

Exemptions and Partial Exemptions

OVERVIEW

To ensure fairness and equity for all students, diploma examination exemptions and partial exemptions may be granted to students who are unable to complete an examination for one of the following reasons:

- Acute medical illness
- Bereavement
- Inclement weather
- Subpoena to attend court
- School or community emergency or crisis
- Administrative error

Exemptions and partial exemptions may also be granted to students who have written diploma examinations, but those examinations, or components of them, cannot be scored or the scores must be invalidated due to an administrative error.

When exemptions or partial exemptions are granted, the school awarded mark is usually substituted for the exempted examination or portion of the examination.

On receipt of a request for an exemption or partial exemption, Special Cases and Accommodations may approve:

1. An exemption for the complete diploma examination, i.e., any mathematics or science examination, or both Part(ie) A and Part(ie) B of a humanities examination, with the transcript annotated *Exemption Granted*.
2. A partial exemption for the missed part of a diploma examination, i.e., a component of a mathematics or science examination, or Part(ie) A or Part(ie) B, or a component of either of those parts, of a humanities examination, with the transcript annotated *Partial Exemption Granted*.
3. In place of exemption or partial exemption, an incomplete diploma examination mark, with the provision to rewrite the following at the next examination administration session without a rewrite fee:
 - 3.1. the missing or invalid part(s) of a humanities diploma examination
 - 3.2. a mathematics or science diploma examination
4. An appropriate course of action based on individual student circumstances.

EXEMPTION RULES

Exemption Requests

1. All requests for exemptions and partial exemptions must be made using the *Request for Exemption from Writing a Grade 12 Diploma*

Examination form (see *Examination Administration Forms* section), and should be forwarded to Special Cases and Accommodations in a timely manner.

2. All *Request for Exemption* forms must be completed by the student and the school and requires the signature of the parent/guardian if a student is under the age of 18.
3. Exemptions for examinations not written will only be granted when documented and legitimate circumstances prevent the student from being present for the diploma examination on the scheduled day and time of administration.
4. Exemptions from diploma examinations **will not** be granted for long-term or chronic medical conditions. Students with chronic medical conditions are expected to write diploma examinations with the support of the accommodations routinely provided to them, by the school, for examination writing and assignment completion purposes. Use of such accommodations for diploma examination writing purposes must be pre-approved by the Special Cases and Accommodations team.
5. Exemptions from diploma examinations **will not** be granted because students have chronic medical conditions or disabilities that render them unlikely to pass those examinations, or to achieve scores on them that are comparable to their school-awarded marks for those courses.
6. If the reason for requesting an exemption is acute medical illness, a *Physician Confirmation of Acute Medical Condition or Illness Affecting the Writing of a Diploma Examination* form must be submitted with the *Request for Exemption* form.

Note: Students, or their parents if the student is under 18 years of age, must authorize the release of medical information to Alberta Education by signing the declaration on the *Physician Confirmation of Acute Medical Condition or Illness Affecting the Writing of a Diploma Examination* form (see *Examination Administration Forms* section).

7. No exemptions or partial exemptions will be granted for students who write the wrong diploma examination as a result of a late course transfer.

Writing a Diploma Examination After Exemption or Partial Exemption

1. If a student should choose to write an examination at a future administration, after a **full exemption** for that examination has been granted, the entire mathematics or science examination, or both Part(ie) A and Part(ie) B of a humanities examination, must be written, but no rewrite fee is required to be paid.
2. If a student should choose to write an examination at a future administration, after a **partial exemption** has been granted, the entire

mathematics or science examination, or both Part(ie) A and Part(ie) B of a humanities examination, must be written at that time and a rewrite fee must be paid.

EXEMPTION PROCEDURES

Submission of Exemption Request Applications All requests for exemptions must be made using the appropriate application form (see *Examination Administration Forms* section). These request forms, and all supporting documentation, should be submitted to Special Cases and Accommodations, on a student's behalf, by the principal or counsellor. Mature students must apply directly to Alberta Education, following the same procedure.

Special Writing Centres

OVERVIEW

To ensure fair and equitable access to diploma examinations, a Special Writing Centre may be established for students who are outside of Alberta when a diploma examination is scheduled to be administered. A Special Writing Centre is a site outside of Alberta that is temporarily approved to serve as a diploma examination writing centre. Special Writing Centres may be established for any diploma examination administration session.

Permission to establish a Special Writing Centre for the purpose of writing a diploma examination may be granted to students, by Alberta Education, for one of the following reasons:

- They live outside Alberta and have completed a diploma examination course delivered through an Alberta Education approved distance learning program
- They are participating in a scheduled activity such as a national or international competition in athletics or music
Note: Students who are outside of Alberta on vacation, to attend a wedding or family event, on an organized tour, or other similar activity are **not** permitted to establish a Special Writing Centre.
- They have a right of access to education in Alberta under section 8 of the *School Act* and after completing instruction at an accredited high school they have **moved** from the province **permanently** and are unable to return to write the examination.
Note: International students studying a diploma examination course in Alberta are expected to remain in the province until the completion of their instructional program, which includes the writing of the diploma examination. Consequently, international students are **not** permitted to establish a Special Writing Centre if they return home early.

The following directives and rules outline specific expectations associated with the establishment of and administration of diploma examinations at Special Writing Centres.

SPECIAL WRITING CENTRE DIRECTIVES

Principals

1. When recommending to a student that application should be made to establish a Special Writing Centre, a principal shall:
 - 1.1. provide access to and explain to the student and his/her parents, all of the directives, rules, guidelines, and procedures associated with the handling and administration of diploma examinations at a Special Writing Centre
 - 1.2. review and sign all forms submitted in application of a request to establish a Special Writing Centre
2. Prior to accepting an out-of-province student's registration for a diploma examination course, the principal of a distance learning program shall ensure that a Special Writing Centre site and the services of a Special Writing Centre Supervisor, approved by Special Cases and Accommodations, are available for that student.
3. If a student is eligible to apply for approval to establish a Special Writing Centre, the principal shall designate an individual at the school to serve in the role of an application process manager for the purpose of supervising and supporting the application process.

Students/Parents

1. Before a student applies to establish a Special Writing Centre, his/her parent(s), in consultation with the student's school principal, shall identify an individual who is eligible to be a Special Writing Centre Supervisor and willing to serve in that capacity, if approved to do so by Special Cases and Accommodations.
2. To have a Special Writing Centre established on his/her behalf, a student residing and studying **in** Alberta, and his/her parents, are responsible for ensuring the accurate completion and timely submission of the following forms:
 - 2.1. *Application to Establish a Diploma Examination Special Writing Centre*
 - 2.2. *Application to Serve as a Special Writing Centre Supervisor*
 - 2.3. *Registration to Write a Diploma Examination at a Special Writing Centre*
 - 2.4. *Teacher Confirmation of Student Readiness to Write a Diploma Examination at a Special Writing Centre*
3. To have a Special Writing Centre established on his/her behalf, a student residing and studying through a distance learning program **outside** Alberta, and his/her parents, are responsible for ensuring the accurate completion and timely submission of the following forms:

- 3.1. *Application to Establish a Pre-Approved Distance Learning Special Writing Centre*
- 3.2. *Application to Serve as a Distance Learning Special Writing Centre Supervisor*
- 3.3. *Registration to Write a Diploma Examination at a Distance Learning Special Writing Centre*
- 3.4. *Teacher Confirmation of Student Readiness to Write a Diploma Examination at a Distance Learning Special Writing Centre*
4. A student who is approved to write a diploma examination at a Special Writing Centre, and his/her parents, shall assume responsibility for all costs:
 - 4.1. payable to a Special Writing Centre Supervisor for procuring an examination writing site and supervising the handling and administration of the diploma examination
 - 4.2. incurred for the secure, timely, and prepaid shipment of all diploma examination materials, by a bonded courier service, **to** and **from** the Special Writing Centre
5. A student who is approved to write a diploma examination at a Special Writing Centre shall comply with all of the directives, rules, guidelines, and procedures associated with the establishment of a Special Writing Centre and the writing of a diploma examination.

**Application
Process Manager**

1. On behalf of a student requesting permission to establish a Special Writing Centre, the person designated to serve as the application process manager shall:
 - 1.1. verify and confirm the accuracy and completeness of all information provided in support of that application
 - 1.2. coordinate and manage the application completion and submission process
 - 1.3. provide access to and explain to the student and his/her parents all of the directives, rules, guidelines, and procedures associated with the handling and administration of diploma examinations at a Special Writing Centre
 - 1.4. provide access to and explain to the proposed Special Writing Centre Supervisor all of the directives, rules, guidelines, and procedures associated with the handling and administration of diploma examinations at a Special Writing Centre

**Teachers of
Students Writing
Diploma**

1. Teachers of students registering to write a diploma examination at a Special Writing Centre shall provide a statement about the student's readiness to write that exam at the examination administration session

**Examinations at a
Special Writing
Centre**

proposed by the student.

**Special Writing
Centre Supervisor**

1. Prior to submitting an application form, a person applying to serve as a Special Writing Centre Supervisor shall:
 - 1.1. review the directives, rules, guidelines, and procedures associated with the handling and administration of diploma examinations at a Special Writing Centre
 - 1.2. identify and tentatively procure an appropriate site for the secure storage and administration of diploma examinations
2. A person approved to serve as a Special Writing Centre Supervisor shall:
 - 2.1. assume responsibility for, and collaborate with Exam Administration to ensure, the secure and timely shipment and receipt of examination materials to and from the Special Writing Centre
 - 2.2. maintain the security of the diploma examination materials while they are under his/her custody and control
 - 2.3. administer the examination(s) in accordance with the diploma examination schedules, directives, rules, guidelines, and procedures specified in this bulletin

SPECIAL WRITING CENTRE RULES

**Examination
Administration
Requirements and
Consequences of
Non-Compliance**

1. Because Alberta diploma examinations are administered at writing centres throughout Northwest Territories and Nunavut, Special Writing Centres are not permitted to be established there. Students who intend to write diploma examinations in these locations must contact the appropriate Ministry of Education to be directed to the nearest writing centre.
2. Students who will be in Alberta but away from their school or usual writing centre during the writing of diploma examinations are not permitted to establish a Special Writing Centre. In lieu of a Special Writing Centre, students in this circumstance must contact the principal of the closest high school or writing centre to arrange to write their diploma examination(s) at that site.
3. To be approved to establish a Special Writing Centre, a student must have a final school awarded mark for the course for which the examination will be written, or be eligible to receive one by the date when the school is required to submit that mark. Students who write diploma examinations at Special Writing Centres in courses for which they have no school awarded mark will have those examinations

invalidated.

4. Students are only permitted to rewrite a diploma examination at a Special Writing Centre if they are currently retaking the course and will receive a school awarded mark in the current session, or if the examination was previously written at the most recent prior writing session.
5. To be approved as a Special Writing Centre, a proposed site must meet the conditions required to ensure the secure and appropriate storage and administration of all diploma examination materials, and written proof that the site has been procured for that purpose must be provided.
6. To be approved as a Special Writing Centre Supervisor, a person must be employed in a position of authority commensurate with that of a school principal, teacher, member of the clergy, police officer, or military officer, and must provide written proof of that employment.
7. To be approved as a Special Writing Centre Supervisor, a person must be fluent at reading and speaking English or French, depending on the language of the examination(s) to be administered.
8. A Special Writing Centre Supervisor may not be a relative or friend, past or present teacher, or a past or present coach of the student.
9. All diploma examinations written at a Special Writing Centre must be administered on the officially scheduled day and time, and in accordance with the deadlines, directives, rules, guidelines, and procedures specified in this bulletin.
10. Diploma examinations administered at a Special Writing Centre are **not** permitted to be written using a computer or an accommodation.
11. All diploma examination materials shipped to a Special Writing Centre must be returned to Alberta Education using a prepaid, secure, and bonded courier service, whether or not the student writes.
12. While the student is responsible for all costs related to the shipping of diploma examination materials to and from a Special Writing Centre, it is the Special Writing Centre Supervisor who must arrange and supervise the receipt of and prepaid return shipment of those materials by a bonded courier service.
13. A student approved to establish a Special Writing Centre must not access or have a diploma examination(s) in his/her possession at any time, other than when completing it on the officially scheduled date and time of administration.

14. A student who is unable or chooses not to write a diploma examination at a Special Writing Centre, after being approved to do so, must notify Special Cases and Accommodations (see *Contacts* section) and the Special Writing Centre Supervisor, as soon as possible.
15. A Special Writing Centre Supervisor who is notified in advance of a scheduled examination administration session that the student will not be writing must return all examination materials to Alberta Education as soon as possible after the notification.
16. If a Special Writing Centre Supervisor fails to comply with the Diploma Examination directives and rules specified in this bulletin, any future request to serve in that capacity will be denied.
17. If a student who is approved to establish a Special Writing Centre fails to comply with all of the directives, rules, guidelines, and procedures associated with that approval, all examinations written at that Centre may be invalidated and any further requests to establish a Special Writing Centre by that student will be denied.
18. If a student approved to establish a Special Writing Centre has unpaid shipping costs associated with that approval, no diploma examination results for the course(s) in question, from that or subsequent administration sessions, will appear on his/her *Results Statement*, *Statement of Courses and Marks*, or official *Transcript*, until those shipping costs are paid in full, whether or not the scheduled diploma examination(s) was written.
19. If diploma examination materials shipped to a Special Writing Centre on behalf of a student are unreturned, no diploma examination results for the course(s) in question, from that or subsequent administration sessions, will appear on the student's *Results Statement*, *Statement of Courses and Marks*, or official *Transcript*, until those materials are returned to Alberta Education, whether or not the scheduled diploma examination(s) was written.
20. No exemption or partial exemption will be approved for a student who was unable to write a diploma examination because his or her request to establish a Special Writing Centre was denied.
21. No exemptions or partial exemptions will be approved for a student who was unable to write a diploma examination at a Special Writing Centre, if the reason for that inability to write was that the examination materials were not available because the Special Writing Centre Supervisor:
 - 21.1. provided an incorrect address or other shipping information to Alberta Education, or

21.2. failed to meet the obligations required to receive and securely store the shipped examination materials.

**Submission of
Special Writing
Centre Request
Applications**

All requests to establish a Special Writing Centre must be made using the appropriate application forms (see *Examination Administration Forms* section). All Special Writing Centre enquiries should be forwarded to Pam Klebanov at (780) 422-2915 or Ellen Powter at 780-422-3336 or by email at special.cases@gov.ab.ca.

Separate (Split) Writings of Diploma Examination Parts

All humanities diploma examinations have two parts. To obtain credit for a humanities diploma examination course, a student must complete **both parts** of the examination.

**Humanities
Examinations**

Students are expected to complete both parts of a humanities (language arts or social studies) diploma examination within the same administration period. Should circumstances prevent a student from completing both parts within the same session, the following options are available:

1. The student may write both Part(ie) A and Part(ie) B of the diploma examination at the next administration. For this option, the student must register for the examination by submitting a *Diploma Examination Registration Form* (see *Examination Administration Forms* section) but is not required to pay a rewrite fee.
2. Within one year of writing the first part of the examination, the student may write the part that was missed. To exercise this option, the student must submit two forms concurrently to Exam Administration prior to the examination administration at which the student intends to write the missing portion:
 - 2.1. *Request for Separate Writing* form: The student must indicate on the form which part of the examination he/she has written, which part he/she intends to write, and in which administration the missing part will be written.

2.2. *Diploma Examination Registration Form:*

Note: If a student writes the missed part of the examination but fails to submit a *Request for Separate Writing* form, the results for the examination will not appear on the *Results Statement*, the *Statement of Courses and Marks*, or the official transcript until the request form is submitted. If the student does not write the missing part of the examination at the examination administration session indicated on the two forms, both forms must be re-submitted, prior to the next session at which the student intends to write.

Regardless of which option a student chooses, once both parts of the examination have been completed, the marks will be combined to calculate a total diploma examination mark.

Unpredictable and Emergency Events

OVERVIEW

Alberta Education is responsible to ensure that diploma examinations are administered fairly and equitably to all students, under all circumstances, including unpredictable events and school emergencies. In relation to the administration of diploma examinations, unpredictable events or emergencies refer to events that in some way interfere with school operation immediately before, during, or after the administration of a diploma examination. Such events might include buses not running, inclement weather, fires, bomb threats, floods, hazardous chemical leaks, or other events that might necessitate school closures or the unexpected dismissal of students from the school or examination writing area.

To ensure that students writing diploma examinations are treated fairly, equitably, and with due regard to their health and safety, Alberta Education has developed the following set of directives and guidelines to provide a consistent framework for responding to unpredictable events or emergencies.

UNPREDICTABLE AND EMERGENCY EVENT DIRECTIVES

School Principal and Chief Presiding Examiner Responsibilities

1. When faced with an unpredictable event or emergency that interferes with the administration of a diploma examination, schools shall always act and make decisions:
 - 1.1. first, in the interest of the health and safety of staff and students
 - 1.2. second, with due regard for the security and integrity of diploma examination materials and the processes of administering them
2. If a school or school authority is required to enact special measures to address an unpredictable event or emergency that may impact the administration of a diploma examination, the school principal or chief presiding examiner of a writing centre shall:
 - 2.1. Ensure that if the school or designated writing centre remains open during inclement weather or other emergency conditions, students who arrive (late or on time) to write their diploma examinations are permitted to do so. Students in these situations must be allowed the full time allotted for the examination.
 - 2.2. Under certain circumstances, and only upon the approval of the Director of Exam Administration (see *Contacts* section), allow an examination to be administered to individual students on the scheduled day of administration but at times other than the scheduled time.
 - 2.3. Ensure that students, including mature students, who are unable to write or to complete a diploma examination because of an emergency have the opportunity to review their options, including

appeal and rescore provisions, with the support of school administration.

- 2.4. On review of a student's options, recommend in writing to Special Cases and Accommodations, one of the following options:
 - a. an exemption from writing the diploma examination or the missed part of a diploma examination
 - b. for humanities examinations only, an incomplete diploma examination mark now, and a request that the student write the missed portion of the examination during the next scheduled administration
 - c. for mathematics and sciences examinations, an incomplete diploma examination mark now, and a request that the student write the examination during the next scheduled session
 - d. a recommendation based on individual student circumstances
- 2.5. Include in the Principal's Statement or Chief Presiding Examiner's Statement a description of the emergency situation and how the measures taken resulted in departure from normal administration procedures.

Special Cases Committee

Special Cases Committee

The Special Cases Committee of Alberta Education deals with all matters that require interpretation and application of policy relative to an individual student's program. The committee consists of Alberta Education directors and is the final level in the appeal process, other than the Minister of Education. Students must have explored all other avenues of appeal at the local school authority level before appealing to this provincial body. Further information about the operations of the Special Cases Committee is in the *Guide to Education, ECS to Grade 12*. The Special Cases Committee can be contacted by e-mail at special.cases@gov.ab.ca.

Annotations

Annotations

Results Statements and official transcripts are not annotated with respect to the use of any accommodations granted for students who have special diploma examination writing needs. Annotations will only appear on official transcripts for those students who were granted an exemption or partial exemption from writing a diploma examination by the Special Cases team.

Diploma Examination Accommodations

OVERVIEW

Alberta Education is committed to accommodating the needs of all Alberta students so that they have fair and equitable access to educational opportunities, including the writing of diploma examinations. To ensure equitable access to diploma examinations and fair and consistent application of diploma examination standards, Alberta Education may approve the use of writing accommodations for students with special diploma examination writing needs. Students with special diploma examination writing needs are individuals for whom the writing of a diploma examination would be inequitable, without a specific accommodation.

The goal of accommodation is not to optimize performance but to level the playing field by removing obstacles to performance that are inequitable. Consequently, accommodations are neither intended nor permitted to:

- alter the nature of the construct being assessed by an exam
- provide unfair advantage to students with disabilities or medical conditions over students taking examinations under regular standardized conditions, or
- compensate for knowledge or skill that the student has not attained

Alberta Education may permit diploma examinations to be administered using one or more of the following accommodations:

Accommodation 1:	CD version (for visual impairment)
Accommodation 2:	CD version (for learning or physical disabilities)
Accommodation 3:	Extra writing time
Accommodation 4:	Not currently assigned
Accommodation 5:	Scribe
Accommodation 6:	Large-print version
Accommodation 7:	Braille version
Accommodation 8:	Reader
Accommodation 9:	Sign language interpreter
Accommodation 10:	Recorded response
Accommodation 11:	Franklin Language Master
Accommodation 16:	Miscellaneous (please specify on <i>Principal's/Chief Presiding Examiner's Statement</i>)

The directives, rules, guidelines, and procedures presented below address the writing of diploma examinations using accommodations.

ACCOMMODATION DIRECTIVES

The following directives outline general requirements and expectations related to the processes of requesting and administering diploma examinations with accommodations.

Requests and Approvals

1. Prior to each exam administration session, the principal shall communicate to students and teachers the availability of and

requirements related to the use of diploma examination writing accommodations.

2. Except under special circumstances, schools shall only request diploma examination writing accommodations that are similar to those routinely provided to and **used** by a student for examination writing purposes.
3. Based on the accommodations that a student **routinely uses** for examination writing purposes, a teacher or counsellor shall recommend to a principal that comparable diploma examination writing accommodations be requested for a student making application.
4. On behalf of students who require accommodations when writing diploma examinations, the school principal shall:
 - 4.1. Submit applications, with supporting documentation, to Alberta Education in accordance with the rules, procedures, and deadlines specified in this Bulletin (*See Accommodation Rules and Accommodation Procedures* below, and *Schedules & Significant Dates* section).
 - 4.2. Ensure that requested accommodations closely parallel those routinely provided to and **regularly used** by a student for examination writing purposes.
 - 4.3. Ensure that requests for accommodations for diploma examination writing are made with the consent of the student and his or her parent(s)/guardian(s), or, in the case of an adult student, with the student's consent.
5. Mature students who require accommodations when writing diploma examinations shall apply directly to Alberta Education, by submitting applications with appropriate supporting documentation in accordance with the rules, procedures, and deadlines specified in this bulletin (*See Accommodation Rules and Accommodation Procedures* below, and *Schedules & Significant Dates* section).
6. All requests for accommodations shall be accompanied by documented evidence that demonstrates the need for and **regular use** of specific accommodations for examination writing purposes. This documented evidence shall include:
 - 6.1. Results of a formal medical or psychometric (e.g. academic, intellectual) assessment **or** a statement indicating that the student has been registered with Alberta Education as a student with special needs. Formal medical or psychometric assessments must be current (usually no older than three years) and administered by an individual who is qualified and/or licensed to interpret and report the results of such assessments (*see Accommodation Rules* below).

- 6.2. A description and record of accommodations normally provided by the school and **regularly and consistently used** by the student for examination writing purposes.

Notes: A valid and current Individualized Program Plan (IPP) may be submitted as supporting documentation but must include (6.1) and (6.2). An IPP means a plan designed to address the student's special needs. It is based on professionally obtained and documented diagnostic assessment information.

Detailed supporting documentation is only required for subsequent applications within the same school year if a student's examination writing needs have changed significantly from the original application or if requested by Alberta Education.

7. On receipt of an application and appropriate and complete supporting documentation, Alberta Education shall:
 - 7.1. Review the application and may grant individual students diploma examination writing accommodations.
 - 7.2. Ensure confidentiality of the information required for approval of accommodations according to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

**Examination
Administration
Using
Accommodations**

1. All diploma examinations administered with the support of an approved accommodation shall be conducted in accordance with the directives, rules and procedures specified throughout this bulletin, including those that are presented in this section (see *Administration Directives, Guidelines & Procedures* section and *Using Calculators & Computers* section).
2. The principal shall ensure that only those students who are approved by Alberta Education to use a writing accommodation are permitted to do so.
3. The principal shall ensure that all facilities and equipment (e.g., recording devices, earphones, microphones, computers) approved to be used as diploma examination accommodations are available and appropriately configured to safeguard test security and fairness and to minimize distraction to students.
4. The principal shall ensure that all facilities and equipment that have been set up for examination writing purposes are secured and remain secured until after the examination writing session and follow-up administrative procedures are completed.
5. The school jurisdiction is responsible for the appointment of scribes, readers, and sign language interpreters and for all expenses incurred in appointing these individuals on behalf of their students.

6. Mature students are responsible for all expenses incurred for the appointment of scribes, readers, and sign language interpreters whose appointment on their behalf has been approved by Alberta Education.
7. It is a school's responsibility to supply all sound recording equipment and materials that are required when administering examinations with the support of a scribe or reader.
- *NEW** 8. The principal shall ensure that all digitally recorded conversations and responses related to the administration of diploma examinations are immediately deleted once they have been saved to a storage device for shipment to Alberta Education.
9. Individuals appointed to serve as a scribe, reader, or sign language interpreter shall not be a relative, friend, or a past or present teacher of the student.
10. Scribes, readers, and sign language interpreters who are approved to assist a student during the administration of an examination shall understand and implement all directives, rules, and procedures related to the administration of diploma examinations using accommodations.
11. All diploma examinations administered with the assistance of a scribe, reader, or sign language interpreter shall be supervised at all times by an Examination Supervisor (See *Administration Directives, Guidelines, and Procedures* section).
12. The principal shall ensure that Examination Supervisors who are designated to supervise the administration of diploma examinations that are being written using approved accommodations are appropriately prepared for that role.
13. Students and mature students who write diploma examinations using one or more approved accommodations shall be familiar with and follow all directives, rules, and procedures related to the administration of diploma examinations using accommodations.
14. Scribes, readers, and sign language interpreters who assist a student during the administration of a diploma examination, and Examination Supervisors who supervise such administrations, shall complete and sign a *Statement of Scribe, Reader, and/or Interpreter and Examination Supervisor* form at the end of the examination writing session (see *Examination Administration Forms* section).
15. The principal shall record the use of all examination writing accommodations on the *Principal's Statement* and shall attach all completed *Statement of Scribe, Reader, and/or Interpreter and*

Examination Supervisor forms to it.

ACCOMMODATION RULES

Requests for Accommodations

1. All requests for accommodations must be made using one of the following application forms (see *Examination Administration Forms* section).
 - 1.1. *Application for Accommodations for Students With Special Diploma Examination Writing Needs*
 - 1.2. *ESL Application for Accommodations for Students With Special Diploma Examination Writing Needs*
2. All application forms and documentation submitted in support of a request for diploma examination accommodations must be accurate, complete, and signed, where required, before submission to Alberta Education. Special Cases and Accommodations will not approve applications that fail to meet these criteria.
3. No exemptions or partial exemptions will be approved for a student because his/her request for accommodations was denied.

Examination Administration Using Accommodations

1. All rules and procedures related to the use of a specific accommodation must be explained and discussed with a student prior to the commencement of the officially scheduled examination period.
2. To ensure that facilities and equipment are available and appropriately configured, students and mature students who are approved to use an accommodation when writing a diploma examination must communicate their intention to do so to the principal or writing centre supervisor, well in advance of the scheduled date of administration.
3. To maintain fairness and security, any student writing a diploma examination with an accommodation that requires the vocalization of answers and responses must do so in isolation from other examination writers.

Medical or Psychometric Assessment Reports

1. Unless specifically stated otherwise, all formal medical or psychometric (e.g. academic, intellectual) assessment reports submitted in support of a request for accommodations must include:
 - 1.1. a summary, interpretation, and analysis of scores or other results
 - 1.2. a clearly defined diagnosis or condition, and the implications of that diagnosis or condition with respect to examination writing behaviours and abilities
 - 1.3. a clear statement of the academic and/or examination accommodations that are recommended or prescribed as a result of

the diagnosis or condition

Note: When accommodations are being requested for medical reasons, a treatment plan must be submitted by a physician

Extra Writing Time

1. All students must complete an examination within the allotted time unless approval for extra writing time has been granted. The allotted time includes the **time officially scheduled** for the examination and the additional half hour that all students are permitted.
2. Students granted extra writing time as an accommodation may be given up to **twice** the amount of **time officially scheduled** for the examination. The additional half hour that all students are permitted may be added at the end of this period, if needed.

Franklin Language Master

1. When using a Franklin Language Master as an approved accommodation, all “My Word List” and note fields must be cleared and no removable cards other than the dictionary/thesaurus card may be used or brought into the diploma examination writing room.

Text-to-Speech Software

1. If approved as a writing accommodation, students may use text-to-speech software to read back their own responses when composing written response answers using a computer. No other use of this software is permitted.
2. When using text-to-speech software as an approved accommodation, features such as word prediction, word wizard, fact folder/finder, and scientific calculator must be disabled.
3. No secured examination material may be scanned to enable the use of text-to-speech software.

Use of a Scribe

1. An examination that is administered with the support of a scribe must take place in an isolated writing area.
2. Once an examination administration session has commenced, a continuous recording of all conversation that occurs between a scribe and student must be made. This recording must be of sufficient sound quality to permit clear understanding of the conversation between the scribe and student.

Note: If a reader has also been approved and is being used to support the same student writing a diploma examination, one recording may be used to capture the readings completed by the reader and the conversation between the scribe/reader and the student. In this situation, the Examination Supervisor must ensure that all reading and conversations between the scribe/reader and student can be clearly heard and understood.
3. To ensure anonymity during marking, the identity of a student must not be revealed during the recording of a scribing conversation.

4. A copy of the recorded conversation between a scribe and a student must be submitted to Exam Administration on a standard size cassette or CD at the end of the examination period along with the completed examination (see *Accommodation Procedures* section below).
- *NEW** 5. All recorded conversations between a student and a scribe must be immediately deleted from the recording device once they have been saved to a storage device for shipment to Alberta Education.
6. A scribe may record a student's response in handwriting or using a computer.
7. A scribe must record a student's response verbatim; that is, exactly as the student dictates. A scribe may not improve the student's response by rewording, correcting grammar, adding punctuation, indicating paragraphs, or otherwise changing a student's answer.
8. A scribe may confirm a student's responses by reading the responses back for clarification.
9. A scribe may not ask leading questions or provide suggestions or interpretations of any kind.
10. A scribe must ask for the spelling of commonly misspelled words and similar sounding words such as "to," "two," and "too," "there," "they're," and "their." If the student uses a word that the scribe is not familiar with or does not know how to spell, the scribe should ask the student to spell it.
11. The student must spell any technical or subject matter terms or concepts associated with a topic, such as chemical terms, geographic locations, or people's names.

Use of a Reader

1. An examination that is administered with the support of a reader must take place in a separate writing area so that other students who are writing the examination are not disturbed.
2. Once an examination administration session has commenced a continuous recording of the reading and conversations that occur between the reader and student must be made. This recording must be of sufficient sound quality to permit clear understanding of what is being read and said.

Note: If a scribe has also been approved and is being used to support the same student writing a diploma examination, one recording may be used to capture the readings completed by the reader and the conversations between the scribe/reader and the student. In this situation, the Examination Supervisor must ensure that all reading and conversations between the scribe/reader and student can be clearly heard and understood.

3. To ensure anonymity during marking, the identity of a student must not be revealed during the recording of an examination administration session that is supported by a reader.
4. A copy of the recorded exam administration session must be submitted to Exam Administration on a standard size cassette or CD at the end of the examination period along with the completed examination (see *Accommodation Procedures* below).
- *NEW** 5. All recorded exam administration sessions must be immediately deleted from the recording device once they have been saved to a storage device for shipment to Alberta Education.
6. A reader must read the examination verbatim; that is, exactly as it appears in the examination booklet. A reader may not add emphasis, inflection, or read in such a way as to prompt or guide the student. A reader may not ask leading questions or provide suggestions, interpretations, or word definitions of any kind.
7. A reader may repeat readings as often as necessary and must read consistently each time.
8. A reader must read in such a way that the student understands the beginning and end of each sentence and paragraph. Without leading the student, the reader must be aware of and obey all punctuation and must read in such a way that the student understands the use and purpose of the punctuation.

Sign Language Interpreter

1. To be appointed to support a student writing a diploma examination, a sign language interpreter must be a neutral person who interprets a spoken message into American Sign Language or into one of the Manually Coded English Systems for a student with hearing loss.
2. For purposes of interpreting for a diploma examination, a sign language interpreter may:
 - 2.1. voice what is signed by a student
 - 2.2. interpret all words spoken during the examination period that are intended for all students
 - 2.3. repeat interpretations as often as necessary, interpreting consistently each time
3. A sign language interpreter must not record a student's responses. This is the role of a scribe and is a support that must be approved by Alberta Education as a separate accommodation.
4. A sign language interpreter must render any message to be interpreted faithfully, always conveying the content and spirit of the spoken word

using the signed language most readily understood by the student. The interpreter must not provide definitions or interpret beyond conveying the spoken message.

5. A sign language interpreter must not counsel, advise, interject personal opinions or ask leading questions, provide suggestions, or provide word definitions of any kind.
6. During the administration of a diploma examination, all questions or queries raised by the student must be directed to the Examination Supervisor. In this case, the interpreter must interpret spoken and signed messages between the student and the Examination Supervisor.

Use of CD Format

1. Students may use their personal portable CD players when writing a diploma examination in CD format.
2. If a student uses a personal CD player when writing a CD format examination, the Examination Supervisor must ensure that no prohibited material is brought into the examination room or used in that CD player before or during the scheduled examination period.

Recorded Response

1. A student using the recorded response accommodation must have an isolated space in which to work.
2. All student work dictated during an examination administration under a Recorded Response accommodation must be transcribed. Students using this accommodation must be able to read the transcribed version of their recorded exam response(s) during the allotted examination writing time, to verify that the transcription accurately reflects what was vocalized. Consequently, a staff member at the school must transcribe the recorded response within the allotted examination writing time.

- *NEW**
3. All recorded responses must be immediately deleted from the recording device once they have been saved to a storage device for shipment to Alberta Education.

GUIDELINES FOR GRANTING ACCOMMODATIONS

The Special Cases and Accommodations team uses the following guidelines to grant diploma examination accommodations for students:

Students Registered with a Special Education Student Code

Students who are currently registered with a Special Education Student Code may be granted one or more accommodations if the requested accommodations are routinely used for examination writing purposes for the course for which the request is being made (see *Accommodation Directives* and *Accommodation Rules*, above).

Students with Special Education Student Code 80 are only eligible for accommodations if they have a dual diagnosis of Gifted and Learning Disability. Requests for accommodations for students meeting these criteria must include an updated copy of their psychological assessments (see *Accommodation Directives* and *Accommodation Rules*, above).

Students Not Registered with a Special Education Student Code

Students who are not currently registered with a Special Education Student Code may be granted one or more accommodations if the request for such accommodations includes a current assessment that identifies the need for such support, and if the requested accommodation(s) are routinely used for examination writing purposes for the course for which the request is being made (see *Accommodation Directives* and *Accommodation Rules*, above).

English as a Second Language (ESL) and Francisation

Under certain circumstances, English as a Second Language (ESL) and Francisation students writing diploma examinations where the language of testing is English and French, respectively, may be granted an accommodation of extra writing time. ESL students come from a home in which the primary spoken language is not English and have a first language spoken that is other than English. Francisation students attend Francophone schools, come from a home in which the primary spoken language is not French, and have a first language spoken that is other than French.

Where the use of dictionaries are permitted for all students (see *Security & Examination Rules* section), ESL and Francisation students are permitted to use paper format bilingual dictionaries.

ESL and Francisation students may be granted extra writing time as an accommodation when writing diploma examinations. Additional writing time is a condition that has the potential to improve the scores of all test takers, regardless of their capabilities or special needs. Consequently, because accommodations are intended to remove obstacles to performance that are inequitable, and not to alter the nature of the construct being assessed, to provide unfair advantage, or to compensate for knowledge or skill not yet attained, the granting of this condition as a diploma examination accommodation must be handled judiciously. When granted as an accommodation to ESL or Francisation students, the intent of additional writing time is to compensate for **significantly** slower second language processing skills. It is **not** intended to compensate for limited English/French language proficiency and/or subject matter knowledge and skill that are not yet attained. This point is particularly salient with respect to requests for extra time for English and French language arts diploma examinations, since language proficiency is a central component of the subject matter knowledge and skill being assessed by those diploma examinations.

ESL and Francisation students may be granted extra writing time as an accommodation if the request includes a current assessment (within the

current school year) that identifies the need for such support, and if the requested accommodation is routinely used throughout the year for examination writing purposes in the diploma course for which the request is being made (see *Accommodation Directives* and *Accommodation Rules*, above).

Notes: ESL students receiving funding should have an annual assessment on file in the school which indicates that their language proficiency is insufficient for them to be successful in their regular coursework without interventions (please see Funding Manual for reference).

Until recommendations are made by Alberta Education on which tests of language proficiency are most acceptable, Special Cases and Accommodations will accept the following commonly used tests of ESL language proficiency:

- Canadian Test of Basic Skills (CTBS)
- Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests, Canadian
- SLEP – Secondary Level English Proficiency
- Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT) 2000 words
- Woodcock-Munoz Language Survey Revised (WML-R)

If the initial assessment does not accurately reflect the student's deficits, for example in written expression, the school is urged to reassess the student with an inventory which addresses or specifies the area of deficit.

ESL or Francisation students who may require accommodations other than or in addition to extra writing time must request those accommodations following the regular procedures. The requirements and criteria for granting these other accommodations are the same as those applied to all other students (see *Accommodation Directives* and *Accommodation Rules*, above).

Use of a Reader

The use of a reader to assist a student during the administration of a diploma examination is approved under exceptional circumstances only. The CD version of diploma examinations is expected to be used rather than a reader.

Sign Language Interpreter

Under the following conditions, a sign language interpreter may use sign language to interpret diploma examinations for a student who is deaf or hard of hearing:

1. the student has a specific impairment that greatly limits his or her ability to decode text, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so
2. the student is only able to access printed material with the support of a reader or sign language interpreter, or is provided with text on tape or in another electronic format for routine instruction

Franklin Language Master

In certain circumstances, the use of a Franklin Language Master may be approved as an accommodation for students writing **Part(ie) A** of the following diploma examinations:

- English 30–1 and English 30–2
- Français 30–1 and FLA 30–1
- Social Studies 30–1, Social Studies 30–2, Études sociales 30–1, and Études sociales 30–2

Only the following models of Franklin Language Master will be approved for use as an accommodation:

- LM 6000
- LM 6000 B
- LM 6000 SE
- MWS 1840
- LM 4200

Text-to-Speech Software

The use of text-to-speech software may be approved as an accommodation for students writing Part(ie) A of the following diploma examinations using a computer:

- English 30–1 and English 30–2
- Français 30–1 and FLA 30–1
- Social Studies 30–1, Social Studies 30–2, Études sociales 30–1, and Études sociales 30–2

Severe Test Anxiety

Most students experience some form of anxiety before, during, and/or after writing diploma examinations. However, some students experience a severe level of test anxiety that may lead to poor performance or prevent them from fully demonstrating their knowledge. Students who experience such severe test anxiety should speak with their school administrators and/or counsellors to seek help developing coping strategies.

Exemption(s) from diploma examination(s) will **not** be granted because of severe test anxiety. Students suffering from severe test anxiety may apply for the accommodation of extra writing time. Applications must include the following:

1. a specialized assessment from a registered psychologist or psychiatrist
2. a prior history of receiving extra time for severe test anxiety
3. IPP documents, including corresponding strategies
4. evidence of significant impairment in test-taking situations related to the administration of achievement tests, diploma examinations, and/or school-based tests and examinations (evidenced, for example, by a consistent and significant discrepancy between a student’s assignment-based scores and his or her test-based scores, **relative to that of other students**).

Isolation is a strategy that schools are encouraged to provide for students

with severe test anxiety and it is not an accommodation for which schools need to apply to Alberta Education.

Chronic Medical Conditions

Students with diagnosed chronic medical conditions such as diabetes, eating disorders, obsessive compulsive disorder, manic-depression, depression, anxiety/panic disorder, epilepsy, etc., are expected to write diploma examinations with the support of the accommodations routinely provided to them, by their school, for examination writing purposes. Use of such accommodations for diploma examination writing purposes must be approved by Special Cases and Accommodations. Students with chronic medical conditions that impact their ability to concentrate may be granted the accommodation of extra writing time. The school is also encouraged to provide an isolated space where that student may write. Isolation is not an accommodation for which schools need to apply to Alberta Education.

If a student with a chronic medical condition experiences a medical crisis related to that condition immediately before or while a particular diploma examination is being administered, he or she may apply for an exemption or partial exemption from that examination on the basis of an acute medical illness (see *Exemptions and Partial Exemptions* above).

Course Level Transfers and Accommodation Requests

If a student transfers courses or course levels after having requested and/or been approved to write a special format form of the diploma examination in the original course (i.e., a Braille, large print, CD, or coloured paper form) an *Accommodation Request Transfer* form (see *Examination Administration Forms* section) must be submitted to the Special Cases and Accommodation team. Submission of this form will ensure that the requested special format form of the diploma exam is sent for the correct course.

GUIDELINES FOR USING ACCOMMODATIONS

CD Format

The Examination Supervisor may modify the examination setting by administering the examination:

- in a small group setting
- in a private room (isolation)
- to the student individually (using routine administration procedures)
- with the student wearing noise buffers (after directions have been given using routine administration procedures)

It is important to emphasize that students should use the printed and CD examinations in a manner that best suits them; for example, students should be made aware that they may listen to part or all of the CD more than once.

If a student appears confused about the examination process, the examiner should explain the process to the student until satisfied that the student understands the process.

Recorded Response

Students who are dictating their responses should be encouraged to do some rough work in the examination booklet. Rough work will not be marked but serves to guide the student as he or she dictates a response.

For written-response questions, students should be advised to indicate verbally when they have finished one assignment and are beginning the next one by saying, “I am now finished assignment one, and I am ready to begin assignment two.”

***NEW** Student responses may be recorded using audiotape or as digital audio files in WAV or MP3 format.

All storage devices containing a student’s recorded responses must be clearly labelled with:

- Name of Student
- Alberta Student Number
- Index Number
- Course Name
- School Code
- Storage Device Number (i.e., 1/3, 2/3, etc.)
- The words “Recorded Response”

Scribe or Reader
***NEW**

Scribe or Reader conversations with a student may be recorded using audio tape or as digital audio files in WAV or MP3 format.

All storage devices containing the conversation between a scribe and a student or a reader and a student must be returned to Exam Administration with the regular return shipment of other diploma examination materials from the school.

All storage devices containing Scribe or Reader conversations with a student must be clearly labelled with:

- Name of Student
- Alberta Student Number
- Index Number
- Course Name
- School Code
- Device Number (i.e., 1/3, 2/3, etc.)
- The word “Scribed” or “Reader”

ACCOMMODATION PROCEDURES**Inquiries and Concerns**

All inquiries and concerns regarding the processes of submitting requests for or administering diploma examinations with accommodations should be directed to Special Cases and Accommodations by phone at (780) 427-0010, by fax at (780) 422-4889, or by e-mail at special.cases@gov.ab.ca. For a toll-free connection, dial (780) 310-0000.

**Application
Process Manager**

To facilitate a smooth accommodation request process, a principal or his/her designate at the school must manage the application process on behalf of a student. In addition to coordinating and managing the application completion and submission process, the application process manager is expected to verify and confirm the accuracy and completeness of the information provided in support of that application and to serve as the official school contact for that student with respect to that accommodation request.

**Submission of
Accommodation
Request
Applications**

All requests for accommodations must be made using the appropriate application form (see *Accommodation Rules* above and *Examination Administration Forms* section). These request forms, and all supporting documentation, should be submitted to the Special Cases and Accommodations team (see above), on a student's behalf, by the application process manager. Mature students who require accommodations when writing diploma examinations must apply directly to Alberta Education, following the same procedure. All requests for accommodations must be submitted to Alberta Education by the deadlines posted in this document (see *Schedules & Significant Dates* section).

If a student requires accommodations for more than one diploma examination writing session, a separate submission of the application form is required for each writing session. However, supporting documentation is required on a subsequent submission within a school year only if the student's examination writing needs have significantly changed from a previous application.

Accommodation request forms are distributed to the Special Cases and Accommodations team by the first letter of the student's last name.

**Return of
Examination
Materials**

1. All special format diploma examination materials, including those in CD, large print, and Braille format, must be returned to Exam Administration along with the regular return shipment of other examination materials from the school.
2. If a student writes a diploma examination using a large print version of the examination, both the large print examination and the answer sheet must be returned with the other examination materials.