

Adult High School Diploma Program

Student Handbook



Gaston College . . . Opportunities for Life

VISION STATEMENT

Gaston College will be viewed as the premier post-secondary educational resource in the region, consistently recognized as an exceptional community college and known in the state and nation for successful and innovative programs.

MISSION STATEMENT

Gaston College is an open-door public community college, located in Gaston and Lincoln counties, that promotes student success and lifelong learning through high caliber, affordable, and comprehensive educational programs and services responding to economic and workforce development needs.

ACCREDITATION

Gaston College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award associate degrees. (SACS: 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097, 404-679-4501)

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Gaston College is committed to affirmative action and equal opportunity in employment and education, and does not discriminate against current or potential employees or students on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome.....	3
Addresses and Contacts.....	3
About the Program	3
Credit Requirements.....	4
Registration.....	5
Attendance.....	5
Withdrawal.....	6
Grading System.....	6
Transcripts/Enrollment Verification.....	7
Satisfactory Academic Progress.....	7
Behavior Requirements.....	7
Student Honesty.....	8
Credit by Exam.....	8
Testing.....	8
Graduation.....	9

Adult High School Diploma Program

Welcome

Welcome to the Adult High School Diploma Program. This handbook will assist you in meeting your education goals while enrolled in the Adult High School program at Gaston College. It is the student's responsibility to read and understand the information, policies, and procedures outlined in this guide. Our staff is dedicated to helping students earn their high school diploma by providing a supportive learning environment.

Addresses & Contacts

Dallas Campus:
Gaston College AHS
201 Hwy 321 South
Dallas, NC 28034

Lincoln Campus:
Gaston College AHS
511 South Aspen Street
Lincolnton, NC 28092

Title	Phone number	Email Address
Secretary	704-748-5205	propst.tonya@gaston.edu
Coordinator	704-748-5206	hissom.debra@gaston.edu
Assistant Coordinator	704-748-5215	beard.pamela@gaston.edu
Director, Life Skills	704-922-6352	mclain.rebecca@gaston.edu
Student Success Counselor	704-922-2268	graves.vicky@gaston.edu

About the Program

The Adult High School program offers a no cost, 100% online program for adults* wishing to complete their high school diploma. To qualify for the AHS program, a student must score 9th grade or above on an approved reading placement test. Upon successful completion of all requirements, as outlined by the NC Department of Public Instruction, a high school diploma will be issued by the Gaston/Lincoln County Boards of Education and the NC Department of Public Instruction through Gaston College**. After successful completion of the program, students are invited to participate in a cap and gown graduation ceremony.

*Minor students (ages 16 & 17) must be officially withdrawn from their previous school and submit minor paperwork as designated by Gaston College to qualify for Adult High School.

**Student must complete at least one credit in the Adult High School in order to receive a diploma from Gaston College.

Required Credits for Graduation

Credit requirements are determined by the NC Department of Public Instruction. The total number of credits required for graduation is 22 credits. Any credits earned in previously attended high schools will count toward total requirements upon receipt of an official transcript from schools previously attended. Students must meet all local and state requirements in addition to the 22 credits to be eligible for graduation.

Course Requirements

English	Credits 4 I, II, III, IV
Math	4 Credits Algebra I or NC Math 1 Geometry or NC Math 2 Algebra II or NC Math 3 1 Additional Math (determined by college/career plans)
Science	3 Credits Physical Science Biology Earth/Environmental Science
Social Studies	4 Credits US Government & Economics American History I American History II* World History
Health & PE	1 Credit
Electives	6 Credits***
Total	22 Credits**

*Beginning in 2021/2022 – students entering 9th grade are required by NCDPI to take Economics and Personal Finance rather than American History II.

**Minor students (ages 16 & 17) will be required to take additional elective courses if required by their local public-school system.

***Elective classes vary by semester

How to Register

New students must first complete a two-part AHS Student Success Class via Zoom to qualify for the Adult High School program. A reading placement test will be given at the first meeting. If the student scores on a 9th grade reading level or above, they will attend an orientation class. If students do not have a reading score of 9th grade or higher, they will be referred to a Reading Review class. Upon completion of the Reading Review class, students are eligible to retest for entry into Adult High School.

Prior to the test date, students must meet the following criteria:

- have access to a computer with Google Chrome downloaded
- test the computer using the link provided in the email from the AHS secretary

This is necessary to ensure the computer and computer software are compatible.

At the beginning of the test session, prior to beginning the test, students must provide 2 forms of identification – **one from each list**

1. State issued ID card, driver's licenses, school ID, passport, military ID
 - **Must be current – expired documents will not be accepted**
2. Social Security card, payroll check stub showing SS, tax return
 - **Students unable to provide two forms of identification are not eligible to test**

Students meeting the test requirements must attend an orientation (Student Success Class) to complete necessary paperwork and be introduced to the online software used in Adult High School.

Current students are required to have open communication with his or her instructor concerning class requirements and registration for classes.

- A student will not receive credit for any course for which registration has not been completed.
- It is the student's responsibility to communicate with the Adult High School coordinators and/or his or her instructor to ensure that he/she is enrolled in the correct courses to meeting graduation requirements.
- It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all course and graduation requirements are met.
- Classes cannot be carried over from one semester to the next.
- If a student stops attending class, they may be required to go back through the testing and orientation process before starting class again.

Class Attendance

The responsibility for class attendance is placed specifically on the student. Adult High School is 100% online but attendance is still required. The college requires students spend a minimum of 15 hours per week in each class. This is necessary to meet the target date for each class. Math classes allow 9 weeks for completion while all other classes have a target date of 7 weeks for 100% completion. Failure to work 15 hours per week can result in a class being disabled and the student having to start the class over.

Students must have attended a minimum of 30 (thirty) days and be in good standing in order to receive an enrollment verification or prom signature.

Withdrawal

A student who does not have active time in a class for a period of 10 days and does not communicate with the instructor will be withdrawn from the class. Student will receive a grade of "W" for the course on their transcript. If a student is withdrawn from all classes for two consecutive semesters, he/she may not be allowed to register for the following semester.

Grading System

A =	90 – 100
B =	80 – 89
C =	70 – 79
D =	60 – 69
F =	0 – 59
NS =	No Show
W =	Withdrawn

A final grade is an evaluation of the student's work and achievement throughout a course. Once a grade has been submitted, it will not be changed, except in the event of a clerical error or by successful student petition for appeal.

No Shows and Withdrawals will be recorded on official transcripts.

All petitions for grade changes must be filed in the AHS office within the semester after the grade was earned. Prior to petitioning for a grade change, a student should meet with the instructor for the course to discuss the grading process and try to resolve the conflict. If no satisfactory solution is found, then the student may petition to the Coordinator of the AHS program.

Important Grade Requirements

- Students must obtain a passing grade.
- Students must complete all requirements for the course.
- Students must pass the comprehensive final exam.
- Students must abide by the signed attendance contract.
- Students must work a minimum of 15 hours per week in each class.
- Students must remain actively engaged and demonstrate progress in the course during each class period.

Transcripts, Grade Reports, and Enrollment Verifications

Official and student copies of transcripts are available through the AHS office. Students must complete and sign an official *transcript request form* before grades will be released. Transcripts will not be faxed. Gaston College does not issue transcripts from other colleges or high schools. Any student needing a transcript from a school previously attended should contact that institution.

Proof of enrollment can also be obtained from the AHS office upon completion of an *enrollment verification request form*. Proof of enrollment will not be issued until a student has consistently attended at least one month of class.

There is a processing time of five business days required for all transcript & enrollment verification requests.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

Academic Alert/Suspension

Students should exhibit “satisfactory progress” in order to remain in good standing in the AHS program. Satisfactory progress is stated in terms of minimum grades; completion of course requirements; and the achievement of certain knowledge, skills, and abilities. If a student does not maintain satisfactory progress, classes will be disabled and the student will no longer have access to the program. The student will first be placed on academic alert, and notified in writing.

Behavior Requirements

Participation in the AHS program at Gaston College is a privilege for each student. By entering classes, students take upon themselves certain responsibilities and obligations, which include an honest attempt at academic performance and social media behavior consistent with the lawful purpose of the college.

- Students are expected to be actively engaged in coursework during class.
- Students must abide by the Gaston College Code of Conduct and all Gaston College/Life Skills policies and rules.

Student Honesty

Dishonesty, cheating, plagiarism, and knowingly furnishing false information to the college are regarded as serious offenses. Cases of dishonesty will first be considered at the departmental level; then the matter will follow procedures in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct. The software program used in Adult High School has an academic integrity feature that notifies the college if work has been plagiarized. This includes paraphrasing. Students must make sure the work they submit is their own work.

Credit by Exam

The content of the challenge test shall measure demonstrated mastery of course competencies. A minimum grade of 85% will be required to demonstrate mastery and receive a credit for the course. A student may not re-take a challenge test. *Challenge tests will only be given when there has been prior learning experience with the subject matter.* For example, a student who is withdrawn after successfully completing 75% of the course with passing grades may attempt a challenge test rather than repeating the course. Challenge testing applies to a limited number of core courses. A student may not challenge elective courses. Tests are given by appointment only and must be scheduled during the first two weeks of the class. A maximum of two credits may be earned through challenge testing. The AHS Coordinator will determine a student's eligibility for challenge testing.

Testing

Placement testing

Students will be given placement testing during the Student Success Class. These scores will be used to determine eligibility for the AHS program.

End of Course Exams

All students are required to pass a comprehensive final exam for each adult high school course in order to receive credit.

Petitioning for Graduation (required to graduate)

All potential graduates are required to complete and submit an "AHS Graduation Petition." Petitions will be emailed to potential graduates during the program year in which they are expected to graduate. At that time, the student will meet with the Basic Skills Student Success Counselor to discuss transitioning to future education and career pathways.

Students who do not complete and submit their petition by the deadline will not graduate, regardless of satisfactory completion of required credits.

A student must complete a course/earn a credit and petition for graduation during the same *program year. If all requirements are not met and/or the petition is not submitted, student may be required to take additional courses upon returning during the next *program year.

**a program year is defined as July 1st – June 30th*

Graduation Ceremony

All graduates will be given an opportunity to participate in a cap and gown graduation ceremony, (depending on COVID situation). The ceremony is held once per year for all graduates from the previous year.

Upon completion of the AHS program, all students will be given a “Petition for Graduation Ceremony Form”, which must be completed and returned to the Life Skills office. There is a small graduation fee to offset the cost of the cap and gown. The graduation fee must be paid to the Gaston College business office.