

North Dakota Scholarship Guidance

Introduction

The North Dakota Scholarship was created by Senate Bill 2289, which was passed by the 67th Legislative Assembly and Signed by Governor Doug Burgum in 2021. The North Dakota Scholarship replaced the Academic and CTE Scholarships following the 2023-2024 school year.

The purpose of the North Dakota Scholarship is to align the requirements of the state scholarship to North Dakota's strategic vision of graduating students Choice Ready. The requirements are written to ensure that every student who earns the scholarship will also graduate Choice Ready. However, not every student who is Choice Ready will qualify for the scholarship, as the scholarship requirements are more rigorous than the Choice Ready requirements.

Just like the current Academic and CTE Scholarship, the North Dakota Scholarship is payable at a rate of \$750 per semester, up to a maximum of \$6,000, and must be used within six years of the student graduating from high school. The student may only qualify for one scholarship (i.e., cannot get both Academic and CTE, North Dakota and Academic, etc.). The student must be a North Dakota resident at the time that he/she graduates from high school to be eligible for the North Dakota Scholarship.

There is a three-year overlap in which students may qualify for the scholarship using either the old (Academic/CTE Scholarship) or new (North Dakota Scholarship) set of requirements. This option will be allowed for the graduating class of 2024. Starting with the graduating class of 2025 and continuing thereafter, only the North Dakota Scholarship requirements described in this guidance will be used.

Summary of North Dakota Scholarship Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible to receive a North Dakota Scholarship, students must meet these requirements:

1. Earn a high school diploma
2. Complete Essential Skills Requirements *(described on page 2)*
 - a. Complete a nine-week career education course or individual counseling
 - b. Receive a score of 70% or above on the North Dakota Civics Test
 - c. Earn a 3.0 Overall GPA (non-weighted)
 - d. Complete a Four-Year Rolling Plan
 - e. Meet four of the eight additional Essential Skills indicators *(described on pages 3-5)*:
 - i. 25 hours of community service
 - ii. 95% attendance (not including school-related absences)
 - iii. Career Exploration Experience
 - iv. Two or more years of co-curricular activities
 - v. Two or more years of extra-curricular activities
 - vi. Capstone project
 - vii. Online learning course
 - viii. 21st Century skills
3. Complete the requirements of two of the three pathways below:
 - a. Post-Secondary Ready Pathway *(described on page 6)*
 - b. Workforce Ready Pathway *(described on pages 7-8)*

c. Military Ready Pathway *(described on page 9)*

Essential Skills

The Essential Skills section begins with the requirement of earning a high school diploma and meeting key requirements for all graduates as required in the North Dakota Century Code (NDCC). This section also outlines the minimum grade-point-average requirement for the North Dakota Scholarship, as well as the requirement for the four-year rolling plan. Please note that if a student does not meet the Essential Skills requirements of this section, they are not eligible to receive the North Dakota Scholarship.

- Complete a nine-week course on Exploring Career Decisions (Course Code 20005) or individual counseling with each student (NDCC 15.1-21-18) sometime during grades seven or eight for the purposes of:
 - Discussing the results of the student's career interest inventory
 - Selecting high school courses appropriate to their educational pursuits and career interests
 - Developing individual high school education plans
- Pass ND Civics Test (NDCC 15.1-21-27) with a score of 70% or higher
- Earn an overall (non-weighted) GPA of 3.0 or above
- Four-Year Rolling Plan
 - The Four-Year Rolling Plan outlines the various steps a student will take throughout their secondary school in preparation for life after graduation. It focuses on academics, college, career, military readiness, and more.
 - The plan begins when students are still in middle school and continues one grade at a time going through the first year after high school graduation.
 - The Four-Year Plan is intended to serve as a guide for students and parents to navigate high school and beyond. Use this guide to complete items that apply to you and visit with your school counselor or principal should you have any questions.
 - The rolling Four-Year Plan will allow students to plan four years into the future in terms of their educational career.
 - Each year, students will meet with a staff member from their school who is familiar with the North Dakota Scholarship requirements and best suited to discuss the student's needs to complete an updated plan, including plans for after high school.
 - The plan itself can be written in any format or template.
 - Here is a sample of what the [template](#) might look like.
 - RU Ready ND also has a tool that can be used for the Four-Year plan.

Students must then fulfill (anytime between grades nine and twelve) four or more from the following list of eight indicators:

- 25 Hours of Community Service
 - Community service can be any work that benefits others.
 - There are numerous ways to participate in community service depending on a student's skills and interests. General guidelines include:
 - Students may not get paid for community service hours.
 - Community service hours may not be conducted as part of normal household chores.
 - Community service hours may not be conducted as work that benefits a business owned by the student's family.
 - Students participating in fundraisers may only count those hours as community service if the fundraiser in no way benefits the student.
 - Examples of fundraisers that count: American Cancer Society, Brave the Shave, local community fundraiser to help a community member who is sick, etc.
 - Examples of fundraisers that DO NOT count: fundraisers to pay for a trip for a student organization that the student belongs to.
- 95% Attendance (not counting school-related absences)
 - Attendance rate is defined as the aggregate days of attendance in a school divided by the aggregate days of enrollment. Attendance data are collected through the state's pupil membership reporting system. The attendance rate is inclusive of grades nine through twelve and should reflect the official attendance as reported to parents on the student report card.
- Career Exploration Experience
 - Career exploration experiences are a wide variety of opportunities which are intended to build a foundation of essential skills students need as they pursue their chosen career. Career exploration experiences focus on providing career exploration opportunities. Career exploration experiences are not limited to but may include the following:
 - Industry presentations
 - Hands-on day
 - Guest speakers
 - Career fairs
 - Informational interviews
 - Industry tours
 - Career forums
 - Job shadows
 - Field trips
 - Work simulations

- Two or More Years in Organized Co-Curricular Activities
 - Co-curricular activities often complement learning experiences and typically take place during the school day. Examples of co-curricular activities include but are not limited to
 - FFA
 - FCCLA
 - DECA
 - Science Olympiad
 - Acalympics
 - Band
 - Choir
 - School newspaper
 - Yearbook
 - Student council
 - FBLA
 - Orchestra
 - Robotics
 - Spanish/German/French clubs

- Two or More Years in Organized Extra-Curricular Activities
 - Extra-curricular activities typically are not connected to academic learning and take place outside of the school day. These activities may or may not be associated with the school. Examples of extra-curricular activities include all North Dakota High School Activities Association sponsored activities, as well as:
 - Drama
 - Debate
 - STEM/Science Engineering Clubs
 - Athletics
 - Peer Tutoring
 - Spelling/History Bee
 - Archery
 - Boy/Girl Scouts
 - Web Design/Computer Clubs Speech
 - Dance/Drill Teams
 - Church Youth Groups
 - Fine Arts
 - Sports United (formally Special Olympics)

- Successfully Complete a Capstone Project
 - The Glossary of Education Reform defines a capstone project as a multifaceted assignment that serves as a culminating academic and intellectual experience for students, typically during their final year of high school, or at the end of an academic program or learning-pathway experience.
 - The Glossary of Education Reform further states that capstone projects are generally designed to encourage students to think critically, solve challenging problems, and develop skills such as oral communication, public speaking, research skills, media literacy, teamwork, planning, self-sufficiency, or goal setting (i.e., skills that will help prepare them for college, modern careers, and adult life).

- A capstone project may include (but is not limited to) the completion of any of the following courses:
 - Supervised Agricultural Experience (01995)
 - Capstone- Business Education (14950)
 - Individual Family and Consumer Sciences Studies (09140)
 - Capstone- Health Sciences (07950)
 - Capstone- Information Technology Education (27950)
 - Capstone- Marketing Education (04950)
 - Capstone- Technology and Engineering Education (10950)
 - Trade and Industry Capstone (17950).

- Successfully Complete an Online Learning Course
 - Students may take any online course of their choice to use this element as one of their four choices.

- Demonstrate Competency in 21st Century Skills
 - The four C's of 21st Century learning include critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity.
 - Demonstrating competency in 21st Century Skills is one of eight indicators students can select to meet the essential skills requirement of the North Dakota Scholarship.
 - There are multiple ways districts can demonstrate student competency in 21st Century Skills.
 - Some districts are working with an outside vendor to implement the four C's throughout their teaching and learning.
 - The National Education Association (NEA) has an excellent guide on the four C's and preparing students for the 21st Century which can be accessed on their website.

North Dakota Scholarship Pathways

Post-Secondary Ready

Workforce Ready

Military Ready

In addition to completing the requirements of the Essential Skills section described above, students must complete the requirements for two of the three pathways (Post-Secondary Ready, Workforce Ready, and Military Ready) described below to be eligible to receive a North Dakota Scholarship.

Post-Secondary Ready Pathway

To fulfill the requirements of the Post-Secondary Ready Pathway, students must complete the following:

1. Earn an ACT composite score of 24 or above, or an SAT composite score of 1180 or above
2. Complete any two of these indicators:
 - a. Grade of “C” or above (or an equivalent proficiency score) in an Advanced Placement (AP) course.
 - i. An AP course is a high school course with curriculum approved by the College Board and taught by a high school teacher who receives specific AP professional development.
 - ii. The course must appear on the high school transcript.
 - b. Grade of “C” or above (or an equivalent proficiency score) in a dual credit English or math course.
 - i. An Early Entry/Dual Credit course is a college course with college curriculum taught by a high school or college instructor who meets the qualifications to teach for the college offering the course.
 - ii. In all cases, college credit is awarded upon successful completion of the course and is recorded on the college transcript.
 - iii. The high school determines whether the Early Entry/Dual Credit college course fulfills high school requirements in consultation with the student and, if so, is recorded on the high school transcript.
 - c. Grade of “C” or above (or an equivalent proficiency score) in Algebra II.
 - d. Grade of “C” or above (or equivalent proficiency score) in three [fine arts courses](#)
 - i. Art
 - ii. Music
 - iii. Theater Arts
 - e. Score of three or above on an Advanced Placement exam.
 - i. AP exams are given each year in May.
 - ii. It is important to note that AP exams may be taken without enrolling in an AP course.
 - f. Score of four or above on an International Baccalaureate exam.
 - g. 3.0 non-weighted GPA (or an equivalent proficiency score) in core courses required for North Dakota University System (NDUS) admission.
 - College preparatory core course completion requirements for NDUS research university admission:
 - Four units English
 - Three units Math (Algebra I or above)
 - Three units Lab Science
 - Three units Social Science

Workforce Ready Pathway

To fulfill the requirements of the Workforce Ready Pathway, students must complete the following:

1. Complete one of the following:
 - a. Earn four credits of Career and Technical Education (CTE) coursework, with two of those credits being in the same [CTE Coordinated Plan of Study](#)
 - i. CTE courses are offered through the local high school and are endorsed by the North Dakota Department of Career and Technical Education.
 - ii. Content areas and course descriptions for CTE Courses include:
 1. Agricultural Education
 2. Business Education
 3. Family and Consumer Science Education
 4. Health Sciences Education
 5. Information Technology Education
 6. Marketing Education
 7. Technology and Engineering Education
 8. Trade, Industry and Technical Education
 - b. Earn three credits of the same world language, indigenous language, or sign language
2. Complete one of the following testing requirements:
 - a. ACT composite score of 24 or above
 - b. Score of 5 or above on each of the three required WorkKeys exams (Applied Math, Graphic Literacy, Workplace Documents)
 - c. SAT composite score of 1180 or above
3. Complete any two of these indicators:
 - a. Career Ready Practices course, as developed by the North Dakota Department of Career and Technical Education. There are a couple of methods that schools can use to help students meet this indicator. One option is that the student can complete a course in Career Management, course code 20060. This course can be taught by any licensed teacher or career advisor. The course must contain a hands-on unit teaching and applying the [Career Ready Practices Standards](#). A second option is for the student to take any course that is taught by a Career and Technical Education instructor who has been trained to integrate and evaluate Career Ready Practices. In any event, the Career Ready Practices must be documented in PowerSchool for a student to satisfactorily meet this indicator. Please see the Career Ready Practices Course Guidance or the [CTE Career Ready Practices website](#) for more information.
 - b. Grade of "C" or above (or an equivalent proficiency score) in any dual credit course (cannot be the exact same course used to meet the dual credit indicator in the Post-Secondary Ready Pathway).
 - c. Technical Assessment or Industry Credential.
 - i. Technical skill assessments are aligned with industry-recognized standards to measure technical achievement.
 - ii. Earning an industry credential allows students to learn about a particular skill set or job and demonstrate mastery of skills. CTE programs that lead to industry-recognized credentials can help students find skilled positions and give them the option of later returning to school for a higher degree.
 - iii. A complete list of approved industry credentials is available from the North Dakota Department of Career and Technical Education. The student must complete requirements for and receive a credential to fulfil this indicator.

- d. Workplace Learning Experience (40 Hours)
 - i. Workplace learning provides extended learning opportunities by connecting students with real-life work experiences where they can apply academic and technical skills and develop employability skills.
 - ii. Workplace learning experiences focus on providing skill application with the outcome of creating a skilled pool of future employees.
 - iii. Workplace learning experiences are not limited to, but may include the following:
 - 1. Career Seminar course (20076)
 - 2. Internships
 - 3. Apprenticeships
 - 4. CTE Classroom Activities
 - 5. Part-time or summer employment
- e. Work-Based Learning Experience, as defined by Perkins V (40 hours)
 - i. The term, “work-based learning” means (for the purposes of Perkins V funding):
 - 1. Sustained interactions with industry or community professionals in real workplace settings, to the extent practicable; -OR-
 - 2. Simulated environments at an educational institution that foster in-depth, firsthand engagement with the tasks required in a given career field, that are aligned to curriculum and instruction.
 - ii. For practical application and data collection, this means that hours can be accumulated by the student throughout his/her enrollment in a program of study in one of two ways:
 - 1. Sustained interaction (e.g., Cooperative Work Experiences) should strive for a minimum of 40 hours of one supervised experience on the worksite. Although the student may spend more than 40 hours on the worksite, 40 hours should be the minimum.
 - 2. Simulated environments in an educational setting (which means any CTE-funded course) should strive for a minimum of 40 hours throughout a series of in-class projects/lab work, with each project/lab taking no less than one week or five successive hours of class time to complete. The entire series of projects/labs should have a goal of equaling 40 hours or more during enrollment in the program.
 - iii. As simulated environments can need clearer definition at times, the following list is provided for ideas as to allowable projects/labs. These projects/labs may include, but are not limited to the following:
 - 1. Agriscience Research
 - 2. Concept-Design-Final Product for 3-D Printing
 - 3. Business Plan Development
 - 4. CNC Machining; Laser Engraving
 - 5. Business Simulation; Stock-Market Simulation
 - 6. SAE Projects
 - 7. School Store/School-Based Business
 - 8. Recycle, Redesign Projects
 - 9. Occupational Building Trades, Auto Technology, Welding Technology
 - 10. Food Truck Business Model
 - 11. Children’s Sleep Deprivation Research

12. CTSO Projects

- f. Complete one of the following state assessment testing requirements:
 - i. North Dakota State Assessment score of 3 or higher in both Reading and Math
 - ii. If (and only if) the school is using ACT for state assessment testing accountability,
 - 1. Receive a score of
 - a. 19 or higher on the English portion of the ACT, and
 - b. 22 or higher on the Math portion of the ACT
 - 2. If using an ACT score to meet this requirement, the test must take place on the day the school is administering the ACT for its school accountability.

Military Ready Pathway

To fulfill the requirements of the Military Ready Pathway, students must complete the following:

- 1. Earn an ASVAB score of 50 or higher (unless the student successfully completes basic training within 90 days of graduating from high school, in which circumstance an ASVAB score of 31 will meet this indicator).
- 2. Earn a grade of “C” or above (or an equivalent proficiency score) in a physical education course.
- 3. Complete one of the following:
 - a. Two additional indicators from the Post-secondary Ready or Workforce Ready options.
 - b. Earn 2 credits of [Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps](#) (JROTC)
 - c. Phase one of the Cadet Civil Air Patrol program

Procedures for Schools Submitting Information for North Dakota Scholarship Purposes

Non-academic indicators will be pulled directly from the Choice Ready Report, so having the Choice Ready Report up-to-date and submitted on time will be extremely important. eTranscript has a progress monitoring tool to track progress toward meeting the indicators of the North Dakota Scholarship. We will keep the field updated on these procedures.

Contact Information

Please contact Jim Upgren with the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction at (701) 328-2244 or jimupgren@nd.gov with questions related to the North Dakota Scholarship.