

COURSE CHALLENGE

Background

A course challenge process is available to high school students who feel they have already acquired the expected knowledge, skills and attitudes for a high school course, as specified in the Program of Studies, and are ready to demonstrate that achievement through a formal assessment and evaluation process.

Course challenges are intended to:

- meet the diverse needs of students
- encourage students' ownership of their learning
- acknowledge the learning that students acquire in a variety of settings

The Superintendent or designate is responsible for the administration of this administrative procedure.

Definitions

Assessment: refers to the process of a 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. The student's performance and the quality of the student's work are evaluated by a certificated teacher who has expertise in the subject/course in question.

Course: refers to a course at any level in a course sequence.

Course sequence: refers to a sequence of courses that together constitute a complete set of prerequisites.

Summative evaluation: refers to the final evaluation of learning outcomes.

Procedures

1. The process and procedures for course challenge shall comply with Alberta Education regulations as detailed in the current [Guide to Education – Course Challenges](#).
2. Each high school Principal shall develop course challenge procedures and appropriate course challenge assessment processes.
3. Each high school Principal shall establish procedures to communicate to parents and students the availability of and procedures for, course challenges.

Course Challenge Process

1. A high school student who possesses the knowledge, skills and attitudes required of a course as specified in the Program of Studies and is ready to demonstrate that achievement through a formal assessment process, with approval of the Principal, may initiate a request to engage in the course challenge process. For diploma examination courses, this applies only to the school-awarded mark component. Students are still required to write the diploma exam.
2. The challenge must be carried out within a reasonable period of time and in a practical manner. A student may not initiate a course challenge for a course in a lower-level sequence if the student has already completed a course in a higher-level sequence in that subject. There are courses identified by Alberta Education that cannot be challenged. These courses can be found in the Guide to Education.
3. The Principal is responsible for providing information related to course challenges as required. The Principal must ensure that there is reasonable chance of a successful outcome to any course challenge and is confident in the student's ability to then manage the course at the next level in the sequence.
4. In responding to a request for a course challenge, the Principal will review the course challenge process with the student, parent/guardian. Students and parents/guardians must be fully knowledgeable about the process and consequences of course challenges. Decisions related to course challenges are made in consultation with the student, parent/guardian and subject teachers, with the final decision being that of the Principal.
5. The Principal will make the final decision about the student's readiness to challenge the course and will assign the administration and evaluation of assessment to a certified teacher who has taught the course.
6. The student who initiates the course challenge process shall take responsibility for providing evidence of readiness to challenge a course. The course challenge process must assess a student's achievement of the depth and breadth of the outcomes of the course. Assessment procedures for course challenges must include a variety of formats and strategies. The challenge must assess a student's achievement of all the outcomes of the course. The formal assessment of student achievement must include multiple indicators and sources of evidence of student learning. This may include but is not limited to interviews, formal examinations, a portfolio, documentation of work and/or experience, and/or a recommendation from a teacher.
7. Writing a final exam is not sufficient support to constitute a course challenge. Other evidence must be collected in addition to a final exam. The student must be successful in all aspects of the challenge. Program integrity must be adhered to and there must be a significant amount of rigor in the process of course challenges.
8. A student can attempt a particular course challenge only once. If the student is unsuccessful but wants credit in the course or wishes to raise their mark, the student is required to take the course. A student who challenges a course, either successfully or unsuccessfully, may subsequently choose to take the course.
9. The course challenge provision applies to high school non-diploma examination courses and only to the school-awarded mark component of high school diploma examination

courses. At the completion of the course challenge, the final mark must be reported clearly indicated that it was a course challenge. Students challenging a non-diploma 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 a combination of the school-awarded mark (70%) and the diploma examination mark (30%). Course challenge in diploma examination courses applies only to the school-awarded mark component of the course and, therefore, will **not** result in a final course mark or in credits until after the student successfully completes the diploma examination for that course.

Reference: Relevant Legislation and Regulations