



Graduation Program Protocols

Policy Graduation Program Protocols	Adopted: February 24th, 2017
	Reviewed:

Course Challenge

Students applying for access to a course challenge, equivalency or external credit program will be guided by the following principles.

- Students learn in a variety of ways and at different rates;
- The diverse needs and abilities of students should be acknowledged;
- Relevant learning acquired by students outside school should be acknowledged;
- Challenge procedures will be consistent and equitable for all students.
- Students should be able to demonstrate they have gained the appropriate knowledge and/or skills before they are allowed to challenge for credit;
- Students will demonstrate that they have met the prescribed learning outcomes for the course being challenged to receive course credit;
- The challenge process will maintain the high standards of a quality education;
- MCS will support (to the best of the school’s ability and dependant on staffing and access to the appropriate resources), students’ access to alternate ways of gaining Graduation Program credits.

We have entrance exams for students coming from a home-schooling environment. The challenge exams cover major subjects such as Socials 10, English 10, Math 10, 11 & 12, as well as Science 10, 11 and 12.

Course challenge is a provision that allows students in grades 10, 11 and 12 to challenge the expectations for a course by participating in a formal assessment process, rather than taking the course. Course challenge is for students who already possess the expected knowledge, skills, and attitudes as defined by the *Program of Studies* for a given course usually because the student has participated in experiences or activities which have enabled the student to gain such skills, knowledge and attitudes.

Students challenging a course will be given a final course mark and, if successful, credits in that course. Credit in diploma examination courses can be achieved only through combination of the school-awarded mark (50%) and the diploma examination mark (50%). Assessment procedures for course challenges may include a variety of formats and strategies. Teachers who have taught the course being challenged shall evaluate students’ success relative to the standards for the course.

In order to successfully challenge a course, students must:

1. Demonstrate the required knowledge, skills and attitudes through a portfolio or other tangible means to justify the request for challenge.
2. Pass the challenge exam.
3. Complete assessments that could include some of the following: oral report, written report, essay, assignments (e.g. poetry assignment), science lab, basic skills assessment (e.g. reading comprehension), project, etc. An interview with the subject teacher may also be required.

Students who challenge will be given the outline of assessment tools that are to be used with a time line and weighting of assessments that will determine the final course mark. Regardless of the number or weighting of assessments, the challenge exam must be passed. While credits will be issued for a pass, the student must receive the minimum grade as stated above to take the next course in the sequence where applicable. A course challenge implies that the student has engaged in educational activities outside the regular school program to acquire the skills, knowledge and attitudes that would justify them challenging a course. A course challenge is not intended as a shortcut to completing courses.

Equivalency

Courses taught outside the British Columbia system that substantially match (80% or more) the learning outcomes of Ministry developed or Board Authority Authorized Grade 10, 11 or 12 courses are eligible for credit through equivalency. Application for Equivalency should be made directly to MCS Administration, who will assess documentation provided by the student to determine if the learning outcomes were successfully completed. For students pursuing equivalency in trades or language courses, MCS will follow the Handbook of Procedures for the Graduation Program.

External Credits

External credentials approved by the Ministry are based on an official list of the approved credentials and assessments provided annually to schools in the Ministry's Course Information Book. Some external credentials are classified as required course, and others as elective courses. Students completing external credit courses will be required to submit documentation of skills and/or knowledge learned to a supervising teacher. The supervising teacher is responsible for creating, distributing and collecting this documentation. The documentation that forms the basis of assessment and evaluation of student learning in an external credit course should:

- Provide details to support evidence of the students' learning of information or skills acquired.
- Provide accurate information on the quality or level of student learning in relation to the grading scale of MCS.
- Provide accurate information on student behaviour, attendance, and attitude.
- Provide an accurate evaluation of student learning in relation to the course outcomes as established either by the institution offering the external credit (as in the case of the trades program) or between the school and the student (as in the case of external sports credits – i.e. dance, hockey).

Credit from Post-Secondary Courses

Students are entitled to earn "dual credit" if they earn credit that leads to a postsecondary credential from a post-secondary institution which is a member of the British Columbia Transfer System or offered in French through Educacentre.

Post-secondary courses for which credit may be earned must be documented as follows:

- a) listed in the most recent edition of the British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer Guide, or specified in individual Career Technical Centre (CTC) program agreements, or included in a BC public post-secondary institution's calendar as a course leading to a credential of one year or less, a two-year diploma or a four year degree.
- b) Applicable post-secondary level courses count towards the required number of Grade 12 level credits needed to satisfy graduation requirements. BCCA does not charge students for reviewing their transcripts.

Procedures for earning dual credit

All post-secondary level courses will be reported using course codes listed in the online Course Registry.

For reporting and transcript purposes, schools must assign all credits earned at a post-secondary institution a letter grade and percentage.

Provided a course consists of the standard number of hours for most courses offered at that post-secondary institution, such courses will be awarded four credits, regardless of the number of credits indicated on the post-secondary institution's transcript. However, if the course at the post-secondary institution is offered in modules, credits awarded should be proportionate to 4 credits for the whole course.

Adult Basic Education (ABE) courses do not count for dual credit.

Our current Dual Credit program supports the Trades program as offered by Northern Lights College – Dawson Creek.

Independent Directed Studies Policy (IDS)

This policy enables students to initiate their own area of learning and to receive credit towards graduation. The policy also allows schools to recognize learning in a Ministry-developed or Board Authorized course that a student may not have completed.

This policy is not a student entitlement but an enabling policy intended to allow students to pursue further studies of interest.

- IDS credits may be awarded to students who have successfully completed independent work based on a subset of learning outcomes of Grade 10, 11 or 12 Ministry developed courses or Board Authorized courses.
- A student may study one or more learning outcomes in depth, or study more broadly a wide variety of learning outcomes from a single course.
- IDS credits may only be used to satisfy elective requirements.
- The maximum value for a single IDS course is four credits, but there is no limit to the total number of IDS credits a student may earn.
- The number of credits a student earns for an IDS will be set out in the plan developed by that student and a teacher, and approved by a principal.
- Grade 12 IDS credits may count toward the minimum of 16 grade 12 credits required for graduation.
- Procedures for IDS Students wanted to be consider for IDS are to provide a written letter requesting:
 1. The reason for wanting to complete an IDS
 2. The course and along with the portion of the course he/ she desires to study.
 3. The number of credits they desire to achieve from the IDS course and how it connected to his/ her graduation plans.
- For reporting and transcript purposes, schools must assign a letter grade and percentage for all credits earned through IDS.
- IDS courses can be for 1, 2, 3, or 4 credits.
- If students complete a portion of the outcomes for a course, schools may report their achievement to the Ministry using IDS credits.