



Re: GED® U.S. High School Equivalency Test

The GED® test (High School Equivalency test in the United States) has been gaining in popularity in South Africa over the past few years. It is likely that higher education institutions are increasingly seeing students with a GED® transcript or credential applying for postsecondary education. I wanted to provide you with some background and inform you of significant changes coming to the test on May 1, 2017. We believe this is the detailed information you need about the new GED® program in order to recognize the credential and afford students an opportunity to pursue postsecondary education.

### **History**

The GED® test, first developed in 1942, is a nationally recognized and accepted test for high school (12<sup>th</sup> grade) equivalency in the United States. It measures student performance in English, mathematics, science and social studies and uses data from graduating high school seniors as the basis for determining high school equivalency. Over 20 million students have earned their high school equivalency/GED® credential by passing the GED® test.

For more than a dozen years, the GED® test has been delivered in countries outside the United States, including South Africa. The test is increasingly used as a measure of high school equivalency in these countries, and as an alternative pathway to high school completion for those who did not finish high school the traditional way. For example, Ministries of Education and/or Higher Education Institutions in South Africa, United Arab Emirates, Bangladesh, Nepal and Thailand now accept the GED® credential as a validation that a student possesses the skills expected of a high school graduate.

### **New test announced**

The GED® test currently being administered internationally was originally launched in 2002. However, we will be moving to a new, updated version of the GED® test on May 1, 2017. This new version, which was launched in the US in 2014, contains significant changes to content and is aligned to college/university and career readiness standards as recommended by the U.S. Department of Education.

### **What the test measures**

The new GED® test measures knowledge and skills in the areas of English language arts (the “Reasoning through Language Arts” module, which measures skills in reading and writing), mathematics (the “Mathematical Reasoning” module), social studies, and science. Each of the content modules is an independent test that may be taken individually, at any time and in any order, based on the convenience to and preparedness of the test-taker. A high-level overview of the content tested in each module is presented below.

Module	Focus
<b>Reasoning Through Language Arts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ability to read closely and to critically understand a range of increasingly complex texts taken from workplace and literary contexts, with an emphasis on non-fiction, although source materials from literature will also be included.</li> <li>• The ability to marshal evidence and analyze arguments while also expressing oneself clearly and fluently in writing.</li> <li>• The ability to correctly apply basic grammar and usage conventions and also to determine the meanings of unfamiliar words.</li> </ul>
<b>Mathematical Reasoning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executing and applying core computations with precision and fluency.</li> <li>• Applying both quantitative and algebraic reasoning skills and mathematical practices to a broad range of real-life, workplace, and academic contexts.</li> </ul>
<b>Science</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applying scientific reasoning skills and practices to content drawn from the three domains: life science, physical science, and earth and space science.</li> <li>• Understanding scientific content that pertains to two focusing themes: health and the human body and energy.</li> </ul>
<b>Social Studies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applying social studies reasoning skills and practices to content drawn from the four domains of civics and government, United States history, economics, and geography and the world.</li> <li>• Analyzing source documents and interpreting data represented in a variety of ways relevant to social studies, including maps, graphs, and tables.</li> </ul>

The total testing time for the full battery of four subject-area tests is comparable to the current international test at approximately 8 hours. The performance standards were set based on a standardization and norming study conducted with US high school graduates who received their diplomas in 2013. The minimum passing score for the GED® test represents that a student that passes the GED test is in the top 85% of the graduating class of US High School Seniors.

### Test Scores

The GED® test has a range of 100 - 200 Scaled Score points and is subdivided into four performance levels:

Performance Level 1: Below Passing (Scaled Scores 100 - 144)

Performance Level 2: Pass/High School Equivalency (Scaled Scores 145 - 200)

Any student who achieves a minimum score of 145 on all four subjects has passed the GED® test and is awarded a high school equivalency credential from the Office of the State Superintendent of Education,



Washington, D.C. The GED test measures the full range of high school skills, and as such we are able to correlate the GED test score to the estimated class rank within a graduating high school class. The table below provides that information in an effort to better help institutions gauge student achievement.

GED Test Average Score	Estimated Class Rank
187 -200	Top 1%
178	Top 5%
175	Top 8%
170	Top 16%
165	Top 27%
160	Top 40%
155	Top 57%
150	Top 73%
145	Top 85%

### **GED transcript and credential**

Once an international student passes the GED® test, they are issued a High School Equivalency credential by Office of the State Superintendent of Education in Washington, D.C. This credential signifies that the student has met all the requirements to be considered a high school graduate. Because the GED® test is delivered in English, the credential also validates that the student possesses the English language skills equivalent to those of high school graduates. The GED® test and corresponding state credential are accepted by more than 98% of the nearly 5,000 postsecondary institutions in the U.S. Also, more than 97% of US employers accept the credential as being equivalent to high school and allow the student to apply for jobs. The transcript of the new test is differentiated from the old test, based on the new score scale and more detailed information available about their skills and knowledge measured on the Test.

A detailed technical manual describing the content, standards, norming, and standardization process for the new GED® test is available at: <http://tinyurl.com/2014GEDtesttechnicalmanual>

### **About GED Testing Service**

GED Testing Service LLC (GEDTS) is a U.S.-based joint-venture between the American Council on Education (ACE) and NCS Pearson, Inc. (Pearson). GED Testing Service® incorporates the strength of



two industry-leading organizations and leverages the combination to result in a common focus on adult education. We are committed to building a high school equivalency program to prepare learners and certify their readiness to pursue college/university degrees or advanced vocational training, or compete effectively for jobs that require current high school graduate level skills.

We firmly believe that the GED<sup>®</sup> test offers opportunities for students who do not have a chance to achieve a credential through traditional high school to demonstrate their academic qualification through alternative means. We encourage your institution to consider recognizing the GED<sup>®</sup> test and the U.S. High School Equivalency Credential as a pathway to enrolling in your postsecondary institution.

If you have additional questions you may contact me at [Nick.Laul@GED.com](mailto:Nick.Laul@GED.com) or at +1-952-681-3839.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Laul'.

Nick Laul  
Vice President, Product Management and Business Development  
GED Testing Service