

SUMMARY: DETERMINING MASTERY FOR ADVANCEMENT, GRADING, & CREDITING



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Awarding Credit by Demonstrating Mastery

Summary, Considerations, and Guidance

Summary

In awarding high school credit, Idaho State Board of Education rule allows for both seat-time and mastery options: ([Link to IDAPA Code 08.02.03.105.a. & b.](#))

a. High school credit. Credits. (Effective for all students who enter the ninth grade in the fall of 2010 or later.) One (1) credit shall equal sixty (60) hours of total instruction.

b. Mastery. Notwithstanding the credit definition of Subsection 105.01.a., a student may also achieve credits by demonstrating mastery of a subject's content standards as defined and approved by the local school district or LEA.

According to **Idaho Statute 33-1632 Mastery-Based Education** means...

"...an education system where student progress is based on a student's demonstration of mastery of competencies and content, not seat time or the age or grade level of the student." [Link to Idaho State Statute 33-1632](#)

The Idaho Content Standards

"describe the knowledge, concepts, and skills that students are expected to acquire at each grade level in each content area." ([Link to IDAPA Code 08.02.03.007](#))

Competencies represent a set of knowledge, skills and attributes that...

"...broadly prepare high school graduates for a successful transition into some form of postsecondary education and/or the workplace." ([Link to IDAPA Code 08.02.03.007.01.!](#))

- In 2017, the Idaho State Board of Education ([link to SBOE webpage](#)) adopted Idaho College and Career Readiness Competencies. Through efforts of the Idaho Mastery Education Network, subskills and performance level descriptors ([link to Competencies Overview](#)) have been identified and created for achieving the competencies and measuring student performance.

Considerations

Transitioning to new policies and systems for advancement, promotion, and crediting through a mastery system presents unique opportunities and challenges. The following considerations may help districts in developing new policies for adoption by the local governing board.

- Recognize that grading and promotion are deeply embedded in educational culture.
- Communication is vitally important, no matter how large or small you imagine the changes to your system will be. Bring them in on the development early.
- The decisions you make when transitioning to a mastery-based system are interconnected and have the potential for wide impact.
- Consider how far and how much you want or can change.
- Transition to crediting through mastery will take multiple iterations and dedicated time.



Guidance

Each Local Educational Agency (LEA) should consider the following steps in creating their own individual model and process for awarding credit by demonstrating mastery.

#1: Define mastery in your system

To define mastery in your system, identify the existing infrastructure by asking three questions:

1. **How do we determine and describe what students should know, do, and be like?**
 - Primarily consider the Idaho Content Standards ([link to standards](#)) and the Idaho College and Career Readiness Competencies ([link to Competencies Overview](#)), when identifying what students should possess when the learning experience finishes.
2. **How do we determine what is developmentally appropriate?**
 - Look to benchmarks in the standards and performance level descriptors in the competencies to provide guidance with this question.
3. **How do we recognize what students know, can do, and are like?**
 - Consider the full range of available evidence options, from traditional exams to performance assessments and portfolios.

#2: Determine student mastery in your system

Determining student mastery means deciding **how much evidence will it take** to confirm, with confidence, that a student has met a given learning objective at a specific performance level. Consider the following:

- How many student performances will it take?
- How will very broad and very narrow learning objectives affect teaching, learning and performance?
- How do different grouping, learning, and assessment models, such as, grade level, age-based, performance based, collaborative, individual, etc., influence mastery?
- Have learning goals and competencies been mapped for content-based courses?
- What alternative scheduling and learning opportunities support mastery? Examples may include: mini courses or projects, independent learning, learning that happens outside regular school hours, growth measurements, etc.

#3: Reporting on Student Progress

Districts and schools must determine what information is useful to stakeholders and develop an effective way to share that information.

1. In mastery, **scoring** represents the process of evaluating individual student performance to determine a student's present level of performance based on a learning progression. Constructive feedback and growth opportunities are also vital. *How will educators, or teams, determine performance level?*
2. **Grading** communicates a students' present level of performance as demonstrated by multiple pieces of evidence. *What calculations will your LEA use?*
3. Students **promote, or earn credit**, when they show mastery at a particular performance level or certain quantity of competencies of standards. *How will your district determine performance level, or grade level equivalent, and evidence required to represent mastery and issue credit?*

This summary is distilled from the ["Guide to Determining Mastery for Advancement, Promotion, and Crediting"](#). For more in-depth guidance see full document.