Ability to Benefit (ATB)

Get help to pay for college without a high school diploma.

If you don't have a high school diploma or GED, there may be a way for you to get financial aid to help pay for college through ATB.

What is the Ability to Benefit?

ATB is a program that allows students (minimum of 16 years) without a high school diploma, GED, or home school diploma to qualify for financial aid, "if they can prove they have the ability to benefit from a college education." Getting financial aid through ATB can help pay for tuition, fees, books and supplies and other educational expenses for college-level courses.

Who is eligible for Ability to Benefit?

A student may be eligible if they:

- do not have a high school diploma or GED.
- plan on participating in an eligible career pathway program.

At Bates, you have three options to show you have the ability to benefit:

Option One:

Passing an independently administered Department of Education-approved ATB test.

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ATB test	Passing scores	Test publisher contact information
* Combined English Language Skills Assessment (CELSA), Forms 1 and 2 Effective Date: November 1, 2002	CELSA Form 1 (97), CELSA Form 2 (97)	Association of Classroom Teacher Testers (ACCT), 1187 Coast Village Road, Suite 1, #378, Montecito, CA 93108. Contact: Telephone: (805) 965-5704. Fax: (805) 965-5807. Email: *actt@cappassociates.com.*
ACCUPLACER Computer-adaptive tests and COMPANION ACCUPLACER Forms J and K: Reading Test, Writing Test, and Arithmetic Test	Reading Test (233), Writing Test (235), Arithmetic Test (230)	The College Board, 250 Vesey Street, New York, NY 10281. Contact: ACCUPLACER Program. Telephone: (800) 607-5223. Email: *accuplacer@collegeboard.org.*
* * Texas Success Initiative (TSI) Assessment—Computer-adaptive tests and COMPANION TSI Forms T and V: Reading Placement Test, Writing Placement Test, Mathematics Placement Test	Reading Placement Test (336), Writing Placement Test (345), Mathematics Placement Test (326).	

* ***Note:*** *As provided in 34 CFR 668.153(a)(2), the CELSA test is approved as the additional ATB English language proficiency test that must be taken by students whose native language is not English and who are not fluent in English if the academic program includes an ESL component.*

* * ***Note:*** *TSI remains a provisionally approved test and can continue to be used to establish title IV aid eligibility. If the Department denies full approval, we will provide notice of the denial through publication in the* ***Federal Register*** *, pursuant to 34 CFR 668.150(c)(3).*

Option Two

Students must have completed six college-level credits or 225 clock hours that are eligible for a Title IV-eligible degree offered by the postsecondary institution. Remedial and developmental coursework does not count towards this requirement. The course work must demonstrate that the student has the ability to benefit from the post-secondary program enrolled in or intends to enroll in. The course(s) do not need to be applied to the specific degree or program in which they are enrolled.

Option Three

Completing a state process approved by the Secretary of Education.

The Washington State Ability to Benefit Option Two: Co-enrollment Option

The approved Washington State Option Two for Ability to Benefit gives students access through co-enrollment in a High School+ (HS+) and I-BEST Title IV eligible career pathways.

The requirements of this process are as follows:

- students must qualify for federally supported levels of basic skills education.
- students must meet all entrance requirements to enroll in I-BEST per program entrance requirements.
- Students and programs must continue to meet all other ATB eligibility requirements.

***See policies and procedures for additional details.**

Fill out the FAFSA or WASFA

If you have not completed the current year's FAFSA, visit studentaid.gov, or for the WASFA (for undocumented students), go to visit wsac.wa.gov/wasfa.

If you have any questions contact financial aid at financialaid@batestech.edu or call 253.680.7020

Revised: August 7, 2025 - JV