

Challenge and Equivalency Policy 6240 January 26, 1999

The Board of Trustees of School District 81 (Fort Nelson) supports the three basic principles that are the foundation of education in B.C.:

- people learn in different ways and at different rates
- learning is both an individual and a social process
- learning requires the active participation of the learner.

The Board acknowledges that relevant learning occurs outside the school building and that assessment is an integral part of the learning process. Crediting prior learning through the process of course challenge and course equivalency creates flexibility and greater opportunities for students to achieve their goals. The assessment of external learning for credit should be rigorous, maintaining the integrity of the curriculum and the standards of a quality education.

All students are eligible to gain credit for Grade 11 or 12 provincially or locally developed courses in the district by applying to challenge a course or have an equivalency review of their credentials.

Challenge

The purpose of Challenge is to assess learning which students have done in other settings and which may not be formally documented. A successful Challenge will result in a student receiving credit for the appropriate course and a mark which is recorded on the student's graduation transcript. Challenge is intended to acknowledge student learning so that students do not have to participate in courses which would be repetitive for them. It also allows students to broaden their high school program by selecting additional courses or to enrich their lives in other ways, such as pursuing personal passions in the Fine Arts or Athletics. The Challenge process is intended to respond to unique needs in exceptional circumstances, not to replace the valuable experience of learning in a classroom setting. Students should be able to provide compelling evidence that they will succeed in the challenge by demonstrating:

- Exceptional ability related to the course;
- Knowledge, understanding, skills, and attitudes equivalent to the prescribed learning outcomes for the course;
- Evidence in a Student Learning Plan that utilizing the Challenge option is in the student's best interest.

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 their equivalency request are entitled to an equivalency review. The equivalency process is not intended to recognize undocumented prior learning. Equivalency credit will only be granted if the prescribed learning outcomes from provincial and locally developed courses are met to a satisfactory level.

Reference: Ministry Policy Circular: Number 96-04 Challenge
Ministry Policy Circular: Number 96-06 Equivalency
Ministry Student Progress Order: Number 191/639

Guidelines

1. Challenging for credit

1.1 Requirements for Challenge:

- 1.11 The entire course should be challenged; however, partial credit may be granted through the challenge process at the discretion of the Committee.
- 1.12 Students must demonstrate in a variety of ways that they have met the prescribed learning outcomes of a course for the challenge to be successful.
- 1.13 Students will receive a letter grade and percentage mark for a successful challenge. These marks will be recorded on report cards and transcripts.
- 1.14 In order to challenge a course with a provincial examination, students must first successfully challenge the school portion of the course. If successful, students will then be provided the opportunity to write the provincial examination at the first available examination date. The final letter grade and percentage mark will be based on the blended school and examination mark.
- 1.15 The Board is not obliged to provide challenges for provincial or locally developed courses not currently taught in the District.

1.2 Eligibility for Challenge:

- 1.21 In most cases, students will be given only one opportunity to challenge a specific course.
 - 1.22 Students who have previously failed a course may challenge it later, provided they can provide compelling evidence that the learning outcomes have since been met.
 - 1.23 Students arriving from other jurisdictions may challenge for credit where equivalency is not appropriate.
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- 1.24 A teacher may recommend a student for challenge.
- 1.3 Procedures for Challenge:
- 1.31 Student applicants must meet with the Challenge and Equivalency Facilitator to obtain the Intended Learning Outcomes for the course to be challenged, a Challenge Application Form, and any other pertinent information to applicants.
- 1.32 The application package is submitted to the Facilitator who will convene an Application Review Panel to review the application. This committee will consist of the Facilitator, the Principal (designate), subject area teachers/specialists, and other educators as appropriate.
- 1.321 If the application package is accepted, the Challenge Form is approved.
- 1.33 All student Challenge Application Forms and supporting documents must be submitted between October 1 and March 31, and the entire Challenge process must be completed by May 31 of any year.
- 1.4 Assessing And Evaluating Challenge:
- 1.41 To be successful in a challenge, students must meet the intended learning outcomes for the course.
- 1.42 The strategies involved in a Challenge should reflect the range and depth of the intended learning outcomes for the course; these may include:
- laboratory demonstrations;
 - oral/aural performances;
 - portfolios or collections of work;
 - interviews;
 - term and final school-based examinations;
 - distance education materials;
 - application of skills demonstrations;
 - reports, essays, or other written forms of expression;
 - translations;
 - documentation of specific learning outcomes having been met;
 - knowledge of or demonstration of safety consciousness; and/or
 - other assessment strategies as deemed appropriate.
- 1.43 An evaluator is selected in accordance with the FNDTA Collective Agreement Posting and Filling guidelines.
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1.431 The posting will indicate an approximate time allocation to conduct the evaluation.

1.44 The Evaluator will award the student credit for a successful challenge, and will assign a letter grade and percentage mark for the course according to the Ministry Reporting Policy and Guidelines, and the Student Progress Report Order.

2. Equivalency

2.1 Requirements for Equivalency:

2.11 The credentials or documentation presented by the student must meet at least 80% of the learning outcomes of the course for which equivalency is sought in order for the course to be deemed equivalent for full credit.

2.12 All students are entitled to apply for a review of their credentials received from other educational jurisdictions and institutions outside the regular school system which match the prescribed learning outcomes from provincial or locally developed courses.

2.2 Student Eligibility for Equivalency:

2.21 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 may be 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.

2.22 When equivalency is not recognized, students may challenge a course for credit.

2.3 Procedures for Equivalency:

2.31 Student applicants must meet with the Challenge and Equivalency Facilitator to discuss their application.

2.32 If necessary, the Facilitator will provide an Equivalency Application Form and any other pertinent information to applicants. Students may be required to provide a written explanation of how the Equivalency will meet the educational goals as set out in their Student Learning Plan.

2.33 The approval for equivalency must be made by the Principal in consultation with the Challenge and Equivalency Facilitator and subject area teachers.

2.4 Assessing Equivalency:

- 2.41 To gain successful equivalency, the student must meet the same standards as those expected of students who take the course through regular classes.
- 2.42 Students will be awarded credit for a successful equivalency and receive a letter grade and percentage mark for the course according to the Ministry Reporting Policy and Guidelines, and the Student Progress Report Order. If there is insufficient evidence to award a letter grade and percentage, “Transfer Standing” will be awarded.
- 2.43 The assessment process may include the following:
- source of the credential submitted;
 - whether the work and expected learning outcomes of the two courses are comparable;
 - the amount of learning time by the student as well as the difficulty of the content;
 - the assessment and evaluation criteria used to award the credential;
 - the Student Learning Plan;
 - samples of student work and any test or examinations completed;
 - an interview between a subject teacher and the student; and/or
 - other strategies as deemed appropriate.
- 2.44 If the equivalency review is successful, a letter grade and percentage or “Transfer Standing” will be recorded for transcript and reporting purposes. The School will designate course credit through a predetermined transcript code provided by the Ministry.
- 2.45 The Equivalency assessment and evaluation process may occur throughout the school year.