

Terms & Definitions

Accredited four-year non-profit institution of higher education

Any of the following:

- (1) a university within the state system of higher education under Article XX-A.
- (2) a state-related institution as defined in Section 1502-A.
- (3) any accredited non-profit public, private, or independent college or university that confers four-year baccalaureate degrees.

Accredited non-profit institution of higher education

Any of the following:

- (1) a community college operating under Article XIX-A.
- (2) an accredited four-year non-profit institution of higher education.
- (3) any accredited non-profit public, private, or independent college or university.
- (4) the Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology.

Advanced (Keystone)

Superior academic performance indicating an in-depth understanding and exemplary display of the skills included in the Keystone Exams' Assessment Anchors & Eligible Content.

Approved Industry-Based Competency Assessment

A NOCTI exam, NIMS assessment, or other industry-based competency assessment identified by the Secretary of Education and approved by the State Board of Education or identified by an act of the General Assembly.

Approved Alternate Assessment

An SAT, PSAT, ACT, or Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test.

Basic (Keystone)

Marginal academic performance, work approaching, but not yet reaching, satisfactory performance. Performance indicates a partial understanding and limited display of the skills included in the Keystone Exams' Assessment Anchors & Eligible Content. The student may need additional instructional opportunities and/or increased student academic commitment to achieve the Proficient level.

Below Basic (Keystone)

inadequate academic performance that indicates little understanding and minimal display of the skills included in the Keystone Exams' Assessment Anchors & Eligible Content. There is a major need for additional instructional opportunities and/or increased student academic commitment to achieve the Proficient level.

Chief School Administrator

The superintendent of a school district, executive director of an intermediate unit, administrative director of an area vocational-technical school or chief executive officer of a charter school, cyber charter school, regional charter school, or multiple charter school organization.

Concurrent Enrollment Course

A course in which a secondary student is enrolled and, upon successful completion of which, both high school and postsecondary credit are earned.

Cooperative Education Program

A program of instruction whereby students alternate or coordinate their high school studies with a job in a field related to their academic or career objectives.

CTE Concentrator

A student under Article XVIII who, by the end of a reporting year, will be reported as successfully completing at least fifty percent (50%) of the minimum technical instructional hours required under 22 Pa. Code Ch. 339 (relating to vocational education).

Department

The Department of Education of the Commonwealth.

Established Score

A score recommended by the Secretary of Education and approved by the State Board of Education.

Externship

Typically held for a short time period and often held during non-school hours, externships are used mainly to explore interests (as opposed to internships, which act as the bridge from student life to professional life).

Full-Time Employment

A relationship between an employee and employer(s) for the purposes of engaging in full-time work [as defined by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the Affordable Care Act (ACA)] OR a relationship between a client(s) and an independent contractor for the purposes of engaging in full-time work or in work that may be reasonably considered commensurate with full-time work.

Employers need not be 'joint employers' (e.g., staffing/employment agencies) as defined by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) for employment to be considered full-time providing the LEA deems the employment (in aggregate) reasonably commensurate with sustained full-time work.

GPA

Grade Point Average.

Industry-Based Competency Certification

Validation that a student successfully demonstrated skill competencies in a core set of content and performance standards in a specific set of work-related tasks.

Industry-Recognized Credential

A portable credential that confirms technical or job-specific skills and abilities within specific sectors in industry, aligned to workforce demands.

Institution of Higher Education (IHE)

An accredited public or other non-profit institution legally authorized within the state to provide a program of education beyond secondary education for which the institution awards a bachelor's degree or provides not less than a 2-year program that is acceptable for full credit toward such a degree. For the purpose of meeting the alternative assessment pathway, an accredited four-year non-profit institution of higher education is any of the following:

- A university within the State System of Higher Education under Article XX-A of the School Code
- A State-related institution as defined in section 1502-A of the School Code
- Any accredited non-profit public, private, or independent college or university that confers four-year baccalaureate degrees

For the purpose of meeting the evidence-based pathway, an accredited non-profit institution of higher education is any of the following:

- A community college operating under Article XIX-A of the School Code
- An accredited other-than-four-year non-profit institution of higher education
- Any accredited non-profit public, private, or independent college or university
- Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology

Internship

A highly-structured, sustained career preparation work experience in which students are placed at a workplace for a defined period to participate in and observe work within a given industry. Learning objectives are specified, and student performance is assessed. Students earn academic credit, giving the student a broad overview of the career area. The work experience is evaluated by the teachers and employers, with input from the student.

Keystone Composite Score

A composite score of 4452 (approved by the State Board of Education), two standard errors below 4500, which is the sum of three Keystone proficient scores. A composite score of 4452 gives benefit to the student by helping to ensure that a student who may have missed the composite score of 4500 due to measurement error is not prevented from achieving the graduation requirement.

Local Education Agency

A school entity defined in Act 158 as a school district, intermediate unit, area vocational-technical school, charter school, cyber charter school, regional charter school, or multiple charter school organization.

Locally Established Grade-Based Requirements

For students not demonstrating proficiency in Keystone Exams, locally established grade-based requirements are performance criteria identified by the Local Education Agency (LEA) and reflected in the local graduation policy as consistent with proficiency in the Keystone academic content (e.g., earning a passing grade on the course aligned to the Keystone Exam).

NCAA standards

Academic standards for college bound athletes who want to compete in Division I or II athletics as defined by the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

Non-Numeric Score

Where the performance level on Keystone academic content is determined without the associated Keystone Exam numeric result, a non-numeric score of Proficient or Advanced may be assigned to a transfer student who has demonstrated their performance through comparable coursework and an equivalent assessment in a prior educational setting or to a student who has met the requirements of Pa. Act 136 of 2020 and qualified for a non-numeric score of Proficient.

Pre-Apprenticeship

Specific career training designed to prepare a student for an apprenticeable occupation in an approved schedule of related instruction. The student must participate in a pre-apprenticeship program which is registered with the Director, Apprenticeship and Training Office, [Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry](#) .

Project-Based Assessment (PBA)

An optional set of activities a student completes independently of classroom instruction to demonstrate proficiency in the content area. LEAs may elect to incorporate project-based assessments into their local graduation requirements.

Postsecondary Course

A course in which a secondary student is enrolled, and, upon successful completion, postsecondary credit is earned.

Proficient (Keystone)

satisfactory academic performance indicating a solid understanding and adequate display of the skills included in the Keystone Exams Assessment Anchors & Eligible Content.

SAT

A standardized test for the assessment of college readiness administered by the College Board.

SAT Subject Test

A standardized test for the assessment of a specific content area administered by the College Board.

Scaled Score

A raw score (representative of the total number of correct questions a candidate has answered) that has been converted onto a consistent and standardized scale. The purpose of scaled scores is to report scores for all examinees on a consistent scale.

School Entity

A school district, intermediate unit, area vocational-technical school, charter school, cyber charter school, regional charter school, or multiple charter school organization.

Secretary

The Secretary of Education of the Commonwealth.

Service-Learning

A form of experiential education that combines learning goal(s) with community service.