

Non-Traditional High School Diploma Option (HSDO) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Guide

This document aims to answer general questions about the Non-Traditional High School Diploma Option (HSDO) and the *Restoring Educational Advancement of Completing High School (REACH) Act*.

What is the age of eligibility for the HSDO program?

A student who drops out of high school and is at least 17 years of age may, under the *REACH Act*, enroll in the HSDO program and begin earning credits towards completion, but will not be eligible to have their Alabama High School Diploma issued until the student is 18 years of age and after the set date of graduation of their base cohort.

Who is responsible for identifying which HSDO option the student qualifies for?

The LEA will make the determination of the option and indicate that on the “Non-Traditional High School Diploma Option Audit Form”.

If the LEA fails to make the determination, the ALSDE will be consulted as to what the best option is for the student.

What type of diploma will the student be issued?

The student will receive an Alabama High School Diploma. Nothing on the diploma shall indicate it was earned non-traditionally, as Alabama only has one diploma.

Who issues the diploma to the student who has completed the HSDO program?

The Alabama High School diploma is issued by the LEA and the school the student last attended as determined by the local school board policy.

What graduation date will be listed on the official high school transcript and the diploma?

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If the student completes the HSDO program after their cohort has graduated, the diploma will reflect the date it is signed by the LEA superintendent. The diploma and/or transcript will not be backdated to match the original graduation year.

~~The actual date the student completes the HSDO program requirements will be the graduation date that is listed on both the official high school transcript and the issued diploma.~~

Once a student completes the HSDO program, should the student's grade point average (GPA) be recalculated?

No. On the high school transcript, the GAP will remain the same as previously earned coursework completed at the high school. Coursework in the HSDO program is completed as pass/fail and would not impact the GPA of the student.

Is the school/LEA able to charge a fee for completing the transcript audit and copy of the high school transcript?

ALSDE strongly encourages LEAs and schools to waive all fees for students participating in the HSDO program, including fees for transcript audits and official transcripts sent to Adult Education.

How will the high school transcript, supporting the diploma earned through HSDO, be prepared?

LEAs will issue the Alabama High School Diploma and the high school transcript. The cumulative record will include both the high school transcript and the Adult Education HSDO transcript, with a notation on the high school transcript referencing the additional HSDO page. No grades or graduation credits earned through the HSDO program will be recorded on the high school transcript.

Can a diploma fee be charged to the student?

Yes. LEAs may charge a diploma fee, and the student receiving the diploma is responsible for paying that fee.

In cases of hardship, other options such as waiving the diploma fee or having community organizations sponsor the diploma fees are an option.

What happens if a student seeks to participate in the HSDO program, but the official high school transcript cannot be located (i.e., transcripts lost or destroyed)?

Students may enroll in the HSDO program even if their high school transcript is lost or destroyed. In such cases, the LEA must provide a written explanation to the Adult Education program in place of the Non-Traditional High School Diploma Option Transcript Audit form. The HSDO Plan of Instruction may require the student to complete portions of the GED, as appropriate.

Can a student who earned the Alabama Occupational Diploma (AOD) participate in HSDO?

Yes. Students who earned the AOD may participate as an Option 2 student.

Can a student who has earned the GED participate in the HSDO program to earn an Alabama High School Diploma?

Yes. At age 18, a student who has already earned the GED may participate in the HSDO program if the last school attended was a public Alabama high school with proper documentation and completion of HSDO coursework and requirements could receive an Alabama High School Diploma from his/her last attended public high school.

The student could potentially have two separate high school graduation documents: a GED and an Alabama High School Diploma.