Course Challenge Process: Policy and Procedures

2023

Saskatchewan

Table of Contents

Course Challenge Policy

Authority

This policy statement is developed in accordance with:

Legal Documents:

- *The Education Act, 1995* Sections 4 (1), (1.1)(c), 4.02

Policy or Supplemental Documents:

- The Registrar's Handbook for School Administrators

Policy Statement

This policy recognizes that some students are able to demonstrate a high level of achievement of the learning outcomes of a particular course without spending the required hours enrolled in the course. To accommodate this, the Ministry of Education has developed a process for challenging courses for credit. Using this process, a maximum of two course challenge credits may be attained at the 10 or 20 level.

- To challenge a course, the student must be enrolled in an Education Organization, which includes provincial school divisions, the Conseil des écoles fransaskoises, the Saskatchewan Distance Learning Corporation, independent schools, First Nations schools, regional colleges, historical high schools, and care and custody facilities that offer Kindergarten to Grade 12 education in Saskatchewan.

- The Education Organization shall develop a policy for the administration of the Course Challenge Process that is consistent with the procedures outlined by the Ministry of Education and submit the policy to the Office of the Registrar with the *Intent to Challenge Course* form.

- The school will administer the course challenge within provincial guidelines and local policy.

- Provincially developed courses may be challenged at the 10 or 20 level.

- A teacher who has previously taught the course at least twice (in different semesters/blocks, not concurrently) is qualified to administer the course challenge process.

- The Course Challenge Process should include a variety of assessment techniques that measure the level of student attainment of course outcomes.

- The student must attain a minimum of 80% through the course challenge in order to be granted credit. The percentage mark attained will be recorded on the student's transcript.

- Students who are not successful in the course challenge shall not be allowed to challenge the same course a second time. In order to receive credit for the course, these students will be required to register in and successfully complete that course.

Procedures

- The Education Organization will determine which courses at the 10 or 20 level may be challenged in their schools. This decision will be based upon whether teachers have taught a particular course at least twice. Within an Education Organization, a teacher at a neighbouring school may administer the challenge process for a course where a particular school does not have a teacher who has taught the course at least twice.

- The Education Organization will develop an *Intent to Challenge Course* form (or use section 1.4 *Intent to Challenge Course* form.

- Assessment strategies for a challenge process shall be developed by the course teacher based upon course requirements and upon current classroom assessment techniques. Course outcomes will be listed with the assessment strategies and shall be available to attach to the *Intent to Challenge Course* form. It is anticipated that teachers of a particular course will meet at the beginning of the school year to share assessment strategies and develop a challenge process. Each course challenge should be reviewed annually by the respective teachers of the particular course.

- It is a local decision to determine appropriate times when courses may be challenged.

- Schools shall establish procedures to communicate to parents and students the availability, procedures, outcomes and assessment strategies for course challenges.

- To challenge a course, the student must make a formal request to the principal and then submit the completed *Intent to Challenge Course* form to the school.

- Students shall take the responsibility for providing evidence of readiness to challenge a course (e.g., a high mark in a prerequisite course, selections from a portfolio or other collection, recommendation from a previous teacher, documentation of work or other experience, etc.).

- The decision to proceed with a course challenge, by evaluating the *Intent to Challenge Course* form, will be determined at the local level by a team of at least two individuals (to include the principal and the teacher who will administer the course challenge). Arrival at this decision shall include discussion of the student's chance of successfully meeting the exemplary level in the course challenge and, subsequently, the student's capacity to successfully complete the course at the next level.

- If the "Intent to Challenge" is refused, the student is required to register in and successfully complete that course in order to receive credit for the course.

- Students will be notified by the school principal of the approval or refusal of their "Intent to Challenge". Refusals will be documented according to criteria. Approvals will state a date for completion of the challenge.

- Students who successfully complete the challenge will be granted one credit for the course.

- The supporting documents for a course challenge credit include:
  o The Education Organization's course challenge policy;
  o *Intent to Challenge Course* form; and,
  o *Secondary Level Mark Correction* form.

Note:
- Independent high schools are to submit all forms and local policies to the Director of Independent Schools and Home-based Education, Ministry of Education.

- First Nation schools are to submit all forms and local policies to the Approved Program Supervisor for approval. The Approved Program Supervisor will forward these forms to the Office of the Registrar at student.records@gov.sk.ca.

- One credit is equivalent to 100 credit hours; a 100 credit hour course should be allocated between 95 and 100 hours of instructional time.

Intent

The challenge process was established to allow secondary level students demonstrating a high level of competency in the learning objectives for a specific course to challenge evaluation requirements, through a vigorous and comprehensive process, and move on to further learning. This recognizes that some students, because of their life experience, academic ability or efficient study habits, are able to demonstrate the achievement of the desired learning outcomes of a particular course without spending the required course hours.

Definitions

- **Education Authority** includes provincial school boards, the Conseil scolaire fransaskois, the Saskatchewan Distance Learning Corporation and equivalent entities including tribal councils, that offer Kindergarten to Grade 12 education in Saskatchewan.

- **Education Organization** includes provincial school divisions, the Conseil des écoles fransaskoises, the Saskatchewan Distance Learning Corporation, independent schools, First Nations schools, regional colleges, historical high schools, and care and custody facilities that offer Kindergarten to Grade 12 education in Saskatchewan.

- **Schools** refers to all schools in Saskatchewan authorized to offer secondary level credits.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. ***Why is the course challenge process being limited to two credits?***
    The intent of this policy is not to "fast track" students, but to open up their timetables for other courses where there can be greater learning benefits. Further, it is considered that classroom experiences and interaction with other students are valuable and not necessarily replaced by a course challenge.

2. ***Why is the course challenge process being limited to only level 10 or 20 courses?***
    This policy is intended for students to challenge courses that they are required to take, such as prerequisite courses, and then be able to move on to further learning. The prerequisite courses tend to be at the 10 or 20 level. However, students may challenge any course at the 10 or 20 level — it does not need to be a prerequisite course. Due to the weight we place on 30 level courses, it is imperative that all students experience these courses to their fullest capability and are assessed in a thorough and consistent manner.

3. ***Can locally developed, modified, and International Baccalaureate courses be challenged?***
    No, only regular provincially developed courses may be challenged.

4. ***How would a teacher evaluator determine if a student is ready to challenge a course for credit?***
    Readiness to challenge a course is demonstrated if the student:
    -   is aware of course outcomes and confident that the challenge process can be successfully completed at an exemplary level;
    -   has previous experiences and courses to provide exemplary knowledge, skills, and attitudes in the particular course to be challenged;
    -   shows exceptional talent or ability in an area or consistently excels in the particular area of study to be challenged; and/or,
    -   would benefit by moving to the next higher level course more quickly.

5. ***Would it not be easier to give an exam to determine whether a student should be given credit for a course?***
    In order to be fair to all students, it is essential that teachers use an appropriate array of assessment strategies before giving credit for the course. The challenge process should be based upon course requirements and upon current classroom assessment techniques. Therefore, the course challenge process should include a variety of assessment techniques and not be based solely upon the results of one exam.

6. ***Would the course challenge process require extra time for teachers and administrators?***
    Initially, time will be required to develop the Education Organization's policy. Assessment strategies will also need to be chosen to reflect course outcomes and activities for each course available for challenge.

7. ***Does the course challenge process replace the waiving of prerequisite requirements in the languages?***
No, schools may continue to request Registrar's approval to waive the prerequisite requirement to allow placement of a student at the appropriate level in the languages (cases where students do not choose to challenge for credit recognition).

8. ***Under current practices, schools are advised that when a student transferring into Saskatchewan is unable to receive credit recognition through an equivalency evaluation and claims to have taken the course, the school may "fast track" the student through the course in less than 100 credit hours. Can this practice continue?***
In the past, principals have been advised that out-of-province transfer students who have taken the work previously and have been unable to receive equivalency recognition may be "fast tracked" through a course for credit at the Grade 10, 11 and 12 levels. They have been advised as follows:
- students must demonstrate they have met the prescribed learning outcomes of a course;
- to receive credit recognition, students must meet the same standards as students who have taken the course for 100 credit hours;
- students are awarded a percentage mark for a course completed through this process; and,
- in order to be eligible to participate, a student must be enrolled in an Education Organization.

In practice, the assessment and evaluation strategies for determining whether students have met the prescribed learning outcomes of the course through the fast track process are determined at the school level. The fast track process should be equally as rigorous as the course challenge process.

9. ***Can adults continue to challenge provincial examinations?***
Yes. Adults will continue to be qualified to write any number of provincial examinations for 100% of the mark without having previously taken the course. (Adults are defined as individuals who are 18 years of age and out of school for at least one year.) This practice is based upon *The Education Regulations, 2019*, Section 29(1) which states:
- *The ministry may provide examinations for any course at any level and may prescribe the manner in which those examinations are to be used.*

The course challenge process is intended for students who graduate with 24 credits.

10. ***How do students receive credit for a successful challenge process?***
Upon completion of the course challenge, the school forwards to student.records@gov.sk.ca a copy of the Education Organization's course challenge policy, the *Intent to Challenge Course* form and the *Secondary Level Mark Correction* form.

Intent to Challenge Course Form

Student Information (Please print)		
Last Name	**First Name**	**Middle Name**
Birthdate Day Month Year	**Grade**	**Learning ID**

Course Title and Number:

Readiness to Challenge Course:

I have read the attached Course Outcomes and Assessment Strategies for the course. I have also attached the following evidence of readiness to challenge this course.

Previous courses taken in this subject area:

Course		**Mark**	**%**
Course		**Mark**	**%**

Selections from portfolio or other collection:

Additional documentation or other information:

Reasons for the Course Challenge:

Reasons for the course challenge request (be specific):

	Day	Mon	Year

Student   Signature *(electronic signature acceptable)*
(I acknowledge that in accordance with The Electronic Information and Documents Act, 2000, my electronic signature has the same effect as a signature.)

	Day	Mon	Year

Parent/Guardian   Signature *(electronic signature acceptable)*
(I acknowledge that in accordance with The Electronic Information and Documents Act, 2000, my electronic signature has the same effect as a signature.)

Approved OR Rejected

Reasons for Approval OR Rejection:

	Day	Mon	Year

Principal   Signature *(electronic signature acceptable)*
(I acknowledge that in accordance with The Electronic Information and Documents Act, 2000, my electronic signature has the same effect as a signature.)

	Day	Mon	Year

Director of Education/Director Independent Schools
& Home-Based Education, Ministry of Education,
Approved Program Supervisor   Signature *(electronic signature acceptable)*
(I acknowledge that in accordance with The Electronic Information and Documents Act, 2000, my electronic signature has the same effect as a signature.)

Assessment Strategies for Course Challenge
(from current classroom assessment techniques)

Submit form to Registrar's Office, Ministry of Education: Email to student.records@gov.sk.ca.