

The American High School Diploma



How does the Diploma compare to its British and SA equivalents? This is actually a difficult question to answer – and even in my literature research, few was written on this subject. My thinking behind this is due to the flexibility of the Diploma – it is so difficult to fit in a box.

So, in short, the answer is yes, the Diploma is second-to-none, as it is definitely not a ‘one-size-fits-all’ school leaving solution.

What is an American High School Diploma?

A high school diploma is a North American academic school leaving qualification awarded upon high school graduation. The high school diploma is typically studied for over the course of three to four years, from grade 9 to grade 12.

Is the American High School Diploma accepted in South Africa as a matric certificate?

Yes, definitely! The Advanced American High School Diploma (also called College Prep or Honors Diploma) is equivalent to the Cambridge A levels matric or SA gr. 13.

It is also recognized by the South African Matriculation Board and USAF for university bound students. To study at a South African university, you will need matric exemption. If you did not follow the traditional South African formal secondary school route (CAPS & IEB), you will have to apply for matric exemption from USAF (same as Cambridge).

What is a matriculation exemption?

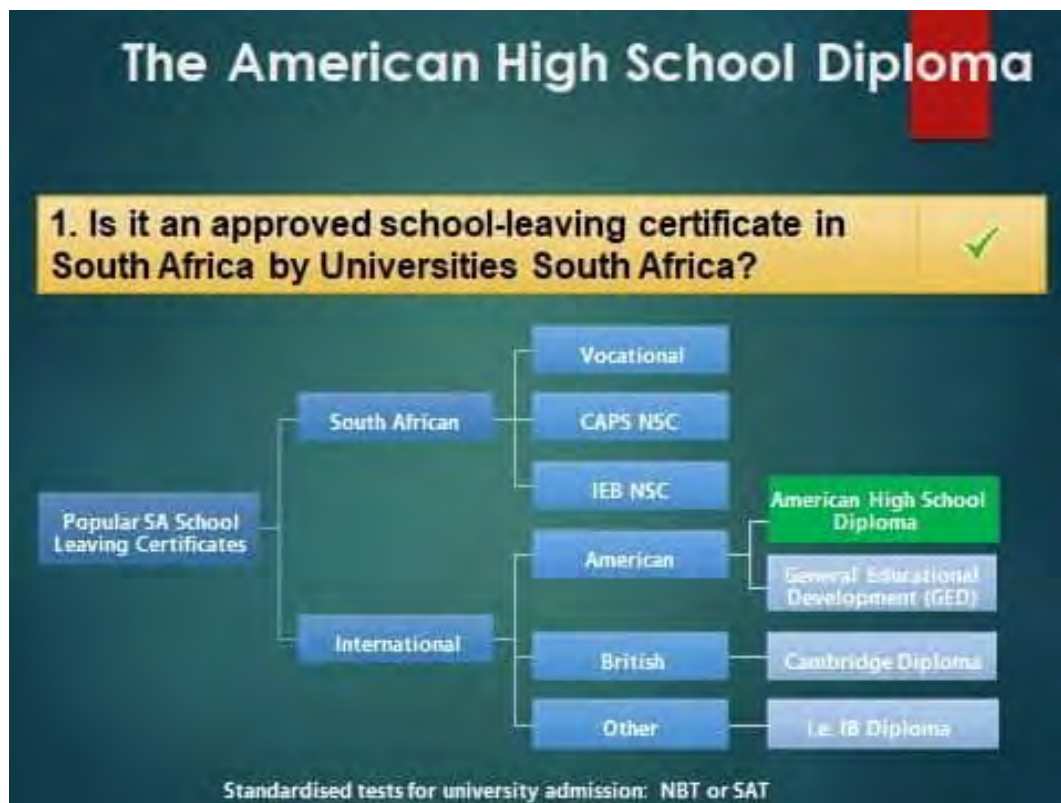
A matriculation exemption is a legal requirement for first-degree study at a South African university.

1. Foreign students wishing to register for first-degree studies in South Africa must have their school qualifications evaluated by the Matriculation Board that will then issue a certificate of exemption to those who qualify.
2. South African students who did not pass Senior Certificate with endorsement are required by law to apply for a matriculation exemption through the Matriculation Board.

Requirements for Exemption Certificates

Candidates who did not follow the formal secondary school route in the South African schooling system need to qualify for a certificate of complete or conditional exemption from the matriculation endorsement requirements in terms of the provisions contained in regulations 10-40, as published in Government Notice (GN) 1226 of 1 December 2000 and amended in GN 1001, 1272 and 1345 of 12 October 2001, 11 October 2002 and of 26 September 2003 respectively.

For exemption requirements from USAF/ SA Matriculation Board with an American High School Diploma see: <https://mb.usaf.ac.za/united-states-of-america/>



Slide credit: Annerine Wenhold, AW Coaching.

The American High School Diploma, indicated in green, is an established and approved qualification, as it represents the satisfactory completion of education from kindergarten through 12th grade.

And specifically contains a transcript of the completed coursework for grades 9 through 12 in Math, English, Social Studies, Science, and a range of elective subjects such as Fine Arts.

American High School Diploma AW Coaching

1. Is it an approved school-leaving certificate in South Africa? ✓

2. Is the American High School Diploma the same as the GED? ✗

GED
General Educational Development
Abbreviations.com

GED is a high school equivalency document

Slide credit: Annerine Wenhold, AW Coaching.

A question that has been asked frequently is whether the Diploma is the same as the GED (General Education Development Certificate)? This is a common misconception.

The answer is however straight forward: no, it is not.

Various differences exist, with the most substantial being that the Diploma is issued after completing a particular jurisdiction's high school educational requirements, whereas the GED is 4 national tests taken after the age of 17, which indicates that you've achieved US high school educational standards by assessing your reasoning in language and maths, and your science and social studies knowledge. And which culminates in the receipt of a GED Certificate.

Note, that although a high school equivalency diploma such as the GED is on paper equivalent to a high school diploma, our SA and even the USA universities and employers prefer a traditional high school diploma over the GED, and might look down on or not accept it.



Slide credit: Annerine Wenhold, AW Coaching.

According to Universities South Africa (USAF <https://mb.usaf.ac.za/>) there are 2 pathways through which the diploma could be obtained for admission to a SA university:

- a. Obtain your **Diploma** through an accredited institution (accredited by an USAF approved accreditation body, in our case: WASC – Western Association of Schools & Colleges), together with a **letter which certified that you are eligible for admission to any US university**; or a
- b. **Diploma** with at least **2 subjects passed on Advanced Placement (AP)-level** with a grade of 3-5 (where 5 is the highest) and **SAT results** (certain standard thereof required).

The universities, and the particular faculty might add requirements to these, so best to follow-up with your particular university of choice to verify requirements if it is not clear from their policy.



For your Diploma to be accredited, you need to enrol in an online school/ virtual school/ umbrella school that is accredited. Educ8 SA is one of the top choices!

An abundance of accredited service providers is available. With service delivery being important in a competitive US market, an adviser is typically allocated to your student and his/her family, who will guide you through the course selection process to reach your educational goals. You will furthermore be (pleasantly) surprised at the number and nature of courses offered.

Online schools: some providers are very flexible, and you can enrol anytime, do your work from anywhere and at any time through the academic year. Some may be more restricted with enrolment time, require class attendance, or have a fixed assignment/test schedule. Obtain also clarity on their transfer policy for completed courses, and the number of courses a student is allowed to take annually. In determining the value of an online high school program, you will want to consider the following: rate of successful program completion, ease of communication with the school and with teachers, flexibility and delivery of classes, counselling and tutoring services, individualized programming, availability of specialization (engineering, religion, arts, etc.), dual credit offerings, and extracurricular activities or clubs.

Accredited Online Service Providers in South Africa & Beyond:

Educ8 SA <https://www.educ8sa.com/american-high-school-diploma-program>