

Montana HiSET Policy

Montana High School Equivalency (HSE) Information June 2021



High School Equivalency Testing Requirements

Minimum Test Scores:

- 8 minimum subtest passing score
- College and Career Ready: 15 minimum subtest passing score

School status:

- Candidates may not be currently enrolled in school or have received an accredited high school diploma or high school equivalency diploma. HiSET Options students will be waived from the requirement to not be enrolled in school.

Age requirement:

Candidates 19 years of age and older are eligible to test pursuant to [the Administrative Rules of Montana \(ARM\), Chapter 66](#). All candidates under 19 years of age must submit a request to the test center or the State Office with the documentation required below.

17 & 18-Year-Old Test Takers:

Candidates 17 and 18 years of age, with prior school enrollment are eligible to test and receive HSE diplomas providing the candidate (see the [HSE 17/18 Year Eligibility Form](#)):

- Submits to the HSE testing center an original, official school document that clearly identifies the candidate by name, date of birth, and provides the last school enrollment date and signed by the chief education officer verifying that the candidate has been advised of in-school and alternative educational options.
- Resides in a Montana-based job corps center, correctional facility, state-authorized group home, or treatment center and submits a written referral from the facility director or authorized agent (e.g., probation officer); and is no longer enrolled in a regular high school program for credit.
- After the Chief Examiner has approved the candidate for testing, they will contact ETS/HiSET and the candidate will be allowed to schedule for testing. Candidates with no previous high school enrollment are required to provide documentation from a chief education officer or the county superintendent of the county in which the candidate currently resides, documenting the candidate has not enrolled in school and has been advised of in-school and alternative education options.

HiSET Chief Examiners should keep the official letter of approval to HiSET test for a 17 or 18-year-old sent from the last school attended or County Superintendent (if they had no previous enrollment) on file at the test site. If a HiSET Test Site and/or a WIOA Adult Education Program would like to information share withdrawal documentation, please see the [HSE 17/18-Year-Old Information sheet](#).

The test taker may sign off on the [Consent to Share School Withdrawal Documentation](#) so that only one withdrawal letter is needed for HiSET minimum age overrides and WIOA Adult Education Services. In this case, the Chief Examiner must keep the Consent to Share School Withdrawal Documentation and a copy of the withdrawal letter on file at the test center. Withdrawal documentation should be kept on file at the test site for a minimum of five years.

16-Year-Old Test Takers:

A 16-year old candidate may receive a waiver of the age requirement if documentation is submitted and approved by the State HSE Test Administrators, as follows (see the [HSE 16 Year Old Waiver Application](#)):

- An original completed, signed and notarized 16-year old waiver application form providing school status and notarized permission from the candidate's parent or legal guardian
- An original statement from an OPI adult basic education program, or literacy program, stating the candidate has successfully completed HSE preparation classes or attained pretest scores indicating a likelihood the candidate will pass the HSE test, and
- An original letter on letterhead from an employer or continuing education training program indicating acceptance of the candidate is based upon successful completion of the HSE test.
- Candidates with no previous high school enrollment are required to provide documentation from a chief education officer or county superintendent of the county in which the candidate resides, documenting that the candidate has not enrolled and has been advised of in-school options and alternative education options.

HiSET Chief Examiners should keep the official letter of approval for a 16-year-old to HiSET test sent from the State HSE Test Administrators on file at the test site. Withdrawal information should be kept on file at the HiSET test center for a minimum of five years.

Residency:

The applicant must physically reside in Montana and have a Montana mailing address or claim Montana as the state of residence if tested in a military installation or in a federal correctional institution.

Identification:

- Visit the [Montana HiSET Exam Requirements](#) webpage for general information on HiSET Identification requirements.
- Educational Testing Service (ETS) requires a government issued photo ID to test. Their stipulations are listed in depth on the Montana HiSET Exam Requirements webpage.
- In the event there is a need for identification corrections, a government issued photo ID and any other relevant paperwork must be submitted to the state.
- Correctional facilities may use a booking card or Department of Corrections ID. The ID or booking card must include a name, date of birth, and a photo.

Testing:

The math portion of the HiSET exam is calculator neutral, meaning the math portion can be completed using basic arithmetic. The examinee may choose to use a basic four function calculator furnished by the test center while testing. Scientific and/or programmable calculators are not permitted.

Retesting:

- Retesting must be administered in a form not previously taken by the examinee and in compliance with the testing service requirements.
- Candidates who previously attained a high school equivalency credential may re-test if higher

scores are required for employment or admission to a post-secondary institution. Re-testing for this purpose requires prior approval from the State HiSET Test Administrators. Candidates shall show proof that re-testing is necessary by presenting a written request on official letterhead stationery signed by the agent requiring higher scores, stating the reasons for higher scores

Test Registration:

Candidates must register and schedule exams at the [ETS/HiSET Website](#).

Social Security Number:

At check in, students who did not fill in their social security number when creating their profile should be asked to do so. This is not a required field and could be easily omitted. It is an important identifier in Montana.

Transcripts and Diplomas:

- The Office of Public Instruction (OPI) shall issue an official transcript and diploma when candidate scores meet or exceed the minimum score established by the Board of Public Education.
- Test takers can expect a diploma and transcript to be mailed to them within 10 working days after they have passed their last test.
- Duplicate transcripts may be requested by submitting a [Digital](#) or [Postal mail](#) Transcript Request Form posted on the [OPI HSE Website](#).
- A letter requesting an official transcript that includes the date of birth, a clearly written name, accompanying signature and prepaid and preaddressed return envelope will also enable an individual to acquire a transcript.
- No duplicate diplomas will be issued.
- For more information, or questions, contact the HSE Helpline at 406-444-4151 or OPIHSE@MT.gov.

Fees:

- The HiSET fee for computer-based tests is \$10.75 per subtest. The HiSET fee for paper-based tests is \$15 per subtest. Fees must be paid at the time of registration (credit card, pay pal, debit card, or voucher). Candidates can take two free retakes in one calendar year.
- Test center fees may also be assessed. Test centers may charge an additional fee up to
- \$5.00 for each test administered. This fee will be collected at the test site.
- Test centers may assess the test center fee for candidates who cancel or do not show up on testing day. This is a local policy, and test centers are encouraged to post this information if they are going to assess this fee.

Staff Appointment and Responsibilities

Persons instructing potential candidates for the HSE tests, particularly as teachers of Adult Basic Education, Adult Literacy, HSE instruction, or other adult secondary education programs, cannot be appointed as Chief Examiners, Test Administrators, or Proctors, or otherwise have any access to any secure HSE testing materials.

The steps for approval of Chief Examiners or Test Administrators are as follows:

- Submit an email request to the State HSE Administrator. Include what position the applicant would like to fill (Chief Examiner, Test Administrator, or Proctor), their background in standardized test administration, and attach a copy of their academic transcripts (see section below: Staff Education Requirements).
- The State HSE Administrator will determine the required academic level of the prospective staff member has been met and send staff approval form to the candidate.
- Prospective staff person will complete staff approval form and complete test session observation with a Chief Examiner. The prospective staff member should observe the same mode of testing that they will administer tests in (computer based, paper based, or both). When complete, the form is submitted to the state.
- State Administration submits the candidate's name and email address to ETS for access to the appropriate eLearning Modules (CBT/PBT or both).
- State Test Administrators will be notified by ETS that the candidate has passed the eLearning Modules. The State will then welcome the Chief Examiner and or Test Administrator to the State HiSET testing team.

Test administration approval may be revoked by the state for activities that compromise the integrity of the test (i.e. exceeding the number of incorrect test forms, violating test security, etc.).

Staff Education Requirements:

- Chief Examiner:
 - Must hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited college, or university, with previous testing experience or training in test administration.
- Test Administrator:
 - Must have completed a minimum of two-years of postsecondary course work at an accredited college, or university, with previous testing experience or training in test administration.
- Proctor:
 - Must have at least a high school diploma or high school equivalency diploma.

Chief Examiners must attend annual state meetings.

Test Administration for Computer Based Tests & Paper Based Tests:

- Candidate to examinee ratio are not to exceed:
- One Chief Examiner/Test Administrators: No more than 20 candidates

- Two Test Administrators or one Chief Examiner/one Test Administrators: 21-40 candidates
- Three Test Administrators or one Chief Examiner/two Test Administrators: 41-60 candidates
- The OPI will approve and monitor all centers at regular intervals. The ETS monitoring tool will be used to confirm test center adherence to administering the HiSET with fidelity and securing all test materials as prescribed. If ETS has monitored a site, the state will acknowledge that monitoring and follow-up with monitoring during the next rotation period.

Centers not in compliance with HiSET and state standards may be closed until the ability to meet requirements can be demonstrated.

Test Center Status Changes

- Submit a request for all test center status changes to state Test Administrators.
- This includes changes in name, location, testing room, and public access (open or closed).

Procedure for HiSET Test Center Approval:

See Appendix A

Procedure for HiSET Chief Examiner and Test Administrator Approval:

See Appendix B

Appendix A: Montana ETS HiSET Test Center & Staff Approval flow

Action	Complete	Date
STATE schedules site approval (completes Center Master Form (CMF) & examiner transcript/previous testing experience approval)		
STATE sends HiSET Test Center Staff Change form and Testing Staff Appointment form for examiner to schedule observation; examiner completes observations and submits staff approval form		
CHIEF EXAMINER completes site observations and submits staff approval form to STATE		
STATE notifies ETS: examiner has final approval, site is approved, and submits CMF with request for eLearning modules to be sent to CHIEF EXAMINER and all Test Administrators for the approved test center		
Site Receives Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) from ETS Test Administration Services and/or ETS Client Director, sends to Chief Examiner		
CHIEF EXAMINER reviews and signs MOU and sends to STATE		
Receive STATE approval on MOU; STATE Test Administrator signs and sends to ETS		
Chief Examiner notifies state of completed eLearning and receives HiSET credentials (sent to examiner), State verifies passage with ETS		
CHIEF EXAMINER receives STATE Policy, and HiSET Welcome Letter from ETS		
STATE adds examiner to HiSET distribution list and adds Test Center # to Montana Database. Suggest examiner sign up for HiSET News Blast. Send Welcome Letter including HiSET Policy and HiSET Testing Manual.		

Appendix B: Test Examiner Approval Flow

Action	Complete	Date
<i>STATE receives written request for change in staff that includes a transcript/previous testing experience (see MT HiSET Policy)</i>		
<i>STATE determines adequate academic attainment and sends HiSET Test Center Staff Change form and Testing Center Staff Appointment form for examiner to schedule observation</i>		
<i>CHIEF EXAMINER completes site observations and submits completed staff approval form to STATE</i>		
<i>STATE notifies ETS: requests eLearning modules (CBT/PBT or both), provides ETS with examiner's email address</i>		
<i>Applicant notifies the state that the eLearning modules were successfully completed. STATE verifies with ETS</i>		
<i>ETS and the STATE welcome the new examiner (Welcome Letter)</i>		
<i>STATE puts examiner on mailing lists, sends the policy packet and relevant items on security and updates. Suggest that individual signs up for HiSET monthly newsletter</i>		