

THE PATH TO YOUR HSED

Short Term

At a Glance



WHAT IT IS

High School Equivalency Degree (HSED) is an alternative to having a high school diploma | You have to pass a series of exams (Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies) and you get your high school diploma equivalent when you pass them all | There are two types of exams - the GED and HiSET - and both can be taken in Spanish



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 | Best for someone who has completed at least one year of high school (either in the US or another country) | 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 (MA) and enrolled in high school. She and her aunt moved to Delaware to work an asparagus harvest. They returned to MA in mid-July and Marisol worked on a tobacco farm. She tried to reenroll in high school in October but was not able to because she was 18 and lacked credits.

The MEP assessed that Marisol was academically ready to take the HSED exam, but Marisol was not sure and thought she was not smart enough. With counseling and support, Marisol enrolled in a MEP prep class that focused on academics and goal setting. Marisol was then ready to enroll in the local HSED program. During that year and a half, she studied and passed the five HiSET 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, identifying the main idea and supporting information, being able to summarize what you read and answer questions based on what you read

Math - Basic math; algebra and geometry; 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

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

Student Profile



Jorge moved to Vermont (VT) from Mexico and found work as a milker. In Mexico he had only one year left in preparatoria but had to leave to earn money for his family. In VT, he enrolled in MEP and joined their 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 local 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.

Ways to Start

Read



Reading comprehension (being able to read different types of text, understand what you read, and talk about what you are reading) is one of the key skills to be able to successfully complete the HSED exams. It doesn't matter what you are reading or what language you read in. The most important thing is that you are reading a lot, talking about what you read, and then connecting what you read with other areas in your life including comparing it what you have read in the past.



HSED Prep Classes

Attending a preparation class will help you see where your strengths are and where you need to study more. There are in person, remote, and self-study online academic programs available. Classes are not just for academics, but also can help be weekly check-ins, helping you stay on track, help address barriers, provide a quiet study space, and help you be accountable.



Set Goals

HSED is a big project and sometimes can feel like it is TOO MUCH. Remembering the reasons you are doing this and then breaking the to-do list into smaller tasks can help. This is goal setting and something that the MEP can help you with.



Connect with someone who will help

Sometimes it is not the academics that you need help on but needing someone to check in with and make sure you are studying and keeping on track! There are also always things that can happen in our lives that can be a roadblock to us progressing. Having someone to help address those roadblocks is super helpful!

Student Profile



Joel has traveled with his family between Florida and North Carolina every year as farmworkers. Joel has been changing schools during the year. Joel fell behind in credit accrual in high school because of how many times he moved. Joel also works to help support his family so he decided that pursuing a HSED would be the best option for him. The North Carolina (NC) MEP quickly was able to see that Joel was academically ready to test for his HSED diploma and provided a tutor to help him prepare for the exams. Joel worked with his tutor several times a week after work while he was in NC and continued to study in Florida during the winter harvest. Joel returned to NC in the summer and was able to complete the exams and receive his HSED.