Acceptable Definitions of Rigorous High School Programs

The US Department of Education approved the following options as evidence of rigor in secondary school programs of study.

Program	English	Math	Science	Social Studies	Foreign Language
Successful completion of coursework necessary for admission to a state institution of higher education*	4 years	3 years (sequential)	3 years (at least 2 years of lab science)	3 years	2 years
Recipients of the *High Schools That Work* (HSTW) Award of Educational Achievement**	4 years	4 years (including Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry and an additional higher level course)	3 years (including at least two credits in college-prep. biology, chemistry, anatomy/physiology or physics/applied physics		
The State Scholars Initiative Requirements	4 years	3 years	3 years of lab	3 ½ years	2 years
Project 720	4 years	4 years, (including Algebra I, Algebra 2, Geometry and an additional higher level course)	3 years, (including Biology, Chemistry, Physics or Physical Science)	4 years	2 years (optional)
Dual Enrollment Program	• Successful completion of 9 college credits • Scoring at or above proficiency on the PSSA				
Pennsylvania Certificate of Distinction	Students earn a Certificate of Distinction after completing all required coursework and scoring at the advanced level of proficiency on all required PSSA exams.				

Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses and test scores	Must have demonstrated the completion of 2 AP or IB courses and received passing scored on the tests.

* Students must demonstrate proficiency on all 11th grade PSSA core content areas (math, reading and writing) as well.
** Students must also complete a concentration in a career/technical field, mathematics/science or the humanities and meet all three of the performance goals on the *High Schools That Work* Assessment.