



Advocates for Children of New York

Protecting every child's right to learn

Summary of Changes to Graduation Requirements due to COVID-19

To graduate from high school in New York, students generally need to earn 22 credits (44 credits in NYC) and to pass 4+1 exams. For details, see AFC's guides on [High School Promotion and Graduation Requirements](#) & [Graduation Options for Students with Disabilities](#).

Course requirements have not changed during COVID-19. But, Regents exams were cancelled in June and August 2020; January, June and August 2021; and January 2022.¹ New York State also changed graduation requirements for students who planned to take one or more of these exams. Below is a summary of those changes.

For more information from the New York State Education Department (NYSED), please see: June & August 2020 [guidance](#) and [FAQ](#); January 2021 [guidance](#) and [FAQ](#); June & August 2021 [guidance](#) and [FAQ](#); and January 2022 [guidance](#) and [FAQ](#).

Regents exam exemptions:

Students who planned to take a Regents exam that was cancelled due to COVID-19 can graduate without a Regents exam in that subject if ANY of the following applies:

- They took a Regents course or make-up program AND earned all of the credits in the sequence by the end of the first semester of the 2021-22 school year; OR
- As a 7th or 8th grader, they passed a Regents course in the 2019-20 or 2020-21 school years.

How do COVID-19 Regents exam exemptions appear on my transcript?

- You should see a "WA" or "E" next to the exam on your transcript. If you think you are eligible for an exemption and don't see it on your transcript, talk to your guidance counselor immediately.
- You can graduate with a Regents diploma if you got COVID-19 exemptions on 4+1 exams, or if you combine COVID-19 exemptions with passing scores on Regents exams.
- Honors/Advanced Regents Diploma determinations are made without consideration of the exempted Regents exams scores.
- Safety Net options are still available to students with disabilities and English Language Learners. For more info, see AFC's Guides on [High School Graduation Options for Students with Disabilities](#) and [Graduation Policy for English Language Learners](#). **Note:** students with disabilities using the Compensatory Safety Net cannot use a COVID-19 exemption to compensate for a lower Regents exam score (45-54) in another subject.

¹ The U.S. History Regents exam was also cancelled in June 2022, though not due to COVID-19. If you were supposed to take that Regents exam, you are eligible for a Regents exemption.

If I declined a COVID-19 exemption, can I ask for it now?

No. During the 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 school years, parents had the option of declining COVID-19 exemptions. Students, regardless of age, could not decline exemptions for themselves. Parents could choose to decline some exemptions and accept others. Once a parent declines, you cannot later request the exemption.

Regents Exam Appeals

Usually, you can only appeal Regents exams if you:

1. Score between 60-64 on the exam;
2. Take the exam at least twice;
3. Receive academic help at school in the subject area; AND
4. Get a recommendation from your teacher or the department head.

During COVID-19, appeals requirements are more flexible. If you take a Regents exam from June 2022 to August 2023, you can appeal if you:

1. Score between 50-64 on the exam; AND
2. Pass the related Regents course

You do not need to meet any of the other above requirements to appeal your score, and there is no limit on the number of exams you can appeal during the time period. For more information, see AFC's [tip sheet](#).

High School Equivalency & GED

In general, students who leave high school without a diploma can earn a High School Equivalency (HSE) diploma by passing 4 GED sub-tests: Math, Science, Social Studies, and Reasoning Through Language Arts. From 2014 through 2021, New York used a different HSE exam called the TASC. The TASC is no longer offered.

Students can also earn their HSE diploma by combining passing GED sub-test scores, passing Regents exam scores, Regents exam COVID-19 exemptions, and passing TASC sub-test scores. ***Students must still pass at least one GED sub-test to get an HSE diploma.*** For details, see this [NYSED FAQ](#) and AFC's guide to [Rocking the GED](#).

This fact sheet does not constitute legal advice. This fact sheet attempts to summarize existing policies or laws without stating the opinion of AFC. If you have a legal problem, please contact an attorney or advocate.

Copyright © June 2022 by Advocates for Children of New York, Inc.