



# Information for Parents

## About Writing Diploma Examinations

Is your daughter or son writing a diploma exam soon? Here is some helpful information.

### 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 a student cannot produce photo ID he/she 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 a student is uncertain about his/her status as a mature student, he/she should call Learner Records and Data Exchange at (780) 422-9337 (toll-free 310-0000).

### How does a student register to write diploma examinations?

If students are taking diploma examination courses through accredited Alberta high schools, then the schools will register them to write the examinations for the courses in which they 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. Mature students who intend to write a diploma examination in January or June without taking the course must submit a completed *Diploma Examination Registration Form* to Alberta Education by the dates specified on the form. They also need to make arrangements with the principal of the high school where they intend to write so that space and an examination will be available for them. If they intend to write at the August session, they 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](http://education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/forms.aspx).

If a diploma examination has two parts, a student 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, the student should see the principal or counsellor.

If a student has to be out of the province when the diploma examinations are written, he/she may, under certain circumstances, be permitted to write at a special writing centre. The student should ask the principal for more information.

### When is the deadline to register to write or rewrite a diploma examination?

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](http://education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/diplomaexams/diplomabulletin.aspx).

### How do students register to rewrite a diploma examination?

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

If they intend to rewrite a diploma examination without retaking the course, students 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](http://education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/forms.aspx).

If students intend to rewrite a diploma examination without retaking the course, they 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 students pay for it?

If students are rewriting a diploma examination that they wrote in the current or two previous school years (since September 1, 2007) they 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, students 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](http://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". Students may come in person to the Transcript Unit, 2nd Floor, 44 Capital Boulevard, 10044 - 108 Street, Edmonton, where they 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 students have unpaid rewrite fees from a prior examination session, their current payment will be credited toward the outstanding debt. They must clear any outstanding debt before new diploma examination marks will appear on their high school record.

### When can a student 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](http://education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/diplomaexams/diplomabulletin.aspx).

### What if student are ill and can't write the diploma examination that they are registered for?

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

### Can a student have special provisions (accommodations) for writing diploma examinations?

Accommodations such as additional time, CD versions of examinations, large print, and Braille are available if a student has a special diploma examination writing need. The student should see the 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 a student is in a Francophone or alternate French Language Arts program, he/she may choose to write an examination in English or in French, regardless of his/her language of instruction. If he/she studied a course in French, the teacher may assume that he/she will write the examination in French; therefore, the student needs to notify the principal at least **90 days** before the examination date should he/she 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 a student is enrolled in French Language Arts 30–1, he/she **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 a student is enrolled in Français 30–1, he/she **must** write the Français 30–1 diploma examination in order to obtain a final course mark.

### What materials does a student need?

For all examinations, students are responsible for their 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](http://education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/diplomaexams/diplomabulletin.aspx).

### Are there other examination rules a student needs to know?

There are very specific rules that students 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](http://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 a student's 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 final marks calculated?

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

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

If a person is a mature student, he/she is not required to have a school mark. A mature student who passes the diploma examination and who has no school mark automatically receives credit for the course. However, if the mature student does have a school mark, and it is lower than the diploma examination mark, the final mark will be the examination mark only. If the school mark is higher than the 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](http://education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/diplomaexams.aspx)—see *Initiative to Maintain Consistent Standards on Diploma Examinations*.

### How does a student get his/her results?

The Results Statement, which lists a student's most recent school and diploma examination marks, will be mailed to the student 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 a student with his/her high school diploma in September, January, or March. An Official High School Transcript of Academic Achievement is available to students at a cost. A student should 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 the school. Students can order transcripts by submitting the completed form plus the required fees to Transcript Services. The student may ask Transcript Services to send a copy of his/her transcript directly to post-secondary institutions, prospective employers, or scholarship boards.

If a student repeats a course or rewrites a diploma examination, his/her transcript will show only the highest school and diploma examination marks earned since September 1, 2007. Students must request and pay for a new transcript if they upgrade their marks. If a student rewrites a diploma examination but neglects to pay the rewrite fee, marks in the course will not appear on either his/her 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 a student is dissatisfied with a school mark, he/she may appeal to the principal under the appeal policy set by the local school authority.

### Is there an appeal process for diploma exam marks?

If students believe that their diploma examination marks do not accurately reflect their level of achievement in a course, they 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](http://education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/forms.aspx).

The deadline to request a rescore is provided on the 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 the examination mark is raised by 5% or more as a result of a rescore. The mark resulting from rescoring becomes the student's **final examination mark, even if it is lower than the original mark**. The most recent school mark will be blended with the rescore examination mark, and a new Results Statement will be mailed to a student. Students should know, however, that rescoring the machine-scored section rarely changes the score.

The written-response raw score reported on the Results Statement will help a student decide if he/she wants his/her 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.

Persons 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 a student improve his/her mark?

A student may repeat a course without rewriting the diploma examination. He/she may rewrite a diploma examination without repeating the course. For all diploma examination courses, the student must rewrite both parts of the examination in the same session. The student will have to pay a rewrite fee for any diploma examination that he/she rewrites in the same course any time since September 1, 2007.

**Remember:** When a student repeats a course or rewrites a diploma examination, his/her new Results Statement will list the most recently earned marks; the new transcript, if the student requests 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 the 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](http://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