

Veritas Prep Charter School Competency Determination (CD) Policy

Date: August 2025

This policy outlines the requirements and procedures by which Veritas Prep Charter School determines whether a student has met the state and school requirements for a Competency Determination (CD), in accordance with Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) regulations.

A Competency Determination signifies that a student has demonstrated mastery of a common core of skills, competencies, and knowledge aligned to the state curriculum frameworks, as measured through coursework and/or the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS).

These requirements are **in addition to** the standard graduation requirements listed in the Program of Study, available at:

www.veritasprepma.org/family-resources.

1. Coursework Requirements

To be eligible for a Competency Determination, students must successfully complete the following courses or approved equivalents (as determined by the Principal and approved by the CEO):

Graduation Year	How CD Is Earned	Coursework Requirements
Class of 2025 & 2026	Passing MCAS (regular or retest) in ELA, Math, and STE or DESE appeals process	English I, English II, Algebra I, Geometry, Biology or Physics, U.S. History or Modern U.S. History
Class of 2027 and Beyond	Earning a passing grade of 60% or higher in all required courses and meeting any state-mandated assessments	English I, English II, Algebra I, Geometry, Biology or Physics, U.S. History or Modern U.S. History

2. Measures of Mastery

For the class of 2025 and 2026, students may earn a Competency Determination by successfully passing the regular or retest administration of the MCAS (including the November 2024 retest) or through the DESE appeals process. Beginning with the class of 2027, students at Veritas Prep Charter School must demonstrate mastery and earn a Competency Determination by meeting the following criteria:

Earning a passing, credit earning grade of 60% or higher in the following grades and subjects or approved course equivalents as determined by the school principal and approved by the CEO.

- English I (9th grade) **and** English II (10th grade), and
- Algebra I **and** Geometry and,

- Biology or Physics and,
- U.S. History or Modern US History (Beginning in the class of 2027).

3. Considerations for Students with Disabilities and English Learners

Veritas Prep Charter School is committed to ensuring that all students, including those with disabilities and English learners, have equitable access to demonstrate competency. To achieve this, the school will provide appropriate accommodations, modifications, and alternative assessments tailored to meet the individual needs of these students. These supports will be implemented in full alignment with each student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Section 504 Plan, or English learner plan.

Accommodations may include, but are not limited to, extended time on assessments, provision of assessments in alternative formats (such as large print or audio), and the use of assistive technologies (e.g., speech-to-text software, screen readers) as prescribed in a student's IEP or 504 plan.

In cases where standard assessment measures are not suitable or accessible, Veritas Prep Charter School will offer alternate pathways or assessments designed to fairly evaluate the student's mastery of required competencies. These alternative assessments will be aligned with state and district standards and will be developed collaboratively by special education teachers, English learner teachers, and classroom teachers to ensure that they accurately reflect the student's abilities and learning progress.

4. Considerations for Late-Enrolling Students

Students entering Veritas Prep after the start of the high school program will have prior transcripts and assessment records reviewed by the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) or designee to determine:

- Which graduation and CD requirements have been met
- Which remaining courses must be completed at Veritas Prep
- Whether prior MCAS scores from other Massachusetts schools may be applied

5. Use of MCAS Scores for Competency Determination

Class of 2025 & 2026: Students who achieve a performance level of "Meeting Expectations" or "Exceeding Expectations" on the high school MCAS in ELA, Math, and STE will be awarded a CD. Students may also meet CD requirements via the DESE appeals process.

Class of 2027 and beyond: MCAS scores will only be used if required by state regulations; coursework mastery will be the primary determination method.

6. Appeals Process

Students or their families may appeal a decision to award or deny a Competency Determination. The appeal process is as follows:

- Submit a written appeal to the Chief Academic Officer within 10 days of the CD decision notification.
- Appeals will be reviewed by an appeals committee composed of the CAO, a school administrator and a teacher.
- The committee will provide a written decision within 30 days.
- Further appeals may be directed to the CEO.

7. Transcript Review Process

Current or former students may request a review of their transcript to reconsider eligibility for a Competency Determination. The process includes:

- Submit a transcript review request to the Chief Academic Officer.
- The request will be evaluated based on the student's coursework, assessments, and any additional evidence of competency.
- A determination will be communicated within 30 days.

Policy Review:

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Chief Academic Officer to ensure compliance with state regulations and responsiveness to student needs.

Effective Date:

Approved by:

Submission Templates

The submission templates below describe key planning steps districts should take and questions districts will answer in GEM\$ when submitting their CD policy and local graduation requirements to the Department.

Competency Determination Policy Submission Template

Section 1: Competency Determination Requirements
<p>In this section, you will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Explain how a student earns full credit and shows mastery in accordance with your district's grading policy.· Describe how a student meets the Competency Determination requirements for each content area: English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and U.S. History.
Submission Questions
<p>General:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Satisfactorily completing coursework shall mean a student earns full credit in accordance with the district's grading policy. Describe how a student earns full credit in accordance with the district's grading policy (e.g., course grade above a 70, course grade of meeting or exceeding expectations, etc.).· Showing mastery shall mean a student successfully completes in accordance with the district's grading policy: (1) the final assessment for a course; or (2) a capstone or portfolio project; or (3) an equivalent measure identified in the district's Competency Determination policy. Describe how a student shows mastery in accordance with the district's grading policy.
English Language Arts:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">· For English Language Arts, the student must: (i) satisfactorily complete coursework in the equivalent of two years of high school English language arts courses. List the local course offerings that your district will certify as meeting the Competency Determination coursework requirement in this content area.· Review the skills, competencies, and knowledge that a student must demonstrate mastery of as identified in the relevant Massachusetts curriculum frameworks. Describe how a student will show mastery in English Language Arts.

Mathematics:

- For mathematics, the student must: (i) satisfactorily complete coursework in the equivalent of one year of both Algebra I and Geometry; or (ii) satisfactorily complete coursework in the equivalent of one year of both Integrated Math I and Integrated Math II. List the local course offerings that your district will certify as meeting the Competency Determination coursework requirement in this content area.
- Review the skills, competencies, and knowledge that a student must demonstrate mastery of as identified in the relevant Massachusetts curriculum frameworks. Describe how a student will show mastery in mathematics.

Science:

- For science, the student must: (i) satisfactorily complete coursework in the equivalent of one year of Biology; or (ii) satisfactorily complete coursework in the equivalent of one year of Physics; or (iii) satisfactorily complete coursework in the equivalent of one year of Chemistry; or (iv) satisfactorily complete coursework in the equivalent of one year of a Technology/Engineering course. List the local course offerings that your district will certify as meeting the Competency Determination coursework requirement in this content area.
- Review the skills, competencies, and knowledge that a student must demonstrate mastery of as identified in the relevant Massachusetts curriculum frameworks. Describe how a student will show mastery in science.

U.S. History:

- Beginning with the graduating class of 2027, the student must satisfactorily complete coursework in the equivalent of a one-year U.S. History course. List the local course offerings that your district will certify as meeting the Competency Determination coursework requirement in this content area.
- Review the skills, competencies, and knowledge that a student must demonstrate mastery of as identified in the relevant Massachusetts curriculum frameworks. Describe how a student will show mastery in U.S. History (beginning with the graduating class of 2027).

Section 2: Additional Requirements

In this section, you will:

- List any other requirements of your Competency Determination policy in addition to those outlined in Section 1.

Submission Questions

In addition to the coursework and mastery requirements outlined in the previous section, please describe any other requirements of your district's Competency Determination policy (learning experiences, coursework, etc.).

Section 3: Additional Considerations

In this section, you will:

- Provide additional information on the implementation of your Competency Determination policy for specific student groups including students with disabilities, English learners, and late-enrolling students.

Submission Questions

Students with Disabilities: Describe how your district provides students with disabilities, including Massachusetts students receiving a publicly funded education in an out-of-district day or residential school, equal opportunity to meet the CD requirements, including any specialized supports, modifications, or alternative demonstration methods used as part of the policy.

English Learners:

- Describe how your district provides English learners equal opportunity to meet the CD requirements, including any specialized supports or considerations.
- If your district indicated in Section 1 that certain ESL courses meet the ELA coursework requirement of the CD, describe how you will determine which students this may apply to and how grade-appropriate ELA standards are integrated into the ESL courses that you certify as meeting the requirement.

Late-Enrolling Students: Describe how your district will evaluate eligibility for the Competency Determination among late-enrolling students, including the use of transcript reviews, course-taking opportunities, or in limited cases qualifying MCAS score-exception. In your response, explain how your policy ensures compliance with state requirements related to equivalent course length, relevant coursework, and demonstration of mastery.

Section 4: Appeals Process

In this section, you will:

- Explain your district's appeals process.

Submission Questions

Describe the process through which a student or parent/guardian may appeal to the district a district's determination that a student has or has not met the requirements of the Competency Determination. Include timelines, responsible personnel, and how decisions are communicated.

Section 5: Diploma Request Process for Previously Enrolled Students

In this section, you will:

- Explain your district's process for reviewing requests from previously enrolled students who may be eligible for a diploma

Submission Questions

Describe the process through which an eligible student (see eligibility requirements in Appendix B) in the classes of 2003 through 2024 who did not earn a diploma as a result of failing to meet the state's CD requirement has the opportunity to determine their current eligibility for a diploma pursuant to the district's CD requirements. Include timelines, responsible personnel, and how decisions are communicated.

Section 6: Certifications

In this section, you will:

- Complete several certifications regarding the approval and posting of your Competency Determination policy.

Submission Questions

Certify that the policy has been approved by the governing board of the district

Certify that the policy has been shared with all students, families/guardians, and district stakeholders

Certify that the policy has been made publicly available in multiple languages

Provide the URL where your policy is posted on your website

Local Graduation Requirements Submission Template

Section 1: Credit Requirements

In this section, you will:

- Define what credit means in your district
- Provide the number of credits required in your local graduation requirements

Submission Questions

What is the definition of a credit for the purposes of your local graduation requirements?
What is the total number of credits required as part of your local graduation requirements?
How many credits are required in each of the following content areas as part of your local graduation requirements? <ul style="list-style-type: none">· English Language Arts· Mathematics· Science· History and Social Science· World Language· Physical Education· Arts
If you require credit completion in courses other than those included above, please list them here.
Section 2: Additional Requirements
In this section, you will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Describe any other components of your local graduation requirements.
Submission Questions
Above and beyond the credit requirements outlined in the previous section, please describe any other components of your district's local graduation requirements (i.e., attendance, extracurriculars, community service, capstone project, etc.).