

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 1003.4282 Florida Statute 1003.435	June 4, 2019	5031

1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is 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 for federal Title IV funds.

II. The Process for Validation

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, a validation process is followed to determine if the institution meets the general standards for a valid high school (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. Alternatively, the official transcript can be received electronically through a certifiable exchange service or secure pdf provider. Any additional documentation required by the College to evaluate the validity of a high school transcript or diploma is the responsibility of the student.

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. Any prospective student with a qualifying high school diploma or the equivalent is eligible to apply. It is the responsibility of the College President or the President's designee to qualify that each high school diploma is representative of a valid and acceptable high school education, thereby meeting the college's admission requirement and qualifying the student for receipt of federal Title IV funds.

The following scenarios provide eligibility for admission to the College:

1. A student who graduates from a Florida public high school with a standard high school diploma, or with any other high school withdrawal (completion) code that is defined in the Florida Statutes as eligible for college-level education.
2. A student with an International Baccalaureate diploma in compliance with Florida Statute 1003.4282.
3. An individual holding a diploma from any school that has been previously validated by the College.

4. A student who graduates 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) (www.nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch).
5. An individual who has passed the GED Exam, has been awarded a high school equivalency diploma issued by any State Department of Education, has passed the GED Exam given by the USAFI (United States Armed Forces Institute), or who has any other military-issued GED. The GED must be submitted on an official transcript evidencing passing scores. A student who submits a GED in a foreign language must score at or above Level II on the Levels of English Proficiency (LOEP) Exam.
6. A student who has met the school attendance policy as defined for home-schooled students within Florida Statute 1002.41 and completed the curriculum requirements for graduation as defined by Florida Statute. A home-school transcript may be requested, but it is only required if the College has reason to doubt the validity of the *Affidavit of Home School Completion*, or it is necessary as a means to document language requirements or prerequisites to specific courses that recommend certain high school course work.
7. A student who graduates from a regionally accredited institution or a DETC-accredited institution (Distance Education and Training Council).
8. An International Student who presents evidence of high school work in compliance with Florida Statute 1003.435. International Student admission requirements are outlined in Polk State College 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 (other than an official GED exam), 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 territory.

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

A student whose high school diploma does not fall into the “general acceptance” criteria or the “automatically invalid” criteria can submit evidence that the high school is valid. The school is then rated based on the subjective judgment of the Admission and Registrar’s staff after reviewing the collected documentation. Diploma-granting entities are 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 enrollment, such as semesters, grade levels, or other defined dates of enrollment that demonstrate student engagement and participation
4. The website of the entity does not conflict with the information provided
5. Any other criteria that assists the College in deciding the validity of the institution, such as if a Florida county school board or public high school contracts with the entity 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.

The Financial Aid Office is notified of the status of all diploma-granting entities that go through the validation process.

VI. Alternatives to High a School Diploma

1. Polk State College encourages each student without a valid high school diploma to take the GED Exam.
2. A student who takes the college placement test and scores at the college level in all areas may attend Polk State College as a degree-seeking student, but the student is not eligible for financial aid.

History:

Adopted: July 26, 2011
Revised: May 24, 2013; June 4, 2019

<i>Reginal T. Wehl</i>	<i>7/29/19</i>	<i>Reginal T. Wehl</i>	<i>7/29/19</i>
Executive Responsible for Procedure	Date	President's Staff Member's Approval	Date
<i>Cheryl M. Galovetti</i>			<i>7/29/19</i>
President's Approval			Date