

## BACKGROUND: OREGON'S COMMITMENT TO CIVICS EDUCATION

In adopting a new civics diploma requirement ([SB 513](#)) in 2021, the Oregon Legislature recognized that “well-designed civics education programs foster an understanding and appreciation of democracy and the skills for participation in a democratic society[.]” Distinct from general social science coursework or social science programs, “civics education programs” focus specifically on the adopted civics standards.

Section (2) of [OAR 581-022-2000](#) Diploma Requirements outlines the credit requirements for students first enrolled in grade 9 before the 2022-23 school year (see OAR text below); the requirements include a collection of social science domains that must be part of the three total social science credits required for an Oregon diploma: history, civics, geography and economics (including personal finance). In practice, school districts offer credits in the five named social science domains in several ways. Most often, one credit of United States History, one credit of world history (including the geography standards), a half credit of economics/personal finance, and a half credit of civics. Other variations might attempt to blend civics with economics standards or integrate civic standards with United States History standards.

## REQUIREMENT FOR CIVICS AS A STAND-ALONE COURSE

New requirements outlined in Section (3) of the rule apply to students first enrolled in grade 9 beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, typically referred to as the class of 2026, and all subsequent graduating classes. To ensure consistency and adequate coverage of the civic standards, the amendment requires .5 credit of civics education as a component of the 24 total credits needed to earn an Oregon diploma. Students must fulfill these requirements before school district boards or public charter schools can award a diploma. The most significant clarifications for the 3.0 credits of required social science include:

- A .5 credit U.S. civics requirement.
- The specific use of “U.S. civics” to ensure a focus on domestic civics and government.
- The identification of U.S. and World History as a component of the 2.5 credits for social science, in addition to geography, economics, and financial literacy.
- A reminder that credits need to align with Oregon State Board-adopted standards.

**Blending or integrating civics standards within other social science courses does not meet the requirements of the statute or rule.** Beginning with the graduating class in 2026, compliance with OAR 581-022-2000 requires student transcripts to indicate at least .5 credits in a stand-alone civics course.

For questions, please contact Social Science Specialist [Amit Kobrowski](#).

# Division 22 Standards: Civics Requirements for Secondary Schools

## Class of 2014-2025 OAR 581-022-2000 Diploma Requirements

(2) Unit of Credit Requirements for students who were first enrolled in grade 9 during the 2010–2011 school year:

(a) Each student shall earn a minimum of 24 units of credit to include at least:

(A) English Language Arts - 4 (shall include the equivalent of one unit in Written Composition);

(B) Mathematics -3 (shall include one unit at the Algebra I level and two units that are at a level higher than Algebra I);

(C) Science — 3;

(D) Social Sciences 3 — (including history, civics, geography and economics (including personal finance));

(E) Health Education — 1;

(F) Physical Education — 1;

(G) Career and Technical Education, The Arts or World Languages — 3 (units shall be earned in any one or a combination).

(b) A district school board or public charter school with a three-year high school may submit through the waiver process alternative plans to meet unit requirements;

(c) A district school board or public charter school may increase the number of units required in specific areas, and may increase or decrease the number of elective units; however, the total units of credit required for graduation shall not be less than 24;

## Class of 2026 OAR 581-022-2000 New Diploma Requirements Highlighted

3) Unit of Credit Requirements for students who were first enrolled in grade 9 during the 2022-2023 school year or first enrolled in grade 9 in any subsequent year:

(a) Each student shall earn a minimum of 24 units of credit aligned to the Oregon State Board adopted standards to include:

(A) English Language Arts — 4 (shall include the equivalent of one unit in Written Composition);

(B) Mathematics —3 (shall include one unit at the Algebra I level and two units that are at a level higher than Algebra I);

(C) Science — 3;

(D) Social Sciences 3 — (shall include 0.5 unit of US civics credit in addition to at least 2.5 units of credit aligned to the Oregon State Board adopted standards for U.S. history, world history, geography, economics, and financial literacy);

(E) Health Education — 1;

(F) Physical Education — 1;

(G) Career and Technical Education, The Arts or World Languages — 3 (units shall be earned in any one or a combination).

(b) A district school board or public charter school with a three-year high school may submit through the waiver process alternative plans to meet unit requirements;

(c) A district school board or public charter school may increase the number of units required in specific areas, and may increase or decrease the number of elective units; however, the total units of credit required for graduation shall not be less than 24;