

Community Service

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Community Service 20 (one credit) is required for secondary graduation in the NWT. The Community Service module comprises twenty-five hours of community service activities/work in which the student does not receive monetary compensation. Community service is intended to expose youth to the "act of volunteering", willingly giving of oneself without expected pay, so as young adults in their communities they will be interested and motivated to "volunteer" their time and energy to benefit their community in some way. The activities will be planned, scheduled and executed by the individual student with the approval of the principal.

This module may be commenced in Grade 10 and completed during any year of the student's senior secondary schooling. However, graduation status will not be granted until the twenty-five hours of Community Service have been completed and records of completion sent to student records.

Community Service is of great value to the student, providing youth empowerment and career development opportunities. Students learn to take responsibility for planning their own activities. Confidence and self-esteem are built through success of such undertakings. Students learn the values attached to being a volunteer in their community. Activities provide opportunities for students to associate with adults, recognize the contribution adults can make to their education and learn from them. Such activities may also provide opportunities for students to discover their own career interests and aptitudes. Community Service can serve as a link between school and community bringing them to a deeper appreciation of one another.

_____ The Expectation of Community Service is that the Student will:

- ▶ participate in a variety of meaningful experiences;
- ▶ gain an understanding of the importance of developing acceptable work habits, good grooming and the need for self-discipline;
- ▶ develop an understanding of positive attitudes for getting along with people;
- ▶ identify experiences in which they have a genuine interest and a willingness to serve without monetary compensation;
- ▶ identify and plan worthwhile personal activities which may be categorized as community service;
- ▶ gain confidence and self esteem by achieving goals and objectives set as part of the planning process;
- ▶ realize the value of the gift of time and energy for worthy volunteer activities;

Community Service is any activity/work (without monetary compensation) selected and planned by the student to enhance community living. The student first determines what project s/he would like to do. The student contacts the person(s) responsible for the selected project. Discussions are held with the school principal to determine whether the selected project could be classified as Community Service. It is the student's responsibility to determine the goals and objectives, write an action plan and a project plan. The student should keep a log of all activities and work completed during each phase of the project and have these verified by the principal and the community person responsible for the particular activity.

Benefits to the School Include:

- ▶ linking school programs more closely with community needs;
- ▶ developing closer rapport between the school and community;
- ▶ making the community realize its importance in the education system.

Benefits to the Community Include:

- ▶ completion of needed projects for which the community may have inadequate funds;
- ▶ recognition of needed service;
- ▶ creation of an atmosphere of shared responsibility with the school;
- ▶ development of a feeling of mutual ownership of the program with the school.

Suggested Practice:

Teachers should build in a "time of reflection" around the student's community service experiences. In order to understand the importance of their community service activity (especially when it is not directly obvious) youth need to be guided through a reflection upon the effect of their volunteering activity. This reflection could be a discussion in the classroom, an interactive journal (with commentary from the supervisor) or a special group activity. This reflection component may allow non-profit agencies and schools to determine the community service activities that are most successful and may be replicated in following school years.

Challenge Credits

CHALLENGE CREDITS

A student may request to demonstrate proficiency at any time in any course including those which require a Grade 12 Diploma examination. In such cases, the Principal must ensure that the challenge criteria will be adequate indicators for potential success in the preparation to write the Grade 12 Diploma examination. Principals will determine whether the request is reasonable and if so, when and how the student will demonstrate proficiency. Upon successful completion, the principal will submit a written request to Student Records, indicating that the student receive credits for that course.

SAMPLE POLICY

The following is adapted from the draft policy developed by Sir John Franklin School in Yellowknife. Feel free to adapt it for your use and provide acknowledgement to Sir John Franklin School.

Senior secondary students should have the opportunity to enrol in courses appropriate to their background and learning style. Students who can demonstrate mastery of senior secondary school courses should receive credits for those courses and be able to move on to more challenging material. Accordingly, the school will provide students with course challenge assessment opportunities.

Guidelines

- 1.0 Definition: For the purpose of this policy, "course challenge assessment opportunities" means a process which allows students, who believe they have already mastered the curricular objectives as stated in a course, to demonstrate that they have mastered the objectives of the course and, if successful, be given a final mark and course credits.
- 2.0 The assessment process may include such components as a portfolio of the learning, a written exam, an oral exam, and a practical exam.
- 3.0 The results of the challenge assessment are binding and will be forwarded to the Department of Education, Culture and Employment for inclusion on the student's record.
- 4.0 Students must demonstrate that they are adequately prepared for a challenge assessment.
- 5.0 Departmental Examination Course challenge assessment opportunities will be provided during Diploma Examination Writing sessions where available.
- 5.1 Non-Departmental Examination Course Challenge assessment can be done at the discretion of the school principal.

Challenge Credits

1. "assessment process" refers to the process of performing a number of tasks and showing samples of work that demonstrate the degree to which the student has achieved the expected standards for the outcomes of the course. The student's performance and the quality of his or her work is evaluated by a teacher who has expertise in the subject/course in question;
2. "course" refers to a course at a higher level in a course sequence than the course for which the student has pre-requisites, or to a course at a similar level in a higher course sequence;
3. "course challenge" is a provision that will allow senior secondary students who believe that they have acquired the knowledge, skills and attitudes as defined by the curriculum for a course (and are ready to demonstrate that achievement) to participate in a summative assessment/evaluation process, be given a final mark, and, if successful, credits in that course;
4. "course challenge in a diploma examination courses" applies only to the school-awarded mark component of the course, and therefore **will NOT result in a final course mark or in credits**, until after the student successfully completes the diploma examination for that course;
5. "course sequence" refers to a sequence of courses that together comprise a complete set of pre-requisites, e.g., Social Studies 10-20-30, Social Studies 13-23-33; and
6. "summative evaluation" means final evaluation of learning outcomes.

PROCEDURES

General

1. The course challenge process shall be available to senior secondary school students who believe that he or she possesses the knowledge, skills, and attitudes for a secondary school course as specified in the curriculum, and is ready to demonstrate that achievement through a formal, summative assessment. **For diploma examination courses, this applies only to the school-awarded mark component.**

Student

1. The student shall initiate the course challenge process, and shall take the responsibility for providing evidence or readiness to challenge a course (e.g. a portfolio, other collection, or documentation of work and/or experience, a recommendation from a junior secondary teacher, etc.)
2. A student who successfully completes a course challenge of the school-awarded mark component of a diploma examination course must write the diploma examination in order to be eligible for a final course mark and credit in that course.

Principal

1. Course challenges shall be administered by the school according to policy, only after the student is enrolled in the senior secondary school.

2. A student's readiness for course challenge shall be determined through consultation that includes the senior secondary school principal, student, parents(s), and subject teacher(s), counsellor. The consultation shall include discussion of the student's chance of successfully meeting the acceptable standard for the course, and the student's apparent capacity to handle successfully the course at the next level.
3. The school principal shall make the final decision about the student's readiness for the course challenge.
4. The principal shall ensure that assessment for course challenges includes strategies that will assess the breadth and scope of the learning expectations for the course in a timely and practical manner.
5. The principal may assign the administration and evaluation of assessment for a course challenge to a teacher who has taught the course.

Marks, Credits, Reporting

1. The principal shall report a student's achievement in a course challenge according to the procedures laid down by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.
2. A student who successfully demonstrates through the course challenge process that he or she possesses the learning expectations for the course to at least the acceptable standard, shall be awarded a final course mark and credits for the course challenged except in diploma examination courses, which require the school-awarded mark to be combined with the diploma examination mark before a final course mark or credit is possible.
3. Upon a student's successful completion of a course challenge, waived prerequisite credits and "P" for "pass" for courses in the course sequence may be awarded, subject to the provisions of the Senior Secondary School Administration Guide.
4. A school shall not charge funded students or their families a fee for administering course challenges.
5. A student who challenges the course, either successfully or unsuccessfully, may subsequently choose to take the course.
6. A student shall attempt a particular course challenge only once. If the student is unsuccessful, but wants credit in the course or wishes to raise his or her mark, the student is required to take the course.
7. The school shall establish procedures to communicate to parents and students the availability of, and procedures for, course challenges.
8. The school will gradually make arrangements to provide appropriate course challenge assessments for the full range of senior secondary school courses offered by the school.
9. The school will attempt to provide for requests to challenge courses not offered by the school, by contacting the DEC/DEA to make arrangements with other schools for such challenges.

The Assessment

The challenge assessment will be administered during exam week at the end of each semester. The assessment may include the following components; written, oral, lab, skills testing, and others as deemed necessary according to the course outline.

Conditions

The marks are binding. Student Records will be notified of the results. Retroactive credits will not be awarded for those courses being challenged if credits have already been granted at the prerequisite level (i.e. If a student challenges and passes Social 23 retroactive credits will not be given for Social 13 if the student already has credit in Social 10).

ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE CHALLENGE CREDIT (Non-curriculum based)

Note: These credits should not replace Curriculum based courses in Dogrib, North Slavey, South Slavey, Chipewyan, Gwich'in, Inuktitut, Inuinnaqtun or Inuvialuktun.

Students enrolled in the NWT schools may be awarded credit toward graduation for demonstrated competence in one of the official Northwest Territories aboriginal languages, in accordance with the following provisions:

- ▶ A maximum of 9 credits per student for one aboriginal language may be granted.
- ▶ Students enrolled in school programs on a full-time or part-time basis, or distance education are eligible for aboriginal language credit.
- ▶ Credit will be awarded on the basis of performance on a single non-curriculum based language examination. The criterion for acquiring credits at each level will be a 50% score on an examination. The qualification to take the examination at each of the levels will be determined on the following basis:

Level 15 - able to speak the language - 3 credits;

Level 25 - able to speak and read the language - 3 credits;

Level 35 - able to speak, read and write the language - 3 credits.

- ▶ 3, 6 or 9 credits will be awarded depending on whether the student has met the criteria for speaking, or speaking and reading, or speaking, reading and writing;

The procedures for administering Aboriginal Language credits may be used for certification of language proficiency and competence by each school;

- ▶ Credit for language competency will be awarded by the Department based on the recommendation of the school, and will be recorded on the student's Validation Statement at the 15/25/35 level;

- Under normal circumstances a student will not be permitted to take the proficiency examination more than once unless s/he is able to provide evidence of additional study leading to improved competency. A student may request a re-examination if s/he feels that some external factor has prevented him/her from performing at his/her normal level of competency.