

# Four-Year and Five-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate Manual 2024–25



North Carolina Department of Public Instruction  
Office of Accountability and Testing  
Analysis and Reporting Section



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## Introduction

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) Office of Accountability and Testing produces the *Four-Year* and *Five-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate Manual* which contains procedures for computing and auditing the cohort graduation rates (CGR) at the school, public school unit (PSU), and state level.

The four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate is a group of students who begin as first-time ninth graders in a defined school year and graduate with a regular high school diploma in four years or less. The five-year adjusted cohort graduation rate is a group of students who begin as first-time ninth graders in a defined school year and graduate with a regular high school diploma in five years or less. Beginning in 2024, the CGR process will track student movement during the fifth year of the cohort. Previously, the five-year rate was not adjusted for population changes; the process only checked the students in the four-year cohort to see if a diploma was earned during the fifth year. Starting with the 2023–24 school year, the business logic and process for the standard four-year rate will be applied to the five-year CGR rate, with the difference that it gives one extra year for graduation and is reported one year later than the four-year CGR rate.

A cohort is “adjusted” by adding any students transferring into the cohort and subtracting any students who transfer out, immigrate to another country, or die during the years covered by the rate. The adjusted cohort graduation rates measure the percentage of students in a ninth-grade cohort that graduate with a regular high school diploma by the expected year.

The rules for calculating the cohort graduation rate meet federal requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act.

Students who exit the following student groups English Learners (ELs), Students with Disabilities, Foster, and Homeless after entering 9th grade are included in the subgroup for the disaggregated cohort graduation rate reports during their anticipated graduation year.

## 1. Determining the Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates

The following information provides the requirements as defined in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and additional business rules applied to cohort data for implementation and calculation of the adjusted cohort graduation rates for the four-year rate and the five-year rate.

### 1.1 Calculating the Cohorts

The number (numerator) of total students earning a regular high school diploma before, during, or at the conclusion of the fourth or fifth year of high school or the summer session immediately following the fourth or fifth year completed by the date published by the NCDPI, is divided by the total number (denominator) of students expected to graduate within four or five years.

According to the ESSA, the adjusted cohort graduation rates numerator “shall not include any students awarded a recognized equivalent of a diploma such as a general equivalency diploma, certificate of completion, certificate of attendance, or similar lesser credential.”

### 1.2 Data Collection for Setting the Cohort

The adjusted cohort graduation rates are calculated by creating an initial cohort of students who are tracked upon entering the 9th grade and are then expected to graduate within four or five years. Under the ESSA, the denominator, or total number of students expected to graduate in the current year’s cohort, “consists of the number of students who form the original cohort of entering first-time students in grade 9.” Membership in the denominator is determined by a collection date defined by the NCDPI, which shall be “no later than the date by which student membership is collected annually for submission to the National Center for Education Statistics.” The denominator is adjusted by adding and removing students as permitted by Section 8101 [20 U.S.C. 7801].

Cohort-based graduation rates are most accurate if each student is assigned to a single cohort formed when the student enters grade 9 for the first time. A single cohort assignment for each student ensures that each student is counted once, and only once, in a four-year or five-year cohort graduation rate. Without a single cohort assignment when a student enters grade 9 for the first time, a student who later repeats a grade might be included in two separate cohorts of students: the cohort that the student originally started in grade 9 and the next year’s cohort.

Using the student information system, the NCDPI extracts each school’s student enrollment data on the twentieth (20) day of school. This data collection sets the initial cohort for the school.

IC1.0—Students are identified as part of the initial cohort using both current and historical enrollment data extracted from the student information system. Students who moved from a previous grade into 9th grade in consecutive years are set in the initial cohort. Discrepancies are reconciled with the school through the district or charter school testing coordinator.

IC1.1—Students in grades 9–13 found in current enrollment data for the first time without historical enrollment data are included in the cohort. (Rules A1.1 and A1.2 are used for these students.)

### 1.3 Adjusting the Cohort

The initial cohort is adjusted by adding students who joined the cohort after the original cohort was determined (transferred into the cohort) and subtracting only those students who during the years covered by the cohort are confirmed and documented to have transferred out, emigrated to another country, transferred to a prison or juvenile facility, or are deceased.

### 1.4 Adding to the Cohort

Transferring into the cohort occurs when a student enrolls into a high school after the initial cohort has been set. Students are added to the cohort throughout the initial cohort year and each of the subsequent years, including the fourth year or fifth year. Students are added through the student information system enrollment data that is captured in scheduled data collections. These data collections are defined in the Office of Accountability and Testing Data Collection Schedule. Newly enrolled students are placed into the appropriate four-year cohort using the following methods:

A1.0—Students who transfer into a North Carolina (NC) public high school are assigned to the cohort that the student started in ninth grade for the first time. (The NCDPI will apply students who transfer between schools within the state to the receiving school's cohort in accordance with the student information system enrollments.) Repeating a grade or not acquiring enough course credit does not reset student membership in a cohort.

A1.1—If the cohort for a student cannot be determined using enrollment data, the NCDPI will use the grade 9 entry date field from the student information system to assign the student to the correct cohort. Discrepancies will be reconciled with the school through the district or charter school testing coordinator.

A1.2—If the grade 9 entry date is blank in the student information system, the NCDPI will extrapolate the cohort using the current grade level and will note the assumed cohort in audit reporting. When this occurs, testing coordinators will be informed that the student was placed in a cohort and the cohort must be validated by entering the grade 9 entry date prior to end of year checkout.

**Note:** For rules A1.1 and A1.2, once the grade 9 entry date field is populated in the student information system and collected in an official accountability data collection, it cannot be changed in the accountability data without an official data correction request and appropriate documentation for the change. The grade 9 entry date is not locked in the student information system; therefore, it may be changed at any time. However, this date will not be changed for accountability purposes without the data correction request.

A2.0—Students who enroll in NC public high schools that do not grant diplomas must be assigned to a diploma-granting high school within the district where the students could earn a diploma by the time of their expected graduation. In these cases, students will be added to the cohort of the NC public high school that grants the diplomas. In the case of students who transfer between NC public schools within the same LEA, see T2.0.

A3.0 – Students who are mid-year promoted to grade 9, are added to that year's cohort with the same graduation expectation as those who were in the initial cohort of that year.

### 1.5 Removal from the Cohort

Removal from the cohort is limited to the specified circumstances defined under the ESSA (the student transferred out, emigrated to another country, transferred to a prison or juvenile facility, or is deceased). Each removal from the cohort requires the PSU to either collect appropriate documentation or obtain

documentation from the NCDPI to verify the removal. Examples of adequate supporting documentation can be found in Appendix A. Students shall remain in the cohort when there is no supporting documentation, or the supporting documentation is deemed insufficient.

### 1.5.1 Transferred Out

*Transferred out* is defined as when a student, as confirmed by the high school or PSU, has transferred to

1. another school from which the student is expected to receive a regular high school diploma; or
2. another educational program from which the student is expected to receive a regular high school diploma.

Transfers from one NC public school to another NC public school are documented in the accountability data collections. When transfers are captured in a data collection, the NCDPI moves the student from one school to another. The NCDPI affirms that information received from the authoritative source (the student information system enrollment) is the documentation necessary to make the transfer. No additional documentation is required at the local level.

T1.0—Transfers between NC public schools that are not captured through accountability data collections require schools to collect and maintain adequate supporting documentation and enter transfer coding through the CGR data collection process developed by the NCDPI.

T1.1—North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services supported schools are considered a transfer within the state, are not captured by an accountability data collection, and require the same type of documentation to be removed from the cohort.

T2.0—Students who transfer within the same LEA from a NC public school to another NC public school that does not grant diplomas (e.g., alternative schools, special education schools, hospital schools), are attributed to the cohort of the diploma granting school to which they would have been assigned.

**Note:** NCDPI collects the list of NC public schools that do not grant diplomas and requires LEAs to designate the appropriate diploma awarding high school to attribute the graduation result.

Students who transfer out of state to a diploma-granting high school, to a private school granting high school diplomas, to a home school, or to a high school diploma granting educational program are removed from the cohort with the specified documentation for the transfer. Examples of acceptable supporting documents are found in Appendix A.

T3.0—When a student transfers out of state, the PSU must collect and maintain supporting documentation indicating the out-of-state transfer. The transfer must be to a high school that grants high school diplomas.

T3.1—When a student transfers to a Department of Defense school, it is considered an out-of-state transfer and requires the same supporting documentation as an out-of-state transfer would for the purposes of removing students from the cohort.

T4.0—When a student transfers to a NC private school, the PSU must collect and maintain supporting documentation indicating the transfer. The transfer must be to a school that grants high school diplomas.

T4.1—The NC School of the Arts and NC School of Math and Science are operated by the University of North Carolina General Administration and require the same supporting documentation for the purposes of transferring students out of the cohort to a NC private school.

T5.0—When a student transfers to a NC home school, the PSU must collect and maintain acceptable documentation consisting of evidence of enrollment at an approved home school registered with the NC Department of Administration's Non-Public Education Division. If the home school is in another state, the documentation must be consistent with the home school laws of the other state.

T6.0—When a student transfers to an educational program from which the student is expected to receive a regular high school diploma, the student would be considered a transfer if the program provides, and the student enrolls in, the part of the program from which the student is expected to receive a regular high school diploma. If the documentation does not indicate enrollment in the part of the program from which the student is expected to receive a regular high school diploma the student cannot be removed. General equivalency diploma programs do not qualify for a student to have an exit code.

### **1.5.2 Emigrated to Another Country**

Students are removed from the cohort when supporting documentation indicates the student has emigrated to another country. This requires the PSU to collect and maintain documentation in the form of a written and signed confirmation from the parent that the student is leaving the county or a school administrator's documented and signed conversation with the parent at the time of withdrawal. In the event the student is deported, written documentation from the Immigration and Naturalization Services is required.

E1.0—Students identified as foreign exchange students sponsored by an exchange agency may be removed from the cohort after returning to their home country. This requires the PSU to collect and maintain documentation of the official exchange paperwork (i.e., on exchange agency letterhead) reflecting the year of participation.

### **1.5.3 Transferred to a Prison or Youth Development Center**

A student is removed from the cohort when supporting documentation indicates the student has been adjudicated and sent to a NC Division of Adult Corrections and Juvenile Justice facility or to another federal or state's prison. In North Carolina, these facilities include adult prisons and youth development centers. This requires the PSU to collect and maintain documentation indicating the adjudication and placement of the student in one of these facilities.

J1.0—In the case of students in North Carolina Juvenile Detention Centers, only those students that have been adjudicated and are awaiting final placement may be removed from the cohort. Students housed in juvenile detention centers that have not been adjudicated remain in the cohort.

J2.0—Students who are placed into county or other municipality detention facilities are not removed from the cohort.

### **1.5.4 Deceased**

Students are removed from the cohort when acceptable documentation indicates the student is deceased. This requires the PSU to collect and maintain documentation.



## 1.6 Additional Rules

The following rules apply to the specified schools.

### 1.6.1 Small Schools Calculation Rule

S1.0—Schools with an average enrollment over a four-year period of less than 100 students are given a four-year and five year cohort rate calculated using three years of data for the purposes of school accountability, long-term goals, and identification of Comprehensive Support and Improvement–Low Graduation Rate.

### 1.6.2 Community College Adult High School Program Rule

C1.0—Students who enroll in a Community College Adult High School (CCAHS) program through a North Carolina community college and earn a high school diploma within the time of the cohort are included in the cohort as a graduate.

C1.1—For the CCAHS program to be approved, the public school unit granting the diploma must have an agreement with the community college where the CCAHS program was completed, and the student must have graduated within the time of the cohort.

C1.2—Students must be coded accurately in the student information system, which involves the withdrawal of the student from the school. Local staff must verify each semester that the student is continuing their education through this program. At the time the student earns the diploma, public school units must complete all processes needed in the student information system to count the student as graduating in the cohort.

Public school unit test coordinators must submit a letter to the Senior Director of the Office of Accountability and Testing, signed by the local superintendent or charter school director, listing the student(s) who have graduated from the community college through the CCAHS program, along with a signed diploma or signed official notification on the partnering community college's letterhead.

For students to be counted in the school's/LEA's graduation rate, the process outlined in the [HomeBase NC SIS Community College Adult High School Program CCAHS User Guide](#) must be completed as well as the Graduate Data Verification (GDV) process for the student. Once the process is complete, PSU test coordinators can verify completion by reviewing the graduation file on the accountability secure server in 2025/####/EOY/GRAD/ACCEPTED/GRADXXX.TXT.

For questions about the Memorandum of Affiliation (MOA) requirements between the public school unit and community college or other concerns about the CCAHS program, contact Sneha Shah-Coltrane at [Sneha.ShahColtrane@dpi.nc.gov](mailto:Sneha.ShahColtrane@dpi.nc.gov).

### 1.6.3 Cooperative Innovative High Schools Rule

CI1.0—Students enrolled in a cooperative innovative high school and participating in a program where the student may remain beyond the fourth year to receive an associate degree or other higher credentials are included in the four-year cohort graduation rate as a graduate at the end of the fourth year if the student has earned the minimum state-required credits to receive a high school diploma. Students participating in the program to remain beyond the fourth year are not

entered in the graduation data verification report until the completion of the fifth year's requirements.

CI2.0—Students who are counted as graduates in the fourth year based on rule CI1.0 must complete and be granted a high school diploma through the authoritative source at the completion of the fifth year to be counted in the five-year cohort graduation rate. To count as a graduate in the fifth year, students must be entered as graduates in the graduation data verification report at the end of the fifth year regardless of meeting the minimum state-requirement in the fourth year.

## 2. Data Collection

Ensuring the integrity and quality of the cohort graduation rate calculations and data are important, and internal controls, such as policies, procedures, and infrastructure, are necessary for collecting accurate data and correctly calculating the cohort graduation rates. The process for how and when to collect the data as established by the general statutes of the NC General Assembly and in accordance with the ESSA. If during data review it is discovered that students are attributed to a Unique ID (UID) that is either shared or duplicated in previous school years, contact the regional accountability office for resolution.

### 2.1 Data Collection for Setting the Cohort

As described in section 1, the initial cohort is created by students that are tracked upon entering the 9th grade and then are expected to graduate within either four or five years.

A cohort is typically applied to students who are educated at the same period of time. A grade level or class of students would be the most common example of a student cohort. For example, students who enter the 9<sup>th</sup> grade during 2017–2018 school year would be a part of that cohort on track to graduate in either 4 years (2021) or 5 years (2022).

### 2.2 Capturing Graduate Data—Graduation Data Verification (GDV) Process

The Graduate Data Verification contains demographic information, Graduation Plan/Course of Study (Diploma Type) and post graduate intentions of North Carolina high school graduates. This collection provides data needed for state and federal reporting. The data provides public school units with an authoritative list of graduates. The student information system is the authoritative source for the GDV and the following processes for GDV. The authoritative source (the student information system) must always be referenced when completing and validating the GDV. Additional student information system Guidance to support GDV can be found using the following information link:

- [Early Graduate QRD](#)
- [Post EOY Summer Grads](#)
- [Summer Promotion Retention Process](#)

#### Process for handling graduates

The status viewer should be used to verify the validity of the graduation data received from the NC Student Information System (NCSIS). Students who receive a diploma but have missing or invalid data or are receiving a diploma in unusual circumstances will have warnings/errors appear. Unusual circumstances involve students who received a diploma but had NCEXTEND1 scores in high school or students enrolled in the current year but has a prior year diploma. The PSU should investigate the

circumstances to determine how to best handle the situation. The diploma can be removed in NCSIS the diploma or documentation submitted validating the diploma is correct and the student either changed tracks correctly or was incorrectly assessed.

The implementation of the 5-year Cohort Graduation Rate requires the NCSIS GDV2 (Graduate Data Verification) data to be pulled and applied to the CGR5AUDIT throughout the relevant school year. Any changes found will be applied only to the 5-year CGR rate; the previous 4-year CGR rate will not change.

Graduates from Infinite Campus must be withdrawn from the school using the exit code of W4 or W6. The diploma date, type, period and post grad plans fields must be completed.

Previous Year (2024 graduates, changes will apply to 5-year rate)

1. Review the status viewer for 2025-EOY-CGRGRAD for students with warnings. An Info message will be shown for students who received a diploma/certificate after GDV2 closed in August. The following warnings are possible:
  - a. 2024 Repull: Removed record – Diploma/certificate was removed for this student
  - b. 2024 Repull: Modified record:document type Diploma -> Certificate – This student originally received a diploma, but was changed to a Certificate in NCSIS.
  - c. Enrolled in current year but has prior year diploma (year diploma was received) – The student received a diploma but has been found in data collections for the current year.
  - d. Diploma student has NCEExtend1 scores in high school – The student received a diploma but had NCEXTEND1 scores in high school.
2. The PSU should review each student to determine the best steps to correct the issue.
  - a. If it is determined a student was granted a diploma in error, the PSU corrects the student in the graduation data in NCSIS. Data will be pulled from NCSIS School the day following the correction to the graduation data and the student will be added back to the CGR5 cohort.
  - b. If it is determined a student tested on NCEXTEND1 in grades 10 or 11 should have received a diploma please submit a data correction with supporting documentation.
  - c. If a student was re-enrolled in the school in error, withdraw the student in NCSIS and submit a data correction to remove the student from previous data collections.

Current Year

1. The following students will appear with a warning on the status viewer under 2025-EOY->CGRGRAD.
  - a. Enrolled in current year but has prior year diploma (year diploma was received) – The student received a diploma but has been found in data collections for the current year.
  - b. Diploma student has NCEExtend1 scores in high school – The student received a diploma but had NCEXTEND1 scores in high school.
2. The PSU should review each student to determine the best steps to correct the issue.
  - a. If it is determined a student was granted a diploma in error, the PSU corrects the student in the graduation data in NCSIS. Data will be pulled from NCSIS the day following the correction and the student will be added back to the CGR5 cohort.
  - b. If it is determined a student tested on NCEXTEND1 in grades 10 or 11 should have received a diploma, please submit a data correction with supporting documentation.
  - c. If a student was re-enrolled in the school in error, withdraw the student in PowerSchool and submit a data correction to remove the student from previous data collections.

- Current year grads should also be checked on the status viewer under 2025-EOY-GRAD for any missing fields.

### 2.2.1 Approval Process

The NCDPI requires schools to have the ability to run this data review at any time during the school year. Each time the data review is run, the NCDPI can retrieve the data in the format for each of the listed data views available. For example, if the school identifies students who require modification (edit, add, or delete), the report should be run to capture the changes.

Approval of the graduate data verification cannot occur before the last day of the school calendar + 7 days or June 15 through June 30, whichever comes first.

Alternative schools that do not award diplomas must return all students to the sending school for inclusion in the sending school's cohort (denominator) in the anticipated graduation year. Alternative schools that award diplomas must retain all students for inclusion in the alternative school's cohort graduation rate. This must be reflected in the GDV.

TABLE 1. Start and end dates of the collection process

Month	Graduate classification	Criteria
February	Summer School Graduates (August 7 through end of summer school)	Summer school graduates who are in grade 12 or GR and have taken a summer school course must have a student information system diploma issue date between August 7 and the beginning of the current school year.
February	12 <sup>th</sup> Grade Mid-Year or Early Graduates	Mid-year or Early Graduates must have a student information system diploma issue date that is before the last day of the school year according to the 2023–24 school calendar.
April – June 30	12 <sup>th</sup> Grade Regular Program	Regular Program graduates must have a student in diploma issue date on or after the last day of the school year according to the 2023–24 school calendar.
July 1– August 6	12 <sup>th</sup> Grade Regular Program Graduates (summer window)	Graduates who complete the requirements for graduation between July 1 and August 6 may be included in the current year data through the GDV2 process.

## 2.3 Cooperative Innovative High School

Starting with the 2023-24 school year, students who remain in high school after completing the 4<sup>th</sup> year of high school and have met the diploma requirements will be flagged in the student information system. The flag will then be populated into the CGRAUDIT. The `gdvr_document_type` will be set to `MetDiplomaReg` and the student will count for the CGR rate if the student is in the current cohort. At the successful completion of their 5<sup>th</sup> year of school, the student will be granted a diploma in GDV.

## 3. Cohort Review and Auditing Processes

Federal laws require the NCDPI to verify that all high schools maintain appropriate written documentation showing adjustments to the regulatory adjusted cohort and resulting adjustments to graduation rates. The process for calculating the graduation rate was established by the U.S. Department of Education to provide parents, educators, and community members with a more accurate standardized calculation. The process allows for meaningful comparisons across states, school districts, and schools

helping ensure that the graduation rate is accurate and consistently calculated. The calculation of the adjusted cohort graduation rates is defined in Section 8101 [20 U.S.C. 7801] of the ESSA.

High schools are required to maintain evidence or documentation for each withdrawal of a student from the calculation of the cohort graduation rates including certifications of death, transfers to private schools, transfers to homeschools, certifications of the student(s) leaving the state or country, and certifications of the student(s) being in a prison or detention center. PSU accountability directors/test coordinators and the respective superintendents are required to verify the evidence or documentation and affirm the accuracy by signing and dating the End of Year Data Collection Sign Off. The Office of Accountability and Testing calculates the cohort graduation rate and monitors the auditing process.

Schools are expected to organize documentation collected for students who have been removed from the cohort and submitted to the district or charter school accountability director/test coordinator for validation and entry.

Exit code documentation for the four-year cohort must be maintained for two years beyond the cohort calculation and documentation for the five-year cohort must be maintained for one year beyond the cohort calculation.

TABLE 2. CGR Annual Process Flow

<b>September</b>	1. Updates made based on official data collection.
<b>October</b>	1. Regional training on Cohort Graduation Rate processes, procedures, and reporting. 2. Preliminary CGR data files provided to public school units to begin processing students. 3. CGR Record Search enabled and CGR Reports on secure shell in 20XX/NCT_Audits available. 4. Updates made based on official data collections.
<b>December</b>	1. Updates made based on official data collections.
<b>January</b>	1. Updates made based on official data collections.
<b>March</b>	1. Updates made based on official data collections.
<b>April</b>	1. Updates made based on official data collections.
<b>May</b>	1. Updates made based on official data collections.
<b>June</b>	1. Updates made based on official data collections. 2. The random selection of LEAs/charter high schools for monitoring is completed. (List will include any school(s) that scored below 90% in the previous year and need to be revisited.)
<b>July</b>	1. Letters sent to schools selected for monitoring and verification audits. 2. Onsite and desk monitoring is completed. 3. Supplemental Graduation Data Verification collection window is open (GDV2). 4. Updates based on official data collections.
<b>August</b>	1. Apply adjustments to cohort based on monitoring.
<b>September</b>	1. State Board of Education review and approval of Cohort Graduation Rate preliminary data. 2. Data correction window where LEAs/charter schools may submit final data corrections.

TABLE 3. Retaining cohort documentation

Year four-year cohort reported	Year exit code documentation can be discarded	Year five-year cohort reported	Year exit code documentation can be discarded
2024–25	July 2027	2024–25	July 2026
2025–26	July 2028	2025–26	July 2027
2026–27	July 2029	2026–27	July 2028
2027–28	July 2030	2027–28	July 2029

There are 2 separate processes or data points that must be reconciled when reviewing the cohort audits:

1. Exit Codes (Page 9)
2. Grade 9 year (Page 13)

### 3.1 Reconciling Exit Codes (?'s) for the Four-year and Five-Year Rate

First, PSUs must determine if they plan to complete the CGR processes by district or school. District processing is the default method and uses a comprehensive PSU CGR4EXIT file or CGR5EXIT file. If PSUs prefer to process by school, an individual CGR4Exit file or CGR5Exit will be needed for each high school. (CGR audit files will be provided as one comprehensive file or, upon request, as separate files for each high school.) If CGR4, the four-year cohort students are in the file; if CGR5, the five-year cohort students are in the file. For example, if creating a file for the four-year cohort, the naming convention will be CGR4EXITXXX.TXT (the XXX indicates the PSU code). Additionally, if creating exit files by school for the four-year cohort, the file name would be CGR4EXITXXXXXX.TXT, where XXXXXX is the six-digit school code. These naming conventions would be adjusted for the five-year rate by replacing the number four with the number five.

For the remainder of this document the asterisk in the file names is for training purposes only and represents the graduation cohort included in the file. When creating the exit file, do not include an asterisk in the file name.

#### 3.1.1 Reconciling Exit Codes

Steps for working with the PSU file:

1. Create the CGR\*EXITXXX.TXT or download the template from the ASM website. Download the CGR\*AUDITXXX.xlsx file where XXX indicates PSU code (example CGR\*AUDIT920.xlsx or CGR\*AUDIT09T.xlsx) from 2024->CGR\* on the secure shell. Note: NCTools can also be used to download the CGR files.
2. Open the CGR\*AUDITXXX.xlsx file.
3. Filter the exit\_code column to show only '?'s (column E).
4. Copy and paste columns A–F into the CGR\*EXITXXX.TXT file. If using the template, the header row does not need to be copied and pasted. There is a comment column in CGR\*Exit that is not in CGR\*Audit. This column is for optional local use only.
5. Gather information and documentation for students with '?', edit the CGR\*Exit file to change the '?' to the appropriate exit code (valid CGR exit codes are found in Table 3), and save as a .txt file.
6. Upload the populated CGR\*EXITXXX.TXT file to the secure shell at 2024 > CGR\*. (When asked, replace the previous version of CGR\*EXITXXX.TXT in this location.)
7. Check the Collection Status Viewer for errors at [https://www.rep.dpi.state.nc.us/2025/app/lea/status\\_viewer.cgi](https://www.rep.dpi.state.nc.us/2025/app/lea/status_viewer.cgi).
8. Redownload the CGR\*Audit files and verify information was properly applied in the following ways:
9. The ex\_exit\_code column (column AP) should populate with the exit code from the most recent CGR\*EXITXXX.TXT upload.
10. The effective\_exit\_code column (column AS) should populate with the exit code used for accountability purposes.
11. With each data collection throughout the year, repeat steps 2-11 to identify students who appear to have left the school recently. NOTE: Append the records with question marks in column E to current CGR\*EXIT file. Do not overwrite the data in the CGR\*EXIT file.
12. Continue to audit CGR files until submission due date.

If an LEA chooses to work with individual school files (available by request only):

1. Download the prepared empty CGR\*EXITXXXYYY.TXT templates where XXX indicates LEA code and YYY is the school code.
2. Delete the CGR\*EXITXXX.TXT file (district level file) in 2025/CGR\*./.

3. Download CGR\*AUDITXXXXYYY.xlsx files where XXX indicates LEA code and YYY is the school code (*example CGR\*AUDIT999304.xlsx*).
4. Follow steps 5-13 above for each school.

The following is a short description of valid exit codes. Appendix A on page 16 of this document contains the full descriptions and examples of required documentation.

TABLE 4. Exit codes

Code	Summary description
?	Has left the school but the reason has not yet been determined
0*	Has not left this school
1*	Transferred to another school in the same system
2*	Transferred to another system
3	Left the state or enrolled in a Department of Defense School
4	Dropped out
5	Temporarily withdrawn due to suspension or school approved illness
6	Death
7	Other situation that does not exempt the student from the cohort
8	Visiting student (should not have been in the cohort)
9*	Graduation status (diploma) is entered in Graduate Data Verification (GDV), or for 5-year Cooperative Innovative High Schools a record of meeting requirement at end of fourth year in the student information system and captured in an official data collection.
A	Transferred to a private high school within the state, including NC School of Science and Math and NC School of the Arts
B	Transferred to home school within the state
C	Transferred to a community college
D	Certificate recipient
E	Documented transfer within district not collected in official data collections (student will appear in the indicated school's CGR*Audit and cohort graduation rate calculations)
F	Documented transfer to a Youth Development Center or prison
G	Documented transfer within state validated in the student information system but not collected in official data collections (student will appear in the indicated school's CGR*Audit and cohort graduation rate calculations)
H	Relocated outside of United States
J	Transferred to an educational program from which the student is expected to receive a regular high school diploma.

\*NCDPI is the authoritative source for exit codes 0, 1, 2 and 9. Any of these exit codes manually entered in the CGRExit files by PSU or school staff are ignored and not used as the effective\_exit\_code in CGRAudit records.

Codes that remove a student from a school's cohort are: 3, 6, 8, A, B, E, F, G, H, J

### 3.2 Recent Exit Code Documentation Changes

Effective 2023–24, added language to Exit Code 3, left the state, for transfers to a home school not located in North Carolina.

Effective 2023–24, added language to Exit Code 9, graduated, to included cooperative innovative high school data collection.

Effective 2022–23, the collection process for Exit Code H is added to separate students relocating out of country from students relocating out of state.

Effective 2022–23, the collection process for Exit Code J is added to separate students transferring to an educational program that grants high school diplomas from students transferring to a private school. It includes the following changes from 2017–18:

- Students requesting records to be transferred to an online school is not sufficient documentation for removing the student from the cohort.
- Written documentation must be provided on official letterhead from online/correspondence school acknowledging enrollment in a high school diploma program.

Effective 2019–20, a request for records from an NC public school will not be valid documentation for using the G code. The student information system is the authoritative source; therefore, requests for records are not valid documentation that the student is enrolled in the school. If a student appears in another school in the student information system Statewide Record Search, the school the student left may use a G code. Transfers documented in the student information system cannot be appealed if the student does not attend but was enrolled.

Note: The Statewide Student Search is no longer available from the Start Page in the student information system. This is a custom NC function that only searches across the student information system locally and does not search the state UID system. If you want to use the Statewide Student Search function,

- It can be accessed using the URL extension in conjunction with your current PS url:  
[/admin/swss/home.html](#).
- To use the url extension you must be logged into PowerSchool and add the url to the end of your PowerSchool url to access the link within the instance. For example, your url would be <https://yourPSU.powerschool.com/admin/swss/home.html>.

Starting with the 2024-25 school year and the implementation of the new student information system a state student locator tool has been developed. This statewide collection of tools can be used as a student locator to determine a student's most recent enrollment and the source system (PowerSchool or NCSIS-IC), or to find if a student has overlapping or duplicate enrollments in one or both systems. This link will provide guidance on how to request access as well as navigate the locator tool (<https://ncdepartmentofpublicinstruction.knowledgeowl.com/home/state-student-locator>).

Effective 2018–19, the collection process for Exit Code B, the screenshots from the Home School Administrator Search page on the NC Department of Administration website is not sufficient documentation to remove a student from the cohort using the homeschool exit code. This is not validation that the administrator/homeschool found on the webpage is where the student is attending.

## 4. Verifying or Reconciling Initial Grade 9 Year

It is each PSUs responsibility to verify the student's data in the effective\_grade9year column is correct for all students. A student's cohort is determined based on their identified first year in grade 9. Table 4 provides the graduation cohorts for the next four years.

TABLE 5. Graduation cohorts for the next four years of each graduation rate

First year in grade 9	Effective Accountability Grade 9 Year	Four-year graduation expectation	Five-year graduation expectation
2020–21	2021		2024–25



2021–22	2022	2024–25	2025–26
2022–23	2023	2025–26	2026–27
2023–24	2024	2026–27	2027–28
2024–25	2025	2027–28	

**Note:** If the student’s transition from 8th to 9th grade can’t be determined from enrollment records, the NCDPI uses the grade 9 entry date in the student information system. When an assumed year is used for the grade 9 year, an info statement appears on the status viewer and these years should be verified.

1. There are Status Viewer “Info” messages at 2025-EOY-CGR4AUDIT and 2025-EOY-CGR5AUDIT available to detect if NCDPI could not determine the grade 9 year from data available in the authoritative sources. In these cases, the NCDPI has entered an assumed grade 9 year.
2. If users prefer, there is also a g 9 year\_missing column (column AN) in the CGR4Audit and CGR5AUDIT that can be reviewed to assist in identifying the students the NCDPI entered using an assumed grade9year for cohort decisions.
3. If the assumed grade9year is correct (i.e., effective\_grade 9 year in the CGR4Audit or CGR5Audit), no further action is needed.
4. If a student's transfer history is completed and verified through the student information system enrollment records, transfers are considered verified and there is no action needed by the PSU. If the assumed grade 9 year (i.e., effective\_grade 9 year) is incorrect and:
  - the grade 9 year (grade 9 entry date) is missing in PowerSchool, the grade 9 year must be entered in the student information system to verify and resolve these warnings. Once entered, no further action is needed. Newly entered dates will be reflected in CGR4Audit or CGR5Audit after the next official data collection.
    - Newly entered dates can be viewed for quick confirmation in
    - the ACCDATA Daily file.
  - the grade 9 year (grade 9 entry date) in the student information system is not correct, a data adjustment/correction request must be submitted for approval before editing the value in the student information system. This edit will only affect the student’s cohort determination if a data adjustment/correction is approved.
  - a student is no longer currently enrolled, a data adjustment/correction must be submitted for approval and correction.
5. Any changes to currently populated data in the student information system must be approved by the NCDPI and made in the student information system by the data correction submission due date.
6. Grade 9-year information entered into the student information system due to a missing grade9year will only be populated into the CGR4Audit and CGR5Audit files at each official accountability data collection (i.e., 20D, OCT, DEC, FDF, FEB, MAR, APR, FDS). Grade 9-year changes made as a result of a Data Adjustment/Correction approval by the NCDPI will be populated in the CGR4Audit and CGR5Audit after the data correction is approved and permission is given to enter the change in the student information system.
- 7.

## 5. Resolving CGR\*Audit Info and Warning Messages on the Status Viewer

When a student’s record is assigned a code to make a change to the record, the request will either be accepted without exception, or the status change can trigger a message in the form of an Info or Warning code. In either case, the system is drawing attention to the result of the action taken regarding the student’s record. While neither code will prevent the action from processing, it could cause a problem with the student’s record or the school reporting if a correction is needed and not performed. Users see a

message listed as either Info or Warning followed by the issue being identified. Following the Info message is an action needed message which tells the user the issue and the action to address the problem. Unlike the warning however, if the Info record is correct as listed then the message indicates the user can ignore the concern and move forward. Following the Warning message is a resolution statement. The statement provides the user with a more detailed cause for the warning message and what needs to be done to clear the exception.

1. **Info:** G9Year unconfirmed assumed to be YYYY  
**Action Needed:** Research student's grade 9 year and verify it for accuracy. See information on page 1 for actions toward resolution if incorrect. If correct ignore "Info" message.
2. **Info:** AccHome record transfer to ##### accepted
3. **Info:** AccHome record transfer from ##### accepted
4. **Warning:** Non-diploma high school has student in denominator  
**Resolution:** Complete AccHome to have student records transferred to an in-district diploma granting high school
5. **Warning:** AccHome record transfer to ##### rejected  
**Resolution:** AccHome record was submitted to transfer record to a different LEA, and that LEA has not submitted its complementary request. The receiving LEA must complete this process.
6. **Warning:** AccHome record transfer from ##### rejected  
**Resolution:** AccHome record was submitted to receive a record from a different LEA, and that LEA has not submitted their complementary request. The sending LEA must complete this process.
7. **Warning:** In denominator for multiple schools in district (#####, #####)  
**Resolution:** Student should only be enrolled in one school per district. Enter a record in the CGR\*Exit file for transfer to the school that should be attributed with the result. Use an E exit code.

## 6. Community College Adult High School Program (CCAHS) Documentation

This program is aimed at capturing those students leaving high school to attend a Community College Adult High School Program. The state board policy that addresses the program indicates that students who leave high school to attend an approved North Carolina CCAHS program shall be coded with the W2T code in the student information system. This code indicates the student's intent to complete a high school diploma in the adult setting.

Documentation that the students are enrolled in the CCAHS must be provided to the traditional school (base school). This documentation must be updated on an ongoing basis (quarter or semester, as determined by the public school unit and CCAHS) to ensure that the student maintains continual enrollment in the program. These students shall not be counted as dropouts until they fail to complete or return to the traditional school. It is important to note that students have one calendar year from leaving school to verify enrollment in a CCAHS program.

Steps for Reporting Community College Adult High School Graduates to the Office of Accountability and Testing for verification of inclusion in the cohort.

1. Public school unit establishes Memorandum of Affiliation with no more than one Community College.
2. Verify and document student continuous enrollment in CCAHS.
3. Use "W2T" (reason code CCAHS) in the student information system.

4. Affirm a standard diploma signed by Community College and LEA Superintendent or Charter School Director.
5. Enter students into the student information system as graduates through the GDV, as directed by PowerSchool.
6. The PSU test coordinator submits to the Senior Director of the Office of Accountability and Testing
  - a. A letter signed by the local superintendent listing the students, with the student information system ID numbers, who have graduated from the CCAHS program by August 6.
  - b. A copy of the diploma or student record (documentation for each student) on the community college letterhead.

## 7. Data File Structures

Data file structures enable reference to a set of records by the file name. The fields within the structure contain values based on the definition of the data in the field. The following data file structures are provided for the auditing of cohort graduation rate data and the collection of exit codes.

TABLE 6. CGR\*Audit file structures

Column name	Description
school_code	Official DPI six-character alphanumeric school code
student_id	State Student ID, 10 digits, zero padded
last_name	Last name
first_name	First name
exit_code	?/Null: column provided for easy filtering and copy/paste to CGR*EXIT file
xfer_school	Intentionally blank to align with CGR*EXIT
init_year	Collection year first seen in school
init_collection	Collection code first seen in school
init_student_id	Student id from initial collection
init_grade	Grade from initial source
last_year	Collection year last seen in school
last_collection	Collection code last seen in school
dob	Date of birth YYYYMMDD
ethnic	Race/Ethnicity reporting category (H/I/A/B/P/W/M)
sex	Male or Female (M/F)
els	ELS subgroup for CGR purposes (Y/N) (ever ELS since 9th grade)
els_year_exited	ELS Year Exited (equivalent to latest year as ELS) looking back five or six years
els_latest_school	Indicates ELS info was missing from district's data and backfilled by NCDPI
swd	SWD subgroup for CGR purposes (Y/N) (ever SWD since 9th grade)
swd_latest_year	Most recent year found in an EC headcount
swd_latest_school	Indicates SWD info was missing from district's data and backfilled by NCDPI
aig	AIG (Y/N)
mig	Migrant (Y/N)
hms	Homeless Student (Y/N)
mil	Military Connected (Y/N)
gdvr	Y/Null (if found in current or previous graduate collections)

Column name	Description
gdvr_document_type	GDVR Document type (Diploma/Certificate/MetDiplomaReq)
gdvr_year	Reporting year of graduation
gdvr_school	School that issued diploma or certificate
gdvr_last_name	Last name from graduate source
gdvr_first_name	First name from graduate source
dc_g9year	Grade 9 year from data correction override
rc_g9year	Grade 9 year recycled from previous year data corrections
en_g9year	Grade 9 year from statewide enrollment records
en_g9school	School code associated with en_g9year determination
en_five_year	Five-year school code if most recent school attended is a five-year program school
ps_g9year	Grade 9 year from 9th grade entry date, latest collected from LEA
hc_g9year	Grade 9 year from EOG H Code, latest collected from LEA
effective_g9year	Effective grade 9 year used to identify cohort
g9year_missing	Indicates no g9year supplied
in_cohort	Y/Null (if initially in cohort based on init_g9year)
ex_exit_code	exit code reported by PSU TC (CGR*EXIT###.TXT)
ex_xfer_school	For exit code E or G, school code transferred to (from CGR*EXIT###.TXT)
auto_xfer_school	Transfer school from DPI automatic search
effective_exit_code	# Exit code assigned to student based on all data presented
exit_exempt	Y/Null (if exempted from gradate calculation based on exit code)
base_den	Preliminary CGR denominator (Y/Null) prior to acchome processing
base_num	Preliminary CGR numerator (Y/N/Null) prior to acchome processing
base_school	If record received via acchome, identifies sending school
acchome_school	If record sent via acchome, identifies receiver, and num/den are cleared
acchome_accepted	Y/N/Null if acchome accepted by receiving district
den	CGR denominator Y/Null (for school and district level)
num	CGR numerator Y/N/Null (for school and district level)

TABLE 7. CGR\*Exit files structure

Column name	Description
school_code	Official DPI six-character alphanumeric school code
student_id	State Student ID, 10 digits, zero padded
last_name	last name
first_name	first name
exit_code	exit code (i.e., code 3, 6, 8, A, B, E, F, G, H, and J)
xfer_school	six-character school code of school student transferred to (only applies to exit code E or G)
comment	optional comment for local use and tracking

## 8. NCDPI CGR Exit Code Monitoring

### 8.1 History

In 2015, Finding 2015-027 from a U.S. Department of Education audit found that the NCDPI did not adequately perform verification of adjustments to the cohort graduation denominator. As recommended

by the finding, the NCDPI implemented a risk-based sampling approach for reviewing adjustments to the cohort denominator.

Prior to 2017–18, monitoring was completed for review purposes and schools/PSUs had no consequences for insufficient documentation. The following findings were communicated based on the monitoring:

1. Calibrated acceptable documentation practices
2. Identified areas of improvement in documentation
3. Improved validation of graduation rate

As a result of the changes based on Finding 2015-027, starting with the 2017–18 school year and beyond:

1. Monitoring will be completed prior to release of graduation data (July)
2. Cohort removals determined, by a NCDPI reviewer, to have no or insufficient documentation are placed back into the cohort for calculation of the Cohort Graduation Rate

Starting with the 2023–24 school year, monitoring of both the four-year cohort rate and five-year cohort rate will be performed.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (8101 (25)) requires the NCDPI to verify that public school units maintain appropriate written documentation affirming adjustments to the regulatory adjusted cohort and the resulting adjustments to graduation rates is appropriate. Documentation includes certifications of death, transfers to private schools, transfers to homeschools, certifications of the student(s) leaving the state or country, and certifications of the student(s) being in a prison or juvenile detention center. The process for calculating the graduation rate was established by the U.S. Department of Education to provide parents, educators, and community members with a more accurate standardized calculation. The process allows for meaningful comparisons across states and school districts and helps ensure that the graduation rate is accurate and consistently calculated.

Cohort graduation monitoring audits occur in late summer before the data correction window. Cohort Graduation Monitoring validates the auditing process and the Cohort Graduation Rate (CGR). Monitoring allows for adjustments to be made to the cohort for insufficient data (i.e., putting students back into the cohort) as well as continued improvement on identifying and collecting sufficient documentation to using exit codes to remove students from the cohort.

The auditing and review processes have been developed to ensure the highest quality of data when computing school, PSU, and state cohort graduation rates.

Once the cohort has been established, schools must have the necessary documentation before removing a student so the student will not count against the school. Schools with issues or reasons for data corrections, should contact the NCDPI Accountability Services section for review and decision. The school can use the Cohort Graduation Exit Code Guidance spreadsheet (Appendix A) to determine if the reason for the change aligns with the options outlined in this guide.

## 9. Monitoring Plan and Process

The NCDPI Office of Accountability and Testing has implemented a formalized state monitoring plan for monitoring of public school units to verify withdrawal of students reported in the prior school year's cohort graduation rates. Teams of state-level and regional staff members are responsible for conducting

monitoring and for requesting copies of written evidence or documentation to verify the withdrawal of students from the cohort. Exit codes monitored by the state include the following:

- Code 3 – relocated outside the state of North Carolina or to a Department of Defense school
- Code 6 – death
- Code 8 – visiting student
- Code A – transferred to a private high school within the state, including NC School of Science and Math and NC School of the Arts
- Code B – transfer to home school within the state
- Code E – documented transfer within district – NCDPI could not validate in authoritative data collection
- Code F – documented to be in a Youth Development Center or prison
- Code G – documented transfer within state – NCDPI could not validate in authoritative data collection
- Code H – relocated outside the United States
- Code J – Transferred to an educational program from which the student is expected to receive a regular high school diploma.

Starting with the 2018–19 school year collection, to ensure all schools with a cohort are audited a 10-year monitoring plan was implemented (this process changed to electronic monitoring effective with the 2019–20 school year).

Effective with the 2023–24 school year, all schools monitored will be monitored for both the four-year cohort rate and five-year cohort rate documentation, as applicable. Additionally, the eligible school's criteria has been updated to include all schools with at least one record for monitoring in either cohort.

For CGR Monitoring Review, the NCDPI identifies a pool of eligible schools based on the following criteria:

- The school must be currently open,
- The school must have a four-year or five-year cohort graduation rate in the latest year, and
- The school must have a minimum of one student record in the four-year cohort or five-year cohort requiring documentation to remove a student from the denominator.

The official list of monitored schools is created as follows:

1. Monitored schools are selected at random from eligible school lists. The selection of these schools is completed programmatically.
  - First by placing schools into a group using the defined rules noted above.
  - Second, the 'rand' or randomize function applies a number to each school 0-?? in each group.
  - Third, the computer is programmed to select the number of schools to monitor for each category.
  - Finally, the list of schools is extracted and provided to the lead person managing the monitoring.

**Note:** While this process is random it is expected that every school will be selected for monitoring at least once by 2029.

2. Schools who did not meet having 90% or greater documentation from the previous year for either the four-year cohort rate or five-year cohort rate, or schools identified as needing review due to concerns from regional or agency staff are added to the random sample selected monitoring list. Schools that are returned to the monitoring list will be added to the list and will not replace a school on the random list.
3. Regional Accountability Coordinators (RACs) and NCDPI staff may request a school be added in any year for monitoring.

The NCDPI enforces an even distribution among the state's accountability regions to select at least 60 schools for monitoring. The selection counts charter schools as part of the regions and rounds to the nearest whole for school counts.

The state plan consists of:

1. **Monitoring:** The process of monitoring allows the state and regional accountability offices to do end-of-year review by requesting written documentation from selected schools.
  - Team members request a copy of the evidence or written documentation to support the removal of a student from the graduation rate calculation.
  - Team members follow appropriate procedures to ensure confidentiality when conducting the CGR monitoring and the data analysis.
2. **State Response and Targeted Assistance:** Following the monitoring, team members reconvene at a designated date and time to discuss whether appropriate evidence/written documentation supported the removal of a student from the graduation rate calculations. The team summarizes the monitoring activities, findings, recommendations, and a follow up letter is emailed and mailed to the superintendent within 90 days of the end of the monitoring window. The letter provides additional information requirements for the submission of additional documentation for review (if necessary), and timelines.

The NCDPI provides 1) continued information distribution, 2) continued training with an emphasis on maintaining evidence or documentation for each withdrawal, 3) increased targeted monitoring, 4) continued collaboration among state-level staff and regional accountability offices, and 5) information dissemination about the state monitoring plan to public school units. This plan may be modified in future years depending on program needs.

A memo from the NCDPI is sent to selected local superintendents/charter school directors in early July. The local test coordinator, RAC and Regional Computing Consultant (RCC) will also be copied on the memo.

A memo highlighting the findings is sent in October, and a statewide presentation is completed to summarize findings and highlight concerns and best practices identified during the monitoring process.

## Appendix A: Cohort Graduation Exit Guidance

Exit code	Description	Cohort action	Examples of acceptable supporting documentation
0	Has not left this school	Included in school's cohort	School enrollment in the student information system is captured in an official data collection.
1	Transferred to another school in the same local education agency (PSU)	Removed from school's cohort	Receiving school enrollment must be entered in the student information system and captured in an official data collection. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No additional supporting documentation is necessary.</li> </ul>
2	Transferred to another PSU or charter school	Removed from school's cohort	Receiving school enrollment must be entered in the student information system and captured in an official data collection. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No additional supporting documentation is necessary.</li> </ul>
3	Relocated outside the state of North Carolina, or to a Department of Defense (DOD) School	Removed from school's cohort <b>only if</b> adequate documentation is provided	Provide one of the following supporting documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Official Request for Student Record is required from receiving out-of-state public or private school. (Documentation from records requests made by district/school personnel through an electronically signed and timestamped request generating system (ex. Scribbles K-12) using a district or school account are acceptable methods for requesting student records. Parent record requests from a parent account through such systems are not acceptable.</li> <li>Written acknowledgement on official letterhead, email or enrollment letter from a school official at the out-of-state or DOD receiving school confirming enrollment. If a North Carolina school provides a form to be completed by the receiving school, the form must include the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student name</li> <li>Name of enrolled school</li> <li>Address</li> <li>Staff contact information (i.e., phone number or email)</li> <li>Name of staff member completing form</li> <li>Signature of staff completing form</li> </ul> </li> <li>Transfer record form or screen shot from receiving out-of-stateschool with appropriate signature(s) from school official or administrator.</li> <li>A written statement from a parent stating the student has transferred out of state and is being homeschooled in another state.</li> </ul>



Exit code	Description	Cohort action	Examples of acceptable supporting documentation
4	Dropped out	Included in school's cohort	Schools may use this code to track students in the auditing process. Code does not remove a student from the cohort and does not apply to any other metrics, like the dropout rate.
5	Temporarily withdrawn due to suspension or school approved illness (does not exempt the student)	Included in school's cohort	Schools may use this code to track students in the auditing process. Code does not remove a student from the cohort. Written acknowledgement on official letterhead from an administrator at the school confirming suspension or school approved illness.
6	Student is deceased	Removed from school's cohort <b>only if</b> adequate documentation is provided	Supporting documentation includes an obituary, death certificate, newspaper article or funeral program.
7	Other situation that does not exempt the student from the cohort	Included in school's cohort	Schools may use this code to track students in the auditing process. Code does not remove a student from the cohort.
8	Visiting student (should not have been in the cohort)	Removed from school's cohort <b>only if</b> adequate documentation is provided	Provide one of the following supporting documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For foreign exchange students, a copy of the official exchange program paperwork reflecting the year of participation (on exchange agency letterhead.)</li> <li>For all other visiting students, written acknowledgement on official letterhead from an administrator at the school confirming the student is a non-content (not included in ADM) visiting student with supporting documentation from the student information system.</li> </ul>
9	Graduated (listed on the official list of graduates)	Included in school's cohort	Graduation status (diploma) is entered in Graduate Data Verification (GDV), or for 5-year Cooperative Innovative High Schools a record of meeting requirement at end of fourth year in the student information system and captured in an official data collection. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No additional supporting documentation is necessary.</li> </ul>

Exit code	Description	Cohort action	Examples of acceptable supporting documentation
A	Transferred to a private school or facility <b>within the state</b> (includes NC School of Math and Science and NC School of the Arts)	Removed from school's cohort <b>only if</b> adequate documentation is provided	<p>Provide one of the following supporting documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Official Request for Student Records is required from receiving private school. (Documentation from records requests made by district/school personnel through an electronically signed and timestamped request generating system (ex. Scribbles K-12) using a district or school account are acceptable methods for requesting student records. Parent record requests from a parent account through such systems are not acceptable.) The private school must be listed on the <a href="#">Non-public School Directory</a> for the year the student transferred.</li> <li>• Copy of Notice of Intent to Operate a Private School Form submitted to NC Department of Administration (NCDOA). This form can be found for reference at <a href="https://ncadmin.nc.gov/citizens/private-school/notice-intent-operate-private-school">https://ncadmin.nc.gov/citizens/private-school/notice-intent-operate-private-school</a>.</li> <li>• Official Request for Student Records is received from NC School of Math and Science or NC School of the Arts.</li> <li>• Written acknowledgement on official letterhead, email or enrollment letter from a school official at the private school confirming enrollment. If a North Carolina school provides a form to be completed by the receiving school, the form must include the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Student name</li> <li>○ Name of enrolled school</li> <li>○ Address</li> <li>○ Staff contact information (i.e., phone number or email)</li> <li>○ Name of staff member completing form</li> <li>○ Signature of staff completing form</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Exit code	Description	Cohort action	Examples of acceptable supporting documentation
B	Transferred to home school <b>within the state</b>	Removed from school's cohort <b>only if</b> adequate documentation is provided	<p>Provide one of the following documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Official Non-Public School Registration Record signed by the parent or guardian.</li> <li>Letter signed by parent indicating the school's name, county and official home school code, given by NCDOA, of school attended by the student.</li> <li>Email from parent's email address stating the student is being homeschooled which includes the home school name, county and official home school code in the body of the email or an attached copy of the registration record.</li> <li>A school official's documented firsthand conversation with the parent at the time of withdrawal conveying the parent's intent to homeschool that includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Name of parent and student</li> <li>Date of conversation</li> <li>Home school name</li> <li>County</li> <li>Home school code</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
C	Transferred to a community college <b>within the state</b>	Included in school's cohort	Schools may use this code to track students in the auditing process. Code does not remove a student from the cohort.
D	Certificate recipient	Included in school's cohort	Graduation status (certificate) is entered in Graduation Data Verification (GDV) in the student information system. No additional supporting documentation is necessary. Code does not remove student from cohort.
E	Documented transfer within district not indicated by DPI enrollment data	Removed from school's cohort <b>only if</b> adequate documentation is provided	<p>Provide one of the following supporting documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Official Request for Student Record is required from receiving public school/facility.</li> <li>Written acknowledgement on official letterhead, email or enrollment letter from an administrator at the receiving school or facility confirming enrollment.</li> <li>Transfer record form or screen shot from receiving school/facility with school official or administrator signature.</li> <li>The student information system Statewide Records Search indicating school of enrollment. (Add the extension "/admin/swss/home.html" to your PS url to access the search page.)</li> </ul>

Exit code	Description	Cohort action	Examples of acceptable supporting documentation
F	Documented to be in a Youth Development Centers or adult prisons under the NC Division of Adult Corrections and Juvenile Justice, federal prison, or another state's adult prison	Removed from school's cohort <b>only if</b> adequate documentation is provided	<p>Provide one of the following supporting documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Official Request for Student Record is required from receiving public or private school/facility. (Documentation from records requests made by district/school personnel through an electronically signed and timestamped request generating system (ex. Scribbles K-12) using a district or school account are acceptable methods for requesting student records. Parent record requests from a parent account through such systems are not acceptable.)</li> <li>• Written acknowledgement on official letterhead, email or enrollment letter from an administrator at the receiving school/facility confirming enrollment. (Students transferred to the Eckerd School have been adjudicated)</li> <li>• Transfer record form or screen shot from an official site receiving school or facility with school official or administrator signature (this would apply to requests from Eckerd Schools).</li> <li>• Written copy of the court order or judgment decision showing student was adjudicated and incarcerated. (Students given probation or other sentence where incarceration does not occur is not valid for removal.)</li> </ul>
G	Documented transfer within state not indicated by DPI enrollment data (includes Department of Health and Human Services Schools [DHHS])	Removed from school's cohort <b>only if</b> adequate documentation is provided	<p>Provide following supporting documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student information system Statewide Records Search indicating school of enrollment (For PowerSchool, add the extension "/admin/swss/home.html" to your PS url to access the search page).</li> </ul>

Exit code	Description	Cohort action	Examples of acceptable supporting documentation
H	Relocated outside of United States	Removed from school's cohort <b>only if</b> adequate documentation is provided	<p>Provide the following supporting documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written confirmation/documentation from the parent that includes the following <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Parent signature</li> <li>○ Date of withdrawal or receipt of withdrawal information</li> <li>○ Country of relocation</li> <li>○ School official's signature</li> </ul> </li> <li>• A school official's documented firsthand conversation with the parent at the time of withdrawal that includes the following <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Name of parent and student</li> <li>○ Date of conversation</li> <li>○ Country of relocation</li> <li>○ School official's signature</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Written document from the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency that the student is detained or was deported.</li> <li>• Request for Student Record from receiving school indicating country of relocation.</li> <li>• Written acknowledgement on letterhead, email or enrollment letter from an administrator at the receiving school or facility confirming enrollment.</li> <li>• Transfer record form or screen shot from receiving school or facility.</li> </ul>

Exit code	Description	Cohort action	Examples of acceptable supporting documentation
J	Transferred to an educational program from which the student is expected to receive a regular high school diploma	Removed from school's cohort <b>only if</b> adequate documentation is provided	<p>Provide the following supporting documentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written acknowledgement on official letterhead from the educational program indicating the student is enrolled and is expected to receive a regular high school diploma. If a North Carolina school provides a form to be completed by the receiving educational program, the form must include the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Student name</li> <li>○ Name of enrolled school</li> <li>○ Address</li> <li>○ Staff contact information (i.e., phone number or email)</li> <li>○ Name of staff member completing form</li> <li>○ Signature of staff completing form</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>In the case of an educational program, the student would be considered a transfer if the program provides, and the student enrolls in, the part of the program from which the student is expected to receive a regular high school diploma.</p> <p><b>If the documentation does not indicate enrollment in the part of the program from which the student is expected to receive a regular high school diploma the student cannot be removed. General equivalency diploma programs do not qualify for a student to have an exit code.</b></p> <p>Educational programs may include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private online schools (Penn Foster, James Madison, etc.)</li> <li>• Non-public schools not included in the NCDOA directory</li> <li>• Tarheel Challenge</li> </ul>

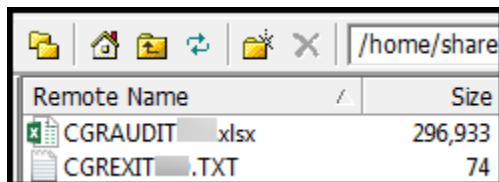
## Appendix B: Detailed Directions for Completing the Cohort Graduation Rate Processes

*As with all pieces of software, the information below describes one way to accomplish a task, there are many other ways to achieve the same result. Please use the method with which you are most comfortable.*

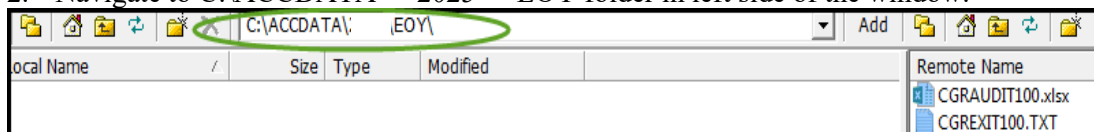
### I. Downloading the CGR\*AUDIT and CGR\*EXIT Files

#### a. Downloading the CGR\*AUDIT and CGR\*EXIT files directly from the Secure Shell

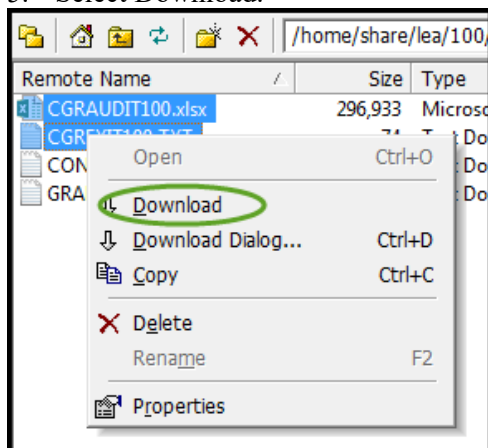
1. Connect to the secure shell and navigate to the 2025 -> CGR\*.



2. Navigate to C:\ACCDATA -> 2025 -> EOY folder in left side of the window.



3. Click to highlight the desired file (hold down the Ctrl key to select multiple files).
4. Right click on the highlighted files.
5. Select Download.



6. The files will download to the designated folder.

#### b. Downloading CGR Audit into Tools

The NCTools application allows accountability directors/testing coordinators to print and view a report by downloading the CGR\*AUDIT###.xlsx files from the secure shell server to a local computer.

If not using the NCTOOLS application, use directions above to complete the process manually. Both LEA level and school level CGR\*AUDIT files are created and prepopulated. This is done to allow an LEA to review files at the LEA level or school level. The file locations on the secure shell are:

2025 > CGR\* > CGR\*AUDIT####.xlsx (LEA level file) or  
2025 > CGR\* > CGR\*AUDIT#####.xlsx (School level files)

The following reports are available in 2024\NCT\_AUDITS\EOY only. These reports update each time the CGR files are updated:

CGR4\_ALL\_\*\*\*\*\*.xls (this report contains the list of students with FOR, AGAISNT, NA listed for each student)

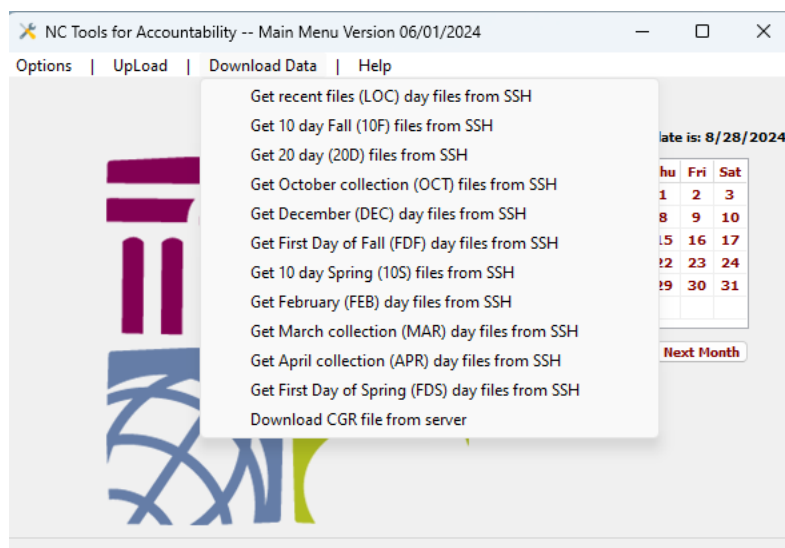
CGR4\_RATE\*\*\*\*\*.xls (this report is the summary of the graduation rates based on the current data files. The data in this report is for review only)

CGR5\_ALL\_\*\*\*\*\*.xls

CGR5\_RATE\*\*\*\*\*.xls

### Launch NCTools Application on Local PC

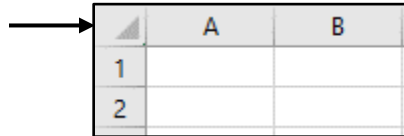
Using application, click on **Download Data** -> **Download CGR file from server**.



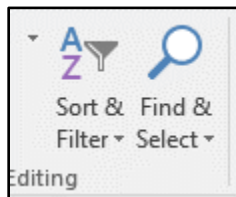


2. A black DOS screen will open displaying CGR\*EXIT file downloading.

## II. Creating/Appending CGR Exit Files

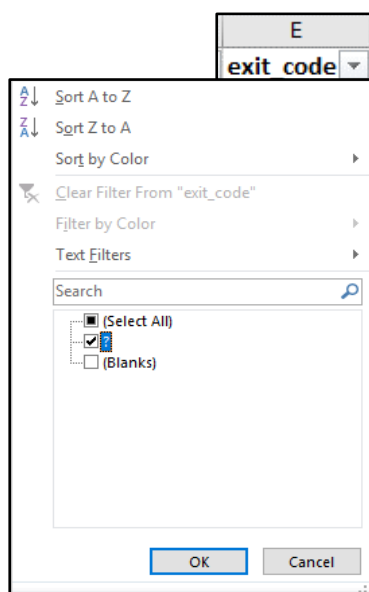


3. From the Excel menu bar click on AZ Sort & Filter button and select Filter from the dropdown menu



**Note:** Each column of the spreadsheet will now have a dropdown arrow.

4. Click on the dropdown for exit code column (E column) and select only the ?s and click the OK button.

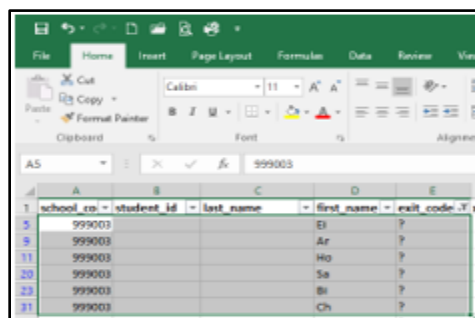


**Note:** Students with ?s listed are no longer in membership at the school and do not have an effective exit code.

5. Click on column A and drag the mouse over to column E to select all information in these columns.

	A	B	C	D	E
1	school_co	student_id	last_name	first_name	exit_code
5	999003			Ei	?
9	999003			Ar	?
11	999003			Ho	?
20	999003			Sa	?
23	999003			Bi	?
31	999003			Ch	?
32	999003				?
33	999003				?

6. Right click on the highlighted cells and select Copy from the dropdown menu



#### In the CGR\*EXIT file

7. Right click in the cell A2 and click Paste from the dropdown menu.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	school_co	student_id	last_name	first_name	exit_code	xfer_scho	comment
2							
3							
4							
5							

8. Student names and info should display in the CGR\*EXIT file.

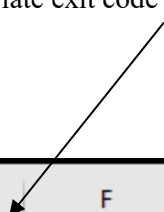
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	school_co	student_id	last_name	first_name	exit_code	xfer_scho	comment
2	999003			Ei	?		
3	999003			Ar	?		
4	999003			Ho	?		

9. Save changes.

### III. Entering Codes into the CGR\*Exit File

1. Open the CGR\*EXIT###.TXT file(s) in EXCEL.
2. Find the student in the CGR\*EXIT###.TXT file(s) and enter the appropriate exit code associated with the collected documentation for the student.

**Note:** See a list of Exit Codes on pages 17 – 21,

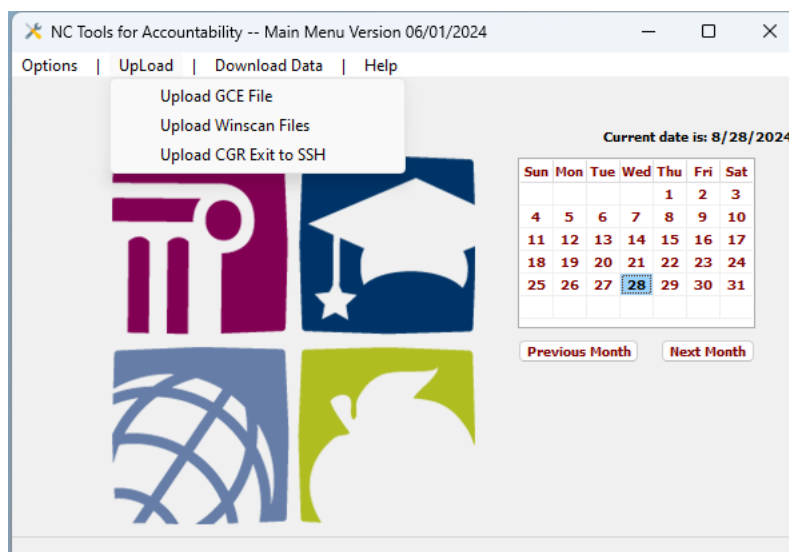


	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	school_code	student_id	last_name	first_name	exit_code	xfer_school	comment
2	999003	1846###	Doe	John	3		
3							

3. Once the students in the CGR\*EXIT###.TXT are reconciled,
  - a. save the edited CGR\*EXIT###.TXT file using the same filename and format.
  - b. Upload the file to the 2025 > CGR\* directory on the server or use NCTools to upload to the server (see directions below.) The CGR\*AUDIT###.xlsx file will be updated shortly after upload. Note, processing may take longer at the end of the year.
4. After the file has been processed, download the CGR\*AUDIT#####.xlsx, open with excel and look at the “effective\_exit\_code” column (column AS), which should populate with the entered codes. If the code was accepted, there will no longer be a ? in the “exit\_code” column (column E).
5. The CGR\*AUDIT file should be downloaded and reviewed per the directions in this document after the CGR\*EXIT file has processed and again periodically throughout the year to locate new records needing action.
6. Any additional new students found in the exit column from the updated CGR\*AUDIT file must be appended to the CGR\*EXIT file. Users can either copy and paste or manually enter new records. The NCDPI suggests copying and pasting to eliminate the chance of incorrectly entering information.
7. Enter appropriate codes in the CGR\*EXIT file for additional students when valid documentation is supplied.
8. Continue to complete this process until the submission due date.

### IV. Using Tools to Upload CGR\*EXIT files

1. Upload the file using NCTools> Upload > Upload CGRExit to SSH.

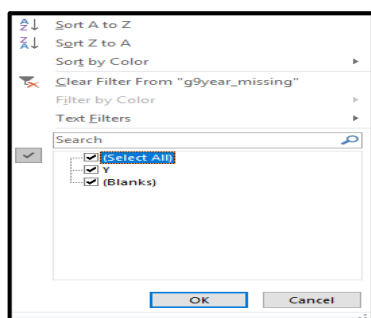


2. A black DOS screen will open displaying CGR\*EXIT file uploading.
3. The CGR\*EXIT file will process shortly after upload. The process may take longer at the end of the year.

#### V. Locating Students with Grade 9 Years to be Verified by PSUs in CGR\*AUDIT Files

**Note:** Grade 9 entry dates in PowerSchool are listed as a specific date (ex. 09/05/2014). The grade9year will reflect the year at the conclusion of that school year. In the example, the grade9year would be 2015.

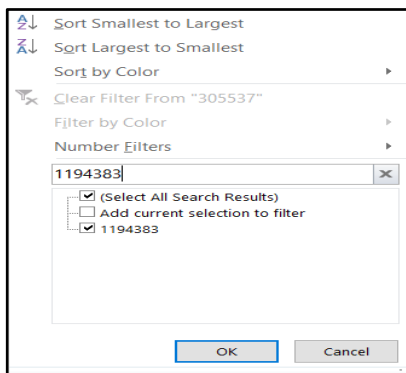
1. Open the CGR\*AUDIT file
2. Add filtering to the spreadsheet using steps 2 and 3 on page 21.
3. Click the dropdown arrow for column AN (g9year\_missing) and keep only ?s.
4. This provides a list of students with missing or unverified grade 9 entry dates (dd/mm/yyyy) in PowerSchool.
5. To return to the full audit, remove the filter from column AN (G9year\_missing) by clicking the filter button at the top of the column and entering a check for Select All.



This information may also be found on the Status Viewer under the 2024-EOY-CGR\*AUDIT option at [https://www.rep.dpi.state.nc.us/2025/app/lea/status\\_viewer.cgi](https://www.rep.dpi.state.nc.us/2025/app/lea/status_viewer.cgi)

## Confirming the Grade 9 Entry Date in ACCData (OPTIONAL process)

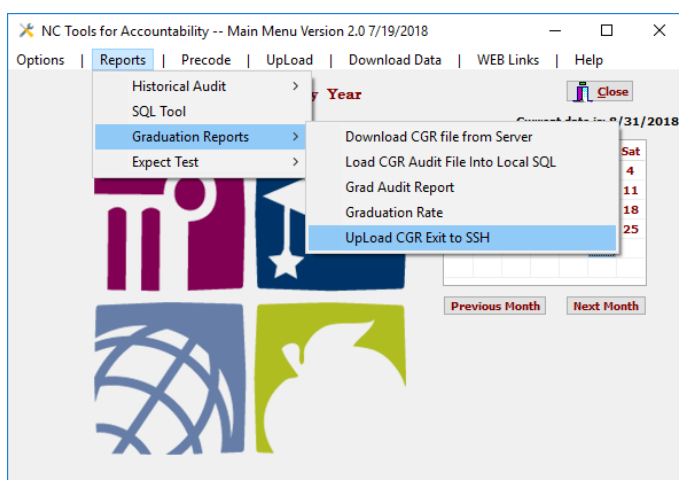
1. Download Daily files using NCTools25 > Download Data > option 2 – Get recent files (LOC) day files from SSH and load into SQL.
2. Once files are downloaded, go to C:\acdata > 2025 > LOC folder.
3. Open the appropriate high school ACCDATAXXXXXX.TXT file. Where XXXXXX represents the 6-digit school code.
4. Apply filters to the spreadsheet
5. Click on the filter dropdown for column D.
6. Enter the student ID in the Search box.



7. Press Enter key or click OK button when student ID shows in box below.
8. The student row should display, and column L will have the Grade 9 Entry Date that's been entered into PowerSchool.
9. The Grade 9 Year will appear in the CGR\*AUDIT file in the ps\_g9year column after the next official data collection.

## VI. Using Tools to Upload CGR\*EXIT files

1. Upload the file using NCTools25 > Reports -> Graduation Reports > Upload CGRExit file to SSH.

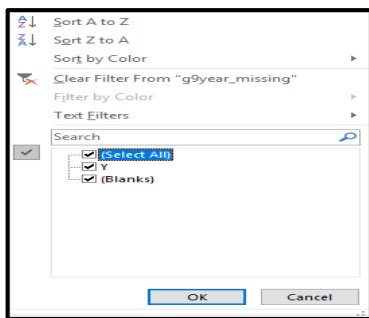


2. A black DOS screen will open displaying CGR\*EXIT file uploading.
3. The CGR\*EXIT file will process shortly after upload. The process may take longer at the end of the year.

## VII. Locating Students with Grade 9 Years to be Verified by PSUs in CGR\*AUDIT Files

**Note:** Grade 9 entry dates in the student information system is listed as a specific date (ex. 09/05/2014). The grade9year will reflect the year at the conclusion of that school year. In the example, the grade9year would be 2015.

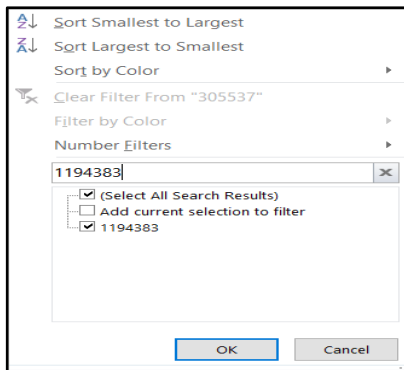
6. Open the CGR\*AUDIT file
7. Add filtering to the spreadsheet using steps 2 and 3 on page 21.
8. Click the dropdown arrow for column AN (g9year\_missing) and keep only ?s.
9. This provides a list of students with missing or unverified grade 9 entry dates (dd/mm/yyyy) in the student information system.
10. To return to the full audit, remove the filter from column AN (G9year\_missing) by clicking the filter button at the top the of column and entering a check for Select All.



This information may also be found on the Status Viewer under the 2025-EOY-CGR\*AUDIT option at [https://www.rep.dpi.state.nc.us/2025/app/lea/status\\_viewer.cgi](https://www.rep.dpi.state.nc.us/2025/app/lea/status_viewer.cgi)

## Confirming the Grade 9 Entry Date in ACCData (OPTIONAL process)

10. Download Daily files using NCTools25 > Download Data > option 2 – Get recent files (LOC) day files from SSH and load into SQL.
11. Once files are downloaded, go to C:\acdata > 2025 > LOC folder.
12. Open the appropriate high school ACCDATAXXXXXX.TXT file. Where XXXXXX represents the 6-digit school code.
13. Apply filters to the spreadsheet
14. Click on the filter dropdown for column D.
15. Enter the student ID in the Search box.



16. Press Enter key or click OK button when student ID shows in box below.
17. The student row should display, and column L will have the Grade 9 Entry Date that's been entered into the student information system.
18. The Grade 9 Year will appear in the CGR\*AUDIT file in the ps\_g9year column after the next official data collection.

## Appendix C: Helpful Hints for Using the CGR Records Search System

PSUs may find it useful to use the CGR Records Search System to identify issues with student enrollments and possible Unique ID (UID) issues. Access to the CGR Records Search is password protected. You must have permissions assigned by the RAC for access. The link to the CGR Records Search System is <https://www.rep.dpi.state.nc.us/2025/app/cgrsearch/>. It is only available after the processing of CGR begins.

Below are some helpful hints to assist in the search for students who may have issues that need to be resolved such as UID changes.

1. The minimum requirements to search are a student ID given by itself or at least two of the following filters: LEA, Student ID, Last Name, First Name
2. A second "Student ID" search box lets you search for two IDs at once so you can more easily make chronological confirmation of an ID change on one page.
3. Name filters search for partial matches, and "Left Anchored" indicates match should be at the beginning of the name.
4. Name filters should be at least two characters.
5. Two types of records (membership and graduate) are searched.
6. The membership records include all high school grades for the last five years; therefore, search results may contain students in cohorts other than the 2025 cohorts. Note that students in the 2025 cohorts are expected to have a "g 9 year" of 2022 or 2021.
7. "Year" refers to the reporting year (e.g., 2020 for the 2019–20 school year).
8. Double-clicking on IDs or names appearing in the results will populate the appropriate search boxes as a convenient alternative to copy/paste.
9. If you don't get results right away, remember to think like a detective, and be creative. It may take several searches in different ways to finally track down the available history for a student. Some things to keep in mind about the data:
  - a. The student's name spelling can differ between schools and/or data sources.
  - b. The student may have switched between using first and middle name.
  - c. The student's last name may have changed.
  - d. The student's ID may have changed from one year to the next.
  - e. The student's ID may not match between the CGRGRAD and CGRMEM tables.