Thank you for your interest in the high school completion program at Kirkwood Community College. This video will help explain our high school completion program, the options available to you as a student, as well as how to get started at a Kirkwood location on attaining your high school diploma.

At Kirkwood Community College’s high school completion program, we believe that all students deserve the opportunity to achieve personal and academic success.

Our program works with students who are at least 17 years of age or older. In certain circumstances, such as our high school distance learning program, we can work with students under 17 years of age. We have even had 80 year old graduates, so it’s never too late to earn your high school diploma!

Students choosing to come to Kirkwood to earn our Adult High School diploma or the GED® no longer work with a traditional high school. However, we also can work with students currently enrolled in traditional high schools as well as home school programs through arrangement with local school districts.

At Kirkwood Community College, we offer four main avenues to work toward earning your diploma:

1) The Iowa High School Equivalency Diploma or GED® Diploma

2) A Kirkwood Adult High School Diploma

3) School-sponsored programs

4) Kirkwood High School Distance Learning, or Kirkwood HSDL
Iowa currently uses the GED® for its high school equivalency diploma. The GED® is an examination-based option. This means in order to earn a GED®, you will be required to take a series of 5 exams. The 5 exams are subject-area tests, reviewing your skills in Math, Reading, Writing, Science, and Social Studies. To earn a GED®, you must successfully pass all five tests, and also have an overall passing score. In Iowa, the overall total score required to pass the GED® is 2250. Prior to official testing, you will be required to take and pass a series of GED® practice tests to demonstrate you are ready for official testing. If the practice tests show you are not ready for official testing, preparation work will occur with learning center staff to help improve your skills.

At Kirkwood, the cost of the official GED® test series is $125, to be paid at the first official test. We are now also offering computer-based testing as an option for the GED®. To test on the computer, the cost is $130. Kirkwood requires an annual registration fee $25 for GED® preparation. This fee allows you to take official practice tests, work with learning center instructors, have access to our online preparation programs, or access face to face courses in select locations. If you desire to check out books to take home to work on GED® prep, a $30 refundable book deposit fee will be required to loan out any GED® study books offered by the learning center. Books are always available for use at no charge in our learning centers. In Iowa, the minimum age to be eligible to take the official GED® tests and earn an Iowa High School equivalency diploma is 17.

Please be aware that there are NO online or correspondence testing programs recognized by GED® Testing Services for achieving an official GED® diploma. Preparation work may be done online, but the only way
to earn an Iowa High School Equivalency Diploma is by taking official GED® tests at an approved testing center.

Additionally, please be aware that the current GED® test series will expire at the end of 2013. The last day to take an official test in Iowa will be Friday, December 13th, 2013. Any student who has not completed and passed the current GED® test series by that date will be required to start over.

Another option to earn a high school diploma is to work toward earning a Kirkwood Adult High School Diploma. The Kirkwood Adult High School diploma is a credit-based option where a student takes and completes high school courses to earn credits toward a diploma. Prior courses taken at an accredited high school can count toward the adult HS diploma requirements.

The cost of an Adult High School diploma depends on the number of courses a student needs to take to earn our diploma. This will depend on the number of courses taken at previous high schools. There is an annual registration fee of $25, which is then applied toward a high school diploma course. Additional courses taken at a learning center are $25, and you have 4 months from the date of registration to finish a course. If you choose to use your course textbook outside the learning center and take it home, a $60 refundable book deposit fee is required for each textbook taken out on loan. Again, books are always available for use at no charge in our learning centers. Students age 17 and older are eligible to work toward a Kirkwood Adult High School Diploma.

If you are currently enrolled in high school, there is also the potential to work at a Kirkwood Learning center to earn your local high school diploma. Some students work on just one or two courses, while others
will work to finish their school’s diploma with our staff. The costs and eligibility for these school-sponsored options will depend on a number of factors. If you are interested in this option, the first step is to contact your local school district to see if your school has an agreement with Kirkwood.

Even if you don’t live near a Kirkwood learning center location, you can still work with us to earn your high school diploma though our high school distance learning program. For additional information on the HSDL program, visit our website at www.kirkwood.edu/hsdl

Whether you work on your Iowa High School Equivalency diploma, Kirkwood adult high school diploma, or any of our diploma options, we offer a variety of class formats and styles to help you earn your degree. Through our independent study classes, online programs, and—in select locations—structured face-to-face classes, our high school completion staff will work with you to find the best fit possible to help you earn your diploma.

We also partner with the United Way of East Central Iowa and Kirkwood’s continuing education division in offering the KPACE program. KPACE allows you to work on earning your high school diploma while also receiving training in manufacturing, health care, or information technology at the same time. Enrollment in these programs is limited. If you are interested in the KPACE program, please visit with our staff for more information.

Many students also ask us how long it will take for them to earn their diploma. Because each student and his or her situation is unique, it is difficult for us to estimate how long it will take for you to earn your diploma. Once you’ve started your program of study our learning
center staff will be able to give you a better estimate on how long it will take.

As you work on your high school diploma, we do have expectations of all of our students. Because we are an adult high school program, we believe that you the student are in charge of your learning, and the responsibility for failure or success is based on the choices you make. Our dedicated staff of professionals will assist you as much as we can, but ultimately the decision to earn your diploma is up to you.

While attending a Kirkwood learning center location, we expect our students to treat one another and our staff in a respectful manner. If you choose to work with us, we will ask you to sign a conduct policy as you enter our program outlining these expectations.

Additionally, our high school completion program is designed for adult learners. Children of students are not allowed to attend learning centers with their parents. Please make childcare arrangements prior to visiting a learning center or attending classes.

Again, because we believe you are in charge of your learning, we want you to work with us when you feel you can make the necessary time commitment to earning your diploma. Students who are most successful in achieving their diploma do so by attending a learning center as often as possible. At a minimum, you should plan on spending at least 5-10 hours per week.

When entering and exiting one of our learning centers, all students are asked to sign in and sign out using our timeclock program. This program allows us to keep track of your attendance, which can be provided to you if necessary.
We also want to make students aware that your educational records are your records. Under the terms of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, also known as FERPA, information such as student grades, credits, course registrations, graduation dates, or GED® scores may not be released without a signed form on file completed by the student. Persons to whom the student gives consent may come into a Kirkwood Learning Center during center hours to check on student progress.

If you have learning difficulties, you may be eligible to receive accommodations for your coursework or testing. If you believe you would need and qualify for accommodations, please visit with a learning center staff member for more information.

As you consider if this is the right time to work with us to earn your diploma, one question you might be asking is if you can afford the costs of our diploma options. If finances are a concern, Kirkwood’s High School Completion program partners with a number of agencies that may be able to provide you with financial assistance if you meet certain eligibility standards. If you decide to enroll and have questions about potential funding sources, please speak to the local learning center staff for additional details.

If you’ve decided that the time is right and you want to earn your diploma, here are your next steps:

After finishing this video, you will be asked to take a short quiz over the topics covered in this video. The quiz is located below the video on the webpage. Complete the quiz and print out the confirmation screen you receive after completing the quiz. If you are interested in earning our Adult High School Diploma, we will need a copy of your high school
transcript. This will allow us to reduce the number of courses you will need to take with us. To get a copy of your transcript, contact the last high school you attended and ask them to send you a copy of your transcript, and bring this copy with you when you go to your nearest learning center.

Next, contact your nearest learning center to enroll as well as to set up a time to take CASAS tests. CASAS assessments placement tests required of all students working toward an Iowa High School Equivalency or Adult HS diploma. They are separate from your GED or adult diploma testing. Some learning centers will take appointments, while others will allow you to come on certain days or times. This information will be provided after you complete the video and quiz. Your $25 enrollment fee will be due when you take your CASAS exams.

CASAS testing is required prior to selecting a program of study. After your CASAS exams are complete, our staff will set up a time to visit with you regarding the diploma option that works best for you, and get you started toward earning your diploma.

Kirkwood Community College has learning center locations in every county in the Kirkwood Service area. Learning Centers are located in Belle Plaine, Cedar Rapids, Iowa City, Monticello, Tipton, Vinton, Washington, and Williamsburg. We also have classes that meet at the IowaWorks office located in Lindale Mall. Hours and days of operation vary by location. After completing the video quiz, you will be provided with a list of learning center locations and contact information.

If you have further questions, please visit our website, which has more information on our program and the services we provide. Our web address is www.kirkwood.edu/highschool
We thank you for taking the time to learn more about the high school completion program at Kirkwood Community College. We hope to see you soon!