		
Create transitions plan to students' future goals		