

# Keystone Exams and Alternate Pathways to Proficiency

Effective with the graduating class of 2023, students will be required to attain proficiency on the three end-of-course Keystone Exams (Algebra I, Literature, and Biology) for high school graduation in Pennsylvania.

**All graduating students must take the 3 Keystone Exams for purposes of federal accountability.** Keystone Exams will continue as the statewide assessment Pennsylvania uses to comply with accountability requirements set forth in the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

Students who do not achieve a score of Proficient or Advanced on any of the 3 Keystone Exams will have the option to demonstrate postsecondary preparedness through one of four additional pathways. In all, five options exist to demonstrate proficiency:

**Option 1 - Keystone Proficiency Pathway:** Scoring proficient or advanced on each Keystone Exam - Algebra I, Literature, and Biology.

**Option 2 - Keystone Composite Pathway:** Earning a composite score of 4452 on the Algebra I, Literature, and Biology Keystone Exams (while achieving at least a proficient score on at least one of the three exams and no less than a basic score on the remaining two).

**Option 3 - Alternate Assessment Pathway:**

Successful completion of locally established grade-based requirements for academic content areas associated with each Keystone Exam on which the student did not achieve proficiency (i.e., pass the related “trigger course” for the Keystone subject) **and** one of the following:

- Attainment of an established score on an approved alternate assessment (SAT, PSAT, ACT, ASVAB);
  - Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT): score 1010
  - PSAT: score of 970
  - ACT: score of 21
  - Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery exam: the minimum score to gain admittance to a branch of the armed services in the year the student graduates
- Attainment of an established score on an Advanced Placement Program in an academic content area associated with each Keystone Exam on which the student did not achieve at least a proficient score;
- Successful completion of a college-in-high school (CHS) course in an academic content area associated with each Keystone Exam in which the student did not achieve at least a proficient score;
- Successful completion of a pre-apprenticeship program
- Acceptance in an accredited 4-year nonprofit institution of higher education and evidence of the ability to enroll in college-level coursework.

**Option 4 - Evidence Based Pathway:** Successful completion of locally established grade-based requirements for academic content areas associated with each Keystone Exam on which the student did not achieve proficiency (i.e., pass the related “trigger course” for the Keystone subject) and demonstration of three pieces of evidence consistent with the student's goals and career plans, including one of the following:

- Advanced Placement Program Exam: score of 3 or higher
- Acceptance to an accredited nonprofit institution of higher education other than a 4-year institution and evidence of the ability to enroll in college-level coursework
- Attainment of an industry-recognized credential; or
- Successful completion of a concurrent enrollment or postsecondary course; and

Two additional pieces of evidence, including one or more of the options listed above, or: satisfactory completion of a service learning project; attainment of a score of proficient or advanced on a Keystone Exam; a letter guaranteeing full-time employment; a certificate of successful completion of an internship or cooperative education program; or satisfactory compliance with the NCAA's core courses for college-bound student athletes with a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 2.0.

**Option 5 - CTE Pathway:** For Career and Technical Education (CTE) Concentrators, successful completion of locally established grade-based requirements for academic content areas associated with each Keystone Exam on which the student did not achieve proficiency (i.e., pass the related “trigger course” for the Keystone subject) **and** attainment of an industry-based competency certification related to the CTE Concentrator's program of study or demonstration of a high likelihood of success on an approved industry-based competency assessment or readiness for continued meaningful engagement in the CTE Concentrator's program of study.

If you have any questions, please reach out to your High School Guidance Counselor.