



## AP-H-301.1 Course Challenge Administrative Procedures

October 7, 2009

### BACKGROUND & RATIONALE

Course challenge is a provision that allows senior high school students to challenge the outcomes of a course by participating in a formal assessment, rather than taking the course. Course challenges are intended to meet the diverse needs of students, to encourage students' ownership of their learning, and to acknowledge the learning that students acquire in a variety of settings not necessarily limited to schools (*Guide to Education*).

Course challenges are the responsibility of the principal educator at the high school. Results from a course challenge recognize how well a student has met the learning outcomes specified for a course. The Guide to Education's states that "Senior high school students who believe that they have acquired the knowledge, skills, and attitudes as defined by the program of studies for a given course and are ready to demonstrate that achievement can participate in a summative assessment/evaluation process. The student is given a final course mark, and if successful, credits in that course."

### PROCEDURES

- Course challenges apply to a course at any level in a course sequence.
- Course challenges apply to all non-diploma examination courses and will constitute the students final grade in these instances, and if successful, credits in that course.
- Course challenges apply to all diploma examination courses but only to the student's school-awarded mark in this case. Students applying for a course challenge still need to write the diploma examination for the course they are challenging. The two grades (the grade they receive from the course challenge as well as the grade they receive on the diploma exam) will be combined (50/50) to come up with a final grade for the challenged course.
- The high school principal educator must communicate to parents and students the availability of, and procedure for, a course challenge.
- Students applying for a course challenge must take the responsibility for providing evidence of readiness to challenge a course (e.g. a portfolio, other collection, or documentation of work and/or experience, a recommendation from a junior high teacher, etc.).
- Ultimately, a student's readiness for course challenge (once they have shown evidence as stated above) is determined through consultation with the principal educator, student, parent(s), and subject teacher(s). The principal educator makes the final decision about a student's readiness for the course challenge.

- Once a student is determined to be ready to challenge a course, the principal educators will:
  - Ensure that the assessment for the course challenge includes strategies that will assess both the breadth and scope of the learning expectations for the course as outlined in the *Program of Studies*.
  - Ensure that the assessment procedures for the course challenge include a variety of formats and strategies. Students must perform a number of tasks and show samples that demonstrate the degree to which they have achieved the expected standards for the outcomes of the course.
  - Assign the administration and evaluation of the assessment to a certificated teacher(s) who has taught the course before (where possible).
  - A student's success with regards to the course challenge will be evaluated by the teacher(s) who administered the assessment. If the teacher who administered the assessment has not taught the subject/course being challenged, the success of the student must be determined in consultation with a teacher who has expertise in the subject/course in question.
- Once a student has been deemed successful in the challenge of a course, the principal educator must report the student's achievement to Alberta Learning according to the directives in the *Guide to Education* "Reporting Student Achievement in High School Subjects."
- When a student successfully challenges a course, they are awarded the waived prerequisites and a "P" for "pass" for courses lower in the sequence.
- Students may attempt a course challenge for a subject/course only once. If a student is unsuccessful or would like to receive a higher grade, they must take the course.
- The FFCA school authority will receive 20% of the full credit enrollment unit funding for a student who completed a course challenge and who does not choose to take the course in that semester.
- No fees will be charged for the administration of a course challenge.
- Students may appeal the decision of the principal educator to not grant a course challenge, or the final grade awarded as the result of a completed course challenge.
- The following procedures will apply for appeals:
  - The student or the student's parent(s) must put their appeal in writing to the principal educator within 7 days of being notified of either decision (the decision to not grant a course challenge or the final grade).
  - If the student is not satisfied with the response from the principal educator, the student or the student's parents must put their appeal in writing to the Superintendent within 14 days of being notified of either decision.
  - If the student is not satisfied with the response from the Superintendent, the student or the student's parent(s) must put their appeal in writing to the Assistant Deputy Minister, System Improvement and Reporting Division of Alberta Learning within 30 days of being notified of either decision.
  - If the student is not satisfied with the response from the Assistant Deputy Minister, the student or the student's parent(s) must put their appeal in

writing to the Minister of Education within 60 days of being notified of either decision.

- Lastly, if the student is not satisfied with the response from the Minister, the student or the student's parent(s) must request in writing that the Executive Director review the results of the evaluation.