



Testimony in Support of Oregon House Bill 2987

GED Testing Service (GEDTS) is pleased to present the following testimony in support of Oregon House Bill 2987, an act proposing Oregon public institutions of higher education to bypass requirements and tests for a score of 165 or higher received on the GED® test.

GEDTS believes that the proposed bill will help GED graduates scoring in the College Ready level of the GED test, or above, to make progress in their postsecondary studies by avoiding unnecessary testing, and unnecessary enrollment in non-credit bearing courses. We believe this is supported by the structure of the GED test, how it was developed, how performance levels were set on the test, and data on how students have actually performed in credit-bearing college courses.

The current edition of the GED® test was launched in 2014, and one of the intended purposes of the revised test was to provide examinees the opportunity to demonstrate their proficiency with academic content in English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies that reflects college and career readiness (CCR) content standards.

The development of the current test edition began in 2009 and involved extensive input from content experts from both secondary education and postsecondary education (PSE). In particular, postsecondary educators were asked to review the content standards on which the tests were based as well as the test blueprints and test items to ensure that they were aligned with and reflect CCR content.

GEDTS also engaged PSE content experts in the process used to set performance standards on the test. This standard setting process began in 2013 with the administration of the GED® test to a nationally representative sample of students who had received their high school diplomas that year, resulting in the establishment of the passing standard for high school equivalency and a second, higher, performance standard reflecting attainment of CCR. In 2014 and 2015, the American Council on Education's CREDIT group (see Exhibit 1) reviewed the results of the standard setting as well as examinee performance data and recommended that the CCR level be divided into two score levels, GED® College Ready (score of 165 and above) and GED® College Ready + Credit (score of 175 and above). As part of these standard setting activities, GEDTS and our PSE advisors developed "Performance Level Descriptors" (PLDs), which explicitly identify the skills and competencies that students at the CCR level demonstrate at the CR levels (see Exhibit 2).

On the basis of this data, more than 225 higher education institutions across the country have implemented the GED® College Ready performance level by allowing GED graduates who score at that level or higher to (1) be exempt from placement testing, (2) be exempt from

developmental education courses, and (3) be placed directly in appropriate credit-bearing courses. Institutions already accepting the CR recommendation in Oregon include Chemeketa Community College, Clackamas Community College, Linn-Benton Community College, Mount Hood Community College, Oregon Coast Community College, Portland Community College (English course placement only), Rogue Community College, and Umpqua Community College. Examples of systems outside of Oregon that have accepted the CR recommendation include the Technical College System of Georgia, the Colorado Community College System, the Virginia Community College System, the Ohio Board of Regents (both 2 and 4-year institutions), Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (both 2 and 4-year institutions). In addition, individual colleges in Kansas, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Rhode Island and Washington, among others, have implemented the GED® College Ready performance level.

It is worth noting that nationally, GED graduates who score at the College Ready level of 165 or higher are equivalent to the top 27% of graduating high school seniors.

GEDTS has also been conducting studies to collect postsecondary performance data on graduates of the current GED® program, and we are actively working with Oregon to collect and analyze data from Oregon GED® graduates. However, we recently completed a study with a large community college system in a western state in which we looked at the college performance of over 1,300 graduates of the current GED® program.

One of the hypotheses about the performance of these students was that students who score at the College Ready level or higher should attain a grade of “C” or higher (2.0 on a 4-point scale) in credit-bearing first year courses. Results of the study showed that credit-bearing course GPAs of 2.0 or above were attained by 80% of students scoring on the GED® test at the CR+Credit level, 74% of students at the CR level, and 70% of students at the High School Equivalency level. In addition, the study showed that the mean grade-point averages in credit-bearing courses for students at CR+Credit were 2.9, for CR were 2.5, and for HSE were 2.3, all of which were above the 2.0 average.

Exhibits:

Exhibits 1: Learn About GED College Ready & College + Credit document

Exhibit 2: Performance Level Descriptors for Math and Reasoning through Language Arts College Ready and College Ready+ Credit