



Homeschooling High School in Alberta

By Judy Arnall

High school can follow several routes when you are homeschooling.

Route One - Traditional

One route is to do a traditional, parent-directed high school program. School boards will assess the work a child does in high school courses and if most of the Alberta Program of Studies outcomes have been met, some will award marks and credits for the work done.

You may not always receive marks and credits for work completed in a high school traditional program. However, the program must lead to the outcomes set out in the "Schedule of Learning Outcomes for Students Receiving Home Education Programs That Do Not Follow the Alberta Programs of Study" but may not necessarily cover the course outcomes of the Alberta Program of Studies. Check with your school board to see which route they support.

Some parents issue marks and a transcript from their home school but as this document is not issued by Alberta Education, it may not be universally recognized. Check with the intended post-secondary institution to see if they accept parent awarded transcripts.

Route Two – Complete Grade 12 Courses

Another route is to learn on a traditional program and then take a school directed grade 12 course to get marks, and credits retroactively.

If the student is under 19 and has completed instruction in a diploma examination course, they are eligible to write the diploma exam and receive course marks and credits.

At the age of 19, any student may take the grade 12 level of any course without taking the pre-requisite grade 10 and 11 courses.

At the age of 19 years of age or older as of September 1 of the current school year, all students are considered mature students and may challenge the government diploma exams. The diploma exam mark will stand for 100% of the course mark and credits without having taken the prerequisites. If the student does take a grade 12 course, the final course mark will be the greater of either the diploma exam mark or a combination of 50% of the course work mark and 50% of the exam mark. Credits may be awarded retroactively in certain instances.

Route Three – Course Challenge

Another route is to challenge the grade 12 diploma exam and/or request a formal assessment to get marks and credits.

Course challenge allows any senior high school student to challenge the outcomes of a course by participating in a formal assessment process rather than taking the course itself. The course challenges acknowledge that learning happens in a variety of settings, not just in schools. (September 2009 copyright Alberta Education)

Students younger than age 19 on September 1, may challenge the grade 12 level course on the recommendation of a parent and supervising school board.

There is flexibility in course work for high school subjects. Discuss the degree of flexibility allowed with your prospective school board.

Here are some more tips that students need to know:

You don't need a diploma to enter post-secondary institutions. Consult the websites of the program you are hoping to enter and see which courses are needed. For most post-secondary institutions, you need four core courses and an option.

If a student is seeking credit and marks for a core grade 12 level subject, they must write the mandatory government diploma exam. The percentage of the exam weight is based on the student's age. A student may take a course at the grade 12 level and with only that passing mark, gain entrance into the post-secondary institution which accepts the mark.

The high school system is like a buffet. If one school authority doesn't offer a particular course title, or format (live, online, or correspondence) students may take the course from another school board. Each school board will have limits on how many courses may be taken outside their authority. Generally, a student can only be registered in two jurisdictions.

A blended high school program is typically an 80/20% division of responsibilities between school board provided courses and parent provided (supervised) courses. The parent provided portion must comprise a minimum of 20% of the total program. Each school board has a different method of issuing funding based on their own policies.

To receive an Alberta High School Diploma, students must meet the government requirements for credits in certain subjects. The student must acquire at least 100 credits.

Many school boards offer special projects credits at grade 10, 11, and 12 to accommodate students' specific interests. They may also offer work experience, registered apprenticeships and many other programs that can fulfil the credit requirement.

Happy highschooling!

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