



Information for Parents

About Writing Diploma Examinations

Is your daughter or son writing a diploma examination soon?
Here is some helpful information.

Diploma examinations are available for the following courses:

- Biology 30 • Chemistry 30
- English Language Arts 30–1
- English Language Arts 30–2 • Français 30–1
- French Language Arts 30–1
- Mathematics 30–1 • Mathematics 30–2
- Physics 30 • Science 30
- Social Studies 30–1 • Social Studies 30–2

Who can write diploma examinations?

- Students who have completed instruction in a diploma examination course
- Students who already have a mark in a diploma examination course and wish to improve it
- Mature students

Note: Students must have photo ID when they write diploma examinations. If a student cannot produce photo ID, he/she will **NOT** be allowed to write the examination.

Who is a “mature student”?

A mature student is someone who, as of September 1 of the current school year, is

- 19 years of age or older OR
- the holder of a previously awarded high school diploma from the province of Alberta or an equivalent high school diploma from a jurisdiction acceptable to the Minister.

If a student is uncertain about his/her status as

a mature student, he/she should call the Provincial Approach to Student Information (PASI) and Student Records at 780-422-9337 (toll-free 310-0000 within Alberta).

How does a student register to write diploma examinations?

If students are taking diploma examination courses through accredited Alberta high schools, then the schools will register them to write the examinations for the courses in which they are enrolled.

Mature students may write diploma examinations without taking diploma examination courses and may write these examinations in the November, January, April, June, or August writing sessions. Mature students who intend to write a diploma examination in November, January, April, June, or August without taking the course must submit a completed *Diploma Examination Registration/Rewrite Fee Payment Form* to Alberta Education by the dates specified on the form. They also need to make arrangements with the principal of the high school where they intend to write or the designated writing centre so that space and an examination will be available for them.

The *Diploma Examination Registration/Rewrite Fee Payment Form* is available on the Alberta Education website at education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/forms.aspx.

Information for Parents is published by Alberta Education for parents and school councils. Information for Students, a publication of Alberta Education, is available for students and teachers.

Check out our website at education.alberta.ca/admin/testing.aspx.

If a diploma examination has two parts, a student must write (or rewrite) both Part(ie) A and Part(ie) B of the examination during the same examination administration session to earn credit for that diploma examination course. If this is impossible, the student should see the principal or counsellor.

If a student has to be out of the province when the diploma examinations are written, he/she may, under certain circumstances, be permitted to write at a special writing centre. The student should ask the principal for more information.

When is the deadline to register to write or rewrite a diploma examination?

The deadlines to register to write or rewrite diploma examinations are specific to the session in which the examinations will be written. These deadlines are specified on the *Diploma Examination Registration/Rewrite Fee Payment Form* and in the *Schedules & Significant Dates* section of the *General Information Bulletin*, which is available on the Alberta Education website at education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/diplomaexams/diplomabulletin.aspx.

How do students register to rewrite a diploma examination?

If students intend to rewrite a diploma examination for a course they are currently retaking through an accredited Alberta high school, their school will register them to rewrite the examination for that course. They will still be responsible for paying the rewrite fee prior to the examination at <http://www.education.alberta.ca/students/exams/rewrites.aspx>.

If they intend to rewrite a diploma examination without retaking the course, they must register and pay the rewrite fee online at <http://www.education.alberta.ca/students/exams/rewrites.aspx>.

Note: In the 2014–2015 school year, only the following diploma examinations are available in the November 2014 and April 2015 sessions.

November 2014	April 2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English Language Arts 30–2 • Mathematics 30–1 • Chemistry 30 • Physics 30 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English Language Arts 30–1 • Social Studies 30–1 • Social Studies 30–2 • Biology 30 • Science 30 —digital only

What is a diploma examination rewrite fee and how do students pay it?

If students are rewriting a diploma examination that they wrote in the current or two previous school years (since September 1, 2012), they are required to pay a rewrite fee of \$26.25 (including GST) per examination. The rewrite fee for foreign/exchange students—visiting or exchange students from outside Alberta—is \$50.00 (including GST) per examination.

Can I register and pay the rewrite fee by mail or in person?

The rewrite fee may be paid by mail in the form of a cheque or money order made payable to “Government of Alberta”. Students may come in person to the Transcript Unit, 2nd Floor, 44 Capital Boulevard, 10044–108 Street, Edmonton, where they can make payment using cash, debit card, cheque, money order, or major credit card. Payment **must** be submitted and received prior to the examination date.

Note: If students have unpaid rewrite fees from a prior examination session, their current payment will be credited toward the outstanding debt. They must clear any outstanding debt before new diploma examination marks will appear on their high school record.

Check out our website at education.alberta.ca/admin/testing.aspx.

When can a student write diploma examinations?

Schedules for all diploma examination administration sessions are available in the *Schedules & Significant Dates* section of the *General Information Bulletin*, which is available on the Alberta Education website at education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/diplomaexams/diplomabulletin.aspx.

What if a student is ill and can't write the diploma examination that he/she is registered for?

If illness, school closure, or an accident or death in his/her immediate family prevents a student from writing a diploma examination for which he/she is registered or he/she gets sick during an examination, the student should see the principal or counsellor about what to do. If the student has registered and paid to rewrite one or more diploma examinations and, for any of the reasons above, is unable to write the examinations, he/she is eligible for a full refund. To apply for a refund, the student should see the school principal or counsellor. In the case of all other cancelled registrations, a \$10.60 processing fee will be charged (including GST).

Can a student have special provisions (accommodations) for writing diploma examinations?

Accommodations such as additional time, CD versions of examinations, large print, and Braille are available if a student has a special diploma examination writing need. The student should see the school counsellor or principal for more information.

Are diploma examinations available in French?

All diploma examinations, except English Language Arts 30–1, English Language Arts 30–2, and Science 30, are translated into

French. If a student is in a Francophone or alternate French Language Arts program, he/she may choose to write an examination in English or in French, regardless of his/her language of instruction. If he/she studied a course in French, the teacher may assume that he/she will write the examination in French; therefore, the student needs to notify the principal at least **90 days** before the examination date should he/she decide to write an examination in English.

What is the difference between French 30, French Language Arts 30–1, and Français 30–1?

French 30 is a second-language course for non-Francophone students. There is no diploma examination for French 30. French Language Arts 30–1 is an advanced French course designed for students in an alternate French Language Arts program. If a student is enrolled in French Language Arts 30–1, he/she **must** write the French Language Arts 30–1 diploma examination in order to obtain a final course mark. Français 30–1 is a French language and literature course for students in Francophone programs. If a student is enrolled in Français 30–1, he/she **must** write the Français 30–1 diploma examination in order to obtain a final course mark.

What materials does a student need?

For all examinations, students are responsible for their own writing materials—pens, HB pencils, calculators, etc. Tear-out pages for rough work are provided in each biology, chemistry, mathematics, physics, and science examination booklet. For more information about the materials that are required and allowed for the writing of diploma examinations, please see the *Security & Examination Rules* section of the *General Information Bulletin*, which is available on the Alberta Education website at education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/diplomaexams/diplomabulletin.aspx.

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Are there other examination rules a student needs to know?

There are very specific rules that students must follow when writing diploma examinations. These rules, and the consequences for not following them, are described in the *Security & Examination Rules* section of the *General Information Bulletin*, which is available on the Alberta Education website at education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/diplomaexams/diplomabulletin.aspx.

How are diploma examinations marked?

The examinations are marked at a central location. Personal identification, including the name of a student's school, is removed from each examination booklet before it is marked. The machine-scorable answer sheets are marked by scanning machines. Written responses are marked independently by two or more teacher markers. These markers must meet specific qualifications in order to mark diploma examinations.

How are final marks calculated?

To pass a diploma examination course, a student must earn a final "blended" mark of at least 50%. For all courses, the school mark and the diploma examination mark are each worth 50% of the total mark. If, for example, in Chemistry 30, a student receives a mark of 45% from the school and a mark of 57% on the diploma examination, the final mark is the average of those two marks—51%. Similarly, if the student's school mark is 56% and the diploma examination mark is 44%, the final mark is 50%.

If a person is a mature student, he/she is not required to have a school mark. A mature student who passes the diploma examination and who has no school mark automatically receives credit for the course. However, if the mature student does have a school mark, and it

is lower than the diploma examination mark, the final mark will be the examination mark only. If the school mark is higher than the diploma examination mark, the two marks will be blended in the usual way.

While thorough examination development procedures are used, with the intent of making the diploma examinations in a given course as identical in difficulty as possible for each administration, the examinations still may vary slightly in difficulty. The process of equating allows Alberta Education to address these differences, so that a mark on an examination means the same thing no matter at which session a student writes the examination. The use of this process enhances fairness to students and enables the direct comparison of results from one examination session to another.

Equating involves the use of a baseline examination, to which all subsequent examinations in the course are compared. If a subsequent examination proves to be slightly easier than the baseline examination, equating adjusts some of the scores downward; if a subsequent examination proves to be slightly harder than the baseline examination, some scores are adjusted upward.

You can find more detail on Alberta Education's website at education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/diplomaexams.aspx—see *Initiative to Maintain Consistent Standards on Diploma Examinations*.

How does a student get his/her results?

The *Results Statement*, which lists a student's most recent school and diploma examination marks, will be mailed to the student approximately three weeks after the last examinations have been written. The *Results Statement* is not an official transcript. An *Official High School Transcript of Academic Achievement* is available to students at a cost. For more details see

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High School Transcripts on the Alberta Education website at <http://www.education.alberta.ca/students/transcripts.aspx>.

If a student repeats a course or rewrites a diploma examination, his/her transcript will show the highest school-awarded and diploma examination marks earned. Students must request and pay for a new transcript if they upgrade their marks. If a student rewrites a diploma examination but neglects to pay the rewrite fee, marks in the course will appear on neither his/her *Results Statement* nor the *Official High School Transcript of Achievement*.

Note: To ensure protection of privacy, course marks and examination marks cannot be read to students over the phone. Telephone requests and payments will not be accepted.

New for April 2015

Beginning with the April 2015 diploma examination writing session, *Results Statements* will be available exclusively online using *myPass*. The *Statement of Courses and Marks* will be replaced with the *Detailed Academic Report*, which is available exclusively online using *myPass*.

What is *myPass*? *myPass* is a student self-service website that will enable high school students to (i) access their *Results Statement*, (ii) view their demographic information, (iii) view their *Detailed Academic Report (DAR)*, (iv) view their progress toward their diploma or certificate, and (v) order and pay for a transcript. Specific information on how to sign up for *myPass* will be provided to all students who write diploma examinations in April 2015 and June 2015. More general information on *myPass* will be provided to students and schools in early 2015.

Is there an appeal process for school-awarded marks?

If a student is dissatisfied with a school mark, he/she may appeal to the principal under the appeal policy set by the local school authority.

Is there an appeal process for diploma examination marks?

If students believe that their diploma examination marks do not accurately reflect their level of achievement in a course, they may rewrite the examination or ask to have it rescored. To request a rescore of a diploma examination the student can apply online or submit the *Diploma Examination Rescore Application Form* at <https://public.education.alberta.ca/eDARTS2/>.

The deadline to request a rescore is provided on the *Results Statement* and on *eDarts2*. Requests received after the deadline **will be denied**. The fee for rescoring each examination is \$26.25 (including GST). This fee is refunded if the examination mark is raised by 5% or more as a result of a rescore. The mark resulting from rescoring becomes the student's **final examination mark, even if it is lower than the original mark**. The most recent school-awarded mark will be blended with the rescore examination mark, and a new *Results Statement* will be mailed to the student. Students should know, however, that rescoring the machine-scored section rarely changes the score. The written-response raw score reported on the *Results Statement* will help a student decide if he/she wants his/her examination rescored.

Students who have explored all avenues of appeal at their jurisdictional level and feel they have a case requiring special consideration should apply, in writing, to the Executive Secretary, Special Cases Committee, Alberta Education. The written submission should provide reasons for the appeal and the remedy expected.

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