



High School Equivalency Testing for Institutionalized Youth

*Bureau of Postsecondary and Adult Education
Division of Adult Education Policy*

Subject: **High School Equivalency Testing for Institutionalized Youth**
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DEFINITIONS

Institutionalized youth – For purposes of this policy, an institutionalized youth is a person 16 or 17 years of age court adjudicated to a residential detention, correctional or rehabilitation facility in Pennsylvania.

State institutions – For purposes of this policy, state institutions are those that are supported in whole by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. They include institutions for the mentally ill or handicapped and institutions for court adjudicated or otherwise publicly placed youth.

POLICY STATEMENT

For purposes of this policy, institutionalized youth from out of state are considered residents of Pennsylvania for determining eligibility for high school equivalency testing.

Institutionalized youth residing in a state or non-state institution who are 16 or 17 years of age and are court ordered to take a high school equivalency test are eligible to take the test while enrolled in a school program.

An institutionalized youth residing in a state institution who is 16 or 17 years of age, without a court order to take a high school equivalency test, is eligible to take the test only by providing:

1. Written confirmation that the candidate is not enrolled in an accredited high school program; and
2. One of the following:
 - a. A written request from an employer requiring a high school equivalency for employment;
 - b. A written request from a college, technical trade school, or university official who accepts applicants on the basis of high school equivalency test scores;

- c. A written request from a recruiting official for persons who wish to enter a branch of the Armed Forces for which high school equivalency is a prerequisite; or
- d. A written request of the state institution's director submitted no earlier than 90 days before anticipated release or discharge from the institution.

An institutionalized youth residing in a non-state institution who is 16 or 17, without a court order to take the high school equivalency test, is eligible to take the test only by providing:

- 1. Written confirmation that the candidate is not enrolled in an accredited high school program; and
- 2. One of the following:
 - a. A written request from an employer who requires high school equivalency for employment;
 - b. A written request from a college, technical trade school, or university official who accepts applicants on the basis of high school equivalency test scores; or
 - c. A written request from a recruiting official for persons who wish to enter a branch of the Armed Forces for which high school equivalency is a prerequisite.

Any institutionalized person 18 years of age or older residing in a state or non-state residential detention, correctional, or rehabilitation facility may qualify for high school equivalency testing upon request, provided that the person does not hold a traditional high school diploma and is not enrolled in an accredited high school program. If the 18-year-old institutionalized individual has a court order to take the high school equivalency test and does not hold a traditional high school diploma, the individual is eligible for high school equivalency testing, regardless of enrollment status.