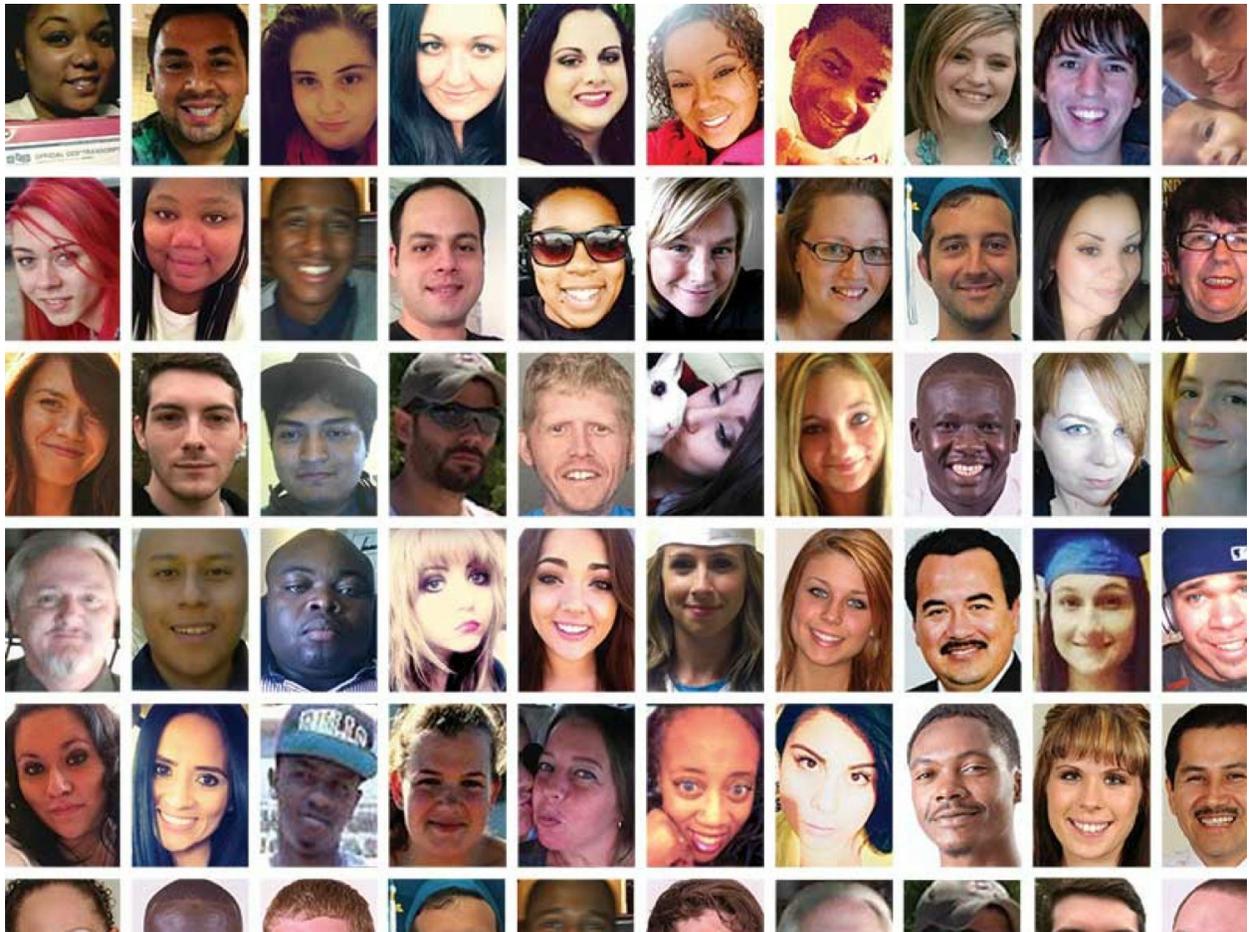

Efficacy Report

GEDTS

March 23, 2016



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Product Summary

The GED® Program launched in January 2014 as part of the continuing effort of the GED Testing Service to help adult learners obtain the credentials needed to access a variety of postsecondary education pathways and to progress in the workplace and in job training programs. The program operates primarily in the US, although there is also an international presence, discussed in later sections of this report.

The GED® Program is founded on two key assessments with related but differing purposes: the flagship GED® test, the nationally recognized high school equivalency test developed by experts with a 70-year history in high school equivalency; and the GED Ready® Official Practice Test, which provides a score predictive of performance on the operational GED® test.

Both tests were developed concurrently, with similar specifications, yet are utilized differently. GED Ready® was built to the same content specifications as the GED® test and therefore allows individuals to evaluate their likelihood of success on the GED® test. GED Ready® also provides an opportunity to gain additional testing experience as well as exposure to the content and format of the GED® test. The GED® test itself is intended for jurisdictions to award a high school-level credential. The GED® test is also an indication of readiness for some jobs, job training programs, and/or credit-bearing postsecondary education coursework. The GED® test is:

- Aligned with current high school standards (including grade 12 standards) and career- and college-readiness expectations.
- Delivered exclusively on computer which provides a consistent testing experience nationwide.
- Features same-day scoring on all four parts including the new score report for reporting and remediation.
- Offers three score levels:
 - GED® Passing Score: at or higher than the minimum needed to demonstrate high school equivalency-level skills and abilities.
 - GED(R) College Ready: at or higher than the minimum needed to demonstrate readiness for credit bearing college courses.
 - GED(R) College Ready+Credit: at or higher than the minimum needed to qualify for granting of up to 10 semester hours of college credit.
- an opt-in feature enabling learners to receive text messages sent from the program to help support them and keep them on track with their progress towards attaining their GED(R) credential.
- The GEDWorks™ initiative, in which the GED Testing Service is partnering with major employers to provide instruction, coaching, and other support to their employees who are seeking to attain their GED® credential.

In conclusion, the GED Testing Service has made a public commitment to ensuring that the test content and performance levels will be monitored over time and kept current with corresponding content and performance requirements leading to awarding of regular high school diplomas.

Intended Outcomes

Intended Outcome 1: Learners will meet their personal goals after earning their GED(R) credential.

The US is facing a national crisis. Millions of adults, without high school diplomas, lack the skills and knowledge to succeed in the 21st century marketplace (OECD, 2013). This impacts every community in the US.

That's why the GED Testing Service has built not just a new test, but a new comprehensive program. The 2014 GED® program ensures that an adult's high school equivalency credential signifies he or she has the skills and knowledge necessary to take the next critical steps in his or her life.

Intended Outcome 2: After earning their GED(R) credential, learners will progress to post-secondary education.

In response to an increasingly competitive labor market and a growing skills gap in the workforce, the GED(R) test underwent another significant revision in 2014. The revised version of the test allows learners who score at the highest level to earn college credits, which could further encourage them to pursue post-secondary education.

Intended Outcome 3: Learners will complete and pass the full 4-part exam battery of the GED(R) test at increasing rates over time.

Passing the GED(R) test at the high school equivalency level is an important first step in helping learners progress toward their long-term goals. The new GED(R) Program has been designed with an extensive amount of learner resources, including the MyGED(R) Portal through which learners access instructional materials, information about their progress towards passing the test, the detailed score report showing areas of strength and weakness, and information about careers and college pathways. These resources are designed to help more students be successful in passing the test than in the past.

Intended Outcome 4: Learners will increasingly pass the GED(R) test at the two college and career-readiness performance standards of the GED(R) test, GED(R) College Ready and GED(R) College Ready+Credit.

Although passing the GED(R) test at the high school equivalency level is the first step in the learner journey, the majority of jobs in the future that provide family-sustaining income will require postsecondary credentials, above and beyond high school equivalency. The supports provided by the GED(R) program are designed to help learners demonstrate their skills at career-and college-readiness levels at increasing rates over time.

Intended Outcome 5: More learners actively use the preparation tools and resources available to them through the MyGED(R) portal.

MyGED(R) is the start-to-finish online portal for test-takers and those who work with them. Launched at the end of November 2013, MyGED™ is the hub for all GED® test activities

providing a personalized online program that guides test-takers through the entire testing process. It also provides resources to assist in transitions to postsecondary education and careers.

Intended Outcome 6: More learners will use the GED Ready(R) Official Practice test, which predicts their score on the operational test, as part of their test preparation strategy.

The GED Ready® went through the same norming and standardization study as the official test. That means the questions are designed to mimic the official test and that the test results are predictive of how a student will perform on the official test. Test feedback includes an indicator of how likely a learner is to pass the GED(R) test given their performance on the GED Ready(R). The GED Ready(R) enhanced score report also provides learners with targeted study plans highlighting both their academic strengths to build upon and areas to address in further preparation activities.

As a result, the GED Ready® is the closest thing to taking the GED® test without actually taking the test and the best way for students to prepare.

Intended Outcome 7: Learners will experience increased satisfaction with the testing experience and with access to the GED(R) Program.

Historically, adult learners have not had much information about the GED(R) test nor much control in how they access and take the test. One of the goals in providing additional information and resources to learners is to enable them to increase their success with the program and to experience increased satisfaction with the results. The GED Testing Service is implementing a long term research program which will measure learner satisfaction with the program over time.

Intended Outcome 8: An increasing number of learners without a high school diploma will have access to the tools and resources provided by GEDTS to help them make progress on their learning goals.

In the past, tools and resources for the GED(R) test were often difficult to obtain, as most programs were operated at the local level. The online MyGED(R) portal now makes information, tools, and resources widely available to anyone with an Internet connection. These more accessible tools are intended to help improve the outreach to learners in need of a high school equivalency credential to take advantage of the GED(R) program in increasing numbers over time.

Foundational Research

Overview of Foundational Research

The overall design and framework of the GED(R) Program is centered around providing measurements and tools documenting and promoting student achievement. Therefore, the program design is built around increasing efficacy. More information about the test itself and the underlying documentation and validity framework may be found in the 2014 GED(R) Test Technical Manual on the GED Testing Service website.

The philosophy underlying the GED® test is that there is a foundational core of academic skills and content knowledge that an adult must demonstrate to be certified as prepared to enter a job, a training program, or an entry-level, credit-bearing postsecondary course. This foundational core of knowledge and skills is defined by career- and college-readiness standards (Pimentel, 2013), now adopted in some form by the majority of states.

The GED® test has three purposes:

1. To provide a high school–level credential.
2. To provide information about a candidate’s academic strengths and weaknesses.
3. To provide evidence of readiness to enter workforce training programs, careers, or postsecondary education.

The GED® test is future-focused: that is, it is designed to provide information about candidate readiness that is directly tied to the next steps in a candidate’s preparation and training. Many factors impact actual workplace or postsecondary success (such as engagement, teamwork, or creativity). However, the GED® test focuses on those foundational career and college academic skills and knowledge that are critical for candidates to be prepared for the next step in their future, whether they seek to enter the workforce or some form of postsecondary education for further education and training.

Intended Product Implementation

Overview of Intended Product Implementation

The GED(R) test has been in existence since 1942, but the revised GED(R) program was implemented starting in November 2013 with the launch of the GED Ready(R) and the MyGED(R) portal, which included the Enhanced Score Report. The operational GED(R) test followed with implementation in January 2014. In the time since the initial launches occurred, the program has continued to be enhanced and new resources added. Some of the recent enhancements include the implementation of:

- Pathsource, a free tool for learners to use to explore a variety of career pathways,
- GED Works™, an employer-sponsored program supporting employees in the achievement of their GED(R) credential, and
- Updated test performance levels which enable high-performing students to earn college credits as a result of their GED(R) test performance.

Additional enhancements will continue to be implemented on an ongoing basis, all of which are designed to improve student outcomes and increase efficacy.

Product Research

Overview of Product Research

GED Testing Service recognizes the importance of a high school degree not only on one's future but also on the economy. As reported in the New York Post (Feb 25, 2013), there are 39 million adults who do not have a high school diploma. High school dropouts cost the US \$1.8 billion annually. Conversely, it has been found that if the number of dropouts among Americans aged 20 was cut in half, the US would gain \$45 billion in higher tax revenues and lower costs for health, jail, and welfare (Purdue Extension Learning Network of Clinton County, 2014). In addition, if the US had in recent years closed the gap between its educational achievement levels and those of better-performing nations, GDP in 2008 could have been \$1.3 trillion to \$2.3 trillion higher. This represents 9 to 16% of GDP (McKinsey & Company, 2009).

There is an extensive body of research documenting the value of completing and passing the GED® on the life outcomes of test takers. Key findings include the following.

- Adults who earn a GED® credential can earn as much weekly wages as a high school graduate. Compared to non- GED® holders, GED® holders can increase their earning potential by about \$115 per week (Song & Hsu, 2008).
- An analysis of 12 years of data showed that, as of 2008, GED(R) test credential recipients earned higher hourly compensation, worked more hours, had higher family incomes, enjoyed higher job satisfaction, and tended to receive better fringe benefits from their employers than uncredentialed high school dropouts. From a longitudinal perspective, for each year after earning a GED(R) test credential, the hourly wages of credential recipients would increase by 2.0% beyond increases in wages of uncredentialed high school dropouts that come with the accumulation of work experiences (Song, 2011).
- Historically, about 43% of GED® test passers enroll in postsecondary education, 26% of the enrollees persist through post-secondary education, and about 12% of postsecondary enrollees with GED® credentials graduate (GED Testing Service, 2011).

The revisions to the GED® program aim to give adults without a high school diploma another chance to go to college or get a good job with higher wages and to produce better long-term future outcomes than were historically the case.

Future Research Plans

Overview of Future Research Plans

GED Testing Service has a comprehensive research plan that will be conducted over, at minimum, the next five years to fully examine and document outcomes and efficacy results associated with the revised test. The research plan seeks to build evidence relating to two factors that underlie and support the learner outcomes that were outlined above, around two major claims.

- Claim 1: An individual passing the GED(R) test at the HSE performance level will be afforded the same opportunities as a traditional high school graduate. These opportunities include applying for postsecondary education (PSE), some jobs, and job training programs. The HSE credential makes no claims about probabilities of success.
- Claim 2: An individual passing the GED(R) test at the GED(R) with Honors (college-and-career-readiness or CCR) level has demonstrated the skills and knowledge necessary to be prepared for an entry-level, credit-bearing postsecondary course, job training program, and some jobs.

The research agenda addresses the following primary research questions:

1. What proportion of GED® graduates apply to a PSE institution or job training program?
2. What proportion of GED® graduates are accepted to PSE institutions or job training programs?
3. To what types of PSE institutions do GED® graduates apply, and to what institutions do they get accepted?
4. How do the answers to the questions above compare to (a) those who do not earn a GED® credential and to (b) high school graduates?
5. What proportion of GED® graduates are accepted into the military?
6. What proportion of GED® graduates obtain employment after obtaining a HSE credential?

The overall approach to these research questions is to conduct the following studies:

1. Conduct a data match with the National Student Clearinghouse to collect baseline data on the progression of GED(R) graduates to post-secondary education.
2. Conduct a pilot study in preparation for the cohort and longitudinal studies to be conducted over the next several years.
3. Conduct an initial cohort study in 2016 and additional cohort studies at approximately two-year intervals.
4. Conduct a comprehensive, longitudinal study of GED® test takers.

5. Conduct control group studies on non-passers and on the sample of high school graduates who participated in the 2013 standardization and norming study.

Future Research Plans

<i>National Student Clearinghouse Data Match Study</i>	
Study Citation	GED Testing Service
Research Study Contributors	GED Testing Service
Type of Study	Data match
Sample Size	10,000 GED(R) graduates
Description of Sample	Sample drawn to represent the key demographic and geographic characteristics of 2014 GED(R) graduate
Outcomes Measured	What percentage of GED(R) graduates from 2014 enroll in postsecondary education programs within 12 months of receiving their credential?

Description

The best way to measure outcomes is to follow GED graduates on a regular basis for several years after testing. As a first step in measuring the progress of GED(R) graduates, GED Testing Service worked with the National Student Clearinghouse, an organization maintaining student-level data on enrollment in, performance in, and progress towards credential achievement in postsecondary education institutions. The initial sample was designed to take a first look at what percentage of GED(R) graduates are progressing to postsecondary education programs within the first 6-12 months of receiving their credential.

This study is still in progress.

<i>Pilot Study</i>	
Study Citation	GED Testing Service
Research Study Contributors	GED Testing Service
Type of Study	Survey
Sample Size	750 GED(R) graduates from 2014 and 2015, who scored at 150 or above on each of the four test modules.

Description of Sample	Sample drawn to represent the key demographic and geographic characteristics of 2014 GED(R) graduates.
Outcomes Measured	The initial survey will primarily be used to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introduce graduates to the survey approach, • garner participation for the longer term, and • collect baseline information about outcomes related to the GED® test and future educational and employment goals.

Description

In fall 2015 we drew a pilot sample of GED® test takers and conducted a baseline survey. The sample contained 750 GED(R) graduates, and included both HSE and CCR credential holders. The initial survey will primarily be used to introduce the study, garner participation for the longer term, and collect baseline information about outcomes related to the GED® test and future educational and employment goals.

The study is still in progress.

<i>Cohort Study</i>	
Intended Start Date	Winter 2016
Anticipated Length of Study	1 year
Type of Study	A cohort sample of GED(R) graduates from 2014 and 2015 drawn in winter 2016 and a baseline survey is in the process of being conducted. The survey is similar to that administered in the fall 2015 pilot study and is intended to establish a trend regarding PSE enrollment and employment outcomes.
Research Leads	Survey
Intended Sample Size	3,000 GED graduates from 2014 and 2015 who scored at 150 or above on each of the four test modules.
Description of Sample	Because the passing score for high school equivalency was adjusted from 150 to 145 effective January 1, 2016, this initial cohort study will examine only those students who passed the test with a score of 150. Longitudinal research will begin in 2017 to examine the outcomes for students scoring at 145 and above, since the performance changes were implemented retroactively, but also since those students would not have had an opportunity to move into postsecondary education as of the

	beginning of 2016. The sample for the cohort analysis could either be constrained to the two year interval or it could be stratified by year beginning with 2014 to the current year.
Outcomes to be Measured	Because our claims are linked to preparedness for entry-level, credit-bearing PSE classes and employment, we will conduct a cohort analysis every two years beginning in 2018. The purpose of the cohort analysis is to survey recent GED® test takers and determine some of the immediate outcomes.

Description

In winter 2016 another survey will be conducted involving 3,000 GED(R) graduates to collect first-semester data on those attending PSE, as well as other outcomes. These data would be the first opportunity to demonstrate how well GED® graduates perform in PSE. Additionally, we would collect information on employment history, as well as follow-up and update participants' educational and employment goals. Finally, we would match our sample with the Student Tracker database (which is maintained by National Student Clearinghouse) to verify enrollment numbers.

Following this, data collection will occur every year after that (i.e. follow-up every summer) for another five years (this timeline is based on the assumption that the average person requires six years to complete a PSE degree program). The study is still in progress.

<i>Longitudinal Studies</i>	
Intended Start Date	Spring 2017
Anticipated Length of Study	5 years or more
Type of Study	A cohort sample will be drawn in the spring, a baseline survey conducted in the summer, and a follow-up survey conducted the following winter. The surveys would be similar to those administered in fall 2015 and winter 2016 and would establish a trend regarding PSE enrollment and employment outcomes.
Research Leads	Survey
Intended Sample Size	GED Testing Service
Description of Sample	3,000 GED(R) graduates from 2014, 2015, and 2016.
Outcomes to be Measured	The longitudinal study is intended to follow a sample of GED® test takers over a longer period of time. The longitudinal study will provide opportunities to study some of the long term effects of having a GED® credential. Outcomes to be assessed include: enrollment in postsecondary education, employment, income.

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Description

In winter 2017 a survey will be conducted involving 3,000 GED(R) graduates to collect first-semester data on those enrolling in postsecondary education (PSE), as well as other tangible outcomes. These data would demonstrate how well GED® graduates perform in PSE. Additionally, we will collect information on employment history, as well as follow-up and update participants' educational and employment goals. Finally, we would match our sample with the Student Tracker database (which is maintained by National Student Clearinghouse) to verify enrollment numbers. Following this, data collection will occur every year after that (i.e. follow-up every summer) for another five years. (This timeline is based on the assumption that the average person requires six years to complete a PSE degree program.)

<i>Passers versus Non-passers Comparison Study</i>	
Intended Start Date	Winter 2017
Anticipated Length of Study	1 year
Type of Study	Survey
Research Leads	GED Testing Service
Intended Sample Size	1,000
Description of Sample	A sample of non-passers taken from the longitudinal study in order to make some comparisons between those who earn and those who do not earn the GED® credential.
Outcomes to be Measured	Examine the differential outcomes experienced by non-passers as opposed to GED(R) graduates.

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