

ADE Cohort Graduation Rates System (ACGRS)

Required Documentation & Technical Guidance



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General Information

The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) intends that schools and districts submit their actual graduates through SIS Cycle 9 (rpt405 - Graduate Student Listing). Data concerning actual graduates submitted in Cycle 9 will be available for review during the ADE Cohort Graduation Rate System (ACGRS) corrections window. Students not entered in the Cycle 9 report who may be part of a school or district cohort are also pulled into ACGRS to provide district and school leaders with an opportunity to remove eligible, on-time students from their cohort for calculating school and district level graduation rates.

Graduation rates serve as one indicator in the ESSA School Index for schools that include grade 12. Graduation rates are also calculated at the district and state level for reporting on the annual School Report Card. As eligible students are removed, graduation rates increase and accuracy of reporting is improved.

There are three options for making corrections in ACGRS. With proper documentation and DESE approval, students may be removed from the cohort, validated as actual graduates, or added to the cohort (requires prior approval).

ACGRS also provides options for data corrections concerning students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who are participating in the Alternate Pathway to Graduation. Data corrections concerning students on the Alternate Pathway include confirmation of a student's eligibility, holding, or re-entry status.

An student is *automatically removed* from the school cohort if the student:

- Transferred to another school within the state and was on-time with credits
- Enrolled in an Arkansas charter school and was on-time with credits

A student *will remain* in the graduation cohort if the student did not graduate and:

- Did not graduate in 4 years
- Repeated a grade (was not on-time with credits)
- Fell behind in credits
- Dropped out/was a "No-Show"
- Pursued a general equivalency diploma (GED)
- Entered prison or a juvenile corrections facility
- Was expelled
- Enrolled in Arkansas Youth Challenge, Job Corps, or Civilian Student Training Program

Important Terms

Term	Definition/Information
Adjusted Cohort	<p>The number of students who enter grade 9 for the first time, adjusted by adding into the cohort any student who transfers in later during grade 9 or during the next three years, and subtracting any on-time students from the cohort who transfer out, emigrate to another country, or die during that same period (USDE Graduation Rate Guidance Adjusted Cohort A-1).</p>
Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate	<p>The four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) is the number of students who complete Arkansas graduation requirements in four years, divided by the number of students in the adjusted cohort for the graduating class.</p> $\frac{\text{\# actual graduates in four years reported in cycle 9 graduates table}}{[(\text{\# initial cohort}) + (\text{\# on-time transfers in}) - (\text{\# of students who transfer out of the cohort})]}$
On-Time Student	<p>A student is on-time when they accumulate at least 5.5 credits per year for each year they have been enrolled in their cohort.</p> <p>A student is assigned to a cohort for a district based on the first year the student enters ninth grade and for a school depending on the school’s grade range configuration. (A 10-12 grade school will have students assigned to the cohort for the school in grade 10.)</p> <p>Schools should consider the number of credits obtained by the student and the Arkansas Graduation Requirements when enrolling students who are new to the district. If a student is from out of state, home school, or private school, the receiving district should evaluate the student to place them in the appropriate grade level.</p> <p>The Office of Public School Accountability recommends that districts consider the Arkansas Graduation Requirements and the following credit suggestions for grade classification by the end of each grade.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Grade 9: 5.5 credits ● Grade 10: 11 credits ● Grade 11: 16.5 credits ● Grade 12: 22 credits <p>If a student transfers into a school and is not on-time based on credits in the initial cohort at transfer in, the student is no longer on-time and is not added</p>

	<p>to the new school's cohort. The student is retained in the cohort of the school in which the student was last on-time as indicated by whether the student's grade level meets or exceeds the expected grade level as outlined above.</p>
<p>On-Time Student Determination</p>	<p>DESE conducts an internal review of SIS Cycle 2-7 data of all four or five years of the student's high school to determine which LEA to assign a student to. Upon review of the cycle reports, which contains data entered by the school and certified by the superintendent, the School Performance Unit is able to determine at which Arkansas school the student was last on-time.</p>
<p>On-Time Records Request</p>	<p>Documentation that the student was projected to graduate on-time at the time of transferring to another school.</p>

Remove Cohort Student Record

Objective: Remove a student record from the cohort because school personnel has evidence the student fits one of the listed criteria.

Documentation Required: Written (see table 1 for specific instructions)

Technical Guidance: The **Remove Cohort Student Record** option removes the eligible, on-time student (if approved) from the school or district’s numerator and denominator for purposes of calculating the adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR).

Table 1 Remove Cohort Student Record

Reason	Withdrawal Codes		Required Documentation for Removal
	eSchool	SIS	
Moved Out of State	014	18	On-Time records request from the receiving school or Screenshot of eSchool entry/withdrawal screen
Residential Facility in Another AR District	010	1	On-Time records request from the receiving school or Official Letterhead Documentation from a Doctor at the Treatment Facility
Private School Enrollment (In or Out of State)	013	16	On-Time records request from the receiving school
Emigrated to Another Country	014	18	Superintendent letter on Official Letterhead or F-1 Visa Documentation (Exchange Students)
Homeschool Enrollment	011	17	ADE Notice of Intent to Homeschool (that does not indicate pursuit of GED)
Deceased	030	03	Obituary or Death Notice or Letter from the parent

Validate Graduation Status

Objective: Validate the status of actual graduates and that of Alternate Pathway participants.

Documentation Required: Written (see tables 2, 3, and 4 for specific instructions)

Technical Guidance: The **Validate Graduation Status** option serves to accomplish multiple functions. With this feature, a non-graduate can be changed to an on-time actual graduate (if approved) and the status of Alternate Pathway to Graduation students can be validated or changed.

Validate Actual Graduate

Table 2 shows the documentation needed to validate the status as a graduate of students who graduated in 4 years, but are marked as non-graduates in ACGRS.

Table 2 Validate Graduation Status

Reason	Action	Required Documentation
Student graduated in 4 years, but is marked as a non-graduate.	Change No to Yes	Official transcript with graduation date .

Alternate Pathway to Graduation

Information concerning eligibility and proper coding in eSchool and SIS can be located in the [2024 Business Rules for Calculating ESSA School Index](#) starting on p. 36.

Eligibility and Holding

With proper documentation, a student who is Alternate Pathway to Graduation eligible and will be remaining in high school longer than 4 years can be removed from the cohort. Table 3 shows the documentation needed for this type of correction.

Table 3 Alternate Pathway to Graduation Documentation

Reason	Action	Required Documentation
Student is eligible for the Alternate Pathway and participated in DLM (alternate assessment) but was incorrectly coded in eSchool.	Change No to Yes	DLM score report for 9th & 10th grade

Student needs to be placed in holding to complete the Alternate Pathway	Change No to Yes	Official Transcript showing progress toward meeting requirements of the Alternate Pathway to Graduation AND a copy of 9th & 10th grade DLM scores or documentation of a recent health change that meets eligibility requirements.
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Entry into Current Year Adjusted Cohort

If not graduating in four years, Alternate Pathway to Graduation students must enter into the current year adjusted cohort for purposes of calculating graduation rate upon completion of the Alternate Pathway to Graduation, aging out due to FAPE, or exiting with no credentials. Table 4 shows the documentation required for adding Alternate Pathway Graduates to the cohort.

Table 4 Alternate Pathway to Graduation Adjusted Cohort

Reason	Action	Required Documentation
Student Completed the Alternate Pathway	Change No to Yes	Official Transcript showing the graduation date and that the requirements of the Alternate Pathway to Graduation were met AND a copy of 9th & 10th grade DLM scores or documentation of a recent health change that meets eligibility requirements.
Student exited the district with no credentials	Change No to Yes	No documentation required. Student will count in denominator only.
Student aged out due to FAPE	Change No to Yes	No documentation required. Student will count in denominator only.

Add Student Record

Objective: Add an actual graduate who did not appear in ACGRS.

Documentation Required: Written (see table 5 for specific instructions)

Technical Guidance: The **Add Student Record** option for students that are NOT pulled into ACGRS allows the school or district to request a student be added to the numerator and denominator for purposes of calculating the adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR). This option exists for including an on-time actual graduate into the adjusted cohort that was not included in the Cycle 9 graduates table. *These corrections require prior approval from DESE. Contact brooke.mccain@ade.arkansas.gov for instructions.*

Table 5 Add Student Record

Reason	Action	Required Documentation
Student Graduated but is not in ACGRS	<p>Contact</p> <p>brooke.mccain@ade.arkansas.gov</p> <p>In Subject Line</p> <p>ACGRS Add Student Record - Insert <i>School Name</i></p>	Official transcript with graduation date

APPENDIX

Appendix A - Cohorts

Students who entered 9th grade for the first time in 2020-2021 were expected to graduate 12th grade in the 2023-2024 school year.

Students who entered 9th grade for the first time in 2019-2020 were expected to graduate 12th grade in 2022-2023. If they did not graduate then but did graduate in 2023-2024, they are entered into the five-year cohort.

Four-Year Cohort	
2023-2024	Graduate
2022-2023	11th Grade
2021-2022	10th Grade
2020-2021	9th Grade

Five-Year Cohort	
2023-2024	Graduate
2022-2023	12th Grade
2021-2022	11th Grade
2020-2021	10th Grade
2019-2020	9th Grade

Appendix B - Special Corrections

A special correction request can be submitted to DESE if a student

- Has multiple State IDs
- Is in the wrong cohort
- Was assigned to the incorrect LEA

Reason	Required Documentation
Multiple State IDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide the IDs in the comment section of ACGRS and • Initial TRIAND record and • New or merged TRIAND record
Incorrect Cohort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official Transcript
Incorrect LEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official Transcript

Appendix C - High School Equivalency Exams

If a student passes the high school equivalency exam during their cohort, they can take the test scores to the school district to be evaluated for course equivalency. Districts can use these scores to develop a traditional graduation plan for the student. Students may need to take additional classes to qualify for graduation status within their district.

Appendix D - Definitions

Appendix E - Alternate Pathway

Removing a Student from Original Cohort and Placing Into Holding

Holding is the removal of students from the original adjusted cohort and reserving the student record for actual graduation date, the year the student exits with no credentials, or year the student ages out of Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

- Five years of source data (SIS cycle enrollment and SIS graduates table) are provided at the time of each cohort’s expected graduation year.
- Holding of students for those on the Alternate Pathway begins the year the student is expected to graduate with their original cohort. Holding the student out of the original cohort continues until the student graduates, reaches maximum age, exits with no credentials, or is no longer coded as on the Alternate Pathway.
- If a student is eligible to participate in the Alternate Pathway for graduation after adjusting the cohort, the student would be considered ‘in holding.’

Re-entry Into Adjusted Cohort for Graduation Rate

- When does a student enter the adjusted cohort for the grad rate?
 - The student's "Alternate Pathway" field stays marked as "Y" for all cycles of the student's original cohort (beyond the initial four years) until one of the following occurs:
 - The student graduates and is moved into the current year's graduation cohort.
 - The student ages out of FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education) and is placed in the current year's graduation cohort.
 - The student exits the program without earning any credentials, and is added to the current year's graduation cohort.
 - The student is identified as participating in the alternate pathway (Y) in a cycle report and later identified as not participating in the alternate pathway (N or Blank/Null).
 - Student is placed back into their original cohort; or, if after their original cohort, the four-year cohort graduating in the year of their exit.

Appendix F - Resources

Division of Elementary and Secondary Education ESSA Business Rules (2024): [Business Rules for Calculating the 2024 ESSA School Index Scores](#).

United States Department of Education (USDE) Graduation Rate Guidance (2017): [Every Student Succeeds Act High School Graduation Rate Non-Regulatory Guidance](#).

Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, School Performance Unit: [Graduation Rate](#)

2022-2023 Alternate Pathway to Graduation Business Rules: [2022-2023 Alternative Pathway to Graduation Business Rules](#)