

General Educational Development (GED) Testing Service

Information on the GED tests

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What are the GED tests?

The General Educational Development (GED) is an international high school equivalency testing program for adults. It consists of a series of five tests in the following areas:

Language Arts Reading
Language Arts Writing
Mathematics
Social Studies
Science

The GED tests are designed to measure the skills that correspond to those of recent high school graduates. They involve the ability to understand and apply information; to evaluate, analyze, and draw conclusions; and to express ideas and opinions in writing. Adults who pass the five tests receive a **Nova Scotia High School Equivalency Certificate**.

Many adults who did not graduate from high school have acquired skills through work, community, family and study experiences, at or above a secondary school level. The GED allows these adults to demonstrate academic abilities that are **equivalent** to those of high school graduates. The content of the test items measures skills relevant to adult experiences.

The tests were originally developed by the GED Testing Service in Washington, DC, but the Canadian version has been adapted to Canadian standards.

2. GED 2002 tests

The 2002 Series GED Tests incorporate the many new skills that traditional high schools now require of their graduates. The previous edition of the tests was released in 1988, before many of these requirements were in place. Since passing the GED Tests leads to a high school credential, the GED Tests have to reflect these new requirements. Even though they have been updated, the new GED Tests will continue to certify 12th-grade ability in Language Arts (Reading and Writing), Social Studies, Science, and Mathematics.

An updated French version of the GED was released in 2004. For more information, see Section 14, *Special editions of the GED tests* on page 8.

3. Why write the GED tests?

Adults who have not completed high school write the GED tests to earn an official document stating they have a Grade 12 secondary school equivalency standing.

People want to gain their GED for many reasons:

- to gain employment
- to qualify for a better job
- to get a promotion within their company or organization
- to apply for admission to educational and training institutions
- for personal satisfaction

4. Who accepts the GED certificate?

GED certificates are awarded in all the Canadian provinces and territories and are awarded in all of the American states and territories.

In some jurisdictions, GED test scores are accepted as being equivalent to secondary school graduation requirements for the purposes of employment, promotion, and licensing. Some post-secondary institutions (such as community colleges and universities) also accept GED test scores for admission purposes.

The Department of Education **cannot** guarantee that a GED certificate will be accepted by employers or post-secondary institutions in every instance.

If you plan to use the GED certificate for community college, university entrance or for a job application, you should first ask the institution or workplace involved if the GED is acceptable or meets their minimum requirements.

5. Who may take the tests?

To write the GED tests in Nova Scotia, you **must** meet all of the following requirements at the time of application:

- You must be at least 19 years of age on the date of the tests.
- You must not have received a Grade 12 certificate from any institution.
- You must have been out of the public school system for one year.

You must provide **government issued photo I.D. for proof of identification and age at the time of application**. If you apply by mail, please attach a photocopy of the necessary identification. You may also be asked to provide proof of last grade attended.

How long do the tests take to write?

The five tests take a total of seven (7) hours and fifteen (15) minutes to complete. However, you must also allow time for registration, initial instructions and breaks between tests. The tests are usually written over a two-day period.

Under certain circumstances, individuals may be granted additional time to write the tests. For information, see Section 15, *Special accommodations to write the GED tests* on page 9.

7. What is on the GED tests? What subjects do the tests cover?

The GED tests are designed to measure understanding in subject areas comparable to a high school program. You are required to write an essay for Part II of the Language Arts, Writing test. All other tests consist of multiple choice questions. In Mathematics there are 10% alternate format questions (not multiple choice).

Language Arts Reading (40 multiple-choice questions, 1 hour and 5 minutes)

This test measures your ability to understand culturally diverse reading passages and answer questions in two content areas:

- 75% Literary Texts: • drama • poetry; 8-25 lines • prose fiction prior to 1920 • prose fiction 1920 - 1960 • prose fiction after 1960
- 25% Non-Fiction Texts: • non-fiction prose • critical reviews (200-400 words) • business documents

Language Arts Writing (2 hours)

The Language Arts Writing test is intended to measure your ability to use standard written English clearly and effectively. It contains two parts and you must complete both parts to receive a mark.

Part I (50 multiple-choice questions, 1 hour and 15 minutes)

The questions will measure your ability to correct, revise, and organize passages in the following areas: **sentence structure** (30%), **word usage** (30%), **mechanics** (25%), and **organization** (15%). Part I will be worth approximately 60% of your total mark for the Language Arts Writing test.

Part II (Essay, 45 minutes)

Part II requires you to write an essay of approximately 200-250 words on a topic which is based on general knowledge and has been chosen to interest and engage the writer. No specialized knowledge is required to respond to a topic. You are encouraged to draw on your own observations and experiences. You are encouraged to plan, write, and revise

your essay. The essay will be worth approximately 40% of your total mark for the Language Arts Writing test. You must achieve an average essay score in order to pass. Examinees who score high on the multiple choice, but fail to pass the essay must retake the entire Language Arts Writing test (Parts I and II).

The scores earned on both parts of this test are combined and reported as one mark.

Mathematics (40 multiple-choice questions, 10 alternative format questions, 1 hour and 30 minutes; in two parts, 45 minutes each)

The Mathematics test places emphasis on your ability to solve realistic tasks. The situations are natural rather than contrived and deal with the world of work, the consumer, technology, family experiences, etc. There are four content areas covered:

- 20-30% Number Operations and Number Sense
- 20-30% Measurement and Geometry
- 20-30% Data Analysis, Statistics, and Probability
- 20-30% Algebra Functions and Patterns

The item sets require you to access multiple pieces of information including bar graphs, pie charts, tables, and diagrams. The test booklets are separated into two parts and contain a formula page. Part I permits the use of a calculator, Part II does not. You will have practice time with the calculator prior to the test. Everyone will use a Casio *fx* 260 Solar calculator which will be provided. The two parts of the Mathematics test are equally weighted and you must pass both parts.

Social Studies (50 multiple-choice questions, 1 hour and 10 minutes)

This test measures your ability to use knowledge and information about fundamental social studies concepts. It will contain at least one excerpt from a historical document and at least one practical document. It consists of reading passages, graphics or visuals. It includes items with a specific focus on the Canadian community (40%) and others which deal with the global community (60%) in four content areas:

- 40% History
- 20% Economics
- 25% Civics and Government
- 15% Geography

Science (50 multiple-choice questions, 1 hour and 20 minutes)

This test integrates thinking skills with National Science Education Content Standards:

- 45% Life Science
- 20% Earth and Space Science
- 35% Physical Science

Please note that the Science and Mathematics tests use metric terms and measurements.

8. What do I need to know about the Casio fx 260 solar calculator?

You will be required to demonstrate your mathematic skills using the Casio *fx* 260 solar calculator which will be provided to you for Part I of the Mathematics test. (Part II does not include the use of a calculator.) Although there will be a short demonstration of the calculator prior to the start of Mathematics Part I, you are encouraged to familiarize yourself with the calculator prior to the testing date.

9. Do I need to prepare for the tests?

The GED tests offer you an opportunity to show the learning that you have accomplished since leaving school. Skills which you have gained from working, parenting, training, travelling, volunteering, reading, and many other experiences have helped you to prepare to write the tests. For some adults, these skills may be sufficient to ensure success.

However, other adults may need to enrol in upgrading and/or GED preparation programs before writing the tests. The purpose of these programs is to review certain subject matters and/or to build on essential reading, writing and math skills. Some adults who may not need to take a formal course may want to work with GED preparation materials to practice test-taking skills.

Please contact the GED Testing Service in the Adult Education office nearest you to get information on upgrading and GED preparation programs and to find out where to borrow or purchase GED preparation materials and texts (see next section).

10. How do I apply to take the tests?

To apply, you must mail or deliver a completed application form and appropriate fees to the office nearest to the area in which you wish to write. **Faxes will not be accepted.** Your completed application form and fees **must** be received at the regional offices **AT LEAST 2 WEEKS** prior to your preferred testing date.

Application forms are available from the following regional offices:

Any Area within Halifax Regional Municipality

GED Testing Service, Adult Education

Department of Education

4th Floor, 2021 Brunswick Street, Trade Mart Building

PO Box 578, Halifax, NS B3J 2S9

(902) 424-4227

Cape Breton and Victoria Counties

GED Testing Service, Adult Education

Department of Education

360 Prince Street, Suite 39, 3rd Floor

Sydney, NS B1P 5L1

(902) 563-2312

Guysborough, Antigonish, Richmond and Inverness Counties

GED Testing Service, Adult Education

Department of Education, c/o Strait Area Campus, NSCC

226 Reeves Street

Port Hawkesbury, NS B9A 2A2

(902) 625-3761

Colchester, Cumberland and Pictou Counties

GED Testing Service, Adult Education

Department of Education

60 Lorne Street, Suite 3

Truro, NS B2N 3K3

(902) 893-5988

Hants, Kings, Annapolis and Digby Counties

GED Testing Service, Adult Education

Department of Education, c/o Kingstec Campus, NSCC

236 Belcher Street, Kentville, NS B4N 0A6

(902) 679-6203

Lunenburg, Queens, Shelburne and Yarmouth Counties

GED Testing Service, Adult Education

Department of Education

80 Logan Road, Bridgewater, NS B4V 3J8

(902) 543-0649

11. What are the costs?

Please contact your local GED testing service for information on the current application fee. You must include the correct fee with your application form.

Payment should be made by money order, payable to the Minister of Finance.

We do not accept personal cheques, credit card, or cash!

12. Where and when will the GED tests be held?

The testing sessions are regularly scheduled during the GED testing year which runs from January to December.

Once you have been registered to write, you will receive a confirmation letter telling you when and where you are scheduled to write.

13. What if I have to cancel my testing?

The GED fees are **non-refundable**.

If you register for a specific session, but decide to write at another session, you **must** contact the regional office at least **ONE WEEK before the testing date**. You will be rescheduled to the next test sitting. Requests to reschedule with less than one weeks notice will be considered on an individual basis. In most cases, you will have to submit a new application form and pay a new application fee.

You must reschedule to write the tests within **8 months** of the initial application date. If not, you will need to submit a new application form and pay a new application fee.

If you fail to show up for the test without having properly notified the testing service, you will need to submit a new application form and repay the application fee.

14. Special editions of the GED tests

A **French** version of the GED tests is available. If you wish to write the GED tests in French, please mark the correct box on the application form. Please note that all five tests must be successfully completed in one language before a certificate can be granted. You cannot combine scores from the English and French editions.

The French version of the GED tests is the 2004 test series. Scores from the 1988 French test series will not be combined with scores on the 2004 French test series.

The GED tests are also offered in **large print**. If you wish to write the tests in large print, send a written request for that version along with your application form.

The tests are also available in **audio-cassette** and **Braille** versions. The use of these two versions usually requires a special testing arrangement. If you wish to write either of these versions, you must submit a **Request for Special Modifications of GED Test Administration** form (see next section for more information).

15. Special accommodations to write the GED tests

If you have specific learning and/or physical disabilities, you may be granted special accommodations to write the GED tests. These may include the following: extra time to write the tests, frequent breaks during testing, a separate testing area, a scribe, a special GED edition, etc.

There are two different forms to request special modifications. One is to request modifications because of motor or sensory disabilities. The other is to request special modifications because of a diagnosed learning disability or disabilities. You must submit a completed copy of the appropriate form, along with your application form, ID and fee. You must also provide written certification by an appropriate professional identifying and describing the disability which requires you to be allowed to write under special conditions.

For motor or sensory disabilities, appropriate certifying professionals include medical doctors, psychiatrists or other medical specialists. For learning disabilities, appropriate professionals include psychologists, educational diagnosticians, or psychometrists. Any request submitted without the appropriate supportive documentation, applications form and fees will be returned.

Due to the time required to review these cases, you must submit your application form, GED fee, special needs form, and medical documentation **at least FOUR WEEKS prior to the preferred writing date.**

16. What do I bring to the tests?

Satisfactory identification **must** be presented at the time of writing. You must bring some form of **government issued photo identification** such as a valid driver's license, a passport, or other government issued ID cards which have a photograph, signature and indicate date of birth. The identification must have a sample of your signature. It will be verified with your signing of the roster at the time of writing.

All materials, including pencils, pens and calculator will be provided. The only calculator that may be used on Mathematics (Part I) is the one provided for you.

No books, slide rules, computers or other materials may be used when taking the tests. No papers of any kind can be taken out of the testing room at the conclusion of the test. For security purposes, non-essential items such as purses, backpacks, cellular phones, pagers and books will be stored at the candidate's risk.

How and when will I be notified of the results?

Your completed tests will be forwarded to the Department of Education in Halifax where they will be scored. **Approximately six weeks** after you write the tests, you will receive a **Transcript of Test Results** indicating your standard score for each test. If you are successful on all five tests, you will also receive a Nova Scotia High School Equivalency Certificate. You will not be notified of your test results over the telephone.

18. How are the results reported?

Results on each of the five GED tests are reported as **standard scores** and **percentile ranks**. The Department does not calculate or report percentages or letter grades. When you receive your transcript, please refer to the standard scores. They tell you whether or not you have gained your GED certificate. The scores range from 200 to 800. In Nova Scotia, the passing standard score is 450 in each test. **You must receive a standard score of at least 450 on each of the five tests** to be eligible to receive a Nova Scotia High School Equivalency Certificate.

Percentile ranks range from 1 to 99. They compare the standard scores of graduating high school students to your standard scores. For example, if your standard score on one of the tests has a percentile rank of 55, you have done as well as, or better than, 55% of the graduating high school students in that subject.

If you rewrite the tests, the scores reported on your new transcript will be the **highest** scores that you have achieved and not necessarily the scores from the most recent testing. Recent scores are not reported if they are lower than your previous scores.

19. Can I write the tests again?

To rewrite the GED tests, you must submit a new application form along with the correct registration fee. You can rewrite one or more of the tests on which you were unsuccessful (**any test on which you received a standard score of less than 450**), under the following conditions:

- **You can only write twice during the GED Testing Year (January to December).** There are only 2 versions of the tests available each GED testing year, and you cannot be tested on the same version twice.
- Your first rewrite can take place after a **3 month** waiting period. If your standard score was less than 400, you are strongly encouraged to do some form of upgrading before rewriting.

- For a second or third rewrite, you need to wait a minimum of **3 months** from your last writing. Again, you are encouraged to do some form of upgrading. Regardless of the time between each testing, you cannot be tested more than twice during the GED testing year.
- You must write all tests at least once before you can be retested on any of the five tests not passed.
- You can rewrite GED tests which you have already passed if you need higher test scores to be accepted into training programs or to meet employment requirements. You must submit a written request, as well as a letter from the post-secondary institution or employer, verifying the need for higher scores.

20. How can I get extra copies of my marks or certificate?

Test records will be kept by the Department of Education. Duplicate statements of transcripts or certificates can be obtained for a fee. You must fill out a form outlining your request and send it to the GED Testing Service in Halifax. Please allow for **1 to 2 weeks** for the marks or certificate to be sent to you. For more information, please contact:

GED Testing Service
Skills and Learning Branch
Department of Education
2021 Brunswick Street
4th Floor, Trade Mart Building
P.O. Box 578
Halifax, NS B3J 2S9
Phone: (902) 424-3626
Fax: (902) 424-1171