

THE PATH TO YOUR HSED: HIGH SCHOOL

Provider Version

At a Glance



• WHAT IT IS

Academically preparing to take a series of exams (Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies) | Receive a high school diploma equivalent | The exams are GED and HiSET, and may be available in Spanish



• IDEAL FIT

Comfortable with 9th grade academics and learning environments | Has basic computer skills | Active communicator and organized, especially with time management | Knows why they want it



• ELIGIBILITY

Age 18, not graduated from a US high school (may allow ages 16 + 17) with a government-issued ID | May require state residency but not US citizenship | Read and write in a language that the test is offered in but English proficiency is not required



• YOU END UP WITH

An academic degree that is recognized throughout the United States and in most other countries | Able to enroll in college and certified training programs | Able to earn a higher salary



• MOBILITY/TIME

Between 6-24 months to complete exams | Need 4-10 hours a week available to study | State specific if scores can transfer from one state to another | Limited international testing sites



• THE REALITIES

A lot of time is spent studying and preparing to take exams | Most people retake at least one exam, especially at the beginning | There is a cost to the exams (state specific) | Many free test preparation resources available

Student Profile



Marisol arrived in Massachusetts and enrolled in high school. In April she and her aunt moved to Delaware to work an asparagus harvest. They returned to MA in mid-July and Marisol began working on a tobacco farm through the harvest. She tried to reenroll in school in October but was told she could not since she was 18 and lacked enough credits. The MMEP assessed that Marisol was academically ready to take the HSET exam, but Marisol was hesitant and felt she was not smart enough. With counseling and support, Marisol enrolled in a small MMEP class for pre-HSED, focused on academics and goal setting. Marisol was then ready to enroll in the local HEP program. During that year and a half, she studied and passed the five HSET exams and was awarded her HSED.

Skills Guide

Recognize when you do not understand something but know what to ask for help with and who to ask

Persevere even when something is hard and you might not be successful at first

Remember the reason why you are doing this - and the long-term benefits

Reading comprehension - Including strong vocabulary, asking questions, using context clues, identifying the main idea and supporting information, being able to summarize what you read

Math - Basic math; algebra and geometry; strong understanding of the relationships between fractions, decimals, and percentages; graphs; word problem solving

Science and Social Studies - Texts and interpretation; compare and evaluate data; charts and graphs, including timelines

Writing - Persuasive essay with multiple paragraphs that cites evidence from a provided text; construct sentences correctly and use proper spelling and grammar

How to Assess a Good Fit

Academic Level

There are many ways to assess a student's levels in key areas of math and reading. One way for any student who has attended school in the US is to ask them what their last classes completed were. Another is to give them one of the sample or placement tests that are available in most HSED prep books. If you only have time for one test, use the science placement test as it combines reading, comprehension, math, and data interpretation. Creating partnerships with HSED programs offering placement tests is a more formal way to assess as well.

Ganas/Why

Ganas, or the reason why, is just as important to know as someone's academic level. Students with the motivation to achieve their goal are more likely to follow through when challenges arrive. We call this the student's personal why. A student may be able to clearly tell you their personal why or may need help to verbalize it, but this is key to being successful in the sometimes difficult process of obtaining a HSED. You can measure a student's motivation by asking them to respond to you (instead of having to follow after them to do something), meet deadlines, and even do research. Have students write a short bio and explain why obtaining their HSED is important to them, and how it will affect their future. Goal setting materials from iSOSY can help develop and foster a student's motivation, as well as develop visuals and reminders of why they are pursuing their HSED.

Current Living/Working Situation

This is not a short-term activity! A student who is highly mobile is not a hard no, but they must be driven and independent. The student needs to be responsible in communicating when/where they are moving, especially as some exams are state-specific. Having the appropriate amount of time to study is also a key factor. The student should think realistically about how much time they have each week for uninterrupted study. Lastly is the environment where they are living. Noise, time, and sleep all affect a student's ability to study well. Students must also balance work, studying, and a social life, deciding how to prioritize within that.

Reasons to Do It



Gain high school credential necessary to enroll in college studies, certification programs, or when seeking employment



Realize a sense of meaning and purpose; productive activity to balance the many challenges of migratory work and life



Earn a credential recognized by most Latin American countries as equivalent to 12 years of formal schooling



Build computer and study skills to be well-prepared for college and career training programs

Goal Statement Examples

Short-Term Goals (within a month)

- ***Receives study materials for exam***
- ***Creates a study plan with deadlines***
- ***Registers for an English class***
- ***Completes a practice test and identifies areas to work on***
- ***Registers for a test prep program***
- ***Reads a book***

Mid-Term Goals (3-6 months)

- ***Completes half or all of the study plan***
- ***Takes and passes half of the exams for HSED***
- ***Begins an English class***
- ***Registers for an exam***

Long-Term Goals (1+ year)

- ***Has a college education***
- ***Earns a salary with benefits***
- ***Is a supervisor***
- ***Owens own business and is own boss***
- ***Speaks English with fluency***

Student Profile



Jorge moved to Vermont from Mexico and was working as a milker. In Mexico he had only one year left in preparatoria and wanted to finish but he had to earn money for his family. In VT, he enrolled in MEP and in English classes. VMEP recognized his academic history and felt he would be a good candidate for HSED but Jorge's priority was working and his schedule made it impossible to attend a structured prep program. Jorge was referred to the local HEP coordinator, who helped develop a realistic plan for him to study and obtain his HSED. HEP provided a study book and access to a tutor. VMEP and HEP staff worked together to support Jorge with technology, transportation, and motivation. His hard work and collaboration paid off. Jorge received his HSED and enrolled in an online accounting program.

Project Ideas and Established Programs/Partners

MEP Book Club (focus on reading comprehension)

Reading comprehension (being able to read, process what you read, understand it, and talk about what you are reading) is one of the key skills to be able to successfully complete the HSED exams. One way to work on this is to add a MEP Book Club to programming. This can be part of an English class or on its own. The books can be in the student's native language as these skills are not English-specific. The most important thing is that students are reading, talking about what they read, and then connecting what they read with other areas in their lives or what they have read in the past.

HSED Prep Classes/Tutoring

Provide small group or one-on-one tutoring for students who are studying for the HSED exams. For those who may struggle to find an appropriate instructor, there are many online academic programs available as well. Remember, the programming may not have to be academic, it can be weekly check-ins, helping the student stay on a study schedule, addressing barriers, providing a quiet study space, and helping the student be accountable.

Connect with Your Local HEP and/or Adult Education Center

Create a network with the local Adult Education Centers in your area and develop or strengthen your relationships with HEP program(s) in your area. HEP is not limited by the state in which they are located, so you can also connect with the HEP where the student may travel. MEP students are eligible to enroll in HEP up to 24 months after MEP eligibility ends, meaning that if a student is not ready right away, they have a longer window of time to enroll.

Student Profile



Since a young age, Joel has traveled with his parents between Florida and North Carolina to follow the tomato harvest, transferring between schools during the year. In high school, the transfers resulted in Joel falling behind in credit accrual. Joel also works to help support his family so he decided that pursuing a HSED would be the best option for him. The NCMEP quickly assessed Joel's academic ability for completing a HSED diploma and provided a tutor to help him prepare for the exams. Joel worked with his tutor several times a week after work, and he continued to study in FL during the winter harvest. Joel returned to NC in the summer and was able to complete the exams and receive his HSED.