

603 CMR 30.00: STANDARDS FOR COMPETENCY DETERMINATION AND LOCAL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Section

- 30.01: Scope and Purpose
- 30.02: Definitions
- 30.03: Standards for Competency Determination
- 30.04: District Certification
- 30.05: Audit
- 30.06: Waiver
- 30.07: Students with Disabilities
- 30.08: Score Appeals

30.01: Scope and Purpose

603 CMR 30.00 establishes standards relating to the Competency Determination required by M.G.L. c. 69, § 1D.

30.02: Definitions

Board shall mean the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, appointed in accordance with M.G.L. c. 15, § 1E.

Commissioner shall mean the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Competency Determination shall have the same meaning as described in M.G.L. c. 69, § 1D(i). In accordance with M.G.L. c. 69, § 1D(I), as amended satisfaction of the requirements of the Competency Determination shall be a condition for high school graduation. A school committee (including the board of trustees of a charter school and, for publicly-funded Massachusetts special education students, the governing board of a private day or residential special education program) shall award the high school diploma or any other document connoting high school graduation only to a student who has satisfied the Competency Determination requirement and who has met local graduation requirements.

Department shall mean the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

District shall mean a municipal school department or regional school district, acting through its school committee or superintendent of schools, a county agricultural school, acting through its board of trustees or superintendent/director, or any other public school established by statute or charter, acting through its governing board or director.

Graduating Class shall refer to the school year in which the student receives a high school diploma.

Local Graduation Requirements shall mean graduation criteria established by the student's school district including attendance, course completion and satisfactory grades.

MCAS shall mean the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System, the statewide assessment of individual students' academic performance, as required by M.G.L. c. 69, § 1I.

MCAS High School Assessments Administered in 2023 shall mean MCAS high school assessments in English Language Arts, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Technology/Engineering.

Satisfactorily Completing Coursework shall mean a student earns full credit in accordance with the district's grading policy.

Showing Mastery shall mean a student successfully completes in accordance with the district's grading policy:

- (a) the final assessment for a course;

30.02: continued

- (b) a capstone or portfolio project; or
- (c) an equivalent measure identified in the district's Competency Determination policy.

Student with a Disability shall mean a student who has been determined to be eligible for special education services in accordance with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or M.G.L. c. 71B and 603 CMR 28.00: *Special Education*, or who has been determined to be an individual with disabilities under Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or the Americans with Disabilities Act.

30.03: Standards for Competency Determination

(1) Beginning with the graduating class of 2026, a student will earn the Competency Determination where:

- (a) The student has shown mastery of a common core of skills, competencies and knowledge in English language arts, mathematics, and science; and
- (b) The student has satisfactorily completed coursework that has been certified by the student's district as showing mastery of the skills, competencies, and knowledge contained in the Massachusetts academic standards and curriculum frameworks in English language arts, mathematics, and science as measured by the MCAS high school assessments administered in 2023. In this regard, the student must satisfy the following:
 - 1. For English language arts, the student must satisfactorily complete coursework in the equivalent of two years of high school English language arts courses.
 - 2. For mathematics, the student must:
 - a. satisfactorily complete coursework in Algebra I and Geometry courses; or
 - b. satisfactorily complete coursework in Integrated Math I and Integrated Math II courses.
 - 3. For science, the student must:
 - a. satisfactorily complete coursework in one year of Biology; or
 - b. satisfactorily complete coursework in one year of Physics; or
 - c. satisfactorily complete coursework in one year of Chemistry; or
 - d. satisfactorily complete coursework in one year of a Technology or Engineering course.
- (c) In the limited circumstance where a district is unable to document a student's prior coursework, a student may earn the Competency Determination by:
 - 1. attaining a qualifying score of at least "Meeting Expectations" or "Exceeding Expectations" achievement levels on the relevant high school MCAS assessment; or
 - 2. meeting the standard for a substituted equivalent that the district certifies satisfies the same academic standards.

(2) Beginning with the graduating class of 2027, a student will earn the Competency Determination where:

- (a) The student has met the requirements in 603 CMR 30.03(1);
- (b) The student has shown mastery of a common core of skills, competencies and knowledge in United States history; and
- (c) The student has satisfactorily completed coursework that has been certified by the student's district as showing mastery of the skills, competencies, and knowledge contained in the Massachusetts academic standards and curriculum framework in United States history. In this regard, the student must satisfactorily complete coursework in a one-year United States history course.

(3) Students who have met the competency determination standard in English language arts, mathematics or science prior to January 3, 2025, retain that benefit.

30.04: District Certification

- (1) Each district shall adopt a Competency Determination policy. The Competency Determination policy shall include an appeals process for students.
- (2) The Competency Determination policy shall be approved by the governing body of the district and shall be posted on the district's website.
- (3) Each district shall post translated versions of the Competency Determination policy to allow meaningful participation by all parents and guardians of students in the district.

30.04: continued

(4) In a manner prescribed by the Commissioner, each district shall submit to the Department its Competency Determination policy and its local graduation requirements.

(5) By December 31, 2025, each district shall certify to the Department that it has complied with 603 CMR 30.04(1) through (3).

30.05: Audit

The Department shall implement a system to audit the quality of districts' Competency Determination policies.

30.06: Waiver

Upon a written request from a district, the Commissioner may waive provisions of 603 CMR 30.00 for good cause.

30.07: Students with Disabilities

Nothing in 603 CMR 30.00 shall be interpreted to limit or expand a student's rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, M.G.L. c. 71B and 603 CMR 28.00: *Special Education*, or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

30.08: Score Appeals

- (1) A score appeal addresses a claim concerning:
 - (a) mis-scoring of a student's response to one or more MCAS grade 10 English Language Arts or Mathematics test items (multiple choice, short answer, composition); or
 - (b) miscalculation of a student's total raw score, scaled score, or both, for the MCAS grade 10 English Language Arts or Mathematics test.
- (2) A score appeal on behalf of a student may be filed only by the superintendent of schools for the school district in which the student is enrolled, or by the superintendent's designee. For a student who is enrolled in a public education program that is not part of a school district, including but not limited to a charter school, an approved special education day or residential school, an educational collaborative, or a state-operated school or institutional program, the administrator of the school or program who is equivalent to the superintendent of schools shall file the score appeal. The score appeal shall be available to any student who has taken the grade 10 MCAS test or the grade 10 MCAS Alternate Assessment in English Language Arts or Mathematics. If the superintendent declines to file a score appeal on behalf of a student, the student's parent or guardian may appeal the superintendent's decision to the school committee.
- (3) The superintendent shall include in the score appeal the following documentation:
 - (a) If the appeal concerns possible mis-scoring of test items, the superintendent submits a rationale for the request to re-score the student's responses.
 1. If the appeal concerns the student's score on the English Language Arts composition, the rationale shall be supported by evidence from the student's composition and the MCAS Scoring Guide and student compositions (benchmarked papers) posted by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to represent each of the composition score points.
 2. If the appeal is based on results reported in the MCAS final test item analysis other than the English Language Arts composition, the rationale shall include specific evidence of the student's prior performance on the particular learning standard(s) addressed by the test item(s) at issue in the appeal.
 - (b) If the appeal concerns possible miscalculation of the total raw score, scaled score, or both, the superintendent submits a copy of the student's MCAS final test item analysis.
 - (c) The names and positions of district or school personnel who conducted the initial evaluation of the student's score;
 - (d) The student's name, state-assigned student identification number (SASID), gender and date of birth;
 - (e) Written consent from the student's parent or guardian to submit the score appeal;
 - (f) The name and code of the student's school and district;
 - (g) The date (month and year) of MCAS test administration for which re-scoring is requested;

30.08: continued

- (h) The student's grade level at time of testing; and
- (i) The name and signature of the superintendent.

(4) The superintendent shall send the score appeal to the Commissioner as soon as possible and no later than 60 calendar days (not counting summer vacation) after the school receives the student's test results.

(a) For the English Language Arts composition test, the superintendent shall send the score appeal no later than 60 calendar days after the date the school receives the student's final MCAS results.

(b) For the English Language Arts test, and for the Mathematics test, the superintendent shall send the score appeal no later than 60 calendar days after the school receives the student's final MCAS results.

(5) The Commissioner shall review the score appeal request to ensure that it meets the requirements of 603 CMR 30.04 and any guidelines issued by the Commissioner. The Commissioner shall determine whether the student's response(s) shall be re-scored based upon the information presented by the superintendent. If the Commissioner decides that the student's response(s) should be re-scored, two professional MCAS test scorers using the established scoring method for all MCAS grade 10 English Language Arts and Mathematics tests will re-score the response(s). The re-scoring process may result in a score increase, a score decrease, or no change in score. The decision of the Commissioner shall be final.

(6) The Commissioner will, within 30 calendar days after he receives the completed score appeal request from the superintendent, notify the superintendent of his decision and the results of the re-scoring, if any. Within 21 calendar days after receipt of the Commissioner's decision, the superintendent may respond, including seeking reconsideration of the Commissioner's decision. If the re-scoring results in an increase or decrease in the student's score, the Commissioner shall correct and re-issue the MCAS Student Report for Parents/Guardians.

REGULATORY AUTHORITY

603 CMR 30.00: M.G.L. c. 69, § 1B and 1D and St. 2003, c. 140, § 119.

(PAGES 321 AND 322 ARE RESERVED FOR FUTURE USE)