

# HIGH SCHOOL 21+

A competency-based diploma for adults

*The vast majority of jobs in Washington State require at least a high school diploma and one year of college. With High School 21+, it's never too late for adults to finish what they started.*

## A springboard to opportunity

Adults who lack a high school diploma now have a new way to get a second chance. It's called "High School 21+," a competency-based high school diploma offered at Washington's community and technical colleges.



Adults 21 years old and older can go to participating colleges to earn a high school diploma. An advisor will look at transcripts and knowledge gained from life experience, and work with the student to craft an educational plan to fill gaps.

## Program overview

- Students are assessed to measure their gaps in education and work readiness. Advisors then create a customized plan of action.
- To receive a diploma, students must demonstrate competency in reading, writing, and math in the context of science, history, government, occupational studies, and digital literacy. Students can demonstrate their knowledge in several ways, including work, life, and military experience; a prior learning portfolio; and high school and college transcripts.
- Students are eligible for the Basic Skills tuition rate of \$25 per quarter.
- Community and technical colleges issue the high school diploma.

## So what's new?

Students have always been able to get high school diplomas from our two-year colleges. Students can either earn an associate degree and ask for a high school diploma after the fact, or work with colleges to complete courses missing from their high school transcripts. (Associate degree-holders must be at least 21 years old or have earned their degrees through the Running Start program.) And, adults always have the option of taking the GED or another equivalency test. The benefit of High School 21+ is that it:

- Recognizes life competency in addition to classroom time and tests.
- Opens one more door to federal financial aid, which now requires applicants to have a high school diploma or equivalency certificate.
- Is accepted more readily and consistently by the military because it is an actual high school diploma rather than an equivalency.

## Powering Adult Basic Education

Adults who lack a high school diploma often attend basic skills classes at two-year colleges. Until now, those classes did not count toward either a high school diploma or an equivalency. High School 21+ is infusing basic skills classes with more rigorous, high-school level education and training so students can upgrade their skills while working toward a high school credential.

Adults with high school diplomas are better-prepared to enter college-level programs, earn certificates and degrees, and secure family-wage jobs. With High School 21+, adults have a new opportunity to earn a diploma and turn their fortunes around.