

Frequently Asked Questions Related to Virtual Laboratory Experiences and the 1,200-minute Laboratory Requirement

This resource addresses frequently asked questions related to the [Amendment of Section 100.5\(b\) of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education Relating to the Laboratory Experience Required in Order to Take a Science Regents Examination](#). This option will ensure that all students have access to quality laboratory experiences, whether virtual or hands-on, that will fulfill the 1,200-minute laboratory requirement.

1. What is the laboratory requirement for admission into a Regents examination in science?

To qualify to take a Regents examination in any of the sciences, a student must complete 1,200 minutes of laboratory experiences with satisfactory documented laboratory reports.

Note: The 1,200 minutes of laboratory experience must be in addition to the required classroom instruction associated with earning a unit of credit. This requirement can be referenced in the Commissioner’s Regulations ([8 CRR-NY 100.5](#), Diploma Requirements).

2. What has changed with the requirement?

At the September 2022 meeting, the Board of Regents approved an amendment to Commissioner’s Regulations to allow the 1200-minute requirement to be met by “any combination of hands-on and simulated laboratory experience.” This flexibility had already been allowed in the 2020-21 and 2021-22 school years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but as a temporary measure. In response to feedback from teachers and districts, the Board of Regents voted in favor of making this flexibility permanent.

3. Can the 1200-minute requirement be met through virtual laboratory experiences?

Yes. Virtual laboratory experiences allow students to complete laboratory experiments through the use of technology. Virtual laboratory experiences may include internet-based activities, augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), extended reality (XR), or other technologies. Virtual laboratory experiences should be comparable to in-person laboratory experiences in that they engage students in learning by thinking, discussing, investigating, and creating. Just as with hands-on laboratory experiences, the expectation is that virtual laboratory experiences are aligned to the New York State Science Learning Standards and provide the opportunity for students to engage in active learning.

4. Who decides whether to use an in-person or simulated laboratory experience?

The method of providing laboratory experiences is locally determined by a teacher and/or administrator.

5. If a student is unable to complete 1,200 minutes of satisfactory laboratory experiences during a school year, can the school or district grant a waiver?

No. No waiver exists for the number of satisfactory laboratory minutes required for admission into a Regents examination in science.

Note: If a student completed a course culminating in a Regents examination in science during the 2019-20 or 2020-21 school year but was excused from the 1,200-minute laboratory requirement due to the COVID-19 pandemic, those minutes remain waived. Additional information may be found in the [Virtual Laboratory Experiences and the 1,200-Minute Science Laboratory Requirement for the 2021-22 School Year memo](#).

6. Can laboratory reports be stored electronically?

Yes, laboratory reports may be retained via digital or hard copy. Schools and districts are required to retain satisfactory written reports for a time period of at least six months following the administration of the science Regents examination.

7. Does NYSED recommend a vendor that will provide virtual labs?

No. In New York State, curricula, including programs, materials, and tools to support instruction of the learning standards, are determined by local schools and districts. The New York State Education Department is a non-endorsing state agency, thus does not approve local curriculum or endorse vendors.

8. Can a student be admitted into a Regents examination in science if they did not pass the associated course?

Yes. There are two instances where a student could be admitted into a Regents examination in science without passing the course.

- A student completed a course of study that culminates in a Regents examination in science and has also met the 1,200-minute laboratory requirement. Regardless of if the course was successfully (or unsuccessfully) completed, the student is eligible for admission into the Regents examination in science.
- A superintendent (or chief administrative officer) determined the student would benefit from credit by examination. The student met the 1,200-minute laboratory requirement.

Please refer to pages 3 and 4 of the [2019 Edition School Administrator's Manual: Regents Examinations](#) for additional information related to admission requirements for Regents examinations.

9. Can schools accept virtual laboratory experiences completed in another school by a transfer student?

Yes. The receiving school may contact the former school to request a letter that confirms the number of minutes of comparable laboratory experiences completed while the student was enrolled in the former school.

Questions about the science laboratory requirements may be directed to the Office of Standards and Instruction via email to sciencestandards@nysed.gov or by calling (518) 474-5922.

Information related to the [New York State P-12 Science Learning Standards](#), including the [Implementation Timeline for Science](#), can be found on NYSED's Office of Standards and Instruction [Science webpage](#).