

High School Equivalency Program Handbook: Montana Policies and Procedures 2026-2027

Office of Public Instruction



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Introduction

The Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) is committed to ensuring that every person in Montana has meaningful opportunities to earn a high school credential and prepare for successful participation in postsecondary education, workforce training, military service, and careers.

Montana's High School Equivalency (HSE) program provides a statewide pathway to demonstrate proficiency in the academic content areas required for a HSE Diploma. The HSE program also provides opportunities for eligible students and adult learners to use HSE examination results as part of other pathways to demonstrating proficiency and completing high school.

The HSE program serves individuals participating in a variety of educational settings and programs, including adult education programs, Montana Options Programs, Montana Youth Challenge Academy, Job Corps, and other pathways authorized under Montana law and administrative rule. Regardless of the setting in which an individual accesses HSE testing, Montana's HSE testing, credentialing, and recordkeeping requirements are established and administered through a statewide system.

This handbook establishes the policies and procedures governing Montana's HSE testing and credentialing system. It is intended to provide a consistent framework for eligibility, testing, accommodations, credentialing, records, and related administrative processes across Montana.

The policies in this handbook are designed to support equitable access to HSE testing and ensure that individuals receive consistent treatment of their examination results and credentials. HSE records and credentials are part of an individual's permanent academic record and should remain accessible and portable as individuals pursue further education, employment, training, military or other service, and other postsecondary opportunities.

The OPI recognizes that students and adult learners may pursue high school completion through different pathways and that HSE testing may play different roles within those pathways. This handbook establishes the statewide HSE requirements that apply across programs while allowing individual programs, schools, and districts to maintain responsibilities that fall within their own statutory or administrative authority.

Statutory and Administrative Framework

Montana's High School Equivalency (HSE) program is established and administered within the statutory and administrative framework governing high school completion, adult education, and educational credentialing in the state.

The Montana Legislature establishes statutory authority for HSE and related pathways to high school completion. The Montana Office of Public Instruction is responsible for administering the statewide HSE program in accordance with Montana law and applicable administrative rules.

The OPI's responsibilities include establishing and communicating statewide HSE testing and credentialing policies and procedures; administering eligibility and age-waiver processes; overseeing HSE testing; maintaining official HSE records; and issuing and documenting HSE credentials in accordance with Montana law and policy.

This handbook serves as the statewide administrative framework for the Montana HSE program. It establishes requirements and procedures applicable to HSE testing, credentialing, records, and related administrative

processes. Programs and institutions that provide HSE preparation or support students in accessing HSE testing are responsible for following the requirements established in this handbook to the extent those requirements apply to their HSE-related activities.

Relationship to Other Programs

The HSE program operates across multiple educational settings. Some programs that support students in accessing HSE testing are administered by the OPI, while others are administered by separate state agencies or organizations. For programs administered by the OPI, this handbook establishes the HSE requirements as well as the applicable program requirements.

For programs administered by other entities, including the Montana Youth Challenge Academy and Job Corps, this handbook governs the HSE testing and credentialing component of the program. It does not establish or supersede requirements governing the administration, operation, instruction, staffing, attendance, discipline, or other programmatic functions of those entities unless specifically authorized by Montana law.

This distinction ensures that Montana maintains a consistent statewide HSE system while recognizing the separate statutory and administrative authority of the programs and institutions through which individuals may access HSE services.

Scope of the Handbook

The policies and procedures in this handbook apply to the administration of Montana's HSE testing and credentialing system, including:

- Roles and responsibilities related to statewide HSE administration;
- Candidate eligibility;
- Test registration;
- Records access and portability;
- Confidentiality and protection of personally identifiable information; and
- Test administration and security compliance.

Statutory Roles and Responsibilities

Administration of Montana's HSE program involves the OPI, HSE test centers, educational programs, schools and districts, and individuals accessing HSE services. Each entity is responsible for carrying out the functions assigned to it by Montana law, administrative rule, or the OPI policies.

Montana Office of Public Instruction – Adult Education Unit

The OPI Adult Education Unit is responsible for the statewide administration of Montana's HSE program, including:

- Establishing and communicating statewide HSE testing and credentialing policies and procedures.
- Interpreting and implementing applicable Montana statutes and administrative rules governing HSE testing and credentialing.
- Establishing procedures for determining HSE eligibility.

- Administering age-waiver processes when required.
- Establishing requirements for HSE testing and test administration.
- Overseeing the statewide HSE testing system and relationship with the HSE test vendor.
- Maintaining official HSE records and credentialing information.
- Issuing HSE credentials to individuals who meet Montana's requirements.
- Establishing procedures for reporting and maintaining HSE examination scores.
- Establishing procedures for accessing official HSE records and credentials.
- Ensuring that HSE records are maintained in accordance with applicable records-retention and confidentiality requirements.
- Providing guidance and technical assistance to programs, schools, districts, test centers, and other entities administering or supporting HSE testing.
- Monitoring compliance with HSE policies.

Authorized Test Centers

The HSE authorized test centers are responsible for administering HSE examinations in accordance with the requirements established by the vendor and the OPI.

Responsibilities include:

- Maintaining secure testing environments.
- Verifying test-taker identity and eligibility as required.
- Administering examinations according to approved testing procedures.
- Implementing approved testing accommodations.
- Providing information to the OPI when required for HSE administration, credentialing, or recordkeeping.

Educational Programs, Schools, and Districts

Educational programs, schools, and districts that prepare or support individuals for HSE testing are responsible for:

- Following applicable Montana HSE policies and procedures.
- Providing accurate information to students regarding HSE eligibility, testing, and credentialing.
- Maintaining appropriate confidentiality of student information.
- Supporting students in accessing approved testing accommodations.
- Maintaining local academic records in accordance with applicable law and local requirements.
- Providing information to the OPI when required for HSE administration, credentialing, or recordkeeping.

Participation in an educational program does not transfer responsibility for statewide HSE policy from the OPI to the program. Programs remain responsible for their own programmatic requirements, while the OPI remains responsible for the statewide HSE testing and credentialing system.

Students and Adult Learners

Individuals accessing Montana's HSE program are responsible for:

- Providing accurate information necessary to establish eligibility and create a testing record.
- Creating and maintaining their HSE testing account, as applicable.

- Registering for and scheduling HSE examinations according to established procedures.
- Following test-center and test-administration requirements.
- Requesting testing accommodations through the established process when needed.
- Creating and maintaining a DiplomaSender account.
- Reviewing their examination results and credential status.
- Providing appropriate authorization when requesting that official HSE records be shared with third parties.

Other State Agencies and Public Institutions

State agencies and public institutions that operate programs in which students and adult learners may access HSE testing retain responsibility for administering their programs in accordance with their own statutory and administrative authority.

When those programs incorporate HSE testing or credentialing, they are responsible for complying with the statewide HSE requirements established by the OPI. This includes programs administered by state agencies other than the OPI. Nothing in this handbook is intended to transfer responsibility for the administration of those programs to the OPI or to supersede the statutory authority of another state agency.

HSE Eligibility

Administrative Rules of Montana

[Administrative Rules of Montana \(ARM\) 10.66.111](#) Qualifications for candidates to receive high school equivalency diplomas:

- 1) Candidates shall not be currently enrolled in school or have received an accredited high school diploma or high school equivalency credential.
- 2) Candidates shall receive a high school equivalency (HSE) diploma when scores meet or exceed the minimum score requirement established by the Board of Public Education.
- 3) Candidates must physically reside in Montana and have a Montana mailing address or claim Montana as their state of residence if tested at a military installation or in a federal correctional institution.
- 4) Candidates must be at least 19 years of age.

17 & 18-Year-Old Public Candidates

[Administrative Rules of Montana \(ARM\) 10.66.112](#) Qualifications - Exceptions:

- 1) Candidates 17 and 18 years of age are eligible to test and receive HSE diplomas provided the candidate:
 - a) submits to the HSE testing center prior to testing, an original, official school document that clearly identifies the candidate by name, date of birth, and provides the last school enrollment date and is signed by the chief education officer (Principal, Vice Principal, HS Counselor, Home School Parent, or County Superintendent) verifying that the candidate has been advised of in-school and alternative educational options and
 - b) is no longer enrolled in a regular high school program for credit.

PowerSchool transcripts and similar documents are not sufficient. Emails are not acceptable. Wet signatures are preferred on withdrawal letters.

Chief Examiners will only provide age waivers for 17–18-year-old candidates testing at their public test center after the candidates have delivered appropriate withdrawal documentation. HiSET Chief Examiners may provide an age waiver directly via the [HiSET TCA Portal](#). GED Chief Examiners may provide an age waiver for in-person testing directly via the [GED Manager Portal](#).

17–18-Year-Old Non-Public Candidates

[Administrative Rules of Montana \(ARM\) 10.66.112](#) Qualifications - Exceptions:

- 1) Candidates 17 and 18 years of age are eligible to test and receive HSE diplomas provided the candidate:
 - c) 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).

Approved Chief Examiners, Test Administrators, and other approved individuals at non-public HSE test center must provide an age waiver request to the OPI Adult Education Unit for approval before registration. The request must be made via the secure [File Transfer Service](#) (See the *Communicating Personally Identifiable Information (PII) with the OPI* section for additional information). The written referral will be on official letterhead, include full legal name and HiSET or GED ID Number of the candidate and state that the individual is no longer enrolled in a regular high school program for credit. Wet signatures are preferred on referral letters.

The OPI Adult Education Unit will review the request for the 17–18-year-old candidate to test at a non-public HSE test center and notify the Chief Examiner or authorized agent by email after the waiver is approved and processed.

16-Year-Old Public Candidates

[Administrative Rules of Montana \(ARM\) 10.66.113](#) Age Requirement - Waiver:

- 1) A 16-year-old candidate may receive a waiver of the age requirement if documentation is submitted and approved by the state HSE test administrator (ARM 10.66.111), as follows:
 - a) a completed, signed, and notarized 16-year-old age waiver application form providing school status as required under ARM 10.66.112 and notarized permission from the candidate's parent or legal guardian;
 - b) a statement from an OPI adult basic education program stating the candidate has successfully completed HSE preparation classes or has attained pre-test scores indicating a likelihood that the candidate will pass the official HSE test; and
 - c) a letter on official letterhead stationery from an employer or continuing education training program indicating that acceptance of the candidate is based upon successful completion of the HSE test.

The [High School Equivalency 16 Year Old Waiver Application](#) Checklist outlines the requirements, as follows:

- A completed, signed, and notarized High School Equivalency 16 Year Old Waiver Application form with

inked signatures providing school status as required under ARM 10.66.112 and notarized permission from the candidate's parent or legal guardian demonstrating consensus of applicant, chief education officer (Principal, Vice Principal, HS Counselor, Home School Parent, or County Superintendent), and applicant's parent/legal guardian that HSE testing is considered in the best educational interest of the applicant.

- Letter Verifying High School Withdrawal: An original letter on official letterhead with signature from a chief education officer (Principal, Vice Principal, HS Counselor, Home School Parent, or County Superintendent) that clearly identifies the candidate by name, date of birth, and provides the last school enrollment date and verifies the candidate has been advised of in-school and alternative education options.
- Letter of Academic Preparedness*: An original letter on official letterhead with signature from an Adult Education Director or Literacy Program Director stating the candidate has successfully completed HSE preparation classes or has attained pretest scores indicating a likelihood that the candidate will pass the official HSE test; and documentation from the same source certifying[EF1] the applicant obtained pre-test scores in at least one academic area substantiating preparedness for the official HSE Test Battery. *[16-Year-Old High School Equivalency Testing Recommendation TEMPLATE](#) available for use in lieu of letter of academic preparedness.
- Letter from Postsecondary, Training, or Employer: An original letter on official letterhead with signature from an employer, continuing education, or training program indicating that acceptance of the candidate is based upon successful completion of HSE testing.
- Montana Identification: A copy of the candidate's current state issued photo ID documenting Montana residency.

PowerSchool transcripts and similar documents are not sufficient. Emails are not acceptable. Wet signatures are required on 16-Year-Old Waiver Application forms and preferred on withdrawal letters or other supporting documentation.

The OPI Adult Education Unit will review 16-Year-Old Waiver Applications and notify the candidate by email once the application is approved and the age waiver has been processed. Official documentation is sent via postal mail to the Chief Examiner.

Chief Examiners may not provide age waivers for 16-Year-Old HSE candidates. If Chief Examiners are found to be providing age waivers for 16-year-old HSE candidates, access to provide all age waivers may be revoked.

16-Year-Old Non-Public Candidates

[Administrative Rules of Montana \(ARM\) 10.66.113](#) Age Requirement - Waiver:

- 2) A candidate 16 years of age who resides in a Montana-based job corps center, correctional facility, state-authorized group home, or treatment center may receive a waiver of the age requirement if the candidate 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.

Approved Chief Examiners, Test Administrators, and other approved individuals at non-public HSE test center must provide an age waiver request to the OPI Adult Education Unit for approval before registration. The request must be made via the secure [File Transfer Service](#) (See the *Communicating Personally Identifiable*

Information (PII) with the OPI section for additional information). The written referral will be on official letterhead, include full legal name and HiSET or GED ID Number of the candidate and state that the individual is no longer enrolled in a regular high school program for credit. Wet signatures are preferred on referral letters.

The OPI Adult Education Unit will review the request for the 16-year-old candidate to test at a non-public HSE test center and notify the Chief Examiner or authorized agent by email after the waiver is approved and processed.

Special Circumstances

Home School

Former home school students may HSE test provided they submit withdrawal documentation. The [Home School Withdrawal Letter Template to HSE Test](#), posted to the OPI HSE Website, may be provided to the candidate and/or their parent or guardian to establish school withdrawal status.

No Previous High School Enrollment

Candidates with no previous high school enrollment may gather documentation from the county superintendent or chief education officer certifying that the candidate has never enrolled in school in the district and has been advised of in- school and alternative education options.

Identification and Residency

[Administrative Rules of Montana \(ARM\) 10.66.114](#) Requirements for Testing:

- 1) The following items must be submitted to an official HSE testing center prior to testing:
 - a) picture identification issued by tribal, state, or federal authorities;
 - b) appropriate documentation pursuant to ARM 10.66.112 or ARM 10.66.113 if under the age of 19; and
 - c) proof of Montana residency.

Acceptable forms of valid identification include:

- Driver's License
- Motor Vehicle Division ID Card
- Passport
- Military ID
- Tribal ID
- Other forms of government-issued (national or foreign) identification that display name, address, date of birth, signature and photograph.

Outdated or expired identification will not be accepted. Photocopies of identification and digital IDs will not be accepted.

Candidates must provide proof that they reside in Montana and register for HSE testing with their Montana address. If the candidate presents a current Montana ID, no supplemental documentation is required. If the candidate does not provide a Montana ID, another source documenting Montana residency must be provided.

Montana residency may be documented by the following sources - all documentation must be current:

- Valid Montana driver's license or Motor Vehicle Division ID Card
 - Temporary government ID
 - The original driver license receipt purchased by a Montana driver applicant is validated for use by an official "temporary license" seal embossed in the receipt by the driver examiner. Such a temporary license may be used, while the actual driver license is being processed through the motor vehicle division headquarters.
- Supplemental documentation to establish residency (must be current and date stamped within the last 90 days and document physical address)
 - Utility bill in the candidate's name
 - Rental agreement or mortgage statement
 - Montana resident hunting or fishing license
 - Montana state income tax filing

More details regarding residency and ID requirements are found on HSE vendor websites:

- [GED Montana](#)
- [HiSET Montana](#)

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 photo.

Online Proctored Testing

Applicants are eligible to take the GED exam using the online proctored option after Montana residency documentation is presented and approved by the OPI Adult Education Unit.

Candidates, age 17-18, interested in the Online Proctored GED, must complete a [High School Equivalency 17 & 18 Year Old Application for Online Proctored GED Tests](#), provide withdrawal documentation, and establish residency with the OPI Adult Education Unit.

Candidates, 19 and older, interested in the Online Proctored GED, must complete a [High School Equivalency 19 & Older Application for Online Proctored GED Tests](#) and establish residency with the OPI Adult Education Unit.

Chief Examiners may not provide online testing authorizations via GED Manager. If Chief Examiners are found to be providing age waivers for online proctored testing, access to provide all age waivers may be revoked.

HSE Candidates

Test Registration

All candidates, except those in a correctional facility, will create their own test taker accounts via the public [HiSET](#) or [GED](#) website. Candidates must use their full legal name and accurate date of birth, as it appears on their government-issued ID, to register. Candidates should register with their permanent mailing address and phone number.

Candidates will be turned away from testing if demographic information does not match at check-in on test day.

Testing Fees

HiSET:

- The HiSET fee for computer-based tests and paper-based tests is \$18 per subtest. Fees must be paid at the time of registration (credit card, PayPal, debit card, or voucher). Total test fees for the HiSET battery are \$90.
- HiSET test center fees may also be assessed. Test centers may charge an additional fee up to \$10 for each subtest administered. This fee will be collected at the test center.
- HiSET offers two free retakes per subtest.

GED:

- The GED fee for computer-based tests is \$26 per subtest. Fees must be paid at the time of registration (credit card, PayPal, debit card, or voucher). Total test fees for the GED battery are \$104.
- GED test center fees may also be assessed. Test centers may charge an additional fee up to \$10 for each subtest administered. This fee will be collected at the test center.
- GED offers one free retake per subtest.

Test Centers:

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 decision, and test centers are encouraged to post information regarding test center fees.

Name or Date of Birth Change

If an error was made upon HSE account registration, and the candidate's name or date of birth needs to be modified, contact the HSE vendor to update. Candidates must be prepared to provide appropriate documentation.

Minimum Test Scores

HiSET:

- Minimum of 8 subtest passing score, minimum score of 2 on the essay portion, and a total scaled score of at least 45.
- College and Career Ready: 15 minimum subtest passing score.

GED:

- Minimum of 145 subtest passing score.
- College and Career Ready: 175 minimum subtest passing score.

Retesting

Retests must be completed in compliance with the HSE testing service/vendor requirements. Candidates who previously attained a HSE credential may retest 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 HSE Administrator. 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.

There is no waiting period for the first three attempts. HiSET and GED require a 60-day waiting period before each additional attempt.

HSE Scores, Credentials, and Record Retention

HSE Records

HSE records – including, but not limited to, examination scores, transcripts, and credentials – are part of candidates' permanent academic record. Candidates' HSE records may not be rescinded, revoked, blocked, invalidated, withheld, or rendered otherwise unavailable based on their standing in any educational program (e.g., Montana Options Program; Montana Youth Challenge Academy). This includes, but is not limited to, current enrollment, withdrawal, dismissal, or program completion status.

HSE Diploma - § 20-7-131, Montana Code Annotated (MCA)

HSE Diplomas are issued by the State of Montana (§ [20-7-131](#), MCA). Test takers who meet Montana's requirements for an HSE Diploma shall be awarded the credential. Eligibility for an HSE Diploma is based solely on meeting the state's HSE requirements and may not be conditioned on a candidate's standing in any educational program (e.g., Montana Options Program or Montana Youth Challenge Academy). This includes, but is not limited to, current enrollment, withdrawal, dismissal, or program completion status.

Earning an HSE Diploma does not preclude a student from also earning a local high school diploma, provided all local graduation requirements are met.

DiplomaSender - Official Database of Record

The OPI has partnered with [DiplomaSender](#) to manage HSE credentials and transcripts. DiplomaSender is the sole entity entrusted to provide an official high school equivalency attainment record for Montana HSE earners.

Candidates will need to enter their full legal name, date of birth, and HSE ID number into the DiplomaSender system to create a user account. Invitations to create a DiplomaSender account are sent to the email address on file with the HSE testing vendor.

DiplomaSender, on behalf of the OPI, shall issue an official transcript and diploma when candidate scores meet or exceed minimum passing scores.

- HSE candidates must create an account with DiplomaSender to receive their complimentary first copy of their HSE diploma and transcript.
- Duplicate transcripts and diplomas may be requested via DiplomaSender.
- The fee for duplicate transcripts and diplomas is \$20 per document.
- For more information or questions, contact DiplomaSender via chat service on their website.

HSE test centers are not authorized to provide educational verifications or transcripts to any entity or individual. Transcript requests and education verifications must be conducted through DiplomaSender. FERPA regulations apply.

Test centers may provide DiplomaSender [Contact Cards](#) for HSE candidates.

Montana Youth Challenge Academy

Former Montana Youth Challenge Academy (MYCA) cadets are instructed prior to leaving the program to log into the [HiSET Montana test taker account](#) portal and update to their personal email address. Cadets may also contact HiSET Test Taker Support at <https://hiset.org/contact/>

The OPI Adult Education Unit will contact HiSET to notate the test taker account for future use at a public test center. These cadets may be referred to their local HSE Preparation Program or HSE Test Center. *Age waivers granted to MYCA cadets will be retained.*

Montana Options Program

The [Montana Options Program](#) is designed for students who are at risk of leaving high school before graduation. The program utilizes the HSE exam as a proficiency measure, providing an alternative pathway to graduation for credit-deficient seniors.

The OPI Adult Education Unit will provide age waivers for Montana Options Students after the Montana Options Coordinator has submitted a Montana Options Roster. *Chief Examiners may not provide age waivers for Montana Options students.*

Current Montana Options Students will test at local test centers in the community or via the Online Proctored GED. HSE Chief Examiners will work collaboratively with Montana Options Coordinators to ensure adequate testing availability for the cohort.

Resources for HSE Candidates

Resources for HSE candidates are posted on the [OPI HSE Website](#). These resources include:

- [Contact High School Equivalency Testing Centers in Montana](#)
- [Contact High School Equivalency Preparation Providers in Montana](#)
- [Montana GED Requirements](#)
- [Montana HiSET Requirements](#)
- [HiSET & GED Comparison](#)
- [High School Equivalency 16-Year-Old Waiver Application](#)
- [High School Equivalency Testing Recommendation Form](#)
- [High School Equivalency 17 & 18 Year Old Information](#)
- [Public School Withdrawal Letter for High School Equivalency \(HSE\) Testing Template](#)
- [Home School Withdrawal Letter Template to HSE Test](#)

HSE candidates may contact the HSE Helpline at opihse@mt.gov, or 406-444-4151, for support including but not limited to:

- Underage waiver questions;
- Testing requirements;
- Referrals to Adult Education Programs; or
- GED Online Proctor testing questions.

Vendor Support for HSE Candidates

HiSET

Chief Examiners and Test Administrators may give HiSET candidates and their advocates the following contact information:

- Telephone: 1-855-MyHiSET (1-855-694-4738)
- Email: HiSETsupport@psionline.com
- Accommodations Email: eaalerts@psionline.com

GED

Chief Examiners and Test Administrators may give GED candidates and their advocates the following contact information:

- Telephone: 1-877-EXAM-GED (1-877-392-6433)
- Email: Help@GED.com
- Accommodations Email: accommodations@ged.com
- [GED Contact Us Website](#)

HSE Chief Examiners and Test Administrators

Staff Appointment and Responsibilities

Individuals instructing potential candidates for the HSE tests, particularly as teachers of Adult 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 OPI Adult Education Unit oversees approvals for new HSE Chief Examiners and Test Administrators in Montana. 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 the section: Staff Education Requirements).
- The State HSE Administrator will determine if the required academic level of the prospective staff member has been met. The state will then send the HiSET Testing Center Staff Appointment Form to the candidate, eLearning Module information, HiSET Program Manual, and Montana HSE Policy for review and completion.
- Prospective staff will review the HiSET Program Manual and the Montana HiSET Policy, and complete required training. Prospective staff will then schedule a full test administration observation with a Chief Examiner. The prospective examiner will fill out the HiSET Testing Center Staff Appointment Form after a full test session observation with a Chief Examiner is complete. The prospective staff should observe the same mode of testing that they will administer tests in (computer-based, paper-based, or both).

- The State HSE Administrator welcomes the Chief Examiner or Test Administrator to the State HSE testing team. Chief Examiner or Test Administrator signs and returns the Montana HSE Data Confidentiality Agreement.

Test administration approval may be revoked by the state for activities that compromise the integrity of the test.

Staff Education and Training Requirements

Chief Examiner:

- Must hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited college, or university, with previous standardized test administration experience.

Test Administrator:

- Must hold an associate's degree from an accredited college, or university, with previous standardized test administration experience.

Proctor:

- Must have at least a high school diploma or HSE diploma.

Chief Examiners must attend required state meetings and Test Administrators are encouraged to attend. Chief Examiners and Test Administrators will review the Montana HSE Policy and vendor specific policies annually.

- [GED Program Policy Manual](#)
- [HiSET Program Manual](#)

Test Administration

Every examiner is expected to administer at least one test session per quarter. If both computer-based and paper-based testing are listed as active with the test vendor, testing in each modality must be maintained, and every examiner is expected to administer each modality at least twice a year. Regular delivery is essential for maintaining proficiency.

Succession Planning

To ensure continuity of services, a succession plan is recommended for all HSE test centers. A Chief Examiner is required at every test center. The Chief Examiner must notify the OPI when personnel changes occur and provide complete contact information, including email addresses and telephone numbers.

Communicating Personally Identifiable Information (PII) with the OPI

To comply with [FERPA](#) (34 CFR PART 99—FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY), the OPI utilizes the State of Montana File Transfer Service to send personally identifiable information (PII). PII under FERPA is any information that could reasonably be tied to an individual student.

Personally Identifiable Information

The term includes, but is not limited to—

- (a) The student's name;*
- (b) The name of the student's parent or other family members;*
- (c) The address of the student or student's family;*
- (d) A personal identifier, such as the student's social security number, student number, or biometric record;*
- (e) Other indirect identifiers, such as the student's date of birth, place of birth, and mother's maiden name;*
- (f) Other information that, alone or in combination, is linked or linkable to a specific student that would allow a reasonable person in the school community, who does not have personal knowledge of the relevant circumstances, to identify the student with reasonable certainty; or*
- (g) Information requested by a person who the educational agency or institution reasonably believes knows the identity of the student to whom the education record relates.*

Chief Examiners and Test Administrators will review the State of Montana [File Transfer Service instructions](#) and create a [user account](#) to communicate with the OPI Adult Education Unit.

Vendor Support for Test Center Staff

HiSET

The Chief Examiner or Test Administrator may utilize the [HiSET Support Form](#) for technical support that does not require immediate attention. The HiSET Support Form must also be used to submit *Security Incident Reports* regarding any possible security breaches, misconduct, and other incidents at the test center. HiSET thoroughly reviews all *Security Incident Reports* and takes appropriate action.

Testing Day Support:

- Hardware or Software Problems: 800-367-1565 x7193
- Candidate Launch and Password Log-in Issues: 844-562-0512

GED

The Chief Examiner or Test Administrator may utilize the [Pearson Test Center Support Portal](#) or call Test Center Support at 888-344-7924, option 1.

HSE Test Centers

New Test Center

The OPI Adult Education Unit oversees approvals for new HSE test centers in Montana. Services should be

coordinated wherever possible, instead of duplicating them in any regional area. Proximity to other public test centers and local need for services are considered. Prospective test center location must, on average, be outside a thirty-minute driving radius from another established provider. Entities are asked to provide data showing consistent and verifiable need for HSE testing. Entities that anticipate one or more test administration day per month will be considered.

[GEMS Graduation/Dropout Data](#) will be reviewed to determine the local dropout rate. Prospective test center locations are also asked to consider if the Online GED Test would fulfill local need. New test centers must agree to administer computer-based tests. HSE test centers are encouraged to offer both the GED and HiSET assessments to provide choice and flexibility for HSE candidates.

For additional information, review the [Establish a Public GED or HiSET Testing Center in Montana](#) resource posted to the OPI HSE Website.

Test Center Records Retention

All high school withdrawal letters and 16-Year-Old Waiver Application approval letters should be kept at the test center for five years. Sign-in/sign-out sheets should be retained for 18 months.

These records are to be separated from adult education records and kept in locked storage. Firesafe storage is preferred. Only approved Chief Examiners and Test Administrators will have access to these records.

Test Center Schedule

Chief Examiners are responsible for publishing their test center schedule with HiSET and/or GED at least three months in advance, and up to one year in advance of testing. Approved test centers must offer testing at least once a month. If testing lapses for one month or longer, the test center is responsible for notifying the OPI Adult Education Unit.

Test Day Check In

Candidates are directed to arrive at the test center at least thirty (30) minutes prior to the start of their testing time. If the candidate arrives later than the scheduled start time, do not admit the candidate or launch the test session. The test registration fee or credit will be forfeited. If the candidate has a test scheduled later that day, they may wait outside of the testing room until it is their time to check-in for their next test.

Ask all candidates if they possess any prohibited items such as phones, recording devices, smart watches, smart glasses, testing aids, food, and beverages. Tell candidates the only item they may bring to their testing station is their ID, no other personal items are allowed. Bulky or loose clothing is not permitted while testing. Ask candidates to empty pockets if necessary. Test centers are advised to post notice of prohibited items around the check-in area.

Review that the full legal name, date of birth, and address listed with each testing vendor matches the ID being presented. The full name and date of birth must be an exact match to proceed with testing. Candidates will be turned away from testing if demographic information does not match at test day check in.

Calculator

Candidates will utilize the on-screen calculator integrated into all HSE computer-based test administrations. Candidates testing at paper-based HSE test centers may use a basic four function calculator supplied by the test center.

Candidates may not bring their own calculator into a Montana HSE Test Center.

Candidate Ratio

Candidate ratio is not to exceed:

- One Chief Examiner or Test Administrator: no more than 20 candidates.
- Two Test Administrators or one Chief Examiner/one Test Administrator: 21-40 candidates.
- Three Test Administrators or one Chief Examiner/two Test Administrators: 41-60 candidates.

Test Center Status Changes

Submit a request for all test center status changes to the OPI Adult Education Unit. This includes staff transitions and changes in test center name, physical address, mailing address, room location, arrangement of the room, number of seats, contact information, website URL, or public access (open or closed). If a test center closes, the Chief Examiner will send all underage waiver documentation to the OPI Adult Education Unit via postal mail within one week of the test center closure.

Test Center Monitoring

The OPI Adult Education Unit will conduct regular monitoring of HSE test centers. Monitoring may be conducted in person, or via desk monitoring. In person and desk monitoring may include, but is not limited to:

- Test center security compliance.
- Test day procedures.
- Record retention.

Test centers not in compliance with vendor and state standards may be closed until the ability to meet requirements can be demonstrated.