

For GRASP Training Purposes Only – Each Program Should Create Their Own Student Handbook with Information Related to Their Specific Programs. Also, each program would probably want to create their own GRASP Student Handbook cover.

Please Note: This was Revised 9/2014 by GRASP Instructor at BT BOCES. Some information might need to be updated.

GRASP Student Handbook

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Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the Home Study Program

Please read through everything carefully. This will assist you in getting a solid understanding of the GRASP program & the rules & regulations that will be required from you, the students.

WHAT DOES HSE MEAN?

HSE stands for High School Equivalency. The TASC test is considered the equivalent of a high school diploma, so it is often referred to as the high school equivalency test.

WHAT DOES TASC MEAN?

TASC stands for Test Assessing Secondary Completion. The TASC test has replaced the GED test in order to meet Common Core Standards for high school graduation.

WHAT DOES GRASP MEAN?

GRASP stands for Giving Ready Adults a Study Program. This is a program designed for highly motivated adults who can teach themselves the concepts & information that is required to take & pass the TASC Exam. Your GRASP teacher will develop lesson plans that are geared toward your individual needs.

WHAT IS THE HOME STUDY PROGRAM?

A home study program is a special opportunity for adults who are unable to attend Adult Education/HSE classes. The purpose is to provide a scheduled educational program in Reading, Writing, Math, Science & Social Studies to be completed at home. All necessary books & assignments are sent to the student with appropriate instructions for their use. Students will be given specific instructions on each assignment & may be asked to return some of their completed work to the teacher to be corrected & evaluated. For the most part, the student is responsible for self-correcting & reviewing all of their own work using an answer key.

HOW MUCH DOES THE PROGRAM COST?

The GRASP home study program is free to the student.

HOW DOES THE PROGRAM WORK?

You will receive assignments every two weeks. It is the student's responsibility to work on all assigned homework, to keep track of all the time spent on assignments, to return completed work, & to record a minimum of 12 hours of study time on the time sheet that is required to be turned in with every packet.

GETTING ORGANIZED

Since this is an unconventional program, meaning not a typical classroom setting, it is suggested that you make a study center/area where all of your materials are safely kept together & where you can be comfortable & be able to do work in an undisturbed environment. It is also a good idea to schedule a time of day to work on your packets so that you don't become overwhelmed with the number of hours needed per assignment.

SCHEDULING

A minimum of 6 hours per week is recommended to keep up with the work that is assigned. Remember that you are **REQUIRED** to study & record a minimum of 12 hours per packet. It is up to the student to determine how to break up study hours, but generally working 6 hours a week means working an hour a day or 2 hours every other day. This is an excellent way to keep up with the assigned work.

PICK UP/RETURN OF PACKETS

Pick-up & delivery of your packets will be decided between the GRASP teacher & student. Packets can be sent to school districts & from there it is the student's responsibility to pick up & drop off all assignments on the scheduled dates. Students may also pick up the packets at the Johnson City Learning Center (JCLC) building if that is decided with the teacher.

Specific directions will be provided for the return of your completed work packet.

HOW WILL I KNOW WHAT MY HOMEWORK IS?

Each packet that you receive will have a lesson plan/assignment sheet, with a specific start & end date, enclosed. This sheet will explain to you exactly what homework you are required to complete, if you should return or hold onto a textbook, whether or not you can write in any of the books or materials that are sent to you, & any other important information that is needed for the packet. It is important that all directions are followed properly so that your time, as well as the teacher's time, is not wasted.

USING THE WORK TIME RECORD SHEET

You will receive a new Work Time Record Sheet with each new packet you pick up. Each time you study, write the subject on which you are working on the Work Time Record Sheet & record the amount of time you spend on the assignment. There is an example of the Work Time Record Sheet that indicates how you should write this. You **MUST** return your Work Time Record Sheet with each completed packet & it **MUST** indicate that you studied a minimum of 12 hours or your packet will be considered invalid.

If your assignment takes less than 12 hours, then review your work, write in a journal, study basic math facts, write a response or summary of a newspaper article, or find something online to study that is related to the work in the packet. You may also read a book that interests you & write a short essay explaining the development of the story, what a television news report & explain what you saw & heard. You may also create your own way to use up the remaining hours for the packet – Just document (write down) what you did, when you did it & how long it took!!

MAKING CORRECTIONS

All books & assignments that you receive will have answer keys. You are expected to correct your own work by using these answer keys. In math, work should be corrected for each problem & by each page. If you do not understand the math process, check the directions & examples given. At the top of each page of section be sure to write # Correct/Total # of Problems. This way, the teacher can clearly see with which work is difficult for you & which work you understand. Rework any problems you have incorrect. If the work is still unclear, notify your teacher.

WHAT IF I HAVE A PROBLEM/TROUBLE WITH HOMEWORK?

This program is based on the student's ability to self-teach; however, there are times when students may struggle & may reach out for classroom/ 1:1 help. If you are experiencing problems with your homework you can have time in one of the BOCES Adult Education classrooms up to 3 hours a week, or you can schedule an appointment with your GRASP teacher to make arrangements for 1:1 help. It is important to discuss this with your GRASP teacher before going to a classroom because the classroom teacher must be made aware of the appointment as well. Please remember that this additional weekly class/tutor time is limited to 3 hours / week for students who are enrolled in the GRASP Program.

If you have any questions regarding an assignment & the contents within, call ----- & leave your name, a brief message, & a phone number where you can be reached. If you would rather write, you may place a letter in your packet or send the teacher an email. With each assignment sheet the teacher's phone number & email address will be listed if the student has any questions or concerns.

HOW WILL I KNOW IF I AM MAKING PROGRESS?

Approximately, every 16 to 17 weeks or 100 hours of study time, you will be asked to retake the (TABE) Test of Adult Basic Education. This retest helps to monitor your progress by demonstrating improvement in grade levels of math & reading. It will also give information about specific areas in which you might need improvement.

WHAT IF I WANT TO TAKE THE HSE (TASC) TEST?

First, students need to come in to be post-tested in the reading, math or both. If the student shows a gain or improvement since entering the home study program, then he/she will be scheduled to take a TASC Readiness test at a BOCES Adult Education program location. If your results on all five sections of the TASC Readiness indicate that you have a high possibility of passing the actual TASC Exam, then you will be referred to an upcoming scheduled TASC Exam.

WHEN I TAKE THE TASC EXAM, HOW LONG UNTIL I RECEIVE MY RESULTS?

The results of the TASC Exam & your TASC Certificate will be sent to you directly from Albany. It takes approximately 6 to 8 weeks to receive your scores. Once you receive your scores MAKE SURE to call your GRASP teacher & inform her/him of your scores, so your teacher can exit you from the class enrollment. You may also go online to view your results by going to the following website: www.nysed.gov then click on HSE/ TASC to the right of the page, then on the top bar click on HSE status report.

WHAT IF I DON'T COMPLETE THE HOMEWORK IN THE TIME ALLOWED?

Normally, your assignments should not require you to spend more than 12 hours in any two-week period, however, life sometimes gets in the way & you may not be able to complete your work. If you feel that you need an extension of time, contact your GRASP teacher to work out a solution. *This should only be done when absolutely necessary.* Failure to complete & return work packets without notifying your teacher, may result in termination from the program. Your GRASP teacher will make every effort to contact you before terminating you from the GRASP program.

STUDY TIPS FOR MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

The TASC/HSE exam consists mainly of multiple choice questions and the materials you will be using also have multiple choice questions. The following suggestions may be helpful to you in answering these types of questions.

1. You will have to select the best answer from several possible answers. The incorrect answers are often partly correct. This method is employed to make you think and to choose only the best answer.
2. Read the question carefully and reject answers that are clearly wrong.
3. You can usually be suspicious of statements with limiting words such as: all, always, entirely, ever, only, never, etc.
4. You will have to rely on information from previous study to help you. This knowledge might be enough to show that some of the choices are not correct. After eliminating such answers, think carefully about the remaining choices.
5. If the question is in the form of an incomplete statement, try to complete the statement before you look at the answers. If the way you have completed the statement agrees with any of the answers, it is likely to be the correct one.
6. Use your head. Often with a little thought and the information that you have, you can reason out the answer.
7. Check your answers with the answer keys provided. Re-read the question to see why the answer on the key was best. You may need to re-read the selection again. If you are still unable to understand your mistake, write a note to your teacher for further help.

STUDY TIPS FOR MATH PROBLEMS

1. Look at the instructional models provided for each section of the work you are doing.
2. Solve each math problem, looking back at the instructional models whenever necessary.
3. Write out each step of the problem exactly the same way as the instructional model.
4. After completing several problems, check your answers to be sure you are doing the problems correctly. If your answers are correct, continue on to the next problems. If your answers are wrong, check your calculations. Most of the time, when you get the wrong answer, it is because you made errors in calculation or copied the problem incorrectly.
5. Once you have determined where your mistake is, go through the process again trying to come up with the correct answer.
6. If you still are unable to figure out why your answer is incorrect, contact your teacher for further help.

HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY TESTING INFORMATION

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY DIPLOMA

1. **RESIDENCE** - You must have resided in New York State for at least one month.
2. **AGE** - You must be **19 years** of age or older.

You also qualify if you are 17 or 18 years old and:

- a. Have been out of a full time high school program for at least one year or were a member of a high school class that has graduated **OR**
 - b. If you are 16 years of age you must be enrolled in an approved Alternative High School program **OR**
 - c. Are a resident of a narcotic addiction control center, or inmate of a correctional institution, or a patient in a hospital in New York State and the head of your institution certifies that the diploma is an essential part of your rehabilitation program.
3. **EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT-you** must obtain satisfactory scores on the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC). You also qualify if you have successfully completed 24 college credits, which were approved by the State of Education Department, or the equivalent as a recognized candidate for a college level degree or certificate at an approved institution.

TASC Scoring Requirements

In order to obtain a High School Equivalency diploma, students must be evaluated by an examination which meets the newly implemented Common Core Standards. The TASC test is based on these standards. Because the standards are higher, the TASC scoring requirements are gradually being raised over the next four years. By 2017, the scoring requirements for passing the TASC exam will be at the maximum level.

The difficulty level of the TASC exam will remain constant throughout the process, however, the number of correct answers required on each section of the test will be raised each year until 2017.

In order to receive your High School Equivalency diploma, you must pass every section of the exam and receive a minimum total score for the entire exam. This means that you must do better than "just passing" on most sections of the test.

If you fail only certain sections of the exam, you still have the option of taking only sections you failed or the whole test battery.

There is a minimum two-month interval before a student can re-test. Students cannot take the TASC more than 3 times in a 12-month period.

Passing the TASC exam is recognized as the equivalent of a high school diploma.

Congratulations on taking your first steps in reaching this worthy goal!

Applying for the TASC Test

Filling out the TASC Test Application:

You may obtain a TASC test application from your instructor or from a testing center office (Johnson City Learning Center), or by printing the application from this website. <http://www.acces.nysed.gov/ged/documents/attach-aHSE 2. pdf>

Be sure to print the required attachments for your eligibility status and fill them out, also:

1. Print all information clearly- use a pen.
2. If all information is not complete, the application will be returned to you. This may cause you to lose your testing space.
3. (a) **On part two**, if you are over 19 years of age, check only the **YES** box.
(b) If you are under 19 years of age, you must complete all blanks, attach a letter signed by a school official on school letterhead stating the date you left school or that your original graduating class already graduated.
4. (a) **Under part three**, check only the **NO** box if you have never tested.
(b) If you have taken the GED/ TASC before, you must include **either** a copy of your official transcript or the detachable record found at the bottom of the transcript. If you do not have your transcript, call the BOCES office for information on how to get one. **Note: always keep your transcript until you pass the test.**
5. **Part four:** you must include the location of the test center you wish, and the date.
6. The application must have your written signature and the current date.
7. You will not receive notification from the testing center until one week before the test. If you do not hear by the week of the test, call your testing center.
8. After the test, your marks will be mailed directly to you from the New York State Department of Education. This may take six or more weeks.

Preparing to take the TASC Test

Before the Exam

1. Know well ahead of time the location and exact time of the test. Plan to arrive at least fifteen minutes before the beginning of your test. Give yourself plenty of time to avoid rushing around.
2. Dress comfortably and eat a well-balanced meal before going to the test site.
3. Be careful about what kind of medicine you take. Avoid anything that might make you drowsy.

What to bring to the test

1. Bring the admission notice with you on the day of your test.
2. Bring several #2 pencils and a blue/black ball point pen. No calculators, scrap paper, rulers, or cell phones are allowed.
3. Bring photo identification, such as a current driver's license, passport, Sheriff's ID, college or military ID with name, picture, signature, date of birth, and address. If you do not have an approved form of ID, you may not take the test.

During the exam

1. Listen carefully to all oral instructions. If you do not understand any part of these directions, ask for help.
2. Read all directions thoroughly **before** doing any work. Within the test there will be many different parts; note carefully the directions for each part.
3. Before marking the answer sheet, it is very important to check to make sure that the number of the test question matches the number on the answer sheet.
4. To use your time efficiently, answer the easiest questions first. Then go back to the more difficult ones. When you leave a question unanswered, remember that you must leave the corresponding number on the answer sheet blank.
5. Mark all answers on the answer sheet, using a heavy black mark between the spaces. DO NOT MAKE ANY STRAY MARKS ON THE ANSWER SHEET.