

COURSE CHALLENGE

Background

The Division believes that high school students should have the opportunity to enroll in courses appropriate to their background and learning rate. Senior high students who believe they already possess the knowledge, skills and attitudes prescribed in the *Program of Studies* for a course, shall be allowed to demonstrate these learnings through special assessment opportunities.

Course challenge is a provision that allows senior high school students to challenge the expectations of a course by participating in a formal assessment process, rather than taking the course. Normally, a course challenge will apply only to a course that is at a higher level in a course sequence, or is at a similar level in an alternative course sequence. **The primary purpose for having a course challenge is to deal with special circumstances whereby students may have acquired various knowledge and skills from previous experiences. The onus is on the student to demonstrate to the Principal that he/she has a reasonable chance to successfully meet the acceptable standards of the course.** If a student makes application for a course challenge, it does not automatically mean that this challenge will be granted. Based on consultation that involves the student, the parents and subject teacher(s) where applicable, the Principal shall make the final decision about the student's readiness for the course challenge.

If a student has been registered in a course for 50% or more of the required time and decides to drop the course, a Principal may choose to allow that student to write the final exam for that subject. The Principal shall consult with the teacher in such situations before making a final decision. The final mark in the course would then be determined by the overall assessment process as explained in the course outline. This type of situation is different and separate from a "course challenge" request by a student.

Procedures

1. Authority to administer the course challenge policy is delegated from the Superintendent to the Principal of each high school.
2. Course challenge is a provision that allows senior high students to participate in a summative evaluation process, to be given a final course mark, and if successful, credits in that course.
3. Course challenges shall be administered by each school in accordance with its own policy on "Course Challenges", and only be applicable after the student has registered in that school.
4. Each school shall develop a course challenge policy that is consistent with the *Guide to Education: ECS to Grade 12* and with these administrative procedures. Procedures will

be established to communicate to students and parents procedures and availability for course challenges.

5. The Principal shall ensure that each course challenge includes strategies that will assess the breadth and scope of learning expectations for the course as outlined in the *Program of Studies*. The “assessment process” includes the student performing a number of tasks and showing samples of work that demonstrate the degree to which the student has achieved the expected standards for the outcomes of the course.
6. The student shall initiate the course challenge process, and shall take the responsibility for providing evidence of readiness to challenge a course. This might include such things as a student portfolio, documentation of work and/or experience, recommendations from previous teachers.
7. The Principal shall assign the administration and evaluation of the course challenge to a certified teacher who has taught the course. If there is no qualified teacher on staff capable of administering the challenge course, the Principal can refuse the student’s request.
8. A student shall attempt a particular course challenge only once. If the student is unsuccessful in the course challenge, but wants credit in the course or wishes to raise his/her mark, the student is required to take the course.
9. Course challenge assessment opportunities will be provided in January and June of each school year and coincide with the exam schedules for regular courses that are being offered in the school.
10. Upon successful completion of a course challenge, waived prerequisite credits and a “P” for “pass” for courses lower in the course sequence shall be awarded. For example, if a student successfully completed a challenge in Math 20-3, waived prerequisite credits would be awarded for Math 10-3
11. In the case of diploma exam courses, the mark obtained on the course challenge would have to be combined with the mark obtained on the diploma exam before a final course mark or credits could be awarded.
12. Students can only challenge courses that have specifically defined content in the *Program of Studies*. Courses such as Work Experience and Special Projects could not be challenged. In Alberta, only Francophone schools can offer course challenge and credit for any Français course.

December, 2003

Updates: June, 2013; April 2020

References:

Section 18, 31, 33, 52, 53, 56, 196, 197,222 Education Act
Alberta Education Funding Manual for School Authorities,
Alberta Education Guide to Education