

**Georgia**  
**Profile of State High School Exit Exam Policies**

<b><i>State exit exam policy</i></b>	<p>Prior to the 2011-12 school year, the Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHSGT) and the Georgia High School Writing Test were required for diploma eligibility. Beginning in 1998, the State Board put into effect a waiver/variance policy. In 2006, this policy was more codified specifying criteria for student eligibility and allowing an alternate way of demonstrating subject area competency if a student was failing the GHSGT. This variance policy allowed students to demonstrate competency via end-of-course assessments in the same content area if the student met certain eligibility criteria.</p> <p>Beginning with the freshman class of 2011-12, the Georgia High School Graduation Tests will no longer be required for diploma eligibility. The end-of-course assessments (EOCTs) are given in 10 courses and will count for 20% of a student’s final grade in each course.</p> <p>For students who enrolled in grade 9 for the first time between July 1, 2008 and June 30, 2011, the EOCT will still count for 15% of a student’s final grade. The GHSGT will still be available. However, students in this cohort will be able to substitute a passing score on their EOCTs for the corresponding content section of the GHSGT. While the GHSGT will be made available for those who need to demonstrate competency in one or more of the content areas, the number of participants in future administrations is expected to be very small because many students will have demonstrated competency via EOCT.</p> <p>All students will still be required to take the Georgia High School Writing Test (GHSWT).</p>
Type of test	<p>The Georgia High School Graduation Tests are comprehensive, standards-based assessments in English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. A writing test (GHSWT) is also required.</p> <p>Beginning with the freshman class entering for the first time in the fall of 2011-12, the GHSGT will no longer be a requirement for diploma eligibility. Students are still required to pass the GHSWT.</p>

	<p>Students who were already in high school prior to fall 2011-12 may demonstrate competency by passing one of the end-of-course tests in a content area in lieu of passing that component of the GHSGT. Students are still required to pass the GHSWT.</p>
<p>Purpose</p>	<p>The purpose of the GHSGT is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that students qualifying for a diploma have mastered essential core academic content and skills. All students seeking a Georgia high school diploma must pass the Georgia High School Graduation Tests in four content areas as well as the Georgia High School Writing Assessment.</li> <li>• Provide schools with student academic diagnostic information</li> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates’ mastery of the state curriculum</li> <li>• Encourage districts and schools to identify and serve students at risk of academic failure</li> <li>• Provide data to state policymakers on student attainment of state education goals to inform educational policy decisions</li> <li>• Increase alignment of local curriculum and programs of instruction with state education standards</li> <li>• Promote equity of opportunity across all student groups</li> <li>• Meet a state mandate and a state board of education rule</li> </ul> <p>The purpose of the EOCTs is to improve teaching and learning. The EOCTs align with the Georgia curriculum standards and include assessments of specific content knowledge and skills. The assessments provide diagnostic information to help students identify strengths and areas of need in learning, therefore improving performance in all high school courses and on other assessments, such as the GHSGT. The EOCTs also provide data to evaluate the effectiveness of classroom instruction at the school and system levels.</p>
<p>Major changes in exit exam policy since the 2009-10 school year for financial reasons</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Major changes in exit exam policy since the 2009-10 school year for <i>other</i> reasons</p>	<p>Beginning with the freshman class of 2011-12, the passing of Georgia High School Graduation Test will no longer be a requirement for graduation. Rather than require students to pass the</p>

	<p>GHS GT in order to receive a diploma, the end-of-course assessments are given in 10 courses and will count for 20% of a student’s final grade in each course.</p> <p>For students currently enrolled in high school (classes prior to the freshmen of 2011-12), the EOCT will still count for 15% of a student’s final grade. The GHS GT will still be available. However, students who were already enrolled in high school during the 2010-11 will be able to substitute a passing score on their EOCTs for the corresponding content section of the GHS GT. While the GHS GT will be made available for those that need to demonstrate competency in one or more of the content areas, the number of participants in future administrations is expected to be very small because many students will have demonstrated competency via EOCT.</p>
<p>Year first administered</p>	<p>GHS GT- 1991</p> <p>EOCTs- Implemented as operational test during 2003-04 school year.</p>
<p>Year diplomas first withheld</p>	<p>GHS GT- 1994</p> <p>EOCTs are not a requirement for diploma eligibility. EOCT will count for 20% of a student’s grade beginning with the freshman class enrolling in fall of 2011-12. For students who enrolled in grade 9 for the first time between July 1, 2008 and June 30, 2011, the EOCTs may serve in lieu of the GHS GT for diploma eligibility and will continue to be used as the final exam and count for 15% of a student’s final course grade.</p>
<p>Subjects tested on exam</p>	<p>English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies (GHS GT), and writing (GHS WT)</p> <p>Now the EOCT can be an alternate way of demonstrating competency. An EOCT that corresponds to a GHS GT content test may be used to fulfill that assessment requirement for diploma eligibility. EOCTs are available in the following courses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English language arts:- 9<sup>th</sup> grade literature and American literature</li> <li>• Mathematics: Math 1 and 2 OR Systems may offer mathematics standards via discrete model courses- Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) algebra and GPS geometry beginning winter 2011</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Science: Physical science and biology;</li> <li>• Social Studies: U.S. history and economics.</li> </ul>
Subjects required for graduation	English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies (GHSGT), and writing (GHSWT)
Grade exam first administered	<p>GHSGT and GHSWT-11<sup>th</sup> ; The main administration for the GHSWT takes place in the fall, and the main administration for the GHSGT in English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies occurs in the spring of 11<sup>th</sup> grade.</p> <p>The passing of EOCTs are not required for students to become eligible for diploma; however, a passing score in a course that corresponds to one of the subject area tests on the GHSGT can be used to demonstrate subject matter competency.</p>
Grade(s) exam aligned to	GHSGT- and GHSWT include subject area content from courses that a student may encounter in 9 <sup>th</sup> -11 <sup>th</sup> grades. Most students who are on track will encounter the bulk of test content on the GHSGT and GHSWT in grades 9 and 10. The GHSGT in ELA reflects the American literature and composition course that most districts usually offer in 11 <sup>th</sup> grade and the GHSGT in Social Studies reflects some U.S. History that some districts either offer to either 10 <sup>th</sup> or 11 <sup>th</sup> graders. All depend on the course-taking pattern of the student.
Number of retakes allowed <i>before</i> the end of grade 12	<p>GHSGT- Five. Students who do not pass on the first attempt have multiple opportunities to receive additional instruction, retest, and qualify for graduation before the spring of 12<sup>th</sup> grade.</p> <p>EOCT- Beginning with the winter 2011 administration, students will be allowed one retest opportunity while enrolled in the course. This policy is being introduced now that the EOCT will serve as the assessment measure for school accountability (i.e., adequate yearly progress). As an alternate way of demonstrating competency, these EOCT retests provide students who are not succeeding on the GHSGT another opportunity.</p>
Number of retakes allowed <i>after</i> grade 12	GHSGT- Students who have met all other graduation requirements (i.e., exited school with a certificate of attendance) are allowed to retake the exit exam as many times as they need to

	after 12 <sup>th</sup> grade to receive a regular diploma.
Is the exit exam used for No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability purposes?	<p>Beginning with the 2009-10 school year, the NCLB-AYP calculations include any student who is a first-time GHSGT taker regardless of grade. Students in the 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade can count as first-time test takers.</p> <p>Beginning with the 2011-12 school year, the EOCT will replace the GHSGT as a measure of whether or not a school makes AYP.</p>
Is the same cut score used for graduation and NCLB accountability purposes?	GHSGT- For the 2010-11 school year, the cut scores for ELA and mathematics which are based on Georgia’s Performance Standards were used for both student (diploma) and school accountability (AYP).
Considerations given to changing the cut score needed to pass the exam for graduation purposes in the past year	The spring 2011 administration of the GHSGT in mathematics was the first GPS-based operational form of the test. Therefore, new test performance standards were set. With the test now based on the more rigorous curriculum, the new cut scores serve both student accountability and school accountability purposes.
Alternate paths to graduation for students other than English language learners (ELLs) or students with disabilities	<p>The state has a process for students seeking a waiver of the GHSGT. Any student experiencing a substantial hardship may request a waiver if either one or both of the following minimum eligibility requirements are met: a student who, due to disability, is rendered incapable of passing a section of the GHSGT, or a student who has not had a reasonable opportunity to pass a section of the GHSGT due to substantial hardship beyond the student’s control, such as a significant, unique, and demonstrable economic, technological, legal, or other type of deprivation. Students who are granted the waiver and meet all other requirements may receive a diploma from the local school district.</p> <p>In addition, there is a variance process that allows a student to demonstrate academic proficiency on a GHSGT using other academic assessments. The state board of education (SBOE) may, by majority vote, grant a variance to students who have satisfied <b>all</b> of the following requirements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The student has attempted the relevant section(s) of the high school graduation assessment four or more times without passing; and</li> </ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. The student has successfully completed a structured remedial class(es) after each unsuccessful attempt</li> <li>3. The student has passed any three of the five high school graduation assessments</li> <li>4. The student has obtained a scale score that falls within one standard error of measurement for passing the relevant section of the high school graduation assessment</li> <li>5. The student has met the attendance requirements as described in SBOE rule</li> <li>6. The student has a 90% or better attendance record, excluding excused absences, while enrolled in grades 9-12</li> <li>7. The student has met the course unit requirements for graduation as described in the applicable SBOE high school graduation requirements rule; and</li> <li>8. The student has met one of the following requirements:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Where applicable, the student has successfully passed each of the end-of-course tests related to the sections of the high school graduation assessment in which the variance is being sought, or</li> <li>b) Where applicable, the student has attained the minimum required score on another qualified academic achievement test as defined by the SBOE and the Georgia Department of Education.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p>Beginning in 2011-12, students who are still required to take the GHSGT will be allowed to substitute a passing grade on an EOCT in each of the four content areas for the equivalent content section of the GHSGT in the core subject areas of English language arts, math, science, and social studies.</p>
<p>Determination of eligibility to pursue these alternate paths to graduation</p>	<p>See eligibility response above.</p>
<p>Number and percentage of students who used alternate paths in 2010-11 school year</p>	<p>Waivers 254*            Variances 495            *Beginning in 2010-11, a single waiver containing multiple subject requests was split into separate cases. In previous years, waivers containing multiple subject requests were counted as a single case. For this reason, results between years are not comparable.</p>

<p>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners</p>	<p>No. However, English language learners may apply for the waiver or variance described. There are a variety of language-responsive accommodations, such as a word-to-word translation dictionary.</p>
<p>Number and percentage of ELL students using alternate paths in 2010-11 school year</p>	<p>The state does not have these data at this time.</p>
<p>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities</p>	<p>No. However, students with disabilities may apply for the waiver described above. A special education diploma is also available for students with disabilities who complete the requirements of their individualized education program.</p> <p>There are a variety of accommodations allowed, such as extended time, frequent breaks, and flexible schedule. More details are available online in the student assessment handbook at <a href="http://www.gadoe.org">www.gadoe.org</a>.</p>
<p>Number and percentage of students with disabilities using alternate paths in 2010-11 school year</p>	<p>The state does not have these data to report at this time.</p>
<p>Is the exit exam used by postsecondary institutions for undergraduate admission purposes?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Is the exit exam used by postsecondary institutions for placement purposes?</p>	<p>GHS GT- As of spring 2008 with the launch of the GPS-based ELA GHS GT, the colleges/universities within the University system of Georgia have permitted students scoring at advanced proficiency level or higher on the ELA test to enroll in credit-bearing courses without taking additional tests. Students who do not score this high may need to take additional tests, and if not successful are placed in remedial, non-credit bearing courses. With the launch of the GPS-based GHS GT in mathematics in spring 2011, students scoring at the</p>

	advanced proficiency level or higher may enroll in credit-bearing courses without having to take additional tests.
Are students who meet a certain standard on the state exit exam granted exemptions on college placement exams?	See above
Can students receive any form of postsecondary education course credit for their performance on the exit exam?	No
Access to initial and cumulative pass rates on high school exit exams	<p>The report card and the GHSGT reports focus on the test results by administration. The report card does report graduation rates that are affected by whether students are passing the GHSGT. In addition, the grad rates may include students who received waivers. Cumulative pass rates are not reported annually.</p> <p>Reports by administration may be located in statewide scores for GHSGT here:  <a href="http://www.gadoe.org/ci_testing.aspx?PageReq=CI_TESTING_GHSGT">http://www.gadoe.org/ci_testing.aspx?PageReq=CI_TESTING_GHSGT</a></p> <p>Report card information on graduation rates is located here:  <a href="http://www.gadoe.org/ReportingFW.aspx?PageReq=102&amp;StateId=ALL&amp;T=1">http://www.gadoe.org/ReportingFW.aspx?PageReq=102&amp;StateId=ALL&amp;T=1</a></p>
State participation in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS)	Georgia has adopted the CCSS in both English language arts and math.
CCSS testing consortia membership	Georgia is a member of PARCC only.
Impact of adoption of the CCSS on high school exit exam policies	Georgia is looking at the feasibility of aligning the CCSS to the GPS on the EOCT and building “transitional” forms using those content standards that appear well matched. Our goal would be not to have to set new test performance standards, because this would not be fiscally responsible with GA going to PARCC assessments in 2015.



	<p>The current GHSWT asks students to write on demand to a prompt; the test assesses a student’s ability to formulate ideas, to organize, to apply style features, and to adhere to language conventions. However, this does not capture the essence of the CCSS writing standards that require the student to read one or more documents, synthesize, and then write for one of several genres. Georgia has not yet decided what direction to take on this.</p>
<p>Plans to replace or realign current exit exam in English language arts with a new assessment aligned to the CCSS</p>	<p>See above response.</p>
<p>Plans to replace or realign current exit exam in math with a new assessment aligned to the CCSS</p>	<p>See above response.</p>
<p>Plans to maintain current exit exams in subjects other than English language arts and math once the Common Core State Standards are fully implemented</p>	<p>See above response.</p>
<p>Will changes in state exit exams mentioned above make the exams more rigorous, less rigorous, or about the same?</p>	<p>See above response.</p>
<p>Preparation for students and teachers to transition to new exam</p>	<p>Districts will be trained in 2011-12 school year on the CCSS and how they are aligned to GPS. School districts will implement the CCSS during the 2012-13 school year. If transition tests are built, then test content description and other documents will clearly inform the teachers and students of the changes.</p>

