

[KRS 158.142](#) establishes the Early Graduation Program (EGP), an optional program in which a student may receive a high school diploma, Early Graduation Certificate and scholarship award from the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) upon successful completion of all EGP requirements provided in [704 KAR 3:305, Section 5](#) in three (3) academic years or less.

Any student who chooses to enroll in the EGP for the 2024-2025 academic year and beyond must meet all state and local graduation requirements specified under 704 KAR 3:305, Section 5, including the **successful completion of a performance-based project, portfolio, or capstone, which shall be required of all EGP students**, beginning July 1, 2024, (7).

## EGP Performance-Based Requirement (effective 2024-2025)

Per 704 KAR 3:305, Section 5(6), “By July 1, 2024, each local board of education shall establish a policy requiring high schools to determine performance descriptors and evaluation procedures for an EGP performance-based project, portfolio, or capstone, required for students who intend to complete the EGP beginning with the 2024-2025 academic year.”

Regulation further requires that the school’s performance descriptors and evaluation procedures “**shall provide an opportunity for the student to demonstrate attainment of... critical skills required for postsecondary and career success,**” (Section 5(6)).

In order to support local schools in meeting the regulatory requirements provided above, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) has developed this resource for school-based leaders, counselors and other staff responsible for determining performance descriptors and evaluation procedures for the EGP performance-based project, portfolio, or capstone, (hereby referred to as “capstone”) prior to its implementation in the 2024-2025 academic year.

### Required Capstone Design Elements

For EGP students to have adequate opportunities to practice, grow and demonstrate attainment of critical skills required for postsecondary and career success, 704 KAR 3:305(5)(6) requires schools to integrate, at minimum, the following four design elements:

1. **Attainment of essential workplace ethics program components as established by the board of education pursuant to [KRS 158.1413](#);**
2. **Demonstration of an ability to apply the [Kentucky Academic Standards](#), established in [704 KAR 3:303](#) and [704 KAR Chapter 8](#), as a life-long learner and contributing member of society;**
3. **Demonstration of written and verbal communication skills needed for postsecondary success; and**
4. **Demonstration of an ability to think critically, synthesize information and draw conclusions.**

### Design Considerations

A capstone is a multifaceted assignment that serves as a culminating academic and intellectual experience for students, typically during their final year of high school or middle school or at the end of an academic program or learning-pathway experience. Capstone projects may take a wide variety of

forms, but most are long-term investigative projects that culminate in a final product, presentation or performance.

### Characteristics of a High-Quality Performance-Based Experiences<sup>1</sup>

Elicits evidence of learning that matters:

- The critical skills being demonstrated are in high demand and/or are highly transferable to the real world.
- The capstone aligns to the *Kentucky Academic Standards* so that the student may demonstrate acquisition of knowledge.
- The capstone is cognitively complex and challenges students to apply higher-order thinking skills while navigating and adjusting to novel experiences.

Criteria is specific:

- It is clear to students what skills and knowledge are required to successfully complete the capstone.
- Students know what learning is expected of them in order to demonstrate the requirements of the capstone, at a developmentally appropriate level.

Student-led:

- Students are expected to take charge of their capstone experience.
- The capstone experience is personalized by allowing students to:
  - Choose and design their own process and product;
  - Express their own views; and
  - Access personal strengths, interests, passions, backgrounds and cultures.

Authentic:

- The capstone is driven by a clear purpose and offers solutions to real world problems that directly impact the community and world around them.
- Provides opportunities for the student to engage with people of influence.
- The capstone allows the student to take intellectual risks.

A learning experience in and of itself:

- Students learn through the capstone experience itself.
- Learners can see how they have been challenged to think differently.
- Students understand the importance of their ability to effectively apply critical skills needed for postsecondary success.

### Example Capstone Types

As a student-led experience, capstones can take many forms, and 704 KAR 3:305, Section 5 does not limit students in their design. Some examples may include, but are not limited to:

Action research project	Co-curricular experience	Community engagement experience
Portfolio	Design/Prototype	Independent research project
Oral/visual presentation	Experience-based reflection	Argument or informational text

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### Sample Performance-Based Capstone Rubric

Schools may wish to align the four required design elements outlined in 704 KAR 3:305(5)(6) to their [local](#) Portrait of a Learner model.

KDE's sample [EGP performance-based capstone rubric](#) also serves as an option for how schools might align the EGP capstone requirements with the statewide [Kentucky Portrait of a Learner](#) framework.

For additional resources, visit the KDE's [Early Graduation Program](#) webpage.

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<sup>1</sup> [Modified]. Envision Learning Partners (n.d.). *Performance assessment (PA) is the demonstration and evaluation of applied skills that can be taught and learned* [Google Slides]. Retrieved from [https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1jzErReT22dnj5c5xJmcqOXRjK6CDgl43RCz4UxmDO4/edit#slide=id.ged822727e90\\_20](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1jzErReT22dnj5c5xJmcqOXRjK6CDgl43RCz4UxmDO4/edit#slide=id.ged822727e90_20).