

Challenge and Equivalency: Prior Learning Assessment

The Board of Education, in compliance with the Ministry of Education mandate, believes that giving credit for prior learning is necessary to permit students to develop their maximum intellectual potential within a flexible and responsive environment.

Challenging for Credit

Purpose of Challenge

- The purpose of challenge is to permit students who have already acquired the appropriate learning elsewhere to obtain full credits for a Grade 11 or 12 course.
- The challenge is not to be used as a way for students to upgrade their final course marks.
- The Board is not obliged to provide challenges for provincial or locally developed courses not taught in the district.

Principles of Challenge

- The principles providing a basis for challenge include the following:
 - 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.
- The challenge process should maintain the high standards of a quality education.
- Educators are responsible for outlining the district expectations of the challenge.

Student Requirements for Challenge

- The entire course must be challenged; a partial credit will not be granted through the challenge process.
- Students will be granted only one opportunity to challenge a specific course.
- Students must be able to demonstrate strong and compelling evidence that they are ready to challenge for credit.
- Students must demonstrate in the specific course challenge package that they have met the prescribed learning outcomes of a course of the challenge to be successful.
- Students will receive a letter grade and percentage mark for a successful challenge. These marks will be recorded on report cards and transcripts.
- In order to challenge a course with a provincial examination, students must first successfully challenge the school portion of the mark. If successful, students will then be provided the opportunity to write the provincial exam at the first available examination date. The final letter grade and percentage mark will be based on the blended school and examination mark. (See previous section – Principles of Challenge.)

Student Eligibility for Challenge

- A student can challenge a course if he or she is:
 - Enrolled in the school district, or
 - Registered with the school district for home schooling, or
 - Enrolled in the Summit Learning Centre where the challenge is being requested.
- Students who have been enrolled previously in the course are not, in most circumstances, eligible to challenge it for credit.

- A teacher may recommend a student for challenge.
- A student may challenge a course if he or she shows that the challenge is linked to his or her Student Learning Plan.

Student Approval for Challenge

- Before approval to challenge a course is granted, students will complete the [Application for Challenge](#) form.
- The approval for challenge must be made by the home school principal or designate, in consultation with the designated advisor, subject teacher, student's parents/guardians (if applicable), and the student.

Challenge Process

- The challenge process begins once a student has given compelling evidence that he or she will succeed in the challenge assessment.
- In order to challenge successfully a non-provincial examinable course, a student must:
 - Demonstrate that he or she has met the learning outcomes of the course as specified in the challenge packet.
 - Obtain at least a C- and 50% in the final assessment.
- In order to challenge successfully a provincial examinable course, a student must:
 - Demonstrate that he or she has met the learning outcomes of the course as specified in the challenge packet.
 - Write the provincial exam at one of the scheduled exam times set by the Ministry for all students
 - Obtain a final mark in the course of at least a C- and 50% based on a combination of school and exam marks, just as it would be for an enrolled student.

Reporting a Successful Challenge

If a student receives credit for a course through challenge, the school determined percentage and letter grade, along with the code of "C" placed in the "Course Type" field, must be reported to the Ministry for transcript purposes.

When to Challenge

Specific times during the spring of each year will be designated for students to challenge courses.

Fees

A non-refundable, standard fee of \$100 will be charged for each challenge application.

Equivalency

Purpose of Equivalency

- The purpose of equivalency is to recognize valid credentials equivalent to the Grade 11 and 12 levels acquired by students from other educational jurisdictions and from institutions outside the regular school system.
- All students who can provide a credential or documentation to support the equivalency request are entitled to an equivalency review.

- The equivalency process will not recognize undocumented prior learning. The most common situation involves a student who has moved from another province into British Columbia.

Principles of Equivalency

- The principles providing a basis for equivalency include the following:
 - 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.
- Students must provide credentials or documentation to demonstrate that they have met the learning outcomes of the course requested for equivalency.
- The equivalency process should maintain the standards of a quality education.

Student Requirements for Equivalency

Equivalency credits are only granted for course and programs that meet all of the following requirements:

- The student is able to provide documentation that the course has successfully been completed.
- The course matches 80% of the prescribed learning outcomes of a Ministry Authorized or Locally Developed Course taught within the district.
- The course has been taken at another institution or educational jurisdiction outside the regular British Columbia school system.

Student Eligibility for Equivalency

- To participate in the equivalency process, a student must be:
 - Enrolled in the school district where equivalency is being requested, or
 - Registered with the school district for home schooling where equivalency is being requested, or
 - Enrolled in the Summit Learning Centre where equivalency is being requested.
- Students are responsible for providing evidence of successful completion of a course or program of learning from other educational jurisdictions or institutions outside the regular system. Evidence is in the form of official credentials, documents, diplomas or certificates which show that the student has met the learning outcomes of the provincial or locally developed course for which equivalency is being applied.
- When equivalency is not available, students may challenge for credit.

Student approval for Equivalency

- Through an application form at the home school the student will provide a written explanation of how the Equivalency will meet the educational goals as set out in their Student Learning Plan.
- Before approval for equivalency of a course is granted, students will complete the [Application for Equivalency Credit](#) form at the home school.
- The approval for equivalency must be made by the principal with the designated advisor, student's parents/guardians (if applicable), and the student.

Assessing and Evaluating Equivalency

To gain successful equivalency, a student's documentation must satisfy the requirements specified in the Ministry Handbook of Procedures (Chapter 2 – Guidelines: Course Equivalency). In all cases the equivalent course must incorporate at least 80% of the learning outcomes of the specified course.

Reporting Equivalency Credits

For any course completed through the equivalency process, the percentage and letter grade, or Transfer Standing ("TS"), along with the code of "E" placed in the "Course Type" field, must be reported to the Ministry for Transcript purposes.

When to Apply for Equivalency

Students will gain equivalency for courses when documentation is complete and reviewed by appropriate school personnel.

Fees

Fees will be established in relationship to costs and ability to pay if credentials or documentation provided require considerable time to process.

Date Adopted: March 2000

Definition:

- *Prior Learning Assessment is:*
 - *Based on the belief that relevant learning can be acquired by students outside the school system and should be acknowledged.*
 - *A process by which the student demonstrates to a specified level of competence the learning outcomes of a Grade 11 or 12 provincial or locally-developed course.*

Legal Reference: Ministry Regulations