

Laurens County Adult Education Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How long will it take me to earn my GED®?

A: There is no way to predict a time frame for you. Everyone has different abilities and levels of knowledge. Your time frame may range from months to years. The length of time depends on your commitment to finishing your GED® – attending class regularly, completing all assignments, asking questions in class, etc.

Q: How much does it cost to take the GED®?

A: There are four tests: Reasoning through Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Each test costs \$37.50, so the total cost is \$150.

Q: What if I cannot afford the cost of the tests? Is there scholarship money available?

A: Yes, if you enroll in our program and meet our requirements, you can earn scholarships to pay for your tests.

Q: What scores do I have to make to pass the GED®?

A. Each test is scored between 100 and 200. You must score at least 145 on each of the four tests to earn your GED®.

Q: Do I have to enroll in class to take the GED® in South Carolina?

A: No, but you certainly increase your chances of passing all four tests if you participate in classes. We believe \$150 is a lot of money to gamble on passing four tests for which you have not prepared.

Q: How much does it cost to enroll in your program?

A: We do not charge a registration fee at this time. We do ask, however, that you bring three (3) canned goods for us to collect and donate to a local food bank.

Q: How old do I have to be to take the GED®?

A: You must be at least 17. If you are 17 or 18, you will first have to submit an official Verification of Withdrawal Form. You can download and print this form at

<http://www.gedtestingservice.com/uploads/files/1ddcb4ec36e1b6f0301a9fcf0ac66225.pdf> . If you are enrolled in our program, we will assist you in getting the signatures you need to submit this form.

Q: How will I know if I am ready to take the GED®? Are there practice tests I can take?

A: Your teachers will keep track of your progress and will request practice tests for you when they see you appear to be ready. If you enroll in our program, we will pay for some of your practice tests. If you choose not to enroll, you will have to set up your own account at <https://ged.com>. Each practice test costs \$6.00.

Q: How do I sign up to take the GED®, and where can I take it?

A: If you are enrolled in our program, we will assist you with scheduling your tests. (If you are not enrolled, you will need to schedule yourself online at <https://ged.com>. You will need to pay with your credit card.) You can test at any authorized Pearson VUE® test center in the state. We have an authorized Pearson VUE® test center at the Higher Education Center in Clinton. Our tentative test dates are listed on monthly calendars on our web page, www.laurenscountyadulthood.org. Tests are generally offered at least two Fridays per month.

Q: Do I have to take the GED® on a computer, or can I take it using paper and pencil?

A: In South Carolina, the GED® is a computer-based test. We have not given paper-and-pencil tests at our test site in Clinton since 2012. The only sites that still give paper-and-pencil tests are the state prisons, and those sites are gradually changing to computer-based testing.

Q: I had an IEP when I was in high school. Are there accommodations for the GED® tests?

A. Yes, there are some accommodations available. You may have had accommodations in high school that are not allowed on the GED® tests because they do not apply (ex: using a highlighter or a colored overlay). Accommodations are not automatically approved. If you are under the age of 21 and you are enrolled in our program, we have someone to help coordinate IEPs and requests for accommodations. There is a lot of paperwork that has to be processed before you can request accommodations. The approval process may take four to six weeks once the paperwork is submitted.

Q. I passed some of the GED® tests several years ago. Can I use those scores and just take the test(s) that I did not pass?

A. The tests changed in 2014. Scores prior to January 1, 2014 are no longer valid. You will have to start over and take all four tests.

Q: I do not have a computer at home, and I have never used one. Will that be a problem for me?

A: Not really. You will spend some of your instructional time on a computer in one of our labs, so you will become comfortable using a computer before you take a test.

Q: Can I take one test at a time, or do I have to take all four tests on the same day?

A: Not only can you take one test at a time, but we think that's a great idea. We believe it is best for you to concentrate on one subject at a time, take the test and pass it, and then move on to a different subject. Start with your strongest subject.

Q: I work a swing shift (sometimes 12-hour days). I can't come to class every day. Does that mean I can't enroll?

A. We will work with you around your work schedule. We offer morning and evening classes at the Higher Education Center, so you can switch between morning and evening classes if you need to do so as long as we have room in the classroom for you. Also, you can earn distance learning hours working on a web-based program called CareerReady 101, as long as you do the work outside of the time the class to which you are assigned is meeting. For example, if you enroll in a morning class, you can earn distance hours for working online before 8:30 AM and after 12:30 PM. If you enroll in the evening class, you can earn distance hours for working online before 5:00 PM and after 8:00 PM. All hours on Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and holidays can count as distance learning hours for you.

Q: Can't I just get my GED® online? I heard that I could get my GED® just by taking online classes.

A: Buyer beware! In order to earn a GED® in South Carolina, you MUST test at an authorized Pearson VUE® test center. The SC Department of Education issues the GED® diplomas, just as they issue all state high school diplomas. At the beginning of every semester, we have students who try to enroll at Piedmont Tech with an "online GED®" who are told that their certificates are not valid, so they enroll with us. They are never happy to learn that they wasted their time and money on a fake GED®. If you have a GED® diploma that was not issued by the South Carolina Department of Education (or another US state's Department of Education), then your diploma is a fake.

We do have an online preparation class through a web-based program called GED® Academy, but you still must come to one of our sites for your pre-test, orientation, post-test, GED-Ready® tests, and GED® tests. The online class is for students who are unable to attend class due to work schedules, health issues, lack of dependable transportation, etc. Students must be able to benefit from working online instead of directly with a teacher.

Q: I want to come to class, but I have a small child and no one to babysit. Can you help?

A: Possibly! We have a child care center that meets from 8:30 AM until 11:30 AM, Monday through Thursday, at our Church Street Center. Depending on where you live, we may be able to provide transportation for you and your child to the Church Street Center. You can also participate free of charge in our Family Literacy program, which will help both you and your child. Call the Family Literacy Coordinator at 864.984.5726 to see if there is room available for your child in the child care program.

Q: What about books and calculators?

A: We have classroom sets of books, so you never have to buy a book. If you want to purchase a calculator, you must purchase the one that is used for the GED® tests, the TI-30XS MultiView calculator. We also have classroom sets of calculators available for students to use during class and during testing. Some agencies, such as TRADE and WIOA, will purchase a book and calculator for you if you are unemployed and are one of their clients.

Q: How do I get started with taking a class?

A: You can enroll on the first or third Monday of every month, as long as we have room for new students. Check our calendar of events at www.laurenscountyadulthood.org for enrollment dates. If the first or third Monday of the month is a holiday (ex.: Labor Day, Martin Luther King Day), then we adjust our enrollment dates for that month.

Q: Is there any sort of orientation, or do I just go to class?

A: After you complete the registration paperwork, an intake specialist will give you a Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) Locator test. The Locator test determines which level of the actual TABE test that you will take. The intake specialist will have you take a TABE tutorial on the computer so that you can get used to computer testing. The next day, we will test you in both Reading and Applied Mathematics. Your teacher will base your instructional plan on the results of your TABE test. The intake specialist will also provide an orientation to the program. You will meet the Transition Specialist during orientation, and she can help you with job searches, resume writing, interview practice, college applications, etc. Part of the orientation will include a career interest inventory to help you narrow down possible jobs for your future.

Q: What if I do not score well on the TABE?

A: We may need to start you in the Adult Basic Education class that meets Tuesday through Thursday from 8:00 AM until 12:00 PM at the Laurens County Literacy Council to build up your reading and math skills before you start working on your GED®.

Q: Where can I enroll?

A: We have several convenient sites. See the list below for the location and time that works best for you.

- Higher Education Center, 663 Medical Ridge Road, Clinton, SC 29325; phone: 864.938.1524.
 - Morning class – 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM
 - Evening class – 5:00 PM – 8:00 PM
 - All classes meet Monday through Thursday

- Church Street Center, 450 Church Street, Laurens, SC 29360; phone: 864.984.5726.
 - Morning class – 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM (If you have a child in child care onsite, the child care ends at 11:30 AM.)
 - Afternoon class – 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM
 - NO EVENING CLASSES at this site
 - All classes meet Monday through Thursday

- United Ministries Center, 500 Academy Street, Clinton, SC 29325; phone: 864.938.9070
 - Morning class – 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
 - NO AFTERNOON OR EVENING CLASSES at this site
 - All classes meet Tuesday through Thursday
 - Intake for new students occurs the first and third Monday of each month.

- Ford Elementary School, 601 Lucas Avenue, Laurens, SC 29360; phone: 864.984-3986. **NOTE: There are English as a Second Language (ESL) classes only, not GED® classes, at this site.**
 - Morning ESL class – 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Q: What is WorkKeys®? Can I get a certificate through Adult Education?

A: WorkKeys® is a National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) that proves to an employer that you have certain skills in Applied Mathematics, Reading for Information, and Locating Information. You will take a test in each of those three areas. ACT, the company that developed WorkKeys®, has profiled thousands of jobs in businesses and industry. There are four NCRC levels, ranging from Bronze (lowest) to Silver to Gold to Platinum (highest).

- A Bronze certificate shows you have skills eligible for 16% of all jobs profiled.
- A Silver certificate shows you have skills eligible for 67% of all jobs profiled.
- A Gold certificate shows you have skills eligible for 93% of all jobs profiled.
- A Platinum certificate shows you have skills eligible for 99% of all jobs profiled.

While you are enrolled in our program, you will also work towards earning your WorkKeys® NCRC. Most of our students leave the program with at least a Silver NCRC.

Q: Do I need to study for the WorkKeys® tests?

A. Absolutely! We have a web-based program called CareerReady 101 that you will use in addition to classroom books to help you prepare for the tests. You can also earn distance learning hours if you use CareerReady 101 at times other than the time period your class meets.

Q: What is a passing score on the WorkKeys® tests?

A. The lowest passing score on each test is a Level 3 (Bronze). It is possible that you may have a different score on each of the three tests. Your NCRC is based on the lowest of your three scores. For example, if you score Level 5 (Gold) in Reading, Level 3 (Bronze) in Locating Information, and Level 4 (Silver) in Math, you would earn a Bronze NCRC since your lowest score is a Level 3.

Q. How much does it cost to take the WorkKeys® tests?

A. South Carolina provides the first set of tests at no charge to its citizens. After that, there is a fee for repeat testing for people who are not enrolled in our classes. Some local companies pay for their employees to take the tests.

Q: I passed the GED® but lost my official transcript and diploma. Can you print one for me so I can get a job or enroll in college? Don't you have copies in my file?

A: ***We do not have copies of your official transcript or your diploma.***

Your official transcript and diploma are mailed to you from Columbia once you complete your GED®. To order replacement copies, you must apply and pay online at this website:

<https://doesc.scriborder.com/>.