

Earning Credit Through Challenge/Equivalency

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Responsible Executive:	Principal
Approval Authority:	School Authority
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Category:	High School

PURPOSE

This policy outlines the framework for recognizing and assessing prior learning for international students enrolled in high schools in British Columbia (BC). Specifically, it focuses on the use of equivalency and challenge credits to ensure students' educational experiences are appropriately recognized, enabling their seamless integration into the BC education system while maintaining the integrity of graduation requirements.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all international students enrolled in high school credit programs at Coquitlam College/Brookmere Secondary (the School).

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. The School adheres to Ministry of Education policies on credit recognition and will ensure that all credits awarded will align with approved learning standards and graduation requirements.
2. All students, regardless of background or enrollment status, will have equal access to the processes and opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills and to have their prior educational achievements assessed with fairness and consistency.
3. The School will provide clear guidelines and support to students and parents/guardians to help them navigate the equivalency and challenge credit processes effectively.
4. The School will provide a fair, transparent, and timely process for resolving conflicts related to credit recognition and graduation requirements.

PROCEDURES

5. Upon enrollment, international students will meet with school counselors to discuss their educational background and review the options for equivalency and challenge credits. This meeting will establish a pathway for meeting graduation requirements.
6. The School will regularly review equivalency and challenge credit processes to ensure alignment with BC Ministry of Education policies.
7. Counselors and educators will receive ongoing training on evaluating international transcripts and administering challenge assessments.
8. Students and guardians will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the process, which will be used to make improvements.

Roles and Responsibilities

9. School Administration

- Ensure compliance with BC Ministry of Education policies regarding equivalency and challenge credits.
 - Provide clear guidelines and resources to students and staff.
 - Maintain accurate records of all credits awarded.
10. Educators
- Review and evaluate applications for challenge credits.
 - Develop and administer assessments for challenged courses.
 - Align equivalency and challenge credit evaluations with BC curriculum standards.
11. Students
- Provide all necessary documentation for equivalency credit evaluations.
 - Prepare for and complete assessments as part of the challenge credit process.
 - Seek guidance and clarification from school staff as needed.
12. Guardians
- Support students in navigating the equivalency and challenge credit processes.
 - Ensure timely submission of required documents.

Equivalency Credits

13. The School will award equivalency credits to international students for prior learning that is demonstrably equivalent to BC Ministry of Education courses, i.e. the prior courses must align with BC provincial standards in content, depth, and learning outcomes.
14. Students must submit official transcripts or Ministry or national authorized course outlines from accredited educational institutions as proof of prior learning. Translated transcripts from previous school(s) must be officially validated by an authorized agency. All transcripts and course outlines must be received from an authorized representative.
15. School counselors and administrators will verify and evaluate the submitted documents for alignment with BC learning standards.
16. If prior learning is determined to have met the equivalency criteria, students and their guardians will be notified, and appropriate credits will be awarded and recorded in the student's file.

Challenge Credits

17. International students may challenge courses to earn credits if they can demonstrate mastery of the course content without formal enrollment. This process is designed to acknowledge informal or non-traditional learning experiences.
18. To be eligible for challenge credits:
- a) Students must be currently enrolled in a BC high school.
 - b) Students must submit a formal application, providing evidence of prior learning or experience relevant to the course being challenged.
19. Students may not challenge courses for which they have already received equivalency credits.
20. A meeting with a school counselor or subject teacher will determine the student's readiness for the challenge process. Eligible students will complete required assignments which may include written exams, practical demonstrations and/or portfolio submissions.
21. A teachers will evaluate the assessments based on the BC curriculum standards and determine if credit should be granted.

22. If challenge credits are determined to have met the criteria, students and their guardians will be notified, and appropriate credits will be awarded and recorded on the student's transcript.

Conflict Resolution

23. If students or guardians disagree with the decisions regarding equivalency or challenge credits, they may:
- a) Discuss the issue with the school counselor or teacher involved in the assessment.
 - b) If the student or guardian is not satisfied with the discussion, or is not comfortable discussing with, the school counselor or teacher, they may submit a written appeal to the school principal, providing detailed reasons and supporting evidence.

DEFINITIONS

Equivalency Credits: Credits awarded to students for prior learning that aligns with BC Ministry of Education learning outcomes and standards. These credits are based on documented proof of formal education outside of BC.

Challenge Credits: Credits awarded to students who demonstrate, through assessment, that they have met the learning outcomes of a specific BC course without having formally completed it.

International Students: Students enrolled in BC schools who have received a significant portion of their education outside Canada.

RELATED RESOURCES

- [British Columbia Ministry of Education – Earning Equivalency, Challenge, and External Credentials Policy](#)
- [British Columbia Ministry of Education – International Student Graduation Credit Policy](#)
- [Senior Secondary Student Handbook](#)