



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

EDUCATION

**Waiver to Award Competency-Based Unit(s):
Application Information and
Standards and Requirements for Review**

In 2015, the State Board of Education convened the High School Credit Flexibility Task Force to consider whether to provide additional options for DC students to earn high school credit. The Task Force included State Board members and representatives from the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), the Public Charter School Board (DC PCSB), local education agencies (LEAs) and schools, OSSE, the Washington Teacher's Union, and business leaders. On December 16, 2015, the State Board of Education adopted a resolution accepting the recommendations of the Task Force and advising the State Superintendent to consider the recommendations and initiate rulemaking.

OSSE subsequently developed rulemaking to update graduation requirements based on the recommendations of the Task Force, including establishing a process for waiving the Carnegie Unit requirement for a school seeking to award competency based unit(s).

In alignment with the Task Force's recommendation, the final rulemaking (Section 2203 of the D.C. Municipal Regulations Title 5-A, Chapter 22) indicates that OSSE establishes the information required to be included in the waiver application and the format, as well as the standards and requirements for reviewing the application. DCPS or DC PCSB ("reviewing body") may waive the Carnegie Unit for DCPS schools and public charter schools, respectively.

The reviewing body may use existing vehicles for gathering this information, which may include components from multiple documents, provided that DCPS and DC PCSB document where the relevant information can be found. The reviewing body may add additional information or requirements to best meet the needs of students, and may determine the conditions of the waiver, including renewal.

Also in alignment with the recommendation of the Task Force and the State Board of Education, the reviewing body is to submit evidence of the progress and quality of implementation on each waiver to OSSE annually. DCPS and DC PCSB will report annually on each school that they granted a waiver to award competency-based unit(s) on the following, for each competency-based learning course:

1. Course details:
 - a. Official Name
 - b. Subject (per graduation requirements)
 - c. Grade level, if applicable
 - d. Number of competency-based units and equivalent Carnegie units
2. Number of students enrolled in each course for previous school year (SY)
3. Number of students completing each course with a passing grade for previous SY
4. Number of students in the course who earned partial competency-based unit(s) and the number of units
5. Number of students in the course who did not earn competency-based units
6. Percentage of students determined to have mastered content based on specific assessments identified for use in demonstrating mastery (provided n-size is greater than 10)

7. If applicable, number of students who were rostered to take a PARCC assessment in the subject area of the competency-based learning course and the median PARCC score of the rostered students¹
 - Only applicable for high school mathematics and English II
8. If applicable, number of students who were rostered to take a required statewide assessment (e.g. science, health) and the median assessment score of the rostered students²

Waiver to Award Competency-Based Unit(s) – Standards and Requirements for Review

The reviewing body shall review the school's application in accordance with the standards and requirements established by OSSE.

The school must demonstrate via the application information provided that:

1. The competency-based unit(s) are offered based on demonstrated need
2. The school has made sufficient progress in developing its plan to ensure that the school will be able to implement the program as intended and in a timely manner
3. The competency-based unit(s) complement or replace the existing academic program of the school to increase the number of students earning units and graduating
4. The competency-based unit(s) are accessible to all students, including English Learners, students with IEPs, and students with 504 plans
5. The competency-based unit(s) are grounded in the standards associated with the competency-based unit content (e.g. for a mathematics competency-based unit, the Common Core State Standards for mathematics)
6. The school has demonstrated a track record of success, as measured by student outcomes and other factors

Waiver to Award Competency-Based Unit(s) – Standards and Requirements for Review

The waiver application used by each reviewing body must include:

1. School name
2. LEA name
3. Rationale and justification for waiver to award competency-based unit: Describe the rationale and justification for awarding a competency-based unit or units for a competency-based learning course or course series, including any pertinent needs assessment-related data. This must include how a competency-based learning course or course series will meet the aims of the school and the educational needs of students, including how the waiver will allow the school to address specific barriers that impact student achievement or impede progress toward receiving a diploma.
4. Description of the scope and structure of how the competency-based units will be earned: Provide a description of how students will demonstrate competency in the content

¹ Refer to state assessment reporting and accountability policy for minimum n-size to report.

² Refer to state assessment reporting and accountability policy for minimum n-size to report.

standards of the course. This must include, for each competency-based learning course, the following information. However, if a school is proposing an all-school or all-grade approach, responses may be grouped if answers are applicable across courses.

- a. Competency-based learning course structure:
 - i. Course details:
 - a. Official Name,
 - b. Subject (per graduation requirements)
 - c. Grade level, if applicable
 - d. Number of competency-based units and equivalent Carnegie units
 - ii. How grading will be structured, including conversion to the GPA scale
 - iii. Minimum grade/score that students must earn to earn a unit or units for the course
- b. Time commitment for the course (e.g. frequency offered, when offered, and class schedules if relevant). If the course can be of varying durations, provide an explanation. Standards and instruction:
 - i. Identify the standards the course or course series will be using (e.g. state-level content standards in English Language Arts, math, science, physical education, health, the arts, or the specific standards to be used in other subject areas)
 - ii. Instructional delivery method used, whether online learning or learning experiences outside of the classroom will be used, and the physical location of the students enrolled in the course (e.g. only in school, both in and outside of school)
 - iii. Resources and instructional materials to be used to meet the needs of learners in the course
- c. Student participation:
 - i. Target population of the competency learning credit (e.g. all students, students who have previously took and failed the course, students who arrive at the school with the content knowledge already), and whether the competency-based learning course or course series will be replacing or complementing an existing program
 - ii. How will the school will address the needs of students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), students with 504 plans, English Learners, or students with other specific needs, to support them in being successful in a competency-based learning course or course series
- d. Assurance that the school will collect and report on the following data annually:
 - i. Course details:
 - a. Official Name
 - b. Subject (per graduation requirements)
 - c. Grade level, if applicable
 - d. Number of competency-based units and equivalent Carnegie units
 - ii. Number of students enrolled in each course for previous school year (SY)
 - iii. Number of students completing each course with a passing grade for previous SY
 - iv. Number of students in the course who earned partial competency-based unit(s) and the number of units

- v. Number of students in the course who did not earn competency-based units
 - vi. Percentage of students determined to have mastered content based on specific assessments identified for use in demonstrating mastery (provided n-size is greater than 10)
 - vii. If applicable, number of students who were rostered to take a PARCC assessment in the subject area of the competency-based learning course and the median PARCC score of the rostered students³
 - Only applicable for high school mathematics and English II
 - viii. If applicable, number of students who were rostered to take a required statewide assessment (e.g. science, health) and the median assessment score of the rostered students⁴
5. Course syllabus and scope and sequence for academic program: Provide a course syllabus/course syllabi and scope and sequence for the school's academic program that indicate(s) how the course or course series aligns with that scope and sequence course and is aligned to the standards the course or course series is using (as identified in the application). If not available at the time of application, please explain.
6. Evaluation: Describe the methods the school will use annually to evaluate the overall competency-based learning process and outcomes. Your answer must include:
- a. How educators will evaluate students' progress in learning to ensure the course is meeting student needs.
 - b. What student progress in the competency-based learning course or course series will qualify as a competency-based unit. The answer must include an explanation of how students will demonstrate mastery with specific assessments (which may include portfolio or performance-based assessments), and a description of their purpose, design, format, rationale for selection, and the level of performance or achievement that will constitute mastery (e.g. thresholds).⁵
 - c. How students who have gained success through a competency-based learning course or course series will be tracked on their next steps.
 - d. How will required annual reporting requirements be met, including how data will be collected.

³ Refer to state assessment reporting and accountability policy for minimum n-size to report.

⁴ Refer to state assessment reporting and accountability policy for minimum n-size to report.

⁵ A competency-based unit is defined as "a unit equivalent to a Carnegie Unit that is earned toward graduation for successful completion of an approved competency-based learning course or course series per subsection 2203.7" (DCMR Chapter 22, Title 5, Subtitle A).