

# *Education Programs and Services*

## *Locally Developed/Acquired and Authorized Junior and Senior High School Complementary Courses*

### **BACKGROUND**

Alberta Learning is committed to ensuring that all students have access to a quality education.

Locally developed/acquired and authorized junior high school complementary courses authorized by school authorities provide instructional opportunities that complement provincially authorized programs. This policy enables school authorities to be innovative and responsive to local and individual needs through the development and authorization of courses at the local level.

Alberta Learning is also committed to meeting the changing needs of students by encouraging flexibility and discretion at the local level. Over a number of years, locally developed/acquired and authorized senior high courses in practical arts/career and technology studies, second languages, fine arts and other areas have been developed to accommodate the special interests and abilities of students, to address local community or parent interests, or to provide for innovative practices.

Historically, Alberta Learning has required school authorities to submit senior high locally developed/ acquired and authorized courses to the Minister for approval. However in the interest of increasing local flexibility to meet the needs of students, local school authorities will authorize senior high locally developed/acquired and authorized courses and provide Alberta Learning with information regarding these authorizations.

### **POLICY**

Alberta Learning supports the local development and authorization of junior high school and senior high school complementary courses which do not duplicate provincially authorized courses, to further develop and cultivate the unique interests and abilities of students, to foster educational improvement and excellence through innovation at the local level to meet the unique needs of a local community.

### **STATUTE**

#### **School Act**

##### Diversity in shared values

3(1) All education programs offered and instructional materials used in schools must reflect the diverse nature and heritage of society in Alberta, promote understanding and respect for others and honour and respect the common values and beliefs of Albertans.

(2) For greater certainty, education programs and instructional materials referred to in subsection (1) must not promote or foster doctrines of racial or ethnic superiority or persecution, religious intolerance or persecution, social change through violent action or disobedience of laws.

##### Private schools

28(2) A private school is entitled to be accredited as an accredited private school if

- (a) the Minister approves the education program and any modification of it offered at the school ...

##### Courses, programs, etc.

39(1) The Minister may do the following:

- (a) prescribe courses of study or education programs, including the amount of instruction time;
- (b) authorize courses of study, education programs or instructional materials for use in schools;
- (c) prescribe the minimum total hours of instruction a board shall make available to a student in a school year;

- (d) approve any course, education program or instructional material that may be submitted to the Minister by a board or another operator of a school for use in a school;
- (e) subject to the right of a board to provide religious instruction, by order prohibit the use of a course, an education program or instructional material in schools;
- (f) by order adopt or approve goals and standards applicable to the provision of education in Alberta.

#### Powers of boards

60(2) A board may

- (a) subject to section 39 and the regulations, develop, acquire or offer courses or programs;
- (b) subject to section 39 and the regulations, develop or acquire instructional materials for use in programs or in schools ...

### **ADDITIONAL DEFINITIONS**

In this policy,

- 1 “school authorities” means boards and funded private schools.

### **PROCEDURES**

- 1 School authorities offering locally developed/acquired and authorized courses shall develop, keep current and implement written policy and procedures consistent with provincial policy and procedures for the development and monitoring of courses at the local level.
- 2 A record of local policy and monitoring and implementation results shall be maintained by the school authorities and shall be available to Alberta Learning for review upon request.
- 3 All locally developed/acquired and authorized courses and learning resources shall be consistent with:
  - (1) the Ministerial Order made under section 39(1)(f) of the **Act**; and
  - (2) *Recognizing Diversity and Promoting Respect*.

- 4 Approval of a locally developed/acquired and authorized course (junior and/or senior high) shall be by board motion and shall be for a maximum duration of three years.
- 5 The description for each course (junior or senior high) should include:
  - (1) the name of the school authority and schools(s) where the course is to be offered;
  - (2) the title of the course;
  - (3) a motion of the board or governing body of a private school to offer the locally developed/acquired and authorized course;
  - (4) the junior high school grades or the senior high school years at which the course is to be offered;
  - (5) the credit allocations, if appropriate (credit values of less than 3 are not acceptable for senior high courses);
  - (6) implementation date;
  - (7) the philosophy and rationale for the course;
  - (8) a statement of general learner expectations for the course;
  - (9) a statement of specific knowledge, skill and attitude learner expectations for the course;
  - (10) the anticipated enrollment;
  - (11) the special facilities or equipment necessary;
  - (12) the identification of controversial or sensitive course components and treatment at the school level;
  - (13) a list of learning resources approved for use by the school authority that must meet the requirements of section 3 of the **School Act** and Alberta Learning's criteria for recognizing diversity and promoting respect;
  - (14) a statement indicating that significant overlap with provincially developed courses does not exist (a course in which the method of delivery or the provision of additional instructional time to attain the learner expectations of other courses are the only differences from that of a provincial course will not be considered as a locally developed/acquired and authorized course);

- (15) the assessment standards for the course (The assessment standards should indicate the means which may be used to assess student achievement, and the overall level of difficulty of the course. Samples of assessment materials and examples of student work may be provided as evidence of the standards.);
  - (16) a plan for course evaluation and monitoring by the school authority; and
  - (17) for senior high school courses, information regarding which other school authority is offering the course, if applicable, and how this course differs from that being offered by other school authorities.
- 6 Courses should have an instructional focus, be based on the development of new learning outcomes and shall not replace activities that are a normal part of:
- (1) extracurricular or co-curricular programs offered by a school, e.g., school team sports, school newspaper, yearbook; and
  - (2) community programs offered by individuals or organizations, e.g., figure skating, ballet, sports activities, clubs.
- 7 Alberta Learning shall monitor locally developed/acquired and authorized courses.
- 8 School authorities are responsible for obtaining clearance of copyright and permission to use courses, learning resources and other related materials developed by other school authorities.
- 9 Locally developed/acquired and authorized second language courses shall reflect the curriculum standards established in provincial second language programs of study.
- 10 School authorities are encouraged to offer challenge assessments in approved locally developed/acquired and authorized language courses in order to recognize the proficiency of their students in languages other than English. The second language challenge assessments must reflect the full range of knowledge and skills of the second language course, that is, a balanced assessment of listening, reading, speaking and writing in all course components.

- 11 Locally developed/acquired and authorized courses involving an Off-Campus work placement shall conform to the *Off-Campus Education Policy* and applicable legislation such as the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System and local and provincial health, safety and building standards.

### Junior High School

The following applies to Locally Developed/Acquired and Authorized Junior High School Complementary Courses:

- 12 School authorities shall keep a written description of each locally developed/acquired and authorized junior high school complementary course on file.
- 13 School authorities wishing to continue offering a locally/acquired and authorized course shall reauthorize their locally developed/acquired courses or programs every three years.
- 14 Schools shall offer two provincially authorized complementary courses except where instruction in a language other than English (**School Act**, sections 10 and 11) is offered, then only one provincially authorized complementary course is required. For the purposes of this section, religious studies are deemed to be provincially authorized.

### Senior High School

The following applies to Locally Developed/Acquired and Authorized Senior High School Complementary Courses:

- 15 Prior to submitting a course outline to the school authority for approval, the course outline will be forwarded to the Director, Curriculum Branch for review regarding overlap with provincially authorized curriculum. The review documentation, along with the course outline, shall be filed with the school authority as it considers course approval.

- 16 School authorities shall then forward all completed authorizations and course outlines of credit courses (including second language courses) to the Director, Curriculum Branch by **May 31** for implementation in the first semester of the following school year, or by **December 31** for implementation in the second semester of the same school year. Alberta Learning will keep these on file and maintain a locally developed/acquired courses database.
- 17 When courses are to be offered for credit, course codes shall be obtained from the Curriculum Branch. All courses will be offered for 3 credits or more.
- 18 School authorities wishing to use locally developed/acquired courses previously authorized by another school authority or a post secondary institution shall obtain permission from the originator to use the course outline prior to authorizing the course. School authorities are also responsible for obtaining clearance of copyright and permission to use learning resources and course related materials developed by others.
- 19 Authorized locally developed/acquired courses may constitute a component of a student's complementary program.
- 20 Locally developed/acquired courses may satisfy the following requirements for the Alberta High School Diploma:
- (1) 10 credits from career and technology studies or fine arts or second languages; and
  - (2) 10 credits in any 30-level course other than English or social studies.
- 21 Locally developed/acquired courses at the senior high school level shall be designated as 15, 25, and 35-level courses.
- 22 All school authorities wishing to continue offering a locally authorized course shall reauthorize their locally developed/acquired courses or programs every three years. Re-authorizations do not require a review for overlap by the Curriculum Branch.
- School authorities will inform the Director, Curriculum Branch of all locally developed/acquired course reauthorizations (including second language courses). New board motions for these reauthorizations will also be forwarded to the Director, Curriculum Branch for all courses (including second language courses).
- 23 School authorities wishing to offer locally developed religious studies courses for credit should refer to the "Locally Developed Religious Studies Course" policy contained in the *K-12 Learning System Policy, Regulations and Forms Manual*. These courses will continue to require Ministerial Authorization.
- 24 Alberta Learning does not provide additional funding for facilities for locally developed/acquired senior high school courses.

## REFERENCES

Please refer to the following for additional information:

*Essential Concepts, Skills and Attitudes for Grade 12*

*Guide to Education, ECS – Grade 12 Handbook (current edition)*

*Off-Campus Education Manual for Administrators, Counsellors and Teachers (2000)*

*Program of Studies: Junior High Schools*

*Program of Studies: Senior High Schools*

*Recognizing Diversity and Promoting Respect*

See Section 7 of the *K-12 Learning System Policy, Regulations and Forms Manual* for information on where the above document(s) may be obtained, and for Department / Branch addresses, phone and fax numbers.