

Polk State College Procedure

Subject	Reference	Date	Number
Validating High School Transcripts for Admission Purposes	Board Rule 4.02 Florida Statute 1002.41 Florida Statute 1003.428 Florida Statute 1003.438 Florida Statute 1003.43	7/26/2011	5031

I. Purpose

To define the criteria for and process of evaluating high school transcripts as valid or invalid for the purposes of admission to Polk State College and eligibility of federal Title IV funds.

II. The Process for Validation

In general, valid high schools are ones where the student successfully completes a variety of secondary courses over a stipulated period of dated enrollment, such as semester periods, grade levels, or other defined dates of enrollment, that demonstrate student engagement and participation, and for which grades were assigned, successful completion or graduation is noted, and an official seal or signature is attested.

When the diploma-granting school does not meet a criterion for general acceptance as listed in this procedure but also does not fall into the invalid category, the validation process is followed to determine if the institution meets the general standards for valid high schools or a reasonable alternative that demonstrates valid teaching and learning at the high school level occurred.

The burden of providing an official high school transcript and any required supporting documentation rests with the student. A transcript shall be accepted for validation provided it is received in a sealed envelope, clearly issued from the awarding institution, and free of conflicting or suspicious information.

III. Criteria for General Acceptance

The College maintains an open-door admission policy. Polk State College accepts high school credentials in accordance with Florida statutes and State Board of Education Rules. Prospective students with qualifying high school diplomas or the equivalent are eligible to apply. It is the responsibility of the College President or the President's designee to qualify high school diplomas as representative of a valid and acceptable high school education, thereby meeting the college's admission requirement and qualifying for receipt of federal Title IV funds.

Eligibility for admission to the College includes:

1. Students who graduate from a Florida public high school with a standard high school diploma, or with other high school withdrawal (completion) codes defined in Florida statutes as eligible for college-level education.
2. An International Baccalaureate diploma in compliance with Florida Statute 1003.438.
3. Schools previously validated by the College.

4. Students who graduate from any U.S. or U.S. territory public high school with a standard high school diploma or its equivalent. Public school information can be found at the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) at www.nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch.
5. Students who have passed the GED or have been awarded a high school equivalency diploma issued by any State Department of Education or students who have passed the GED given by the USAFI (United States Armed Forces Institute) or any other military issued GED. The GED must be submitted on an official transcript evidencing passing scores. Students who submit a GED in a foreign language must score at or above Level II on the Levels of English Proficiency (LOEP) exam.
6. Students who have met the school attendance policy as defined for home school in Florida Statute 1002.41 and completed curriculum requirements for graduation as defined by Florida Statute 1003.43. Home-school transcripts are requested but are required only if the College has reason to doubt the validity of the home-school affidavit or to meet language requirements or prerequisites to specific courses recommending certain high school course work.
7. Students who graduate from regionally-accredited institutions or DETC-accredited institutions.
8. International students presenting evidence of high school work in compliance with Florida Statute 1003.435. International student admission requirements are outlined in Procedure 5014, *International Students*.

IV. Criteria Which Automatically Assesses a Diploma as Invalid

A high school diploma is automatically deemed invalid if the student took an exam to earn the credential, and there is no evidence that teaching or specified periods of student engagement and participation occurred or the high school is not registered with the Department of Education in a U.S. state or U.S. territory.

V. Process to Validate a High School Diploma as Eligible for Admission and Federal Title IV Funds

Students whose high school diplomas do not fall into the general acceptance criteria or the automatically invalid criteria have the opportunity to submit evidence that the high school is valid. Schools will be rated based on the subjective judgment of the Admission and Registrar's staff after reviewing collected documentation. Diploma-granting entities will be evaluated on the following criteria:

1. Mode of delivery of education to the student
2. The qualifications of teachers delivering the education
3. Evidence of specified periods of dated enrollment, such as semesters, grade levels, or other defined dates of enrollment that demonstrate student engagement and participation
4. The use of legitimate textbooks in mathematics and English
5. The website of the entity does not conflict with the information provided
6. Any other criteria that will assist the College in making a determination as to validity such as:
 - a. The diploma-granting entity contracts with the Polk County School Board or any other Florida county school board or any Florida public high school to provide services to students that lead to earning a diploma. The diploma-granting entity must provide evidence of the contract and school board contact information.
 - b. Students who graduate from high schools accredited by organizations that maintain standards for member institutions regarding the credentials of the teachers, specified periods

of enrollment to earn a high school unit of credit, and minimum subject area requirements to earn a diploma. Examples of such accrediting bodies include, but are not limited to:

- National Lutheran School Accreditation
- National Association of Private Catholic and Independent Schools
- Association of Christian Schools International

The Financial Aid office will be notified of the status of all diploma-granting entities that go through the validation process and will provide a member to serve on a decision committee in instances where a validation does not provide a clear judgment.

VI. Alternatives to High School Diploma

1. Polk State College encourages students without a valid high school diploma to take the GED test.
2. Students who demonstrate six hours of college-level work have shown ability to benefit and may qualify for some programs and Title IV funds.
3. Students who pass an ability-to-benefit test in all areas (score at the college-level), may qualify to take some college-level work and may qualify for some programs and Title IV funds after successful completion of six college credit hours

History

Adopted: July 26, 2011

Revised:

Distribution: All Holders of the College Procedure Manual
 All Faculty

			
Executive Responsible for Procedure	Date	President's Staff Member's Approval	Date
			
President's Approval			Date