

Home Study Frequently Asked Questions:

Policy Update – August 2023

Updates in the Law

Q: H261 was recently signed by the Governor. When does it take effect?

A: The new law is in effect as of July 1, 2023.

End of the Year Assessments

Q: Do I need to complete the End of the Year Assessment (EOYA) for the 2022-2023 school year?

A: Yes and No. Families must assess their students at the end of the 2022-2023 school year and maintain a copy of the assessment. If your student was enrolled in Home Study during the 2022-2023 school year *and* you wish to receive a Verification Letter (a letter that identifies your student's date/s of enrollment and that your student completed the 2022-2023 Home Study requirements, generally used for colleges, the military or potential employers), then you **MUST** complete and submit an acceptable EOYA to the Home Study Team.

If your student *does not need* a verification letter, then you *do not* need to submit the 2022-2023 EOYA to the Home Study Team.

Q: Do I need to complete the End of the Year Assessment (EOYA) for the next school year (2023-2024)?

A: Yes and No. Families must continue to assess their student's progress (separate assessment for each child if more than one child in household is enrolled in home study) using one of the acceptable forms of assessment and maintain a copy of the assessment for future use. EOYAs should be kept until the student reaches the age of 18. Future uses may include:

- Determine grade placements upon initial enrollment/re-enrollment in public/independent schools
- Use as part of any comprehensive assessment for disabilities
- Use to determine credit or proficiencies toward graduation requirements

While families must assess their students, it is not required for them to submit their assessment to AOE (this new rule is in effect for the 2023-2024 school year).

Q: Is there a reason why I might want to submit an EOYA for the 2022-2023 school year?

A: Yes, if you will want your student (most likely high school aged) to receive a Verification letter (which essentially identifies when your student was enrolled in home study, and that they completed the Home Study requirements for their year(s) of enrollment). Since Home Study students do not receive diplomas or certificates from the Agency of Education, the Verification letter may be submitted to the military, colleges, technical education centers and potential employees.

To receive a Verification letter for the 2022-2023 school year, an EOYA must be submitted and reviewed and approved by AOE as meeting the 2022-2023 school year requirements (please note that a Verification letter and a Complete letter are not the same). Thereafter, EOYAs do not need to be submitted to AOE. However, you still may choose to do so if you would like the Agency to review and provide a Verification letter.

If you have already completed and submitted your EOYA and wish to receive a Verification letter, please contact Marianne at Marianne.robtham@vermont.gov

Q: I have already submitted my EOYA, and I have been notified that I need to present more information. Do I still need to do that?

A: Yes and No. While you should gather the information requested to add to your EOYA, you DO NOT need to submit the additional information to the Home Study Team UNLESS you want a Verification letter. In that case, you WILL need to submit the outstanding documentation requested by the Team before the Verification letter can be provided.

Enrollment

Q: When do I need to enroll my student for the 2023-2024 school year?

A: Per state statute, each student must be enrolled in a home study program, public or independent school by the first day of school in your town of residence.

New law requires that a Notice of Intent must be received by the AOE Home Study Team 10 business days prior to the intended start date of the Home Study program. **This means that you must enroll your student at least 10 business days prior to the first day of school in your town of residence.**

Please note that the August 1, deadline for the Minimum Course of Study (MCOS) has been eliminated as there is no longer a need to submit a copy of the MCOS each year.

Q: Can I enroll my student in a Home Study program during the school year?

A: Yes, you can enroll a student in a Home Study program any time during the school year as long as the student remains enrolled in the public/independent school while the Home Study Team processes the paperwork. You must submit the paperwork at least 10 days prior to beginning your Home Study program.

Q: I am enrolling my student/s for the first time, what do I need to submit?

A: Two forms (please note that we have changed the name of the forms below):

1. A Notice of Intent Form
2. Independent Professional Evidence (IPE) Report Form OR
 - a. A report card if the student was previously enrolled in a VT public school OR
 - b. Other alternative evidence such as an IEP, 504 plan or letter/report from a medical or educational professional.

Q: What do I need to fill out if I have a returning Home Study student (for the 2023-2024 school year)?

A: Returning students must complete a Notice of Intent Form and submit to the Home Study Team. This is the only document that is required. This needs to be submitted at least 10 days prior to starting your Home Study program.

However, if your returning student will be enrolling in Dual Enrollment (DE) or Early College (EC), an MCOS must be submitted to the Home Study Team who will then share the information with the DE/EC Team.

Q: I submitted my forms for the 2023-2024 school year prior to July 1, 2023. What do I need to do now?

A: Families who submitted their information prior to July 1, 2023 *and* have received Complete Letters will not need to submit any additional information based on the new rules.

Q: I submitted my forms for the 2023-2024 school year after July 1, 2023 using OLD forms. What do I need to do now?

A: The old forms are missing the required attestations. We will need to have them before the enrollment process is complete. You can either submit a new form (the Notice of Intent form) that includes the attestations, or the staff can send you an email asking you to agree to the attestations required in the new law.

Minimum Course of Study

Q: Do I need to fill out a Minimum Course of Study (MCOS) for the 2023-2024 school year?

A: Yes and No. The rules require that all students enrolled in Home Study must continue to receive instruction in the 5 core subjects: reading/writing, math, citizenship/government/history, literature, and natural science. Students who are 12 or younger must also receive instruction in Physical Education (PE), health and fine arts.

It is recommended that families develop some form of MCOS for each student to use as a guide when developing/implementing the curriculum, but it is not a requirement. If you develop an MCOS, it's recommended that you maintain a copy of the MCOS if the student transitions from Home Study program to a public/independent school. The school may request a copy of the MCOS for grade placement or other purposes.

For students who are going to be enrolled in Dual Enrollment (DE) or Early College (EC), the MCOS continues to be required.

Attestation

Q: The new law requires that parents/guardians sign an “attestation”. What does that mean?

A: There are four sections in the new law that require parents/guardians to “attest” to something. It means that the parent/guardian who signs the document certifies that the information provided is correct.

For example, if you are the sole parent/guardian of a student, you must sign that you “attest” that you are the only parent/guardian with legal educational rights. Please remember that you are signing a legal document guaranteeing that you as the parent/guardian will follow the Home Study requirements.

Q: What areas need to include the attestation?

A: There are 4 attestations: 2 are required attestations for each student, and 2 attestations are needed on a case-by-case basis.

1. All families must attest that student progress is assessed at the end of each school year AND that the family will maintain a copy of the assessment (required for each student.)
2. All families must attest that each student is provided with the equivalent of at least 175 days of instruction each school year (required for each student.)
3. Families who have students with documented disabilities must attest to providing the student with adaptations to support the student in the home study program (not applicable to all students.)
4. Parents/Guardians who have sole legal educational rights must attest that they are the only person who can make legal educational decisions for the student (not applicable to all students.)

Students with Documented Disabilities

Q: For my student who has disabilities, do I need to submit a list of adaptations?

A: No. If your student needs adaptations, you will need to attest that you will provide them to the student as needed.

If you have questions about adaptations, visit our [website](#) or contact the Home Study staff at aoe.homestudy@vermont.gov.

Legal Custody/Legal Educational Rights

Q: The new law requires that: *parents or guardians of the child with legal custody who are legally authorized to make educational decisions for the student* must sign off on the home study paperwork. What does legal custody mean in this instance?

A: Legal custody means that the parent/guardian has a legal right to participate in the making of educational decisions regarding the student. Only one parent/guardian or both may have such legal rights.

Legal custody is not the same as physical custody after a divorce or separation. It *does not* mean that the parent who has physical custody has sole rights to make educational decisions.

Unless the parent/guardian has had their legal educational rights removed by a court, both parents/guardians must sign the paperwork.

Verification Letters

Q: What is a Verification Letter?

A: VT AOE does not provide families with Diplomas or Certificates of Completion for their Home Study education. Instead, we offer a Verification letter. This letter (on VT AOE letterhead) identifies your student's date/s of enrollment and that your student **completed** the Home Study requirements. Families have used Verification letters for colleges, employment, and the military to verify that their student has successfully completed their home study program. It does not

state that the student has graduated, has met graduation requirements or that the student passed a specific grade level.

Q: Do I need a Verification Letter?

A: Each family is different and will make their own decision. Some families home school their students every year up through their 18th birthday. Others only enroll during elementary school, and still others only enrolled for a short time (i.e. during the pandemic). Having a Verification letter will be important if the student was enrolled in Home Study when they were “high school” aged or if they will “graduate” from their home study program. If your student will only be enrolling in Home Study for a couple of years in elementary or middle school, then you probably will not need a Verification letter.