

# ACADEMIC HONORS DIPLOMA PROGRAM

*What You and Your Child Should Know*



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### **May a school district raise the standards of the Academic Honors Diploma beyond those set in state Administrative Code?**

Yes. 511 IAC 6-7-2 states in part; school corporations may establish graduation requirements that exceed these minimum standards, in which case the local standards take precedence.

### **Does postsecondary credit apply toward the Academic Honors Diploma?**

(IC 20-10.1-15): The Postsecondary Enrollment Program. Sec. 4(b) A student may, upon approval of that student's school corporation, enroll in courses offered by an eligible institution under the program on a full-time or part-time basis during grade 11, grade 12, or both. (c) If a course has been approved for secondary credit by the school corporation, a student is entitled to credit toward graduation requirements for each course the student successfully completes at that institution.

### **Must the courses that have been approved to satisfy the credit requirements in the various subject areas for the Academic Honors Diploma be accessible to all students?**

Yes. It is important that the courses offered to fulfill the requirements in each subject area for the Academic Honors Diploma include courses that are open to all.

### **When a student transfers from another school district and cannot fulfill some of the Academic Honors Diploma requirements due to the lack of offerings in the receiving school, what are some options for that student?**

In most cases the student will need to complete the requirements either through correspondence courses, distance learning courses, summer school, or through an after- school or summer program at a college or university.



## Frequently Asked Questions

### Who determines which students qualify?

The principal or local superintendent has the responsibility to determine if a student has met the necessary requirements to receive the Academic Honors Diploma.

### May students from the nonpublic schools be awarded the Academic Honors Diploma?

An accredited nonpublic school may award the Academic Honors Diploma to any student who meets the requirements and intent of the Academic Honors Diploma rule.

### What electives may a student take when the required courses are completed?

In addition to the **required courses** in each subject area for the Academic Honors Diploma, a student may complete the **required 47** credits by taking courses from any subject area offered by the high school. This includes courses offered at the high school, the area vocational school affiliated with the high school, or a postsecondary institution offering a two or four year degree.

### Do courses completed prior to Grade 9 count toward the Academic Honors Diploma?

Students who complete courses before entering grade nine may earn credit for those courses if each course is equivalent to its high school counterpart.

511 IAC 6-7-6.5 states in part, if a student has completed a junior high school curriculum that is equivalent to high school Level I course (such as *Algebra I*, or a Level I course in *World Languages*) prior to Grade 9, and is placed in a high school Level II course, that student is given credit for level I course completed before grade nine.

School corporations are to develop policies that govern awarding high school credit before grade nine.

## Academic Honors Diploma Program

### Introduction

The Academic Honors Diploma (AHD) is designed to encourage and reward students who pursue a rigorous, advanced course of study during their high school years. It is part of Indiana's plan for academic excellence and is available to all students.

Any public or accredited nonpublic high school may award the Academic Honors Diploma to a student who meets the requirements. The high school must have on file with the Indiana Department of Education an approved list of courses and course descriptions that meet the requirements in each subject area. This list must be available to students and parents.

The Academic Honors Diploma seal is affixed to the student's diploma, and a statement appears on the transcript. The school corporation should provide appropriate recognition for these students at graduation.

The Department of Education conducts periodic reviews of all courses, course descriptions, and programs.

### On The Internet

For your convenience, Academic Honors Diploma rules, course descriptions, brochure, and frequently asked questions can be accessed on the Office of Program Development Web site. Direct your browser to <<http://www.doe.state.in.us/opd/welcome.html>>

## Courses and Credits

### Overview

Academic Honors Diploma is a state mandated diploma. Neither the Indiana Department of Education nor the local school corporation may waive the courses and credits required in the prescribed subject areas.

In addition to the courses specifically required for the Academic Honors Diploma, a student may complete the 47 credits by taking courses from any subject area offered by the high school, but such courses must be on the list submitted to the Department of Education. This list includes other courses offered at the high school, courses at the area vocational school affiliated with the high school, approved correspondence courses, or courses at a postsecondary institution offering a two- or four-year degree.

### Transfer Rule

If students are unable to fulfill some of the Academic Honors Diploma requirements during the regular school year, they may fulfill them through local board approved correspondence courses, distance learning courses, summer school courses, after-school courses, or summer programs at a college or university.

The State Board of Education's student transfer rule (511 IAC 1-6-3) allows a student to request transfer to another school corporation if the student is capable of earning the Academic Honors Diploma, the student's school corporation does not offer the required Academic Honors Diploma courses, and the student has completed the Academic Honors Diploma courses offered by her/his school of record.

## State Student Assistance Commission

Students may be eligible for extra help to pay for college.

The State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana makes tuition assistance available for graduates with the Academic Honors Diploma.

Depending on financial need, Indiana high school graduates with the Academic Honors Diploma may qualify for a grant premium up to 100 percent of demonstrated need for approved tuition and mandatory fees. The tuition and fees apply to any eligible Indiana higher education institution.

Review the State Student Assistance Commission Web site to determine eligibility: <<http://www.state.in.us/ssaci>>.



## Eligibility

### Grade Point Average

Only courses in which a student has earned a grade of “C” or above may count toward an Academic Honors Diploma. A student must have an overall grade point average of “B” or above.

The school corporation has the responsibility to define “B” and “C” (according to school board policy) and to make students aware of the school’s definitions.

The school has the responsibility to determine whether a student has met the necessary requirements to receive the Academic Honors Diploma.

A student’s preliminary eligibility may be calculated at the end of the seventh semester; however, it must be verified at the end of the eighth semester. If a student qualifies to graduate before the end of the eighth semester, eligibility for the Academic Honors Diploma is determined by the student’s total academic record at the time of graduation.

A student may not be awarded the Academic Honors Diploma unless the student actually has completed the minimum of forty-seven (47) credits with an overall GPA that is within the required range.

### Pass/Fail Grades

Courses with “Pass/Fail” grades MAY NOT be included in the Academic Honors Diploma curriculum.

## Current Academic Honors Requirements

### Arts Education **2 Credits**

2 credits from Dance, Music, Theatre, or Visual Arts

### English/Language Arts **8 Credits**

8 credits: must integrate reading, writing, and speaking

### Health and Safety **1 Credit**

1 credit: Health Education Curriculum

### Mathematics **8 Credits**

2 credits: Algebra I,  
2 credits: Algebra II,  
2 credits: Geometry  
(or Integrated Mathematics I, II, and III for 6 credits)  
2 credits from:  
Pre-Calculus/Trigonometry, Probability and Statistics,  
Discrete Mathematics, Advanced Placement, or  
College Course

### Physical Education **1 Credit**

1 credit: Physical Education I, or Physical Education II

### Science **6 Credits**

2 credits: Biology I  
2 credits: Chemistry I, Physics I,  
or Integrated Chemistry/Physics  
2 credits: Advanced Biology, Chemistry, Environmental  
Science, Physics, or Earth & Space Science

### Social Studies **6 Credits**

1 credit: Economics  
1 credit: U.S. Government  
2 credits: U.S. History  
1 credit: course with world focus, and  
1 credit: any other Social Studies course

### World Languages **6 or 8 Credits**

6 credits: in one language, or  
4 credits: in each of two different languages

### Electives **9 Credits**

9 credits: Arts, Computers, World Languages, or  
Career and Technical Education

## Other Courses

**Advanced Placement:** These courses, which are listed in the *Course and Program Descriptions for Indiana Schools*, may be used to satisfy credit requirements for the Academic Honors Diploma and must follow the College Board curriculum for the course.

**College Credit:** These courses may be considered for credit toward the Academic Honors Diploma as long as they are equivalent in content and of equal or greater rigor than the courses offered for the Academic Honors Diploma. The school must be in compliance with Indiana law concerning the Postsecondary Enrollment Program. (IC 20-10.1-15 and 511 IAC 6-10)

**Correspondence:** Locally approved correspondence courses are acceptable. The school corporation will decide whether such courses have the same level of rigor as those included in its Academic Honors Diploma curriculum. The same practice applies to distance learning courses.

**International Baccalaureate:** The International Baccalaureate Organization develops challenging programs of international education and rigorous assessment. These courses may be considered for credit toward the Academic Honors Diploma and must follow the International Baccalaureate Organization's program for high school students.

**Prior to Grade 9:** If a student completed courses equivalent to high school courses (such as Algebra I, or a Level I course in a World Languages) prior to Grade 9 and received high school credits for them, the credits count toward the total 47 credits required for the Academic Honors Diploma.

Successful completion of courses prior to Grade 9 *without receiving high school credits* reduces the number of credits required in Mathematics (from 8 to 6 credits) or World Language (from 8 to 6 or 6 or 4), but *does not reduce* the total number of 47 high school credits required for the Academic Honors Diploma.

**Summer School:** These courses may be applied toward the Academic Honors Diploma provided they meet or exceed the standards established for courses offered during the regular school year. Courses taken after the student has formally graduated from high school do not count toward the Academic Honors Diploma.

