

Guide to Education

ECS TO GRADE 12

***Policy, Regulations, and Forms Manual Changes
and the Guide to Education: ECS to Grade 12***

For the 2008/2009 School Year

Questions and Answers

Question **Why is the *K-12 Learning System Policy, Regulations and Forms Manual (Policy Manual)* being disbanded?**

Answer The *Policy Manual* is being disbanded because much of the direction it provides is already contained in the *Guide to Education: ECS to Grade 12 (Guide)*. Disbanding the *Policy Manual* is intended to turn the *Guide to Education* into the key repository for policy and other requirements and information critical to the delivery of education programs in Alberta. This initiative is a key step in reducing the overall administrative burden on the education system by:

- creating a 'one-stop portal' for Ministry direction/expectations
- clarifying what the Ministry requires from the ECS to Grade 12 education system, and what is only suggested, or encouraged
- reducing duplication and redundancy by eliminating or combining documents that repeat what is already contained in other documents.

It is our hope that by eliminating outdated, redundant or duplicated information, the revised *Guide* will help school administrators to find more efficiently the information they need.

- Question** **Where do I go to get the information I need?**
- Answer** Information on the key aspects of educational program delivery is in the *Guide*. When looking for more detailed information on a specific topic, the *Guide* contains a list of hyperlinked references and resources that can be directly accessed online.
- Question** **Does this signal a change in the Ministry’s direction?**
- Answer** Disbanding the *Policy Manual* does not change Ministry direction on any of the topics that were originally covered in the *Policy Manual*. Every effort was made to ensure that no relevant content was lost in the process of disbanding the *Policy Manual*.
- Question** **What information in the *Policy Manual* was moved to the *Guide* and why?**
- Answer** Most of the direction-giving content in the *Policy Manual* was already included in the *Guide*. Unique content from the *Policy Manual* was used to enhance existing sections of the *Guide*. Policy statements from the *Policy Manual* that require adherence by the education system are now found in a new ‘Policies’ section of the *Guide*.
- Question** **Some topics were identified as policies in the *Policy Manual* but do not appear in the policy section of the *Guide*. Are they not requirements anymore?**
- Answer** A consistent definition for the term policy was adopted for the review. It was found that a number of the documents in the *Policy Manual* were called ‘policy’ but their content did not meet this definition. Adherence to all policies in the Policies section of the *Guide* is now mandatory, while allowing for some flexibility in how the policies are implemented. Where non-mandatory programming was referenced in the *Policy Manual* (e.g., providing off-campus education programming is optional), the procedures necessary to establish and operate such programs are still mandatory and are retained in the *Guide*, but because they are of a procedural nature, they are no longer referred to as ‘policy’.
- Question** **How has the Ministry ensured that content from the *Policy Manual* has not been lost?**
- Answer** To ensure content from the *Policy Manual* was not lost, key ministry staff, including program area experts, reviewed the *Policy Manual* to identify the unique content found nowhere else. The unique content was either used to enhance existing content in the *Guide* or was moved (or is in the process of being moved) to the appropriate handbook, other resource documents, or the Ministry website. The online version of the *Guide* provides links to these documents.
- Question** **Will I still be able to access the *Policy Manual* online?**
- Answer** The *Policy Manual* will continue to exist on the Ministry of Education’s website as a reference until the transition to the *Guide* is completed. The *Policy Manual* content is in the process of being moved to another site (e.g., in the case of regulations and forms), moved to an issue specific handbook, where appropriate, or in the case of outdated/redundant documents removed from the website.

Question **What happened to the forms in the *Policy Manual*?**

Answer The forms contained in the *Policy Manual* continue to be accessible online and are located on the Ministry of Education’s website at <http://education.alberta.ca/department/policy/forms.aspx>.

Question **What happened to the regulations in the *Policy Manual*?**

Answer The regulations contained in the *Policy Manual* continue to be accessible online and are located on the Ministry of Education’s website at <http://education.alberta.ca/department/policy/legislation.aspx>.

Question **How will I be able to navigate the *Guide* to find the information I need?**

Answer A PDF version of the *Guide* will be on the Ministry of Education’s web site. You will be able to navigate this version by clicking on your topic of choice in the table of contents or by using the search function. All documents referenced under each topic area (e.g., legislation, handbook) will be hyperlinked enabling immediate access to them by clicking on the highlighted text.

Question **What are the next steps?**

Answer We recognize that for each particular topic, there are a number of other documents that also provide direction to the education system making it difficult for users to find all the relevant information in one place. Furthermore, since the magnitude of this initiative requires continuing efforts to further simplify and reduce the Ministry’s direction-giving documents, Ministry staff will be identifying and acting on opportunities to further reduce duplication and potentially merge or eliminate existing documents.

Question **Why weren’t external stakeholders consulted on this initiative?**

Answer The intent of this initiative is to reduce administrative burden by clarifying terminology, clarifying policy and other requirements, streamlining ministry documents and reducing duplication. This initiative is not about changing Ministry direction, or changing what is or is not required of the education system. However, we will be collecting feedback from users on the extent to which the goals of this initiative have been met. You are invited to provide comments on an online feedback form at <http://education.alberta.ca/admin/resources/guidetoed.aspx>. Information collected is confidential and will not be shared with anyone.

Question **Who can I talk to if I have any other questions about changes to the *Policy Manual*?**
About the *Guide*?

Answer For more information about *Policy Manual* content, please contact Evan Jones, Manager, Policy Development at 780-422-1348 (dial 310-0000 for toll-free access) or by e-mail at Education.Policy@gov.ab.ca.

For more information on the *Guide*, please contact Sheldon Bossert, Education Manager, Governance Support Branch, at 780-415-9954 (dial 310-0000 for toll-free access) or by e-mail at Sheldon.Bossert@gov.ab.ca.