

EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT THE EXTERNAL DIPLOMA PROGRAM (EDP) AND WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW THESE THINGS

THE DEFINITION OF EXTERNAL DIPLOMA PROGRAM

The External Diploma Program (EDP) 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 a 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, plus an occupational or specialized skill.

Through the EDP 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

The areas are communication, computation, self-awareness, social awareness, consumer awareness, scientific awareness, and occupational preparedness.

EDP asks adults to demonstrate what they have learned. They have acquired in work and life. How can adults sharpen their skills as workers, parents, and citizens.

Time, fear, lack of confidence, and other reasons, keep adults from advancing in the workplace, get a job, or take the GED.

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:

- self-direct their own learning

- set their own goals and follow through
- learn to learn

The EDP was designed to meet the needs of adults. The program features:

- *A multi-faceted assessment approach:* The EDP uses a variety of performance demonstrations as alternatives to paper and pencil tests. Oral as well as written competence is assessed. Simulations of life tasks make paper projects 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 responsibility is 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.