

General Information Bulletin

Introduction to the Diploma Examinations Program

- Purpose** The Grade 12 Diploma Examinations Program, established in 1984, has three main purposes:
- to **certify** the level of individual student achievement in selected Grade 12 courses
 - to **ensure** that province-wide **standards** of achievement are maintained
 - to **report** individual and group results

The program provides examinations in selected Grade 12 courses: English Language Arts 30–1, English Language Arts 30–2, Français 30–1, French Language Arts 30–1, Social Studies 30–1, Social Studies 30–2, Pure Mathematics 30, Applied Mathematics 30, Biology 30, Chemistry 30, Physics 30, and Science 30.

To receive a high school diploma, students are required to write at least **two** diploma examinations, either English Language Arts 30–1 or English Language Arts 30–2 and one of the social studies diploma exams (Social Studies 30–1 or Social Studies 30–2). Students in Francophone programs may take Français 30–1, which is a diploma examination course, or Français 30–2, which is not, to meet their language arts diploma requirement. However, they must also take English Language Arts 30–1 or English Language Arts 30–2. Please refer to the *Guide to Education, ECS to Grade 12*, for information pertaining to students who entered Grade 10 prior to the 1995–96 school year.

- Eligibility to Write Diploma Examinations** A student who is formally registered to receive instruction in a diploma examination course in an Alberta high school is eligible to write the diploma examination at that school. Before course credit can be awarded, a student must write the diploma examination. A student who has a previously awarded school mark for the course may write the diploma examination. A mature student may write the diploma examination without having a previously awarded school mark in that course.

The **school providing instruction** in diploma examination courses must register students for the diploma examinations in which they are enrolled. Students who intend to write a diploma examination without receiving instruction (for example, a mature student challenging the examination or a student who rewrites a diploma examination without retaking the course) must submit a *Diploma Examination Registration Form* to Alberta Education to register for the examination, by the dates specified.

- August Administrations** Summer-school teachers offering diploma examination courses must register their students to write diploma examinations by the date specified in this

document. Students writing a diploma examination in August without taking the course must register on the day the examination is administered at one of the writing centres listed at the end of this section. All students should arrive at the writing centre at least 30 minutes before the established examination start time in order to complete registration forms.

November and April Administrations

The Minister of Education has approved the administration of diploma examinations in November and April for those schools whose unique instructional delivery format permits students to complete their course work and receive final school awarded marks by the administration dates scheduled for the November and April diploma examination sessions.

Only some diploma examinations are administered in the November and April sessions. In **November**, diploma examinations are administered for the following courses: English Language Arts 30–2, Pure Mathematics 30, Chemistry 30, and Physics 30. In **April**, diploma examinations are administered for the following courses: English Language Arts 30–1, Biology 30, Social Studies 30–1, and Social Studies 30–2.

To be approved to administer November and April diploma examinations, a school must submit a formal request, in writing, to the Director, Exam Administration (see *Contacts* section). This request must include a description of the alternate delivery program for which permission to administer November and April diploma examinations is being sought.

November and April diploma examinations may only be written by students who are receiving alternate delivery instruction in a course from a school that has been approved by the Minister to administer those diploma examinations.

Only students who are **currently receiving instruction** and who will be **receiving a final course mark** in a diploma examination course within a November or April session **may write** the corresponding November or April diploma examination. Consequently, students **may not rewrite** a diploma examination at a November or April session unless they are **currently retaking the course**. Similarly, mature students who wish to challenge a diploma examination **may not** write in November or April.

To be eligible to write a November diploma examination in 2011, students who are receiving instruction in a November session diploma examination course must receive their final course mark by **November 4, 2011**. To be eligible to write an April diploma examination in 2012, students who are receiving instruction in an April session diploma examination course must receive their final course mark by **April 13, 2012**. Students who write a November or April diploma examination without receiving a school awarded mark for the corresponding course **in that session** will have their diploma examination mark **invalidated**.

All students who intend to write a November or April session diploma examination must be registered to write their diploma examinations **by the school providing instruction**. The deadlines for schools to submit November 2011 and April 2012 diploma examination registrations are **September 27** and **March 1**, respectively.

Rewriting Diploma Examinations

Students may rewrite diploma examinations in January, June, or August sessions without retaking the course (some examinations administered in November and April may not be rewritten in August—see the *Schedules & Significant Dates* section for further information). Students may not rewrite a diploma examination at a November or April session unless they have retaken the course in that session. Students re-writing humanities diploma examinations must re-write both parts of those examinations.

Students who are retaking a course will be registered to rewrite the diploma examination by the school providing instruction. Students who intend to rewrite a diploma examination without retaking the course must register for the examination by submitting a *Diploma Examination Registration Form* to Alberta Education by the deadline date. If accommodations are required, they must also submit the request to Alberta Education directly.

All students and mature students who intend to rewrite a diploma examination must pay a rewrite fee of \$26.25 (includes GST) *per examination*, whether or not they are retaking the course. The rewrite fee for foreign/exchange students—students from outside Alberta—is \$50.00 (includes GST) *per examination*. A student is considered to be rewriting a diploma examination if he or she has previously written that diploma examination any time in the current or two previous school years (since September 1, 2009).

All students who intend to rewrite a diploma examination must submit a *Diploma Examination Rewrite Fee Form* and the rewrite fee to the following address:

Alberta Education
PASI and Student Records
2nd floor, 44 Capital Boulevard
10044 – 108 Street
Edmonton AB T5J 5E6

Rewrite fee payment may be made by cheque, money order, or credit card. Do NOT send cash. Students rewriting a diploma examination in August should not submit their fee payment at the time of writing. Rather, they should send their fee payment to the address provided above a day or two **after** the administration.

Principals should ensure that information about rewriting diploma examinations, the *Diploma Examination Registration Form*, and the *Diploma Examination Rewrite Fee Form* are available to students, but they should **not**

collect and submit rewrite fees for the students.

Students who have unpaid rewrite fees from a prior examination session will have their current payment credited toward the outstanding debt. If a student rewrites a diploma examination but has not paid the fee, results of the examination will not appear on the *Results Statement*, the *Statement of Courses and Marks*, or the official *Transcript* until the rewrite fee is paid. A student who writes the French translation of a diploma examination and then later rewrites the examination in English must pay a rewrite fee.

If a student is unable to rewrite a diploma examination because of illness, accident, inclement weather, or bereavement (supporting documentation from the school is required) and receives approval from the Special Cases and Accommodations team of Exam Administration, the student is eligible to rewrite the diploma examination at the next scheduled session or to have the rewrite fee refunded.

If a student is unable to rewrite a diploma examination for a reason other than illness, accident, inclement weather, or bereavement, a refund (minus a \$10.50 processing fee) will be given.

Deadlines for receiving forms and fees at Alberta Education are listed in the *Schedules & Significant Dates* section.

**Accessing
Forms**

The *Diploma Examination Registration* form and the *Diploma Examination Rewrite Fee* form are available on the Alberta Education website at <http://education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/forms.aspx>.

**Duplicate
Registration**

In any one semester, only one school mark per course will be accepted and added to a student's record. Students are asked to withdraw duplicate registrations (i.e., registration in the same course in two different schools in the same semester) before the end of the term. For procedures governing how marks are calculated in relation to student registration, see *Marks, Results, & Appeals* section.

Mature Students

A mature student* may write any diploma examination in January, June, or August without taking formal instruction in the course. The diploma examination mark will constitute 100% of the final mark.

**A mature student, for Alberta High School Diploma purposes, is one who, as of September 1 of the current school year, is 19 years of age or older or is 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 mature student enrolls in a diploma examination course at an accredited Alberta high school, the final course mark will be a blended one only if the school-awarded mark is higher than the diploma examination mark. If the examination mark is higher than the school-awarded mark, then the

examination mark becomes the final mark. A student who is uncertain about his/her eligibility as a mature student should contact the Client Services Help Desk at (780) 427-5318.

Course Challenges

A student must apply for a course challenge through the principal of the high school he or she is attending. Course challenge is a provision that allows senior high school students to challenge the expectations for a course by participating in a formal assessment process, rather than taking the course. Course challenge is for students who believe that they already possess the expected knowledge, skills, and attitudes as defined by the *Program of Studies* for a given course.

For diploma examination courses, this policy applies only to the school-awarded mark component (refer to the *Guide to Education, ECS to Grade 12*). A high school student who successfully completes a course challenge of the school-awarded component of a course must still write the diploma examination in order to be eligible for a final course mark and credit in that course.

Only individuals with mature student status may challenge a diploma examination course by writing the diploma examination without taking formal instruction in the course or successfully completing a course challenge. Individuals who do not have mature student status and who write the diploma examination at a January, June, or August session without having completed a course challenge for the school-awarded component will receive an “incomplete” as the final mark in the diploma examination course. If such students write a diploma examination at a November or April session, they will have their diploma examination mark invalidated.

Course Level Transfers

Students who transfer their course level registration in diploma examination courses **must** receive a final school-awarded mark that is based on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the course into which they transfer. The process of evaluation of a student’s achievement in this situation should be very similar to that used to evaluate a student’s achievement through the course challenge procedure.

Students taking instruction in diploma examination courses must be registered to write their diploma examinations by the dates specified by Alberta Education (see *Schedule & Significant Dates* section). Consequently, all course level transfers for diploma examination courses must also be completed by the deadlines specified by Alberta Education (see *Schedule & Significant Dates* section). If a student transfers courses after the published deadline, that student will not be registered to receive a diploma examination in the transferred course. No exemptions will be granted for students who write the wrong diploma examination because of late course transfers (see *Special Cases & Accommodations* section). Schools that permit students to change course levels after the deadline for registering for diploma

examinations may need to submit a *Request for Supplemental Shipment* form (see *Examination Administration Forms* section) to order appropriate examination materials for those students.

**French
Translations of
Diploma
Examinations**

French translations of the Social Studies 30–1, Social Studies 30–2, Pure Mathematics 30, Applied Mathematics 30, Biology 30, Chemistry 30, and Physics 30 diploma examinations are available upon request. Students who wish to write the French translation of a diploma examination must inform their principals before the deadline established for each examination registration (see *Schedules & Significant Dates* section). The principal must note this request on the registration checklist. Individuals with mature student status who are not receiving instruction in the course in a school but who wish to write the French translation of a diploma examination must indicate this preference on the *Diploma Examination Registration Form*.

Students writing French translations of social studies diploma examinations must write both Part A and Part B in French. Marks cannot be calculated for students who write one part of an examination in French and one part in English.

Students who choose to write the French translation of a diploma examination are not permitted additional writing time beyond what is scheduled; nor are they allowed an English version of the examination or data booklet while writing. Students writing the French translation of the Social Studies 30–1 or Social Studies 30–2 diploma examinations may use an approved bilingual print dictionary, a thesaurus, and an approved writer’s handbook when writing Part A: Written Response.

Foreign Students

Foreign (visiting) students are those who are not eligible to receive funding in Alberta and who have an enrolment type of 415 or 416. Foreign students seeking Alberta high school credits for official transcript purposes must write a diploma examination on the same terms as any Alberta student.

**Diploma
Examination
Fees for Foreign
Students**

Foreign students are required to pay \$50 (includes GST) per diploma examination that they write or rewrite. **Schools should collect these fees from their foreign students** who are taking diploma examination courses. Schools or school authorities will be invoiced in the fall of each year for every diploma examination that was written or re-written in the prior year by a foreign/exchange student who was registered at that school in that year.

**Writing Diploma
Examinations on
Computers**

Alberta Education permits students to compose the written-response parts of English Language Arts 30–1, English Language Arts 30–2, Français 30–1, French Language Arts 30–1, Social Studies 30–1, and Social Studies 30–2 diploma examinations on the school’s computers. Only students in schools or designated writing centres that have the facilities, equipment, and support services to consistently and appropriately provide this mode of examination delivery, may complete the written-response parts of these diploma

examinations on the school's computers. The principal of a school or designated writing centre will decide whether or not to provide the opportunity for students to write their diploma examinations using the school's computers. This decision is based on the principal's certainty that the school or designated writing centre can comply with the directives, rules, and procedures outlined in this Bulletin and on consideration of fairness to students and students' needs (see *Using Calculators & Computers* section).

**Return of
Diploma
Examination
Materials**

Diploma examination materials must be returned to Alberta Education according to the dates specified in the *Schedules & Significant Dates* section of this Bulletin.

In accordance with section 4 of the *Student Evaluation Regulation, Alberta Regulation 177/2003*, a late return charge of \$20 per examination will be charged to schools for diploma examination materials returned to Exam Administration after a marking session is complete.

Writing Centres

January and June diploma examinations are administered in all accredited Alberta high schools that offer Grade 12 diploma examination courses. August diploma examinations are administered in the writing centres listed on the following page. Most summer school students write their August diploma examinations at their summer schools.

Writing Centres for the August Administration

School Code	Town/City	School Name
2601	Athabasca	Edwin Parr Composite Community School
2316	Barrhead	Vista Outreach, 4923 – 50 Ave
2950	Bonnyville	Bonnyville Centralized High School
6718	Brooks	Brooks Sunrise School
9996	Calgary	SAIT –Symposium Room in the Campus Centre Building
4504	Camrose	PACE Outreach School
5725	Drumheller	Drumheller Composite High School
1223	Edmonton	Financial Building, 10621 – 100 Avenue (8th Floor)
1564	Fort McMurray	Holy Trinity High School
1141	Grande Prairie	Grande Prairie Composite High School
1715	High Level	High Level Learning Store
2011	Hinton	Harry Collinge High School
2702	Lac La Biche	J.A. Williams High School
6466	Lethbridge	Winston Churchill High School
6844	Medicine Hat	Crescent Heights High School
1511	Peace River	Peace River High School
4433	Red Deer	Hunting Hills High School
3610	Vegreville	Vegreville Composite High School
3909	Wainwright	Wainwright High School

Notes: To request the use of a computer to write the Part(ie) A portion of a humanities diploma examination contact the writing centre at which you plan to write prior to the date of administration. Please note that some writing centres may not be able to accommodate your request.

Writing centres in the Northwest Territories will be designated as needed. Please contact Northwest Territories Education at (867) 920-6235.

Writing centres in Nunavut will be designated as needed. Please contact Nunavut Department of Education at (867) 975-5658.

Summary of Revisions for the 2011–2012 School Year

The following major revisions and/or additions to Diploma Examination Program dates, directives, rules, and/or processes have been made in the *General Information Bulletin* for 2011–2012. All major changes for the 2011–2012 school year are indicated by ***NEW**. Other minor changes and updates have been made throughout this bulletin but are not noted here. All of these changes have important implications for administrators, teachers, and students/examinees, so it is important that they carefully review this bulletin as they prepare for the administration of diploma examinations in the 2011–2012 School Year.

Topic:	Changes made:	Section:
Exam Schedules	Change to schedules	Schedules & Significant Dates, page 12, 14, 16
Alberta Student Numbers	New requirement	Security & Examination Rules, page 3
Alberta Student Numbers	New requirement	Administration Directives, Guidelines, & Procedures, pages 4, 6, 8, 13
Deletion of exam materials and student responses from digital devices and computers	New requirement	Administration Directives, Guidelines, & Procedures, pages 5, 7, 14
Personally owned devices	Information on pilot project	Use of Computers and Calculators, page 11
Deletion of recorded conversations and student responses	Information included	Special Cases & Accommodations, pages 15, 18, 19, 20
Types of audio files allowed	New information	Special Cases & Accommodations, page 25

Summary of Revisions–November Update

The following revisions and/or changes to Diploma Examination Program dates, directives, and/or processes presented in the 2011–2012 *General Information Bulletin* have been made in this November update. All pages which contain changes made in November have the ‘November 2011’ footer. Other minor updates may have been made throughout this bulletin but are not noted here.

Topic:	Changes made:	Section:
August 2012 Writing Centres	Updated information	<i>Introduction & Revisions—page 9</i>
2012–2013 Exam Schedules	Removed Draft statement	<i>Schedules & Significant Dates—pages 12–16</i>
Field Test Request and Administration Dates	Dates changes	<i>Field Testing—page 4</i>