

# Course Credit Policy

## Highroad Academy

### A. Rationale:

This policy describes how Highroad Academy awards credit to grade 10, 11, or 12 students and includes equivalency, course challenge, external credits, post-secondary credits, and IDS.

The Ministry of Education specifies certain courses and grad requirements for every student who desires to graduate with a BC diploma, but they also acknowledge that learning is a continuous activity and there is learning that takes place outside the regular school program. Schools are required to offer the necessary courses for graduation, but are also invited to “grant credit towards graduation for learning that has been assessed and matches or exceeds provincial, national or international standards.”

### B. Definitions:

**BAA courses:** Board Authorized (BAA) courses are courses unique to Highroad Academy. They are developed to reflect the mission statement and philosophy of our school. Students may have an unlimited amount of BAA courses count toward graduation as part of their elective course choices. BAA courses are noted on student schedules and report cards with a Y preceding the course code.

**Challenge:** a provision that allows high school students to challenge the expectations for a course by participating in an assessment process, rather than taking the course.

**Diploma:** certificate awarded when all requirements are met for graduation in BC.

**Distance Learning:** sometimes there are courses students are interested in taking where there are not enough students to offer it as a classroom course. In this situation, a student may be permitted to take a course outside of Highroad Academy through Distance Learning (DL). Students must apply to take a DL course based on having parent and department head permission.

**Elective course:** any course that is not required for graduation

**Equivalency:** when a course taken elsewhere has been shown to be equivalent or equal to a course being offered at our school (documented prior learning)

**External Credentials:** credits earned outside the regular school day, or school system

**IDS - Independent Directed Studies:** students can choose a topic or area of particular interest to study.

**Prior Learning:** learning that has taken place at a previous time and place

**Post Secondary Institution:** a learning institution beyond high school

**Post-Secondary Credits:** Students may earn credit towards graduation by earning credit for courses at specific [Post Secondary Institutions](#).

**Study Blocks:** time designated for students to complete their assigned work. Study blocks do not count for credit.

### **C. Protocols:**

Highroad Academy staff and administration will do their best to support students by helping them make choices for their course selection, assisting them in managing their credits, and awarding credit where credit can be given.

All students must meet Ministry of Education requirements in order to graduate. The Ministry of Education requires 80 credits for graduation. Highroad Academy requires 88, because all students are required to take Bible courses at grade 10, 11, 12 which are each 4 credits and allow for 12 additional credits for their overall program. Courses required for graduation must be taken at Highroad Academy with the regular classroom teacher; however, elective courses may be taken over the summer or online during the school year in addition to the regular program.

### **Study blocks:**

Students in grades 11 and 12 are eligible for Study Blocks. Students in grades 11 and 12 may have the equivalent of up to one academic study block with administration approval and on the condition that all 88 credits from grades 10-12 will be attained. Students must maintain full time status at HRA. Full time status is *generally* eight 4-credit courses. Students in grades 9 and 10 will not have study blocks unless they are on an IEP. Grade 12 students may be off campus during study blocks if they have parental permission on file, and are in good standing in all their courses (over 60%).

### **Challenge Protocols:**

With some exceptions for international students, all students enrolled in Highroad Academy are entitled to undertake the challenge process to assess their prior learning for any Ministry-authorized graduation program course offered by any school board in the Province, provided the student has not already completed the course through previous enrolment.

Highroad Academy will review any documentation or prior learning that a student presents in order to determine if credit can be awarded through equivalency. The challenge process begins when it is determined that credit cannot be awarded through equivalency and a student has given compelling evidence that he or she will succeed in a challenge assessment.

Any student who asks for the opportunity to challenge a course must send an email to the high school department head entitled "Application for Course Challenge."

According to the Ministry, the entitlement to a free challenge process does not apply in the following circumstances:

- the student has already challenged the course and received a passing grade
- the student has already completed the course through previous enrolment, or
- the student has already been granted equivalency for the course.

There is no limit to the number of credits that may be awarded through challenge.

Highroad Academy must document the challenge assessment delivered to each student, including a pre-challenge equivalency review, and the documentation must be made available to Ministry auditors if requested.

Students should be able to demonstrate their readiness to challenge a course based on factors such as a recommendation from a previous teacher, or from evidence that relevant learning has been acquired outside the regular classroom setting. Examples of assessment strategies that could be used in a challenge process include such things as hands-on demonstrations, oral performances, interviews, written examinations, or presentations of a collection of work.

Awarding credit through challenge is based on the same standards used for students who have taken the course through enrollment. A challenge is considered successful when a student has achieved at least a C- and 50 percent.

For reporting and transcript purposes, Highroad Academy will assign a letter grade and percentage to all credits awarded through challenge processes.

### **Equivalency Protocols:**

There is no limit to the number of credits students may be awarded through equivalency.

Students may be asked to provide translations if documents are not in English or French.

For the purpose of equivalency, comparison of courses may be based on factors such as the following:

- comparison of learning outcomes
- comparison of general subject matter
- comparison of depth or breadth of coverage of subject matter
- comparison of assessment methods, instruments, and standards.

To be deemed equivalent according to the Ministry of Education, there should be a match of approximately 80 percent or more of the learning outcomes to either a Ministry-developed or Board Authorized Grade 10, 11 or 12 course.

In order to receive credits through equivalency, students must provide the appropriate documentation as proof of successful completion of the course.

For reporting and transcript purposes, the Highroad Academy secondary Department Head will assign a letter grade and percentage to all credits awarded through equivalency. If the student's documents show only a letter grade or level, Ministry protocols specify that we may choose to assign a percentage, based on the mid-point of the matching British Columbia letter grade range, or use "[Transfer Standing](#)" (TS) if it is not possible to determine a letter grade and a percentage.

### **External Credentials:**

Highroad Academy has required courses and external courses/credentials. The required courses must be taken at Highroad Academy. External credits may be used for graduation, but cannot be used to take the place of a regular course.

Students at Highroad Academy may not use external credentials to complete the 88 course credits necessary for graduation. All external credits will be listed on the graduation transcript as additional graduation credits. The courses listed below are all examples of courses that fall under the category of external credit:

- Worship Leadership 10, 11, 12
- Global Intercultural Studies 12 (rolled out over grade 10, 11, 12)
- Work Experience 12 (WEX) - (rolled out over grade 10, 11, 12)
- Secondary School Apprenticeship 11-12 (SSA) – for students working in a trade, see below.
- Theatre Production – for students taking part in the annual school play.
- Non Highroad courses: Driver's Ed, Red Cross, Royal Conservatory Music, high level sports, advanced life saving and related courses (based on the BC Course Information for Graduation Guide).
- Distance Learning (DL) courses, unless special circumstances apply
- Secondary School Apprenticeship (Youth Work in Trades)

The Secondary School Apprenticeship program allows students to start their apprenticeship while still in high school. They earn graduation credit and log apprenticeship-training hours at the same time. Students can be signed up anytime during the school year.

You might already be eligible to sign up as a Secondary School Apprentice if you are a high school student with paid part-time employment in a trade, you may be a "hidden

apprentice". In order to sign up, connect with the high school administrator about the kind of work that qualifies, and about registering as a Secondary School Apprentice. The benefits of apprenticeship for students are as follows:

- earning 16 elective external credits towards graduation
- acquiring skills employers want
- getting a head start on your career
- 480 paid work hours towards your apprenticeship
- seamless transition from school to work
- eligible for a \$1000 bursary if requirements are met and marks in all courses stay at C+ or above

The Ministry of Education has sole authority to review and approve external credentials and assessments, and to provide an official list of these approved credentials and assessments to schools. The list is published in the Ministry's online [Course Registry](#). Some external credentials are classified as required courses and others as elective courses. Grade 12-level external credentials count towards the required number of Grade 12 level credits needed to satisfy graduation requirements.

There is no limit to the number of credits a student may earn by using external credentials. However, there may be credit restrictions between credentials where the external courses or programs are deemed to be equivalent. It is the responsibility of Highroad Academy to ensure that students do not receive double credit for credentials deemed equivalent based on the Course Registry website.

In order to earn credit for an approved credential, students must provide the appropriate documentation proving successful completion of the external assessment, course or program.

For reporting and transcript purposes, Highroad Academy must assign all credits received as a result of an external credential either a letter grade and percentage, if possible to determine. If impossible to determine, "Transfer Standing" (TS) may be used.

### **Independent Directed Studies (IDS):**

IDS enables students to initiate their own area of learning and to receive credit towards graduation. This also allows schools to recognize learning in a Ministry-developed or Board Authorized course that a student may not have completed. This Ministry policy is not a student entitlement but an enabling policy intended to encourage schools to allow students to pursue further studies of interest.

IDS credits may be awarded to students who have successfully completed independent work based on a subset of learning outcomes of Grade 10, 11 or 12 Ministry developed courses or Board Authorized courses. A student may study one or

more learning outcomes in depth, or study more broadly a wide variety of learning outcomes from a single course.

IDS credits may only be used to satisfy elective requirements.

The maximum value for a single IDS course is four credits, but there is no limit to the total number of IDS credits a student may earn. The number of credits a student earns for an IDS will be set out in the plan developed by that student and a teacher, and approved by a principal. Grade 12 IDS credits may count toward the minimum of 16 grade 12 credits required for graduation.

For reporting and transcript purposes, Highroad Academy must assign a letter grade and percentage for all credits earned through IDS.

IDS courses can be for 1, 2, 3, or 4 credits.

For a student interested in pursuing an IDS course, they must make written (by hand or email) application to the high school department head and outline a plan that includes a scope and sequence, in addition to having a high school mentor teacher oversee the course.

### **Credit from Post-Secondary Courses:**

Students are entitled to earn "dual credit" if they earn credit that leads to a post-secondary credential from a post-secondary institution which is a member of the British Columbia Transfer System or offered in French through Educacentre.

Post-secondary courses for which credit may be earned must be documented as follows:

- listed in the most recent edition of the [British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer Guide](#), or
- specified in individual [Career Technical Centre](#) (CTC) program agreements, or
- included in a BC public post-secondary institution's calendar as a course leading to a credential of one year or less, a two-year diploma or a four year degree.

Applicable post-secondary level courses count towards the required number of Grade 12 level credits needed to satisfy graduation requirements.

All post-secondary level courses will be reported using course codes listed in the online [Course Registry](#).

For reporting and transcript purposes, Highroad Academy must assign all credits earned at a post-secondary institution a letter grade and percentage. Provided a course consists of the standard number of hours for most courses offered at that

post-secondary institution, such courses will be awarded four credits, regardless of the number of credits indicated on the post-secondary institution's transcript. If the course at the post-secondary institution is offered in modules, credits awarded will be proportionate to 4 credits for the whole course.

#### **D. Related Information:**

This policy is currently under review, with changes anticipated during the 2018/19 school year.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/administration/legislation-policy/public-schools/earning-credit-through-equivalency-challenge-external-credentials-post-secondary-credit-and-independent-directed-studies>

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<b>Policy History</b>	
Developed:	January 2007
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