

Indiana

Graduation Qualifying Examination (GQE)*

*This exam is undergoing significant changes. The data here reflects both the GQE and end-of-course assessments (ECAs), as GQE begins the phasing out process with the class of 2012.

Part I: Policy Trends

Type of test	<p>The GQE is a comprehensive standards-based exam</p> <p>The end-of-course assessments will be called ISTEP+: Algebra I Graduation Examination and ISTEP+: English 10 Graduation Examination.</p>
Purpose	<p>The purpose of the exam is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine prospective high school graduates’ knowledge and skill levels relative to those needed for entry-level employment • Determine prospective high school graduates’ mastery of the state curriculum in reading, writing, and mathematics • Encourage districts and schools to identify and serve students at risk of academic failure • Increase alignment of local curriculum and programs of instruction with state education standards • Promote equity of opportunity across all student groups • Meet a state mandate
Status of state’s decision regarding the Common Core State Standards and impact of that decision on exit exam policies	<p>The state has adopted the Common Core State Standards in both English language arts and math. Implications for the graduation examination TBD.</p>
Test used by colleges or universities for undergraduate admission?	<p>The GQE does not affect college admission, except to the extent it is a graduation requirement. The state has developed end-of-course tests that may be used for college placement. For example, student scores on the Algebra II ECAs could be used to provide information on a student’s level of college readiness. Post-secondary institutions can determine how they will use the student scores on those assessments.</p>
Year first administered	<p>The GQE was first administered in 1997.</p> <p>ECAs were operational in the 2009-10 school year for the graduating class of 2012.</p>
Year diplomas first withheld	<p>2000 for the GQE; 2012 for new ECAs</p>

Subjects tested	Current GQE: English language arts (through grade 9) and mathematics (through pre-algebra and Algebra I).
Types of questions	<p>ECAs: Algebra I and English 10 required for graduation, but students may also take ECAs in Algebra II and Biology I.</p> <p>Current GQE: Multiple-choice, short-answer, gridded-response in mathematics, and writing prompt/essay questions.</p> <p>In the new end-of-course assessments, ALG I includes graphing items. ENG 10 has the same question types as GQE.</p>
Grade first administered	<p>GQE: 10th</p> <p>New ECAs are taken when the student is enrolled in the course (i.e., A student who takes Algebra I as an 8th grader is expected to take the assessment at the end of the course completion in 8th grade.)</p>
Grade(s) exam aligned to	<p>GQE: 9th grade standards, including end of pre-algebra and Algebra I</p> <p>The ECAs are aligned to Algebra I and English 10 standards.</p>
Number of retakes allowed before end of grade 12	<p>GQE: Four, in addition to initial test administration; first retake opportunity in the fall after 10th grade</p> <p>Students may retake ECAs one time per semester after the initial testing. The number of times they can retest depends on when the student took the class.</p>
Retakes after grade 12	<p>GQE and ECAs: Students who have met all other graduation requirements but have not passed the exit exam may retake the exam as many times as necessary after 12th grade and still receive a regular diploma.</p>
Does the state have reciprocity with other states?	<p>Not officially. However, the documentation submitted by students who seek to graduate using the waiver described below may include results from tests other than the exit exam.</p>
Exit exam used for No Child Left Behind?	<p>Results from the first time a student takes the exit exam count toward NCLB accountability.</p>
Same cut score for graduation and NCLB?	<p>Yes</p>

Has the state considered changing the cut score needed to pass the exam for graduation purposes?

The cut scores for Algebra I and English 10 were set and approved this summer, as the purpose of the ECA has changed to a graduation requirement.

Evaluations of state exit exam

Achieve Inc. conducted an evaluation in 2004. A report is available upon request.

The SEC Alignment Study was recently conducted for the new end-of-course assessments.

State test contractor

GQE: CTB/McGraw Hill
Algebra I & English 10 ECAs: Questar

Does the state provide students with alternate paths to graduation?

Students who fail the exit exam may be eligible to graduate if they do *all* of the following:

- 1) Retake the exam in each failed subject at least once per year after the year in which they first took the exam
- 2) Complete remediation opportunities
- 3) Maintain a school attendance rate of at least 95%
- 4) Maintain a C average or equivalent in the courses required by the state for graduation
- 5) Meet all other graduation requirements
- 6) Either:
 - a. Complete the course and credit requirements for a general diploma, including the career academic sequence; complete a workforce readiness assessment; and complete at least one career exploration internship, cooperative education, or workforce credential recommended by the student's school; *or*
 - b. Obtain written recommendations from teachers in each subject in which the exam was failed; the recommendation must be supported by the principal and by documentation demonstrating the student's acquired knowledge.

Before July 1, 2010, a student who does not achieve a passing score on the graduation examination may be eligible to graduate if all of the following occur:

- 1) The principal of the student's school certifies that within one month of the student's scheduled graduation date the student will successfully complete all components of the Core 40 curriculum as established by the Indiana State Board of Education under IC 20-30-10.

- 2) The student otherwise satisfies all state and local graduation requirements.

Students in the class of 2012 (grade 9 students in 2008-09) will be held to the new graduation requirement of passing the English 10 and Algebra I ECAs. There will continue to be a waiver process in place.

The waiver process in place for GQE is applicable to the ECAs.

For the 2008-09 school year, 7.7% of all diplomas issued were obtained through the waiver process.

Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners

No, other than the alternate path available to general education students. In the 2008-09 school year, 41% of English language learners who obtained a diploma did so through the waiver process.

Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities

Students with disabilities who fail the exam may be determined by their case conference committee to be eligible to graduate if they do *all* of the following:

- a. Obtain a written recommendation from their teacher of record in consultation with their teacher in each failed subject; the recommendation must be supported by the principal and by documentation demonstrating the student’s acquired knowledge
- b. Retake the exam in each failed subject as often as required by the student’s individualized education program (IEP)
- c. Complete remediation opportunities to the extent required by the IEP
- d. Maintain an attendance rate of at least 95% to the extent required by the IEP
- e. Maintain at least a C average or the equivalent
- f. Meet all other graduation requirements

The alternate path for general education students is also available to students with disabilities. In the 2008-09 school year, 37% of students with disabilities who obtained a diploma did so through the waiver process.

Who makes decisions on whether a student is eligible to use alternate paths?

Decisions are made by the case conference committee.

When calculating the graduation rate for adequate yearly progress (AYP) purposes, does the state count students taking alternate paths together with graduates who passed the high school exit exams?

For the 1% Federal Flexibility assessment (Indiana Standards Tool for Alternate Reporting), the answer to this question is no. For those earning a general diploma, the answer is yes.

How many full-time equivalent staff in the state department of education are involved in implementing alternate paths?

Currently, approximately 1.5 FTE are dedicated to this work.

Types of assistance the state provides for all districts to raise *initial* pass rates for all students on the high school exit exam

The state offers technical assistance to help:

- Teachers administer the exam, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency;
- All teachers prepare students for the exam, which includes online assistance and specialist(s) in the state education agency;
- Teachers become more proficient in their content area, which includes online assistance and specialist(s) in the state education agency.

The state also provides preparation materials for students and teachers and releases test items from prior years.

Types of assistance or remediation the state provides for all districts to help students who have failed to pass the exit exam

The state requires schools to provide remediation to students who have not passed the state assessments

Does the state provide funding for remediation?

Yes. The amount of funding that a school receives for remediation is related to the percentage of students scoring below state achievement standards.

Are districts mandated by law to provide remediation?

Yes. Schools must have a conference with the parent of each student who does not receive a passing score on the GQE. The conference must include the proposed remediation plan for the student.

Are students required to participate in remediation?

It is an expectation that students participate in all remediation opportunities that are made available.

Part II: Student Performance

Initial pass rates, 2008-09

Percentage of 10th Graders Passing the GQE on First Try, 2008-09		
Student Group	English Language Arts	Math
All students	67%	65%
White	73%	71%
African American	41%	36%
Latino	46%	49%
Asian	67%	74%
Native American	64%	58%
Multiracial	65%	58%
English language learners	13%	34%
Students with disabilities	23%	27%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	49%	47%
Passing score (scale of 220-820 for English language arts and 300-920 for mathematics)	551	586

Note: Retrieved from <http://mustang.doe.state.in.us/IS/iststate1.cfm> on May 27, 2010 and from the state department of education.

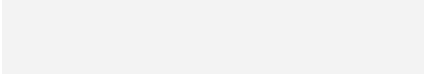
Denominator used when calculating these rates: The number of students with valid attempts of assessment

State Graduation Rates		
Student Group	2008-09	2009-10
All students	82%	NA
White	84%	
African American	66%	
Latino	70%	
Asian	89%	
Native American	73%	
Multiracial	79%	
English language learners	62%	
Students with disabilities	59%	
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	68%	

Note: Data retrieved from <http://mustang.doe.state.in.us/TRENDS/grad4orless.cfm?pub=1> on May 27, 2010.

Current state graduation rate calculation formula for AYP purposes.

Indiana uses the Adjusted Cohort Rate, defining a legitimate leaver as a student who transfers to another education program, withdraws because of long-term illness or death, is detained by law enforcement, is listed by the state as missing or attended



school in the state for less than one year and cannot be found.