

Caat High School Graduation

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Education Code section 51225.3 identifies the state mandated graduation requirements for high school students. Historically, charter schools had been understood to be waived from these requirements in accordance with Education Code section 47610, allowing charters to set their own graduation requirements. In recent times, it appears that position is shifting. For instance, the California Department of Education's website opines that charter schools are subject to follow the state's minimum graduation requirements. The specifics below align with the state graduation requirements, with the exception of health, electives, technology, and/or senior project/portfolio.

Currently, Education Code section 51225.3 requires charter schools and other LEAs to require students to take a one-semester course in ethnic studies and in the school's discretion, may require a full-year course. This requirement would apply to students graduating in the 2029-30 school year. As of December 2025, this requirement is postponed until the legislature provides funding for the mandate.

The law also requires charter schools to offer in all of its high schools at least a separate, stand-alone one-semester course in personal finances, that is not combined with any other course.

It is widely understood that charter schools may impose their own additional coursework and other requirements in order to award a student with a diploma of graduation from high school. There are, however, several statutes that exempt certain students from any requirements that are in addition to the state minimum graduation requirements. This policy is written in accordance with those statutes.

The aspiration of The Central Academy of Arts and Technology, in partnership with the community, is to provide an exceptional education that prepares students to be successful members of our democratic society. Therefore, the graduation requirements stated below have been established. The graduation requirements encompass the knowledge, abilities, and experience necessary to develop the essential aptitudes and skills of successful participants in today's society: behavior of character, communication, citizenship, intellect, self-direction, teamwork, wellbeing and productivity.

Students are to be provided with assistance to tailor the requirements according to their individual needs and abilities. Students must demonstrate proficiency in reading comprehension, writing and mathematics. Those students not proficient will be provided with remedial programs after consultation with the student's parent/guardian.

In addition to the following graduation requirements, students must pass any state and federal mandated assessments.

Subjects Required for Graduation

Minimum State Requirements:

Three years of English

Two years of Mathematics (including Algebra I)

Three years of Social Studies (including U.S. history and geography; world history, culture, and geography; one semester of American government and civics, and one semester of economics)

Two years of Science (including biology and physical science)

One year of Foreign Language or Visual/Performing Arts/Career Technical Education (ASL shall be deemed a course in foreign language)

Two years of Physical Education

Commencing with the 2027-28 school year, one-semester course in personal finance will be offered to students in grades 9 to 12

Additional Charter School Graduation Requirements:

Two Years of College Prep Electives in Designated *Pathway

One Year of Computer Science

One year of Performing Arts

Externship and Career/Colege Project

Senior Portfolio

*Students pursuing the Arts Pathway Seal or Teaching Pathway Seal are required to complete additional pathway-specific elective coursework beyond the standard graduation requirements in order to demonstrate advanced study and specialization in their selected pathway.

Individuals with Exceptional Needs:

Eligible students with exceptional needs shall be exempt from all coursework and other requirements adopted by Caat's governing board that are additional to the statewide coursework requirements identified above and shall be awarded a diploma from high school as described in 20 U.S.C. § 7801(23)(A)(ii)(I)(bb).

A student with exceptional needs shall be eligible for the exemption and diploma award if the students Individualized Education Program (IEP) provides all of the following:

- The student is deemed eligible to take the alternate assessment aligned to alternate achievement standards in grade 11 as described in Education Code section 60640(k);
- The student is required to complete state standards aligned coursework to meet the statewide coursework requirements.

Before a student commences grade 10, the student's IEP team shall determine and notify the parent or guardian of whether the student may be eligible to graduate pursuant to the exemption provided for herein.

A student with exceptional needs that meets the criteria for the diploma exemption shall be eligible to participate in any graduation ceremony and any school activity related to graduation in which a student of similar age would be eligible to participate.

Other Specific Populations:

As defined in statute, students in foster care, homeless children/youth, former juvenile court school students, students who are in a military family, students who are migratory children who transfer between schools any time after the completion of the student's second year of high school, pupils participating in a newcomer program (meaning a student who is participating in a program designed to meet the academic and transitional needs of newly arrived immigrant students that has a primary objective the development of English language proficiency and who was enrolled before January 1, 2024 [**Note: it is within the discretion of the school to extend these rights to pupils participating in a newcomer program irrespective of when the student was enrolled**]) and newcomer students (collectively, "Specific Population Students") and who are in their third or fourth year of high school, shall be exempt from all coursework and other requirements adopted by Caat board of directors that are in addition to the statewide coursework requirements, unless Caat makes a finding that the student is reasonably able to complete Caat's graduation requirements in time to graduate from high school by the end of the student's fourth year of high school.

If Caat determines that a Specific Population Student is able to complete the School's graduation requirements within the student's fifth year of high school, Caat shall do all of the following:

- Consult with the student and the student's educational right holder regarding the student's option to remain in school for a fifth year to complete Caat's graduation requirements.
- Consult with the student and the student's educational right holder about how remaining in school for a fifth year to complete Caat's graduation requirements will affect the student's ability to gain admission to a postsecondary educational institution.
- Consult with and provide information to the student about transfer opportunities available through the California Community Colleges.
- Permit the student to stay in school for a fifth year to complete Caat's graduation requirements upon agreement with the student (if over 18 years old) or the student's educational rights holder.
- For a student in foster care or a homeless child/youth, consult with the student and student's educational rights holder regarding the student's option to remain in the student's school of origin.

To determine whether a Specific Population Student is in the third or fourth year of high school, the number of credits the student has earned to the date of transfer, the length of the student's school enrollment, or, for students with significant gaps in school attendance, the student's age as compared to the average age of students in the third or fourth year of high school, may be used, whichever will qualify the student for the exemption.

Caat shall notify a Specific Population Student and that student's educational rights holder within 30 calendar days of the date of transfer into the School that the student may qualify for the exemption from local graduation requirements. If the School fails to provide timely notice, the student shall be eligible for the exemption once notified, even if the student no longer qualifies as a Specific Population Student.

If a Specific Population Student is exempted from local graduation requirements and completes the statewide coursework requirements before the end of the student's fourth year of high school and that student would otherwise be entitled to remain in attendance at the school, the school shall not require or request that the student graduate before the end of the student's fourth year of high school. If a Specific Population Student is eligible for the exemption and would otherwise be entitled to remain in attendance at the school shall not be required to accept the exemption or be denied enrollment in, or the ability to complete, courses for which the student is otherwise eligible, including courses necessary to attend an institution of higher education, regardless of whether those are required for statewide graduation requirements.

If a Specific Population Student is not exempted from local graduation requirements or has previously declined the exemption, Caat shall exempt the student within 30 days of the date of an exemption request made by the student or student's educational rights holder. If a Specific Population Student was eligible for an exemption, was not properly notified of the availability of the exemption, or declined the exemption, Caat shall exempt the student within 30 days of the date of an exemption request made by the student or the student's educational rights holder even if the student no longer qualifies as a Specific Population Student. A Specific Population Student's exemption shall not be revoked by Caat.

If a Specific Population Student was granted an exemption in a previous school and later transfers to Caat, the exemption shall continue to apply after the student transfers or no longer qualifies as a Specific Population Student.

If a Specific Population Student is exempted from local graduation requirements, in addition to providing notice, the School shall consult with the student and student's educational rights holder on the following:

- Discussion regarding how any of the requirements that are waived may affect the student's postsecondary education or vocational plans, including the ability to gain admission to a postsecondary educational institution.
- Discussion and information about other options available to the student, including, but not limited to, a fifth year of high school, possible credit recovery, and any transfer opportunities available through the California Community Colleges.
- Consideration of the student's academic data and any other information relevant to making an informed decision on whether to accept the exemption.

Any complaints regarding noncompliance with the exemptions for Specific Population Students may be made through Caat's Uniform Complaint Procedures.

Adopted: 2026

Amended: N/A