

# Certificate of Completion (COC)

## BACKGROUND

511 IAC 7-43-4(h) requires that the IEP of a student entering grade 9 or becoming 14 years of age must contain documentation regarding whether the student will pursue a high school diploma, as defined in 511 IAC 6-7.1-1 (e), or a certificate of completion.

The term “certificate of completion” is not further defined, but is interpreted to be a document awarded to a special education student who has been taken off of the diploma path but completes the public school educational program prescribed in the student’s IEP.

The term “Certificate of Completion” may only be used to refer to a document awarded for completion of the special educational program outlined in a student’s IEP, and may not be used in any other circumstances.

## IMPETUS FOR CHANGE

2014 - Indiana’s Alternate Assessment shifted focus from functional to academic skills.

2015 - Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Development Partners expressed concerns about the readiness of students who receive the COC to enter the workforce.

2015 - Parents expressed concerns about the ability of their children to access the workforce without a high school diploma

2015 - Schools report receiving minimal guidance on serving students on a Certificate of Completion track. The students have no documentation of their academic or employability skills.

November 2015 – A Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) from the Office of Special Education Programs clarified the definition of a Free Appropriate Public Education including access to grade level standards.

December 2015 - Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires Equity and Access for all students. Challenging academic content standards apply to all public schools and students in the State; for students with significant cognitive disabilities, alternate achievement standards must be aligned with state academic standards.

May 2016 – The number of students exiting high school with a certificate of completion significantly increased.

### EXIT DATA

	2015	2016
Total SWD who exited	7223	8102
Total SWD who exited with Certificate of Completion	795	1326
% of SWD who exited with Certificate of Completion	11%	16%

The Certificate of Completion Work Group, a subset of the Interagency Transition Council, began meeting monthly in September 2015 to examine the issues related to the Certificate raised by schools, parents, students and the community and to develop a plan to address the issues. The group is comprised of representatives from schools, Vocational Rehabilitation, Workforce Development, FSSA, ARC of Indiana, ICASE, INSOURCE, Indiana Resource Network, Indiana Manufacturers Association and various members of the Department of Education.

**The Certificate of Completion Course of Study will take effect with those students who enter high school in the 2018-19 school year or the class of 2022 .**

### Diploma First

The majority of students with disabilities are capable of earning a high school diploma if given appropriate instruction, supports and services.

Students who have been removed from the diploma path by the case conference committee must be presented with and follow a course of study that raises expectations, is aligned with grade level standards and/or alternate standards, and provided opportunities to gain employability skills.

### Certificate of Completion Assumptions

High Expectations for all students is a shared responsibility.

General Education classes are accessed whenever appropriate to fulfill COC Course of Study.

Student's IEP goals are aligned with grade level content standards that drive the curriculum.

Communication skills, reading skills, problem solving skills are woven into all classes.

Classes may be repeated with new goals if appropriate; more than four years may be needed for completion.

Course selection is driven by the Transition IEP and individual goals of students.

As the Certificate of Completion subcommittee has worked on making the COC a more robust and meaningful pathway for students who have been removed from the diploma path, we followed the development process below.

Course of Study

- Aligned with General Diploma
- Support from VR/DWD/Transition Stakeholders
- Aligned with standards and statewide assessments

Development Process

Course Descriptions

- Support form IDOE P-16 Office
- Aligned to Content Standards, Content Connectors and Workplace Essentials
- Support high expectations and COC assumptions

Professional Development

- Academic Instruction
- Transition Planning
- Employability

**Certificate of Completion resources can be found [here](#).**

## Indiana Certificate of Completion Course of Study

Effective with the students who enter high school in 2018-19 school year (class of 2022)

The Course of Study for the Certificate of Completion is a framework for aligning curriculum to grade level standards while meeting the individual goals and transition needs stated in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Minimum total 40 credits/applied units: It is expected that these requirements are met through enrollment in a combination of general education courses for credit, modified general education courses in which non-credit applied units are earned and special education courses in which non-credit applied units are earned.

<b>English/Language Arts</b>	<b>8 credits/applied units</b>
	Including a balance of literature, composition, vocabulary, speech/communication
<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>4 credits/applied units</b>
	Including a balance of number sense, expressions, computation, data analysis, statistics, probability, equations and inequalities and personal finance. Student must take a math or applied math course each year in high school.
<b>Science</b>	<b>4 credits/applied units</b>
	Including a balance of physical, earth/nature, life, engineering and technology
<b>Social Studies</b>	<b>4 credits/applied units</b>
	Including a balance of history, civics and government, geography, economics
<b>Physical Education</b>	<b>2 credits/applied units</b>
<b>Health &amp; Wellness</b>	<b>1 credit/applied unit</b>
<b>Employability</b>	<b>10 credits/applied units</b>
	Job exploration, work- or project-based learning experiences, employability skills (mindsets, self-management, learning strategies, social, workplace), portfolio creation, intro to post-secondary options
	Investigation into opportunities for enrollment in postsecondary programs, work place readiness training to develop employability and independent living skills and instruction in self-advocacy
<b>Electives</b>	<b>7 credits/applied units</b>

### Certificate of Completion Transition Portfolio

Students earning a certificate of completion fulfill at least one of the following (aligned with transition goals):

1. **Career Credential:** Complete an industry-recognized certification, one-year certificate or state-approved alternative
2. **Career Experience:** Complete project- or work-based learning experience or part time employment
3. **Work Ethic Certificate:** Earn a Work Ethic Certificate (criteria to be locally determined)
4. **Other Work Related Activities:** As determined by the case conference committee

Mirrors regular diploma requirements (minimum 40 applied units or credits with emphasis on academics)

Employability Skills are an integral part of the plan

Transition portfolio is a requirement

Can be earned through any combination of applied units and credits

Aligned with Statewide Assessment (ISTAR or ISTEP)

## Course Descriptions

The Indiana Course Descriptions were used to begin the process of developing courses that would meet the applied unit requirement of the Certificate of Completion. The related Content Connectors (alternate achievement standards assessed on ISTAR) and workplace essentials (skills assessed by DWD) were aligned. [Link to Indiana Academic Standards and Alternate Achievement Content Connectors.](#)

High School Course Titles	Course Description	Applied Course Description	Related Critical Content Connectors	Employability Skills	Max # Units	Grade Level	COC Requirement
Business Math	<i>Business Math</i> is a course designed to prepare students for roles as entrepreneurs, producers, and business leaders by developing abilities and skills that are part of any business environment. A solid understanding of math including algebra, basic geometry, statistics, and probability provides the necessary foundation for students interested in careers in business and skilled trade areas. The content includes mathematical operations related to accounting, banking and finance, marketing, and management.	<i>Applied Business Math</i> is a course designed to prepare students for roles as entrepreneurs, producers, and business leaders by developing abilities and skills that are part of any business environment. A solid understanding of application of money management skills, navigating industry specific technology and apps, establishing and managing budgets, and maintaining inventory for products and other necessary skills that provides the foundation for students interested in careers in business related fields and everyday life. The content includes	AI.DS.5.a.1: Examine the study using categorical data. AI.L.11.a.1: Solve linear equations with 1 variable. AI.RNE.2.a.1: Identify the pattern for the sum or product for combinations of rational numbers.	Multi-Tasking Skill in handling multiple tasks and assignments simultaneously by setting priorities and managing work flow under varying deadlines Numerical and Arithmetic Application Skill in compiling data, using numbers in various formats,	2	10+	employability, math

High School Course Titles	Course Description	Applied Course Description	Related Critical Content Connectors	Employability Skills	Max # Units	Grade Level	COC Requirement
English 9, English 10	<i>English 9, English 10</i> is an integrated English course based on the <i>Indiana Academic Standards for English/Language Arts in Grades 9-10</i> , is a study of language, literature, composition, and oral communication, focusing on literature within an appropriate level of complexity for this grade band. Students use literary interpretation, analysis, comparisons, and evaluation to read and respond to representative works of historical or cultural significance in classic and contemporary literature balanced with nonfiction. Students write responses to literature, expository (informative), narrative, and argumentative/persuasive compositions, and sustained research assignments.	<i>Applied English 9, Applied English 10</i> is an integrated English course based on the Indiana Content Connectors for English/Language Arts in Grades 9-10, is a study of language, literature, composition, and communication, focusing on literature and nonfiction within an appropriate level of complexity for each individual student. Students use literary interpretation, analysis, comparisons, and evaluation to read and respond to a variety of texts. Students form responses to literature, expository (informative), narrative, and argumentative/persuasive compositions, and research tasks when appropriate. . Students deliver ability appropriate presentations with attention to audience and purpose and access, analyze, and evaluate online information.	9-10.RL.2.1.a.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what a text says explicitly 9-10.RL.2.1.a.2: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of inferences and interpretations drawn from the text 9-10.RL.2.3.a.1: Analyze how dynamic characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text and interact with other characters. 9-10.RL.3.1.a.1: Analyze and evaluate how an author's choices concerning how to	Attention to Detail Skill in reviewing with a critical eye the fine, detailed aspects of both quantitative and qualitative work process and end products Decision Making Knowledge of how to ask questions, consider options, rewards, and risks, set limits, plan goals, and apply information to the process of choosing the best alternative Technology and Tool Usage Knowledge	8	9-12	ELA

## ESSA Alignment

**Assessment and Standards** – the COC Course of Study provides a structure for schools that allows students to make progress toward either the Academic Standards or Alternate Achievement Standards (aka Content Connectors); Alternate Standards have been developed and Alternate Assessment aligns with the standards.

**Supporting Each and Every Student** – the revised requirements for earning a Certificate of Completion encourages equity (course of study that mirrors a diploma) and allows flexibility through the credits or units for accessing both the Academic Standards and Alternate Achievement Standards.

**Supporting Excellent Educators** – the Certificate of Completion, as revised, requires a more rigorous curriculum for students who have been removed from the diploma path. Professional Development is available to all teachers who are working with students who have been removed from diploma path, particularly those who work with students who have a significant cognitive disability.

**Accountability** – ESSA allows for 1% of students assessed in the state with significant cognitive disabilities to take an Alternate Assessment that could count favorably in the school accountability formula.

**School Improvement** – As DOE works with districts on improvement, all subgroups must be considered. The Certificate of Completion, as revised, raises expectations for students who have been removed from the diploma path. Raised expectations = Improved Outcomes.

Resources available: <https://www.doe.in.gov/student-services/student-assistance/coc>

EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS



### Next Steps

1. IDOE course titles and descriptions updated to include the applied 'unit' course descriptions
2. Development of a commonly asked questions/ answers document
3. Technical assistance-professional development
4. Information e.g.. COC Course of Study, Sample 4 and 6 year plans, Guidance Counselor Information Q&A will be posted to the [IDOE Academic Guidance website](#)

**Raised Expectations=Improved Outcomes**

# Plan Examples

Recognizing that students earning a certificate of completion will do so in a variety of paths, we are developing sample plans. The plans will highlight a combination of credits and units and multiple courses for employability/capstone requirements.

Nathan is an 11<sup>th</sup> grade student with autism spectrum disorder. His communication skills are inconsistent, although he is able to express needs, information and some emotions to those he knows well. With support for behavior, Nathan has participated in general education curriculum. However, there has not been adequate academic progress and skills continue to be four-five years below expectation.

## Four-Year Plan Example

Freshman Year – Fall 20xx			Freshman Year – Spring 20xx		
Course	Requirement	Credit/Unit	Course	Requirement	Credit/Unit
1002	English 9	1	1002	English 9	1
2520	Algebra 1	1	2520	Algebra 1	1
2516	Algebra 1 Lab	1	2516	Algebra 1 Lab	1
1010	Language Arts Lab	1	1010	Language Arts Lab	1

5394	Preparing for C
3024	Biology
1570	Geography and
	Cur

Maria is a student with a significant cognitive disability. She is medically fragile and has no identified means of communication. She is able to sustain short periods of instruction, but frequent prompting is needed. Recent evaluation attempts were inconclusive, but teachers report that Maria appears to be engaged for approximately 2 hours per day but tires easily and requires frequent breaks.

## Six-Year Plan Sample

Sophom	
Course	Requirement
1004	English 10
2520	Algebra 1
2532	Geometry
3506	Health and We
4540	Personal Finan
	Study Hall
3024	Biology
	Cur
Junior	
Course	Requirement
4512	Business Math
1542A	United States H
1006A	English 11

Freshman Year – Fall 20xx			Freshman Year – Spring 20xx		
Course	Course Title	Credit/Unit	Course	Course Title	Credit/Unit
1002A	English 9	1	1002A	English 9	1
2520A	Algebra 1	1	2520A	Algebra 1	1
2516A	Algebra 1 Lab	1	2516A	Algebra 1 Lab	1
5394A	Preparing for College and Careers	1	5394A	Preparing for College and Careers	1
0500A	Basic Skills Development	1	0500A	Basic Skills Development	1
3030A	Life Science	1	3102A	Physical Science	1
3506A	Health and Wellness	1	3542A	Physical Education I	1
Cumulative Credits/Units		7	Cumulative Credits/Units		14
Sophomore Year – Fall 20xx			Sophomore Year – Spring 20xx		
Course	Course Title	Credit/Unit	Course	Course Title	Credit/Unit
1004A	English 10	1	1004A	English 10	1
2520A	Algebra 1				
1512A	Current Prob				
3506A	Health and V				
4540A	Personal Fin				
0500A	Basic Skills				
3024A	Biology				
	C				
Jun					
Course	Requirement				
1006A	English 11				
5364A	Interpersona				
1542A	United State				
3506A	Health and V				

Jalen is a ninth-grade student with a significant cognitive disability. He communicates using mostly one and two word phrases. Recent evaluation data shows his receptive language to be several years above his expressive language skills. Reading comprehension level is unknown.

## Four-Year Plan Example

Freshman Year – Fall 20xx			Freshman Year – Spring 20xx		
Course	Course Title	Credit/Unit	Course	Course Title	Credit/Unit
1002A	English 9	1	1002A	English 9	1
2520A	Algebra 1	1	2520A	Algebra 1	1
2516A	Algebra 1 Lab	1	2516A	Algebra 1 Lab	1
5394A	Preparing for College and Careers	1	5394A	Preparing for College and Careers	1
0500A	Basic Skills Development	1	0500A	Basic Skills Development	1
3030A	Life Science	1	3102A	Physical Science	1
3506A	Health and Wellness	1	3542A	Physical Education I	1
Cumulative Credits/Units		7	Cumulative Credits/Units		14
Sophomore Year – Fall 20xx			Sophomore Year – Spring 20xx		
Course	Course Title	Credit/Unit	Course	Course Title	Credit/Unit
1004A	English 10	1	1004A	English 10	1
2520A	Algebra 1	1	2520A	Algebra 1	1
2532A	Geometry	1	2532A	Geometry	1
3024A	Biology	1	3024A	Biology	1
1512A	Current Problems, Issues and Events	1	1512A	Current Problems, Issues and Events	1
3506A	Health and Wellness	1	3542A	Physical Education I	1
5364A	Interpersonal Relationships	1	5364A	Interpersonal Relationships	1
Cumulative Credits/Units		21	Cumulative Credits/Units		28
Junior Year – Fall 20xx			Junior Year – Spring 20xx		
Course	Course Title	Credit/Unit	Course	Course Title	Credit/Unit
1006A	English 11	1	1006A	English 11	1
4540A	Personal Financial Responsibility	1	4540A	Personal Financial Responsibility	1