



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

APR 11 2014

GEN-14-06

Subject: Recognized Equivalent of a High School Diploma

Summary: This letter provides information on State-authorized examinations released in January 2014.

Dear Colleague:

This letter provides important information to institutions about State-authorized examinations that were released in January 2014. Also, we provide guidance on how an applicant for Federal student aid should answer the high school completion status question on the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**.

Update on State-Authorized Examinations

The **General Educational Development Certificate (GED)** is included as one of the recognized equivalents of a high school diploma in 34 CFR 600.2. The GED test (from which a passing or failing score is used to determine if a State will issue a high school equivalency certificate to a student) has historically been the accepted State-authorized examination; however, several States have recently selected alternative tests for determining high school equivalency.

**A State certificate received by a student after the student has passed a State-authorized examination that the State recognizes as the equivalent of a high school diploma** is also included as one of the recognized equivalents of a high school diploma in 34 CFR 600.2. Two examples of State-authorized examinations, in addition to the GED test, are the High School Equivalency Test (HiSET) and the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC). As of January 2014, some States have either replaced the GED test with a different State-authorized examination or offer students a choice of several State-authorized examinations (e.g., a choice between the HiSET, TASC, GED test, or other State-authorized examination). Like the GED test, a student who takes the HiSET, TASC, or other State-authorized examination will receive official notification of a passing or failing score that is used to determine if a State will issue a high school equivalency certificate to a student.

Completing Question 26 on the FAFSA

The information below provides updated guidance on how applicants for Federal student aid should answer the high school completion status question on the FAFSA (Question 26).

For an applicant who completed and passed the HiSET, TASC, GED, or other State-authorized examination—

1990 K ST. N.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20006  
www.ed.gov

On the 2013-2014 FAFSA, select option 2, "General Educational Development (GED) certificate. **Skip to question 28.....**"

On the 2014-2015 FAFSA, select option 2, "General Educational Development (GED) certificate or State equivalent test. **Skip to question 28.**"

For More Information

Students should contact the State education authority where they took or plan to take a State-authorized examination to determine which examinations are approved by the State and the eligibility requirements for each examination. For information on contacting State education authorities, see the following:

[http://wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/Programs/EROD/org\\_list.cfm?category\\_cd=DAE](http://wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/Programs/EROD/org_list.cfm?category_cd=DAE)

For more information on the recognized equivalents of a high school diploma, see Volume 1, Chapter 1, of the Federal Student Aid Handbook.

If you have questions regarding State-authorized examinations, please contact Aaron Washington at (202) 502-7478 or via e-mail at [aaron.washington@ed.gov](mailto:aaron.washington@ed.gov).

Sincerely,



Brenda Dann-Messier  
Acting Assistant Secretary  
Office of Postsecondary Education