

ADULT EDUCATION DIVISION

GED[®] TESTING OFFICE

PROGRAM POLICIES

**FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE
GED[®] TEST**



2011

Arkansas Department of Career Education

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF CAREER EDUCATION
ADULT EDUCATION DIVISION
GED® TESTING OFFICE

PROGRAM POLICIES
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OF THE
GED® TEST

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PURPOSE OF THIS MANUAL

The GED® Program Policies Manual provides information to help you operate an effective and efficient GED® testing program. Throughout the manual, all GED® topics are printed in **boldface** type preceding the descriptive text.

The GED® Program Policies elaborate and explain how to better implement the regulations for operating GED® testing programs on the local level. These policies were approved by the State Board of Career Education and should be considered a part of your contract with the Arkansas Department Career Education.

If you want more information on guidelines to follow for establishing and operating a GED® testing program, the ***Policies and Procedures Manual*** published by GED Testing Service® of the American Council on Education/Pearson VUE provides specific information.

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INTRODUCTION

This manual contains the policies for administration of the GED® test, a program of the American Council on Education (ACE)/Pearson VUE. The policies are approved by the State Board of Career Education which is the policy-making body for all programs of the Arkansas Department of Career Education.

The proper administration, supervision, and integrity of the testing programs located in sites approved as test centers are joint responsibilities of the chief administrative officer for that institution, the person signing the official contract, the Chief Examiner for GED® Testing, and the Arkansas GED Administrator™. All persons involved in the administration of GED® test should become thoroughly familiar with the contents of this manual and the ***Policies and Procedures Manual*** published by GED Testing Service®.

For policy questions or clarifications, please contact Arkansas GED® Testing, Three Capitol Mall, Luther S. Hardin Building, Little Rock, AR 72201 or call (501)682-1980 or visit our website at <http://ace.arkansas.gov/adultEducation/Pages/default.aspx>

ADMINISTRATION OF THE GED® TEST

POLICY: Only Chief Examiners and Examiners may administer the GED® tests and inspect or have access to tests.

Persons instructing potential test-takers for the GED® test, particularly as teachers in Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Literacy, GED® instruction, secondary education programs, adult secondary education programs, alternative high school education programs and developmental education staff cannot be appointed as GED® Chief Examiners, GED® Examiners, or GED® proctors, or otherwise have access to any secure GED® testing materials.

INFORMATION/RATIONALE: This regulation is established in accordance with GED Testing Service® of the American Council on Education/Pearson VUE.

EFFECTIVE DATE: December 6, 1993

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: GED Administrator™, GED® Testing Office (501)682-1980

QUALIFICATIONS FOR EXAMINERS

POLICY: GED® Chief Examiners must hold at least a bachelor's degree from a nationally accredited college or university and shall have experience in teaching, training, counseling, or testing. GED® Examiners must have a bachelor's degree from a nationally accredited college or university and experience in teaching, training, counseling, or testing; at least an associate's degree from a nationally accredited college or university and three years of experience in teaching, training, counseling, or testing; or college-level coursework and experience as a testing proctor at the discretion of the Arkansas GED Administrator™.

These qualifications must be verified by the GED Administrator™.

The Chief Examiner and/or the Chief Administrative Officer of the institution with the approval of the GED Administrator™ may appoint proctors in accordance with the institutional guidelines and GED Testing Service® policies and procedures. Proctors must have a high school or GED® diploma (certificate).

INFORMATION/RATIONALE: This regulation is established in accordance with GED Testing Service® of the American Council on Education/Pearson VUE.

EFFECTIVE DATE: December 6, 1993

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: GED Administrator™, GED® Testing Office (501)682-1980.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR TESTING

POLICY: The GED® test may be administered to eligible test-takers only. Individuals must be at least sixteen years of age and not currently enrolled in an accredited high school. Only persons who do not have a standard high school diploma are eligible to take the GED® test. Under no circumstances may the GED® test be administered to persons less than 16 years of age. Test-takers must present proof of positive identification that shows name, date of birth, address, signature and photograph. Valid drivers' licenses, passports, military, or other forms of government-issued (national and foreign) identification that shows required information are all acceptable forms of identification, unless there is reason to question their authenticity. Test-takers must be legal residents of Arkansas. The term "legal resident" has been clarified by the Arkansas Department of Career Education to mean a person who spends most of his/her time in Arkansas, who pays property taxes, or who possesses a valid Arkansas driver's license.

GED® Chief Examiners and GED® Examiners must obtain a written statement confirming eligibility from each test-taker. Such written confirmation must include the GED® test-taker's signature and must be retained for use in verifying that the test-taker is eligible.

Prior to taking the Official GED® test, test-takers must pass the official GED® Practice Test with an average score of 450 and a minimum score of 410 on each of the five tests in the battery. This test must be administered through an approved adult education program or a GED Testing Center™.

EXCEPTION: Persons 16 (sixteen) and 17 (seventeen) years old will be approved to take the Official GED® test **after** having met the provisions specified in Arkansas Compulsory Attendance Law – Annotated Code 6-18-201.

INFORMATION/RATIONALE: This regulation is established in accordance with the American Council on Education (ACE)/Pearson VUE for GED Testing Service®, Arkansas Acts 30 and 31 of 1994, Act 1659 of 2001, Act 604 of 2003 and Arkansas Compulsory Attendance Law – Annotated Code 6-18-201 which allow, after certain provisions have been met, for persons ages 16 and 17 to enroll in adult education programs or take the GED® test.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 10, 1995; August 2001

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: GED Administrator™, GED® Testing Office (501)682-1980

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE OFFICIAL PRACTICE TEST

POLICY: All applicants wishing to take the GED® test are required to take and pass the Official Practice Test with a minimum standard score of not less than 410 on each test in the battery and a combined average standard score of at least 450 as administered through an approved adult education program or GED Testing Center™.

EXCEPTION: Persons 16 (sixteen) and 17 (seventeen) years old will be approved to take the Official GED® test after having met the provisions specified in the Arkansas Compulsory Attendance Law – Annotated Code 6-18-201.

INFORMATION/RATIONALE: This policy is not to be viewed as an encouragement for students sixteen and seventeen years of age to drop out of traditional public school but should be considered as an alternative method to obtain a high school diploma. This policy is also in accordance with Arkansas Compulsory Attendance Law – Annotated Code 6-18-201 which allow school districts to provide waivers to this requirement, provided adult education rules and regulations are met by individuals aged 17 and under wishing to enroll in adult education classes or take the Official GED® test.

EFFECTIVE DATE: December 6, 1993; August 2001; January 2002

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: GED Administrator™, GED® Testing Office (501)682-1980

TESTING OF A SIXTEEN/SEVENTEEN YEAR OLD

POLICY: Persons sixteen (16) and seventeen (17) years old will be approved to take the Official GED® test after having met the provisions specified in the approved Adult Education Program policies and/or meeting the requirements set forth in Arkansas Compulsory Attendance Law – Annotated Code 6-18-201.

INFORMATION/RATIONALE: Policies for the “Minimum Age for Adult Education Enrollment” and “Attendance for Sixteen (16) and Seventeen (17) Year Old Students” were approved by the State Board of Vocational Education on November 14, 1994. The approval of these policies granted permission for the sixteen (16) and seventeen (17) year olds to enroll in adult education programs after having met certain provisions. This policy is also in accordance with Arkansas Compulsory Attendance Law – Annotated Code 6-18-201 which allows school districts to provide waivers to this requirement, provided adult education rules and regulations are met by individuals aged 17 and under who wish to enroll in adult education classes or take the Official GED® test.

Arkansas GED® Testing policies for sixteen (16) and seventeen (17) year olds follow state law and procedures/regulations established by GED Testing Service® of the American Council on Education (ACE)/Pearson VUE.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 10, 1995; August 2001

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: GED Administrator™, GED® Testing Office (501)682-1980

POLICIES REGARDING SIXTEEN (16) AND SEVENTEEN (17) YEAR OLDS

INFORMATION/RATIONALE:

Attendance/Enrollment. As a result of Arkansas Acts 30 and 31 of 1994 policies for the “Minimum Age for Adult Education Enrollment” and “Attendance for Sixteen (16) and Seventeen (17) Year Old Students” were approved by the State Board of Vocational Education on November 14, 1994. The approval of these policies granted permission for the sixteen (16) and seventeen (17) year olds to enroll in adult education programs after having met certain provisions as a result of Arkansas Acts 30 and 31 of 1994. Arkansas Act 1659 of 2001, Act 604 of 2003 and Arkansas Compulsory Attendance Law – Annotated Code 6-18-201 revised enrollment and testing provisions for 16 and 17 year olds enrolled in private, parochial or home schools.

Act 1148 of 1997 amended Arkansas code to reduce the number of Adult Education class hours that employed students are required to attend. Adult Education Programs shall require, for continued enrollment, a minimum of twenty (20) hours per week of class and instruction; provided, however, that a minimum ten (10) hours shall be required for any student who is employed for thirty (30) hours or more each week.

Home School and Private Schools. In April of 2001 Act 1659, Act 604 of 2003 and Arkansas Compulsory Attendance Law – Annotated Code 6-18-201 restructured the requirements for private, parochial, and home school students preparing to take the GED® test. If these students want to attend an adult education program, application must be made for enrollment. The application process includes a meeting between the parents/guardians and the adult education administrator, a review of the student’s records, and a written agreement detailing attendance requirements. Students who do not fulfill attendance requirements must re-enroll in the private, parochial or home school program within five days.

Students enrolled in private or parochial schools who desire to take the GED® test must provide a letter from the principal or administration of the institution to verify enrollment. Home school students wishing to test without enrolling in Adult Education must provide to the test center a notarized copy of the notice of intent to home school submitted to the superintendent of the local school district.

EFFECTIVE DATES: Varied

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: GED Administrator™, GED® Testing Office (501)682-1980

ESSAY TOPICS

POLICY: Topic selection and rotation is established by GED Testing Service®. Examiners may not change topics in the essay section of the Language Arts, Writing test. In rare cases, an examiner may find a test-taker that is unable to write about an assigned topic because the topic is inappropriate due to the test-taker's disability, religion, or incarceration. In such cases, the examiner follows procedure outlined in the *Policies and Procedures Manual*.

INFORMATION/RATIONALE: In accordance with GED Testing Service® policy, topic rotation will follow a rotating selection pattern. For retests the test-taker will not be assigned the same topic previously given.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 1997

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: GED Administrator™, GED® Testing Office (501)682-1980

RETESTING OF APPLICANTS

POLICY: Test-takers scoring at least 2150 (average 430) on the first Official GED® test may retest at the next scheduled test date without retaking the Official GED® Practice Test.

If the total score is 2050 – 2149 (average 410 – 429) or the test-taker has been retested one or more times, the test-taker must wait three months **OR** complete 30 hours of instruction through an approved Adult Education program **AND** pass the Official Practice Test with a score of 450 in each area to be retested.

If the total score is 2049 or below (average 409 or below), the test-taker must wait six months **OR** complete 60 hours of instruction through an approved Adult Education program **AND** pass each part of the Official GED® Practice Test with a score of 450 in each area to be retested.

NOTE: A test-taker is required to take only the part(s) of the Official Practice Test to be administered on the GED® test.

When test-takers are retested during the contract year, the test-taker must be administered a different form of the GED® test each time.

INFORMATION/RATIONALE: In accordance with the rules, regulations, and guidelines as established by GED Testing Service® as set forth in the *Policies and Procedures Manual* for the GED® test.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2002

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: GED Administrator™, GED® Testing Office (501)682-1980

SCORING OF TESTS

POLICY: The GED® tests are scored by an official GED® scoring site approved by GED Testing Service®. As a general rule, test results will be disseminated to the GED® Chief Examiner and test-taker within 21 working days after the test administration.

RATIONALE/INFORMATION: The above policy is established in an effort to ensure efficient/effective scoring services by the Arkansas Department of Career Education, GED® Testing Office.

Examiners may view results via a secure website, but results are not official until received on official transcript/credential paper issued by the Arkansas GED® Testing Office.

Scores will not be faxed unless an immediate need is expressed in writing by the test-taker and a vested third party such as an employer, an educational institution, a correctional facility or the military for hiring, enrollment, release or enlistment purposes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: March 2001

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: GED Administrator™, GED® Testing Office (501)682-1980

MINIMUM SCORE REQUIREMENTS

POLICY: Effective January 1, 2002, the requirement to pass the GED® test is a minimum score of 410 on each test in the battery

AND

an average score of 450.

Scores earned prior to January 1, 2002, cannot be combined with the 2002 series of test.

RATIONALE/INFORMATION: In accordance with GED Testing Service®, each state that contracts to use the GED® test establishes its own minimum score requirements for diplomas and credentials provided that the scores are at least the minimum set by GED Testing Service®.

PREVIOUS PASSING GED® TEST SCORES:

1945 - December 1962: A minimum Standard Score of 35 on each of the five tests OR an average of Standard Score of 45.

January 1963 - December 1972: A minimum Standard Score of 40 on each of the five tests OR an Average Standard Score of 50.

January 1973 - December 1974: A minimum Standard Score of 35 on each of the five test OR an Average Standard Score of 45.

January 1975 - June 30, 1987: A minimum Standard Score of 35 on each of the five tests AND an Average Standard Score of 45.

July 1987 - December 31, 2001: A minimum Standard Score of 40 on each test in the battery AND an Average Standard Score of 45.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2002

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: GED Administrator™, GED® Testing Office (501)682-1980

REQUESTING INFORMATION ON TEST SCORES

POLICY: A request for information on GED® scores must be submitted to the Arkansas Department of Career Education, GED® Testing Office, in writing and signed by the test-taker.

INFORMATION/RATIONALE: In accordance with GED Testing Service®, the test scores of individual test-takers are confidential information. Subject to the limited exceptions stated below for verifying scores by telephone or fax, an individual's score should be reported to educational institutions, adult education teachers, employers, correctional facilities, military recruiters, *only for test-takers who have submitted written and signed requests to that effect.*

A request for a GED® transcript/credential must contain verifiable information including

- (1) the test-taker's full name (and the name under which tested, if different)
- (2) date of birth
- (3) approximate year tested
- (4) city where tested
- (5) social security or identification number
- (6) signature
- (7) name and address where credential(s) should be sent
- (8) required fee (if applicable)

The Arkansas GED® Testing office will fax scores to a third party (i.e., employers, military, educational institution, correctional facility etc.) for test-takers who provide written permission to do so; faxed copies are unofficial. Test-taker's permission must be accompanied by verification from the third party that a faxed copy of scores satisfies an immediate need for hiring, enlistment, enrollment or release.

EFFECTIVE DATE: December 6, 1993

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: GED Administrator™, GED® Testing Office (501)682-1980

CONFIDENTIALITY/PRIVACY POLICY

Test scores and results of individual test-takers are confidential information. An individual's scores will be reported to educational institutions, adult education teachers, military recruiters, employers, correctional facilities, and others only for test-takers who have submitted written and signed requests to that effect. Because some test-takers do not wish their credential award to be a matter of public record, names of credential recipients should not be released until individuals have signed written permission to do so. The fact that a person has or has not taken the GED® test should also be treated as confidential.

- Confidential information should only be released after an individual's written release has been signed by the test-taker in question, and only after the test-taker in question understands that s/he may choose not to allow the release of said confidential information. According to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, enacted as Section 438 of the General Education Provisions Act, student information that is considered "private" may not be shared with anyone who is not designated on a release of confidential information form that has been signed by the student.
- Each institution or GED Testing Center™ must establish what information can be released based on the Freedom of Information Act and the Privacy Act of 1974. Information that can be released is "directory information," and is regarded as information contained in an education record of a student which would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. It includes, but is not limited to, the student's name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, dates of attendance, and the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended. Local programs must adhere to their affiliated institution's policy for directory information. Furthermore, each test-taker must sign a release that verifies their knowledge that the institution can release directory information.

Verifying Scores by Telephone and Fax

Many test-takers need prompt verification of their GED® test scores so that they can, for example, accept employment or enroll in postsecondary education or training. GED Testing Service® permits scores to be faxed for test-takers who have provided written or faxed permission to do so. The Arkansas GED® Testing Office will provide an unofficial report of scores by fax only in cases that require immediate confirmation of test results (i.e. enrollment in an educational institution; enlistment in the armed forces; release from incarceration/detention). Here, the term "immediate" means before the end the next regular business day after applicable fees have been received in the Arkansas GED® Testing Office.

An Official Score Report can be obtained or sent directly from the Arkansas GED® Testing office.

The GED® Testing Office can confirm unofficial score reports by telephone when the following condition is met: callers must prove they possess a GED® score report by reading the date of testing, test form, standard scores, and percentile ranks. Confirmation or denial that such a record of scores is on file may be given.

- Written consent may not be submitted on a "blanket" form which lists all individuals being tested, all staff who might want to know score information, and all testing situations in which the individual has been or might be involved. Confidential information should be released **ONLY** to a *specific person* who has a *specific need to know* about the *specific test-taker* who took the GED® test on a *specific date/time*.

According to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, enacted as Section 438 of the General Education Provisions Act, student information that is considered “private” may not be shared with anyone who is not designated on a release of confidential information form that has been signed by the student. Examples of other information considered confidential include: physical, emotional, mental and/or learning disabilities;

Release Forms

Every Arkansas Adult Education/Literacy provider receiving state or federal adult education funds should have proper release forms for release and/or transfer of confidential information. A request for transcript/diploma form has been provided by the GED® Testing Office to all testing centers.

ISSUANCE OF A GED® TRANSCRIPT/DUPLICATE DIPLOMA

POLICY: Official reports of test scores can be issued only by the Arkansas Department of Career Education, GED® Testing Office.

Each test-taker who completes the GED® test will receive a copy of his/her scores. This initial set of credentials is at no charge to the GED® test-taker. A test-taker may be charged a fee to have a duplicate official credential sent to a representative of a business, educational institution, military, correctional facility or other organization, or to themselves by making a written request to the Arkansas GED® Testing Office including appropriate information and the test-taker's signature.

INFORMATION/RATIONALE: The records of GED® tests in Arkansas are maintained by the GED® Testing Office of the Department of Career Education. To protect the confidentiality of GED® test-takers, initial score reports and/or diplomas are sent directly to the individuals.

EFFECTIVE DATE: December 6, 1993.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: GED Administrator™, GED® Testing Office (501)682-1980

ISSUING THE *ARKANSAS HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA*

POLICY: Individuals receiving an *Arkansas High School Diploma* must attain a minimum standard score of 410 on each of the five subtests and an average of 450 on the GED® test.

RATIONALE/INFORMATION: This regulation is established in accordance with the American Council on Education/Pearson VUE for GED Testing Service®. Each state shall determine the minimum test score requirements and other qualifications for issuing a high school credential based on the GED® test provided that the scores are at least the minimum set by GED Testing Service®.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2002

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: GED Administrator™, GED® Testing Office (501)682-1980

PROGRAM EVALUATION

POLICY: GED® Testing Programs and/or Test Centers will be evaluated and monitored by the Arkansas GED Administrator™ using a GED® Site Visit Form that was developed in accordance with the policies established in the *Policies and Procedures Manual* for the GED® test.

INFORMATION/RATIONALE: The GED Testing Service® requires that approved Test Centers be evaluated according to guidelines in the *Policies and Procedures Manual* for the GED® test.

The first two administrations of the GED® test by a new examiner must be monitored by the state GED Administrator™ or his/her designee.

EFFECTIVE DATE: December 6, 1993

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: GED Administrator™, GED® Testing Office (501)682-1980

FEES AND/OR OTHER CHARGES

POLICY: Fees for GED® testing are set by the Department of Career Education, Adult Education Division, GED® Testing Office in accordance with the policy and fee structure established by GED Testing Service® of the American Council on Education/Pearson VUE.

INFORMATION/RATIONALE: The Arkansas Department of Career Education feels that providing an opportunity to Arkansas citizens to take the GED® test and issuing official GED® credentials is a way of encouraging the achievement of a literate and educated population.

EFFECTIVE DATE: December 6, 1993

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: GED Administrator™, GED® Testing Office (501)682-1980

PURCHASE OF TESTING MATERIAL

POLICY: All official testing materials are provided by the Arkansas Department of Career Education through the GED® Testing Office. Test materials are distributed to each center by GED Testing Service® and/or the Arkansas GED® Testing Office.

It is the responsibility of the testing centers to ensure the security of test materials according to procedures listed in the *Policies and Procedures Manual*.

INFORMATION/RATIONALE: For convenience and ease in tracking and distributing testing materials, other than the Official GED® test, the Arkansas Department of Career Education, GED® Testing Office, serves as the official distribution site for all test centers in Arkansas.

EFFECTIVE DATE: December 6, 1993

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: GED Administrator™, GED® Testing Office (501)682-1980

**COOPERATION AND SUPPORT AMONG ALL GED® TESTING CENTERS
IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF GED® TESTING PROGRAMS**

POLICY: All educational institutions/entities approved as GED® Testing Centers will be governed by the same rules, regulations, policies, and procedures as established by the Arkansas Department of Career Education and GED Testing Service® of the American Council on Education/Pearson VUE. All approved testing centers must have received the same credentials to operate and administer a testing program and should be viewed as an official entity.

INFORMATION/RATIONALE: This policy is in accordance with the policies established by GED Testing Service® of the American Council on Education/Pearson VUE. This policy is also a part of the annual contract signed by the Arkansas Department of Career Education with GED Testing Service® according to rules and regulations stated in the ***Policies and Procedures Manual***.

EFFECTIVE DATE: December 6, 1993

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: GED Administrator™, GED® Testing Office (501)682-1980