



Information for Students

Planning to Write Diploma Examinations

Are you writing a diploma exam soon? We can help.

Diploma examinations are available for the following courses:

- Applied Mathematics 30 • Biology 30 • Chemistry 30
- English Language Arts 30–1 • English Language Arts 30–2
- Français 30–1 • French Language Arts 30–1 • Physics 30
- Pure Mathematics 30 • Science 30 • Social Studies 30
- Social Studies 33 • Social Studies 30–1
- Social Studies 30–2

Who can write diploma examinations?

- Students who have completed instruction in a diploma examination course
- Students who already have a mark in a diploma examination course and wish to improve it
- Mature students

Note: Students must have photo ID when they write diploma exams. If you cannot produce photo ID you will **NOT** be allowed to write the exam.

Who is a “mature student”?

A mature student is someone who, as of September 1 of the current school year, is

- 19 years of age or older OR
- the holder of a previously awarded high school diploma from the province of Alberta or an equivalent high school diploma from a jurisdiction acceptable to the Minister

If you are uncertain about your status as a mature student, please call Learner Records and Data Exchange at (780) 422-9337 (toll-free 310-0000).

How do I register to write diploma examinations?

If you are taking a diploma examination course through an accredited Alberta high school, then your school will register you to write the examination for the course in which you are enrolled.

Mature students may write diploma examinations without taking diploma examination courses and may write these examinations in the January, June, or August writing sessions. If you are a mature student and intend to write a diploma examination in January or June without taking the course, you must submit a completed *Diploma Examination Registration Form* to Alberta Education by the dates specified on the form. You also need to make arrangements with the principal of the high school where you intend to write so that space and an examination will be available for you. If you intend to write at the August session, you must register at a designated writing centre on the day of the examination. The *Diploma Examination Registration Form* is available on the Alberta Education website at: education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/forms.aspx.

If a diploma examination has two parts, you must write (or rewrite) both Part(ie) A and Part(ie) B of the examination during the same examination administration session to earn credit for that diploma examination course. If this is impossible, see your principal or counsellor.

If you have to be out of the province when the diploma examinations are written, you may, under certain circumstances, be permitted to write at a special writing centre. Ask your principal for more information.

When is the deadline to register to write or rewrite diploma examinations?

The deadlines to register to write or rewrite diploma examinations are specific to the session in which the examinations will be written. These deadlines are specified on the *Diploma Examination Registration Form* and in the *Schedules & Significant Dates* section of the *General Information Bulletin*, which is available on the Alberta Education website at: education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/diplomaexams/diplomabulletin.aspx.

How do I register to rewrite a diploma examination?

If you intend to rewrite a diploma examination for a course you are currently retaking through an accredited Alberta high school, your school will register you to rewrite the examination for that course.

If you intend to rewrite a diploma examination without retaking the course, you must register for the examination by submitting a *Diploma Examination Registration Form* to Alberta Education by the dates specified on the form. The *Diploma Examination Registration Form* is available on the Alberta Education website at: education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/forms.aspx.

If you intend to rewrite a diploma examination without retaking the course, you may only do so at the January, June, or August sessions. **All** students and mature students who intend to rewrite a diploma examination must pay a rewrite fee, whether or not they are retaking the course.

What is a diploma examination rewrite fee and how do I pay it?

If you are rewriting a diploma examination that you wrote in the current or two previous school years (since September 1, 2007) you are required to pay a rewrite fee of \$26.25 (includes GST) *per examination*. The rewrite fee for foreign/exchange students—visiting students from outside Canada—is \$50.00 (includes GST) *per examination*.

To pay diploma examination rewrite fees, you must submit a completed *Diploma Examination Rewrite Fee Form*, along with the rewrite fee for each examination to be rewritten, to Alberta Education. The *Diploma Examination Rewrite Fee Form* is available on the Alberta Education website at: education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/forms.aspx.

The rewrite fee may be paid by mail in the form of a cheque or money order made payable to “Minister of Finance”. You may also come in person to the Transcript Unit, 2nd Floor, 44 Capital Boulevard, 10044 - 108 Street, Edmonton, where you can make payment using cash, debit card, cheque, money order, or major credit card. Payment will **not** be accepted at schools or writing centres.

Note: If you have an unpaid rewrite fee from a prior examination session, your current payment will be credited toward the outstanding debt. You must clear any outstanding debt before new diploma examination marks will appear on your high school record.

When can I write diploma exams?

Schedules for all diploma examination administration sessions are available in the *Schedules & Significant Dates* section of the *General Information Bulletin*, which is available on the Alberta Education website at: education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/diplomaexams/diplomabulletin.aspx.

What if I am ill and can't write a diploma examination that I'm registered for?

If illness, school closure, or an accident or death in your immediate family prevents you from writing a diploma examination for which you are registered or if you get sick during an exam, see your principal or counsellor about what to do. If you have registered and paid to rewrite one or more diploma examinations and, for any of the reasons above, you are unable to write your examinations, you are eligible for a full refund. To apply for a refund, see your school principal or counsellor. In the case of all other cancelled registrations, a \$10.60 processing fee will be charged (includes GST).

Can I have special provisions (accommodations) for writing diploma examinations?

Accommodations such as additional time, CD versions of examinations, large print, and Braille are available if you have a special diploma examination writing need. See your school counsellor or principal for more information.

Are diploma examinations available in French?

All diploma examinations, except English Language Arts 30–1, English Language Arts 30–2, and Science 30 will be translated into French in the 2009–10 school year. If you are in a Francophone or alternate French Language Arts program, you may choose to write an examination in English or in French, regardless of your language of instruction. If you have studied a course in French, your teacher may assume that you will write the examination in French; therefore, you need to notify your principal at least **90 days** before the examination date should you decide to write an examination in English.

What is the difference between French 30, French Language Arts 30–1, and Français 30–1?

French 30 is a second-language course for non-Francophone students. There is no diploma examination for French 30. French Language Arts 30–1 is an advanced French course designed for students in an alternate French Language Arts program. If you are enrolled in French Language Arts 30–1, you **must** write the French Language Arts 30–1 diploma examination in order to obtain a final course mark. Français 30–1 is a French language and literature course for students in Francophone programs. If you are enrolled in Français 30–1, you **must** write the Français 30–1 diploma examination in order to obtain a final course mark.

What materials do I need?

For all examinations, you are responsible for your own writing materials—pens, HB pencils, calculators, etc. Tear-out pages for rough work are provided in each biology, chemistry, mathematics, physics, and science examination booklet. For more information about the materials that are required and allowed for the writing of diploma examinations, please see the *Security & Examination Rules* section of the *General Information Bulletin*, which is available on the Alberta Education website at: education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/diplomaexams/diplomabulletin.aspx.

Are there other examination rules I need to know?

There are very specific rules that you must follow when writing diploma examinations. These rules, and the consequences for not following them, are described in the *Security & Examination Rules* section of the *General Information Bulletin*, which is available on the Alberta Education website at: education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/diplomaexams/diplomabulletin.aspx.

How are diploma examinations marked?

The examinations are marked at a central location. Personal identification, including the name of your school, is removed from each examination booklet before it is marked. The machine-scorable answer sheets are marked by scanning machines. Written responses are marked independently by one or more teacher markers. These markers must meet specific qualifications in order to mark diploma examinations. How are my final marks calculated?

How are my final marks calculated?

To pass a diploma examination course, you must earn a final “blended” mark of at least 50%. For all courses, your school mark and your diploma examination mark are each worth 50% of your total mark. If, for example, in Chemistry 30, you receive a mark of 45% from your school and a mark of 57% on the diploma examination, your final mark is the average of those two marks—51%. Similarly, if your school mark is 56% and your diploma examination mark is 44%, your final mark is 50%.

If you repeat a course or rewrite a diploma examination, your most recent school mark will be blended with your most recent diploma examination mark to produce the final mark that will appear on your Results Statement. Note, however, that your transcript will show only the **highest** school and diploma examination marks earned since September 1, 2007.

If you are a mature student, you are not required to have a school mark. If you pass the diploma examination and have no school mark you automatically receive credit for the course. If you do have a school mark and it is lower than your diploma examination mark, your final mark will be the examination mark only. If your school mark is higher than your diploma examination mark, the two marks will be blended in the usual way.

While thorough exam development procedures are used, with the intent of making the diploma exams in a given course as identical in difficulty as possible for each administration, the exams still may vary slightly in difficulty. The process of equating allows Alberta Education to address these differences, so that a mark on an exam means the same thing no matter at which session a student writes the exam. The use of this process enhances fairness to students and enables the direct comparison of results from one exam session to another.

Equating involves the use of a baseline examination, to which all subsequent exams in the course are compared. If a subsequent exam proves to be slightly easier than the baseline exam, equating adjusts some of the scores downward; if a subsequent exam proves to be slightly harder than the baseline exam, some scores are adjusted upward.

Some diploma exam scores are adjusted through the process of equating. This is a standard process used in large-scale testing programs, and it has been introduced in the Diploma Examinations Program as a means of taking into account any variations in the difficulty of exams from one administration to another.

You can find more detail on Alberta Education's website at education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/diplomaexams.aspx—see *Initiative to Maintain Consistent Standards on Diploma Examinations*.

How do I get my results?

The Results Statement, which lists your most recent school and diploma examination marks, will be mailed to you approximately three weeks after the last examinations have been written. The Results Statement is not an official transcript. A Statement of Courses and Marks will be mailed to you with your high school diploma in September, January, or March. An Official High School Transcript of Academic Achievement is available to you at a cost. Call the Client Services Help Desk at (780) 427-5318 for details. Transcript request forms are available on our website, from Transcript Services, or from your school. You can order transcripts by submitting the completed form plus the required fees to Transcript Services. You may also ask Transcript Services to send a copy of your transcript directly to post-secondary institutions, prospective employers, or scholarship boards.

If you repeat a course or rewrite a diploma examination, your transcript will show only the highest school and diploma examination marks earned since September 1, 2007. You must request and pay for a new transcript if you upgrade your marks. If you rewrite a diploma examination but neglect to pay the rewrite fee, marks in the course will not appear on either your Results Statement or Official High School Transcript of Achievement.

Transcripts and Statements of Courses and Marks may be requested electronically through our website, in writing, or in person. Payment of outstanding diploma examination rewrite fees may also be made through this website. Information about these services or fees may be obtained in person or by calling the Client Services Help Desk at (780) 427-5318. For toll-free access within Alberta, first dial 310-0000.

The address of the Transcript Office is: 2nd Floor, 44 Capital Boulevard 10044 - 108 Street Edmonton, Alberta T5J 5E6

Note: To ensure protection of privacy, course marks cannot be read to students over the phone and are not viewable on the Internet. Telephone requests and payments will not be accepted.

Is there an appeal process for school awarded marks?

If you are dissatisfied with a school mark, you may appeal to your principal under the appeal policy set by your local school authority.

Is there an appeal process for diploma exam marks?

If you believe that your diploma examination mark does not accurately reflect your level of achievement in a course, you may rewrite the examination or ask to have it rescored. *The Diploma Examination Rescore Application Form* must be used to request a rescore. This form is available on the Alberta Education website at: education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/forms.aspx.

The deadline to request a rescore is provided on your Results Statement and on the *Diploma Examination Rescore Application Form*. Requests received after the deadline **will be denied**. The fee for rescoring each examination is \$26.25 (includes GST). This fee is refunded if your examination mark is raised by 5% or more as a result of a rescore. The mark resulting from rescoring becomes your **final examination mark, even if it is lower than the original mark**. Your most recent school mark will be blended with the rescore examination mark, and a new Results Statement will be mailed to you. You should know, however, that rescoring the machine-scored section rarely changes the score. Refer to the written-response raw score reported on your Results Statement to help you decide if you want your examination rescored.

Students who have explored all avenues of appeal at their jurisdictional level and feel they have a case requiring special consideration should apply, in writing, to the Executive Secretary, Special Cases Committee, Alberta Education. The written submission should provide reasons for the appeal and the remedy expected.

Students who appeal to the Special Cases Committee shall concurrently advise the principal of the school and the superintendent of the school authority where the student received instruction.

How can I improve my mark?

You may repeat a course without rewriting the diploma examination or rewrite a diploma examination without repeating the course. You will have to pay a rewrite fee for any diploma examination written since September 1, 2007 that you rewrite.

Remember: When you repeat a course or rewrite a diploma examination, your new Results Statement will list your most recently earned marks; your new transcript, if you request one, will show only the **highest** diploma examination marks and **highest** school marks earned since September 2007.

Where can I get further information?

For more information on these topics, contact your school principal or counsellor and ask to see the Guide to Education, ECS to Grade 12, and/or the *General Information Bulletin*, Diploma Examinations Program.

You can also visit our website at education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/diplomaexams.aspx.

Alberta Education Contacts

To be connected toll-free to government offices, call 310-0000.

- Results Statements: (780) 422-9337
- Rewrite Fees: (780) 427-5732
- Transcripts: (780) 427-5732
- Diploma Certificates: (780) 427-5732
- Mature Student Status: (780) 422-9337
- Special Cases Inquiries: (780) 427-0010
- Learner Assessment: (780) 427-0010
- Statement of Courses and Marks: (780) 427-5732