

WHAT IS THE NATIONAL EXTERNAL DIPLOMA PROGRAM?

The National External Diploma Program (NEDP) is a competency-based, applied performance assessment system that expects adults to demonstrate their ability in a series of simulations that parallel job and life situations. Participants are evaluated against criterion of excellence instead of by comparison to others. They take responsibility for acquiring instruction by using existing community resources, and achieve mastery of all the competencies required, and demonstrate an occupational or specialized skill. Through the NEDP assessment, mature adults demonstrate competence in:

- oral and written communication
- listening, reading and following directions
- problem solving and computation
- personal management: goal-setting and self-direction
- appreciation of cultural diversity and the need for teamwork
- effective use of resources
- career development, plus an entry-level job skill

These competencies fall under the broader areas of communication, computation, self-awareness, social awareness, consumer awareness, scientific awareness, and occupational preparedness.

NEDP asks adults to demonstrate what they have learned – what skills and competencies they have acquired in work and life. Participants both demonstrate and increase their awareness of social, consumer, aesthetic, governmental, and scientific issues by:

- gathering data
- manipulating data
- analyzing and synthesizing data
- applying data in context
- solving problems using the data collected

During the Assessment process adults are empowered to:

- direct their own learning
- set their own goals and follow through
- learn how to learn

The NEDP was designed to meet the needs of adults so the program features:

- *A multi-faceted assessment approach:* Your assessor will use a variety of performance demonstrations as alternatives to paper and pencil tests. Oral and written competence is assessed and simulations of life tasks make paper and pencil tasks relevant.
- *Private appointments and at-home work:* These features allow the program and the learning to be confidential, self-paced, and flexible. Pacing is dependent on the skill of the candidate rather than on the skill of the teacher. Time lost because of real life responsibilities are not penalized; adults compete only with themselves.
- *Open information:* Adults are expected to be responsible for their own learning. They are always told what they will be asked to do before the demonstrations so they can prepare themselves.
- *Continuous feedback:* Throughout the program participants receive written reports of competencies that are "demonstrated" or "not demonstrated." The feedback is both oral and written, and is accompanied by referrals to existing community educational resources.

Often, time, fear, lack of confidence, and other reasons keep adults from advancing in the workplace, getting a job, taking the GED or pursuing a high school diploma in traditional programs. The nature of the National External Diploma Program helps eliminate those types of obstacles for a motivated adult so they can, indeed, earn their high school diploma.

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